

LIFE THROUGH HIS NAME

being

an exposition of the Gospel of John

by

Charles H. Welch

Author of

*Dispensational Truth
The Apostle of the Reconciliation
The Testimony of the Lord's Prisoner
Parable, Miracle, and Sign
The Form of Sound Words
Just and the Justifier
In Heavenly Places
etc.*

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PREFACE

It is not without a strong sense of happy memories that the monumental volume on Romans - *Just and the Justifier* - carried a touching reference to forty years of devoted service to the *Berean* by Mr. F.P. Brininger, and that upon the launching of the new volume - *Life through His Name* - Mr. Albert Gallimore of Birmingham should be remembered, also with forty years' close fellowship in the company of Mr. Charles H. Welch. The parallel is continued in that neither of the pioneers was permitted to remain at Mr. Welch's disposal to see the Volume leave the Press.

The volume, *Just and the Justifier* by its exposition of the epistle to the Romans has unveiled some of the grace manifested in the 'Gospel of God ... concerning His Son', and this new exposition *Life through His Name*, introducing John's record of God's testimony - 'In Him was life and the life was the light of men' - will cause many to rejoice anew that the Word of Truth, rightly divided, has not left unguarded a single joint in the harness of those who may 'please Him Who hath chosen ... a soldier'. The joy of fellowship with Mr. Welch and Mr. Gallimore for over forty years is at once an act of grace abounding, and a responsibility not lightly to be regarded; but if one of my fingers can point towards a tried, tested and approved highway for the feet of saints, then my foreword shall be something of which I 'may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him'.

This then is my God-speed message to this new volume, and may God thereby receive the praise due to His Name.

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EXPLANATORY NOTES.

LXX.

The accepted sign for the Septuagint. This is a Greek version of the Hebrew Scriptures, the oldest one made in any language, and was commenced about 280 B.C.

Talmud.

The oral tradition of the elders of Israel committed to writing. It is divided into two parts, the TEXT or the MISHNA, and the COMMENTARY, or the GEMARA. The *Mishna* is in Hebrew, the *Gemara* is in Aram -an. While containing a mass of exaggeration, it nevertheless is a storehouse of information regarding Judaism and its later developments.

Dr. John Lightfoot.

Born A.D. 1602. His researches into the Talmud are contained in fourteen volumes, entitled 'Lightfoot's Works' and often illuminate an otherwise obscure passage. He must be distinguished from Bishop Lightfoot, A.D. 1828-89.

Structure.

One of the chief values of the structure of any portion of Scripture is that it exhibits to the eye the scope of the passage, and the steps in the argument. Structures are not invented, only discovered.

Figures of Speech.

Where these present any difficulty, help will be found by consulting *The Companion Bible*, Appendix 6.

Gnosticism.

A system of philosophy, professedly Christian, devised to solve such questions as the origin of evil. Much that is written by John concerning the person of Christ is levelled at the incipient Gnosticism of his day.

Greek and Hebrew.

Words from these languages are transliterated into English, and printed in italic type. No attempt has been made to distinguish the short and long 'o' and the short and long 'e' in the Greek, nor to give an exact phonetic spelling of the Hebrew.

Received Text (*Textus Receptus*)

This is the Greek New Testament from which the Authorized Version of the Bible was prepared. Comments in this work on John's gospel are made with this version of the Greek in mind, and where there are variances from the Nestlé Greek Text, and/or other critical texts 'in the Received Text' is printed in brackets next to the word or words in question.

LIFE THROUGH HIS NAME

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

A Question of View Point

While it is true that 'all spiritual blessings in heavenly places' are 'far above all', it is essential that we should remind ourselves continually of the basis upon which all these blessings rest, namely, the finished work of the Son of God, accomplished in the fulness of time upon the earth. The epistles of the New Testament abound in references to this finished work, but it is essential that those inspired records which we call the Gospels, should be read, studied and understood if that work is to become a reality to us. Three things must be kept in mind when we think of the Gospels and their purpose.

(1) The historic facts which they record are basic. The birth, death, resurrection and ascension of the Lord are fundamental to doctrinal and practical truth.

'If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain' (1 Cor. 15:14).

(2) While the Gospels are, in a sense, complete in themselves, the Lord told His disciples that there was still further truth to be revealed to them when the Spirit of Truth should come.

'I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now' (John 16:12).

(3) There is a Divine purpose in the fact that the earthly life of our Lord is recorded from four different aspects. The only One Who could have inspired a single complete account of that life and ministry has not done so, but has been pleased to inspire four different writers to write individual and selective accounts from four different points of view.

MATTHEW. - The point of view of this writer is that of the Kingdom, and his readers are Jews and Jewish believers. He begins with Abraham.

MARK. - This Gospel follows the same line as that of Matthew, but is shorter and omits some subject matter that would not appeal to the Gentile proselytes, for whom the account was primarily intended.

LUKE. - Luke writes for the Gentiles evangelized by Paul. He goes back to Adam.

JOHN. - John's point of view is to be discovered. All we will say at the moment is that in 20:31 the apostle has plainly indicated the great object he had in mind in writing his account of the ministry of Christ.

Every teacher, whether inspired or not, if he is to be successful in his work, must establish contact with his hearers, and then proceed from the known and accepted to the unknown. Matthew, for instance, is traversing ground which would be very familiar to his hearers when he traces the genealogy of our Lord back to Abraham. Every name in the first sixteen verses of Matthew would be as well known to many of his readers as the commonest household words. Abraham was the common ancestor of them all, and Judah the father of the particular tribe most concerned. Having established contact with his readers, Matthew then proceeds to advance one step further, and to prove that the Son born of Mary was the Heir to the throne of David, and yet a virgin's Son and Emmanuel, 'God with us'.

John opens his Gospel with the words:

'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God'.

We must suppose that in this case also the writer is standing on common ground with his readers. Strange as this language may sound in our ears, it can be shown that the necessity for the 'logos' was the burden of both Greek and Alexandrian philosophy at the time of John's writing, and that the city of Ephesus, from which the Gospel emanated, was a place where the philosophies of East and West mingled and where these ideas were at that time 'in the air'. Later we will substantiate these statements as to the important position that the 'logos' held in ancient philosophy, but for the moment we must pass on.

That John wrote for non-Jewish readers is at once evident, for it is obvious that no Jew needed to be told that the 'Passover' was a feast of the Jews, or that 'Rabboni' meant My Master. Here is further evidence that non-Jewish readers are in view:

The *world* is the sphere of John's ministry.

The fact that Jewish customs are explained.

The *rejection of the Lord by His own people* is at the very forefront of the Gospel.

No mention is made of the Lord's Supper, the *New Covenant* feast.

The *ascension* is emphasized.

The 'Word' in John 1:1 is parallel with the 'Image' in Colossians 1:15.

The prayer of John 17 is, among other things, that 'the world' may know.

Miracles are not mentioned as such; they are called 'signs'.

Those readers who are not familiar with the Scriptural arguments associated with the above summary are earnestly recommended to consider what has been put forward in Vol. 20 of *The Berean Expositor*. The question of viewpoint is most important in the study of any part of the Scriptures.

The special 'signs' recorded in John's Gospel, which are so intimately associated by the writer with his message (20:31), are eight in number. We give the structure here.

THE EIGHT SIGNS

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|---|
| A | 2:1-11. THE MARRIAGE IN CANA. | The third day. No wine. Glory manifested. |
| B | 4:46-54. THE NOBLEMAN'S SON. | After two days. At the point of death. |
| C | 5:1-15. THE IMPOTENT MAN | The Pool of Bethesda. Thirty-eight years. Sabbath. Sin. |

- D 6:1-14. FEEDING FIVE THOUSAND. Many went back (6:66).
- D 6:15-21. WALKING ON THE SEA. Many of the people believed (7:31).
- C 9:1-14. THE MAN BORN BLIND. The Pool of Siloam. From Birth. Sabbath. Sin.
- B 11:1-44. THE SISTERS' BROTHER. Two days. Lazarus is dead.
- A 21:1-14. THE DRAUGHT OF FISHES. The third time. No meat. The Lord magnified.

Later we shall give evidence that John wrote his Gospel at Ephesus, after Paul had finished his course. We do not believe that John teaches the truth of the Mystery, or that he was himself a member of the One Body, but he knew that the revelation had been made through Paul, and records in his Gospel aspects of the Person and work of Christ that the other Gospel writers were not permitted to reveal.

The accompanying diagram may help the reader to visualize the relation of John's Gospel and Paul's epistles.

BEREAN CHARTS.		TWO MINISTRIES SINCE ACTS 28. JOHN "GUESTS", PAUL "BODY".		NUMBER THIRTEEN.	
MATT.		XXII.			
First invitation to Marriage.		They would not come.		(Period)	
(Gospels)					
Second invitation to Marriage.		They made light of it.		(Period)	
(Acts)					
Israel set aside		City destroyed.			
Acts		XXVIII.			
John the	Paul the Prisoner	Elder			
Christ	Christ, the Image	The Word			
Only	First born	Begotten			
His Fulness	Fulness...ye complete	we receive			
Children	Adoption of sons	of God			
Heavenly	Heavenly Places	things			
From heaven	Far above all heavens	above all			
Where before	He ascended	I ascend			
Friend of	Perfect Man	Bridegroom			
Other	Pastors	sheep			
World	Pr. & Powers may know	may know			
Vine &	Head & Members	branches			
Glory before	Chosen before overthrow	Overthrow			
Many	Manifested in Glory	Mansions			
Gospel of John.		Ephesians			
The World		The Church			
Non-Jewish		To Gentiles			
Jn. i. 11 = Acts xxviii.		Mystery			
The other sheep		Israel set aside			
Signs		No miraculous gifts.			

Historical Evidence and the Scope

The reader may not be very much concerned with what is called the 'Higher Criticism'; for the Scriptures speak too plainly to the quickened understanding to need external proofs. We must not, however, forget that inability to meet criticism, or failure to bring forward evidence, may mean that, at some important moment, our witness may be blunted and some friend or acquaintance left in darkness.

The Gospel of John has been more severely criticised than the other three, and its genuineness has been denied. It is not our intention here to load our pages with ancient names, or with many extracts from antiquity. We give a few pointed references. Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 150-215) writes:

'St. John, the last (of the evangelists), when he saw that the outward bodily facts had been set forth in the (existing) Gospels, impelled by his friends (and) divinely moved by the Spirit, made a spiritual Gospel'.

One of the earliest and most important witnesses in this connection is Iren -us (born A.D. 98), who knew and had conversed with Polycarp, himself a disciple of John. Iren -us unhesitatingly ascribes the fourth gospel to John, and speaks of this belief as of universal acceptance in his day.

Victorinus of Pettan wrote of John and his Gospel:

When Valentus and Cerinthus and Ebion and others of the school of Satan were spread throughout the world, all the bishops of the neighbouring provinces came together to him to constrain him to commit his own testimony to writing (*Migne Patrol v. 333*).

In connection with this quotation it is interesting to note that Cerinthus taught that Christ was a man, *and nothing more*, and that He was the son of *both* Joseph and Mary - a doctrine that is most definitely refuted in the opening of John's Gospel. Iren -us also writes of John as being 'willing, by the publication of his Gospel, to take away the error which Cerinthus had disseminated amongst men'. He tells us, moreover, that John remained at Ephesus up to the time of the Emperor Trajan.

We do not propose to pursue this subject further. Those readers who are concerned with proofs for the canonicity of John's Gospel, and are able to appreciate historical evidence, will already be in possession of sufficient means to prosecute their studies without our help, and those who are not will not benefit by a multiplicity of proofs.

We turn now to the book itself in relation to the other Gospels, and note first those things which are common to John's Gospel and the Synoptics.

The work of the 'Forerunner', John the Baptist.

The last supper, but no reference to the institution of a memorial feast.

The anointing at Bethany.

The miracle of feeding the 5,000.

The miracle of walking on the sea.

The crucifixion.

The resurrection.

The word 'synoptic' has been used in the note above, and it may be that some readers are not quite clear as to its actual meaning. The word means, 'to see together', 'to have a common point of view'; and it is this common point of view that unites the other three Gospels. John, while recording some of the same incidents in the life and death and ministry of the same Lord, has a point of view entirely his own. This different point of view is manifest not only in the opening verse ('In the beginning was the Word') but throughout the Gospel. We shall therefore learn more by 'trying the things that differ' than by observing the things in common, and we will therefore record a few of these differences as examples.

The Companion Bible draws attention to some eighty-four words that are employed by John that are not used by the Synoptic writers, and these will be noted as our exposition proceeds. There are also other words, not exclusive to John, but used by him with greater frequency than in the other Gospels, and these are grouped together in *The Companion Bible* in the foreword to John's Gospel. Of this list of thirty-two words we give the following by way of example.

	<i>Word.</i>	<i>John's Gospel.</i>	<i>Synoptic Gospels.</i>
<i>Kosmos</i>	THE WORLD	79 times	15 times.
<i>Ho Pater</i>	THE FATHER (used of GOD)	121 „	66 „
<i>Martureo</i>	WITNESS	33 „	3 „
<i>Aletheia</i>	TRUTH	25 „	7 „
<i>Pempo</i>	SEND	33 „	15 „
<i>Teleioo</i>	FINISH	19 „	2 „

These six words, which are so characteristic of John's message, would, if studied together, throw considerable light upon the special purpose of his Gospel.

The following inter-relation of the four Gospels is common knowledge, but is set out here in order that our testimony may be complete, and that all readers may have the benefit.

MATTH. - Christ is set forth as KING. 'Behold *thy King*'
(Zech. 9:9).

Christ is set forth as David's BRANCH. 'Behold ... I will raise unto David a righteous *Branch* and a King shall reign and prosper' (Jer. 23:5,6; 33:15).

Christ's *genealogy* is therefore given from Abraham through David (Matt. 1:1-17).

Christ, *relatively*, presented as in the highest earthly position, a KING.

- MARK.- Christ is set forth as SERVANT. 'Behold *My Servant*' (Isa. 42:1).
 Christ is set forth as the BRANCH. 'Behold I will bring forth My Servant, *the Branch*' (Zech. 3:8).
 Christ as a servant, needs no *genealogy*.
 Christ, *relatively*, presented as in the lowliest earthly position, a SERVANT.
- LUKE.- Christ is set forth as MAN. 'Behold *the Man*' (Zech. 6:12).
 Christ is set forth as the BRANCH. 'Behold the man whose name is *the Branch*' (Zech. 6:12).
 Christ's *genealogy* is traced back to Adam.
 Christ, *intrinsically*, presented as the ideal MAN.
- JOHN.- Christ is set forth as GOD. 'Behold *your God*' (Isa. 40:9).
 Christ is set forth as Jehovah's BRANCH. 'In that day shall Jehovah's *Branch* be beautiful and glorious' (Isa. 4:2).
 Christ, as God can have no *genealogy*. He 'was' in the beginning.
 Christ, *intrinsically*, presented as 'GOD', mediatorially as the 'WORD', and savingly as 'JESUS THE CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD', 'THE WORD MADE FLESH'.

The 'Logos' in Philosophy and in Revelation

When the apostle Paul was confronted with the Stoic and Epicurean philosophers at Athens, he did not use words of scorn or derision, but rather of sympathy. The Jew in him, as well as the Christian, abominated the sight of idols, and we read that 'his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry' (Acts 17:16). Nevertheless, when he was arraigned before these philosophers, he did not alienate them by ridicule or contempt, but rather used the local conditions as a starting point for his speech:

'I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom, therefore, ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you' (Acts 17:23).

It is in much the same spirit that John, at Ephesus, surrounded by Greek and Alexandrian philosophies, opens his Gospel with the title *Logos*. There is no introduction to the title, no leading up to it, but

simply a statement with which he expected most of his hearers to be in agreement. After the prologue of 1:1-18, the title *Logos* is never again used of Christ, the whole object of the Gospel being to prove that the Messiah, the Son of God, fulfils all and more than all that the ancient philosophers, or the writers of the Hebrew Wisdom literature, ever conceived.

We referred above to Paul's attitude at Athens, which is actually recorded, as an illustration of what was probably John's attitude at Ephesus, which is left to be inferred. Let us now acquaint ourselves a little further with the position at Athens. The philosopher Chrysiphus had said that God pervades all nature and that He has many names to match His operations.

'They all call him *Dia*, "through" whom are all things, and they call him *Zeus*, inasmuch as he is the cause of "life"' (Diog. Laert vii. 147).

According to Chrysiphus, Zeus is the *Logos* that regulates (*dioikeo*) all things, and is the soul of the world.

On another occasion, when Paul stood before a group of Pharisees and Sadducees, we find that he seized the opportunity presented by their mutual antagonism to gain the ear of the Pharisees in the matter of the resurrection. So here, at Athens, before the Stoics and Epicureans, he seizes upon their distinctive tenets and shows how they meet in the person of Christ. Knowing the sayings that were current among them, he refers to the fact that 'we are also His offspring', and also that He is not 'like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device'. He teaches the Divine *transcendence* (the Epicurean position): 'Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though He needeth anything', but he also teaches the Divine *immanence* (the Stoic position) by adding: 'If haply they should feel after Him ... for in Him we live, and move, and have our being'. And then, when both parties begin to realize that Paul has taken hold of both their conflicting positions, he brings these opposite views into synthesis by focussing their attention upon the 'Man' that has been ordained (Acts 17:31).

Paul does not necessarily endorse the somewhat popular etymology of Chrysiphus. *Dia* and *Dion* need not necessarily be derived from *dia* 'through', and there are other possible origins of Zeus besides *zoe* 'life'; nevertheless the idea was sufficient for the apostle to use as a starting-point from which to direct the attention of his hearers to the

Lord God, the true Source of life, through Whom all else must be derived. And so John, surrounded at Ephesus with a blend of Greek and Philonic philosophy and the Hebrew Apocryphal Wisdom, takes up the central theme of this philosophy, the *Logos*, and stripping it of its heathen and Hebrew accretions and adding to it that which revelation alone could give, leads his readers to see that the elusive and abstract *Logos* of human philosophy found its full and perfect significance in the Living Person of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. No explanation of John 1:1 can compare with that written by the same writer in his first epistle:

‘That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us); that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full’ (1 John 1:1-4).

Just as the first eighteen verses of John form a sort of prologue to the Gospel, so the first four verses here form a prologue to the epistle. In both we observe, as Westcott notes, a similar sequence of thought:

‘In each, the main subject is described first (John 1:1-5; 1 John 1:1).

Then the historical manifestation of it (John 1:6-13; 1 John 1:2).

Then its personal apprehension (John 1:14-18; 1 John 1:3)’.

Each book, however, has its own distinctive point of view. The Gospel is concerned with demonstrating that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, so that, believing this, life may come through His name. The epistle, on the other hand, takes up the practical working out of this truth.

The references to the *Logos* in John’s writings are as follows:

- | | | |
|---|---------------|--|
| A | John 1:1-5. | In the beginning. With God (<i>pros</i>). |
| B | John 1:14. | Made flesh. The Lamb (in context). |
| A | 1 John 1:1-4. | From the beginning. With the Father (<i>pros</i>). |

B Rev. 19:13. Coming in flesh (1 John 4:3; 2 John 7).
The Lamb.

Outside the writings of John there is no specific reference to the *Logos* (unless Heb. 4:12,13 be one), but if the word itself is not used by Paul, the doctrine underlying it is most gloriously present in his epistles. He speaks of the 'Image of the invisible God' (Col. 1:15, see also 2Cor. 4:4), which to all intents and purposes corresponds to the *Logos* of John 1:1-5. He speaks also of 'the express Image of His Person' (Heb. 1:3), which is even closer to the meaning of the *Logos*. These passages will come up for more careful examination later. For the moment, we must continue our quest for the doctrine of the *Logos*, as underlying 1:1-5. First of all, we must refer to the passage in Proverbs 8:22-31, which anticipates the fuller revelation of John 1:1-5 :

'The LORD possessed me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: while as yet He had not made the earth nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When He prepared the heavens, I was there; when He set a compass upon the face of the depth: when He established the clouds above: when He strengthened the fountains of the deep: when He gave to the sea His decree, that the waters should not pass His commandment: when He appointed the foundations of the earth: then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him: and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him; rejoicing in the habitable part of His earth; and my delights were with the sons of men' (Prov. 8:22-31).

The apocryphal writings must also be considered, for, while they are not canonical scriptures and are not looked upon as inspired and authoritative, the thoughts they express and the words they employ hold an important place in the history of doctrine.

In Ecclesiasticus 24 Wisdom follows the same line of thought as that given in Proverbs 8. Wisdom is represented as seeking rest, and the Creator causes Wisdom's tabernacle to rest in Jacob. When one reads in John 1:14 that the Word was made flesh and 'tabernacled' among us, one feels that there is at least a passing glance at this ancient

book of Wisdom. John, however, shows that the fond hope of Ecclesiasticus that Wisdom should find a home among Israel was not immediately realized, for 'He came unto His own, and His own received Him not'.

The following is a quotation from The Wisdom of Solomon - a passage which it is difficult to read without thinking of John 1 and Hebrews 1:

'For she is the breath of the power of God, and a pure effluence from the Almighty ... For she is the brightness of the everlasting light, the unspotted mirror of the power of God, and the image of His goodness' (Wisdom of Solomon, 7).

There is something comparable, also, between The Wisdom of Solomon 18:15 and Revelation 19:

'Thine Almighty Word leaped down from heaven out of Thy royal throne, as a fierce man of war into the midst of a land of destruction'.

While the Targums or Aramaic paraphrases of the Old Testament were not committed to writing until after the Christian era, they embody teaching that was current from a much earlier period, and in these Targums we frequently meet the word *Memra*, 'The Word'. For example, in the Targum of Onkelos on Genesis 3:8, Adam and Eve are said to have heard the voice of *the Word* of the Lord walking in the garden. And in Deuteronomy 5:5, the Targum reads:

'I stood between the Word (*Memra*) of the Lord and you, to announce to you at that time the word (*pithgama*) of the Lord'.

It will be seen that the Targum differentiates here between 'the Word' (*Memra*), and the spoken word. It is 'the Word' (the *Memra*) that creates, preserves and redeems. The Targums, however, fall short of the complete truth, for they never seem to have identified the *Memra* with the Messiah. It is this identification that is the peculiar office of the Gospel according to John.

Our account of Hebrew thought as to the *Logos* would be incomplete without a reference to the Apocalyptic Book of Enoch, of which one authority has said: 'The influence of Enoch in the New Testament has been greater than that of all the other apocryphal and pseudepigraphal books taken together'. This does not mean that John

borrowed from the Book of Enoch, but it is obvious that the inspired writers of Scripture must have used words that were intelligible to their readers, and could not have ignored the doctrines that were believed and taught all around them.

The Book of Enoch is a compilation whose date is regarded by authorities as between 170 and 64 B.C. In the section known as the Similitudes we find the following passage, which is in some respects parallel with John's Prologue and his insistence upon the ascension:

'Wisdom came to make her dwelling among the children of men, and found no dwelling-place; thus Wisdom returned, and took her seat among the angels'.

The philosophy of the Greeks, and particularly that of Heraclitus and Plato, must never be forgotten in considering the meaning of the *Logos*. This does not imply that we should import the speculations of men into the revelation of God, but simply that we should recognise that even inspired truth must use words of common meaning, and that John's immediate readers would be fully cognisant of the philosophic use of this word.

Speaking of Heraclitus, Dr. Drummond writes:

'He clearly perceived that the universe was one, and that all its multifarious changes were governed by a rational and unalterable law. To this law he gave the very name which we translate "Word" in the Gospel'.

To Heraclitus, however, the *Logos* was not a person, but much like the scientists' 'laws of nature'.

Plato's views on the *Logos* are set forth in the *Timaeus*:

'The world is represented as "a living and rational organism", the "only begotten" (*monogenes*) Son of God, itself a god and the express image (*eikon*) of the supreme God' (J. S. Johnston).

What Plato ascribed to the creation itself, revelation ascribes to the Person of the Son of God. The groping of unaided reason stumbled upon the terms '*logos*', and 'only begotten', and 'image', but could not relate them one to another, or to the truth.

Plato speaks of ideas as 'vowels', which, chain-like, pervade all things (Soph. 253) - a suggestion which at once makes us think of Him

Who is the Alpha and the Omega, the glorious 'chain-like' link in the purpose of the ages.

We must now pass on to Philo, a Jew of Alexandria, who attempted to bridge the gulf between the revelation of God as given in the Hebrew Scriptures and the demands of Philosophy. Two contrary views were held as to the nature of God: one view being that He was transcendent, and the other that He was immanent. The first view removed God so far from creation and human affairs, as to reduce Him to an abstraction, while the second identified Him with creation so closely that it became virtually Pantheism. The transcendent God was 'unknowable and unthinkable'. He had no qualities, and no attributes. His only name was 'I am that I am'.

With these thoughts in mind, let us turn once more to the Gospel of John. Here, too, we find One Who could say: 'Before Abraham was, I AM' (8:58), but we also read that He said, 'I am the bread *of life*', and 'I am the light *of the world*'. The transcendent One was also immanent. Greek philosophy felt the need for the mediating *Logos*, but the *Logos* was regarded as being *neither God nor man*. The Christian revelation also stresses the need for the mediating *Logos*, but reveals the glorious fact that He is *both God and Man*. In other words, the passage in 1:14: 'The Word became flesh and dwelt among us', together with its complement in 11:25, 'I am the resurrection, and the life', contain the truth which Plato and Philo sought, but sought in vain. When we consider these earnest seekers after the truth and compare their position with our own, how grateful we should be for the light vouchsafed to us in this day of grace.

John reveals that God is transcendent in His nature (1:18), but that in the *Logos* He is also immanent throughout the extent of His creation. Creation, revelation, incarnation, redemption, ascension are all possible and necessary, if the *Logos* of John be true.

The Rabbinical School at Alexandria, where Philo lived, urged the transcendental aspect of the nature of God to its extreme, setting its face against all forms of anthropomorphism. Philo, for instance, says that, to accept in their literal sense the words 'It repented God that He had made man', is to be guilty of an impiety greater than that of any that was drowned in the flood. For Philo, God was an abstraction, and His nature only capable of being shadowed forth by negatives. We can only know what He *is not*.

How comforting to turn from such a view for a moment to the reassuring words of 14:9, 'He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father', even though, at the same time, we must not forget the utter transcendentalism of such passages as 5:37: 'Ye have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His shape'. As we realize the immensity of the gulf that yawned between the far-off Platonist God, and the things of time and sense, we may perhaps better understand why the Lord uses the figure of Jacob's ladder as representing Himself in 1:51.

Philo uses the following names and titles in his description of the *Logos*:

The 'Son of God'; the 'First-born Son' (*protogonos*, i. 414); the 'Image of God' (*eikon Theo*, i. 6); 'God' (i. 655 *de Somnus Theos*); 'Second God' (*ho deuterios Theos*, Fragments ii. 625); 'archetypal man' (*ho kat' eikona anthropos*, i. 427). When one reads and listens to many Christians today as they speak of the Lord Jesus Christ, one wonders whether they have got any further than Philo's 'Second God'!

Philo speaks of the 'seamless robe', when referring to the indissoluble texture of the universe, and it is surely no accident that this apparently irrelevant detail is incorporated in 19:23, for we must constantly bear in mind that the doctrine of the prologue is elaborated and illustrated throughout the record of the Gospel. Philo refers to the Divine Word as flowing like a river, which may be compared with John's reference to the living water. He also speaks of the *Logos* as the 'Heavenly Bread,' which is parallel with the Gospel reference to Christ as the Bread that came down from heaven.

In his Confessions (vii. ix.), Augustine has a fine comment on the essential difference between philosophy and revelation:

'Thou procurest for me by means of one puffed up with most unnatural pride, certain books of the Platonists, translated from Greek into Latin. And therein I read, not indeed in the very words, but to the very same purpose, enforced by many and diverse reasons, that, 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 nothing made: that which was made by Him is life, and the life was the light of men, and the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not ... BUT THAT HE CAME UNTO HIS OWN ... but as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the

sons of God, as many as believed in His name; *this I read not*. Again, I read there (i.e. in the writings of the philosophers) that God the Word was born, not of flesh, nor of blood, nor of the will of man, nor of the will of the flesh, but of God. BUT THAT THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH, and dwelt among us, *I read not there*'.

Augustine puts his finger on the crux of the matter. Human reason could go so far as to see the necessity for the *Logos* - for all God's ways are wrought with reason - but it could never penetrate the mystery of godliness and discover that 'God was manifest in the flesh'. The glorious fact that 'God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself' was the secret of the God of Love, and it was this secret that was John's message, both in Gospel and Epistle.

The Structure of the Gospel

The Key of the Eight Signs

So far we have merely cleared the way for the blessed task which now lies before us: an examination of the teaching of this fourth record of the earthly life and ministry of the Son of God. Our first duty is to see the book as a whole, in order to discover its theme and the way in which that theme is elaborated, illustrated and proved. At the very beginning of this Gospel we are at once struck by its unique point of view. Let us compare the way in which it opens with that of the other Gospels.

MATTHEW. This gospel opens with the words: 'The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham' (1:1).

MARK. The writer omits all reference to genealogy, and opens with the words: 'The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God' (1:1).

LUKE. Luke goes back before the advent of Christ, to the birth of the forerunner, John the Baptist. He begins with an explanatory prologue, to Theophilus, and opens his Gospel with the words: 'There was in the days of Herod, the King of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia' (1:5).

JOHN. John gives no genealogy, as Matthew does; he goes back to an earlier beginning than that referred to by Mark; and he speaks of a time and a sphere in which the Lord could have had no forerunner. He begins with the words: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God' (1:1).

The first eighteen verses of this Gospel constitute a marvellous and awe-inspiring prologue to the rest of the book. The prologue enunciates the theme, and the rest of the Gospel elaborates it and demonstrates its truth. The central and largest section of the Gospel is a golden chain of eight links, the eight 'signs' selected by John about which the whole Gospel narrative is woven. On either side of these eight 'signs' we have a reference to specially prepared witnesses. The simplest possible analysis, therefore, of the Gospel according to John is as follows:

- A 1:1-18. The PROLOGUE. The theme enunciated.
A 1:19 to 21:25. The GOSPEL. The theme elaborated.

Taking the second member A, we can set it out in its simplest form as follows:

- B 1:19-51. WITNESSES.
C 2:1 to 21:14. SIGNS.
B 21:15-25. WITNESSES.

This simple structure naturally contains a wealth of detail and its gradual unfolding will, we trust, be a joy and rejoicing of heart, as we go forward in this labour of love. Each of the members denominated 'Witnesses' may be subdivided as follows:

- B 1:19-51. WITNESSES.
a 1:19-34. The witness of John the Baptist. 'This is the record ... I saw and bare record'.
b 1:35-51. Andrew, Simon the son of Jona, Philip,

Nathanael. 'Follow Me.'

This section dealing with witness is paralleled at the close in inverse order as follows:

B 21:15-25. WITNESSES.

b 21:15-23. Simon Peter, Son of Jonas, John. 'Follow Me'.

a 21:24,25. The witness of John. 'We know that his testimony is true'.

The bulk of the Gospel lies between these two outposts, and, as we have said above, is interwoven with the eight distinctive 'signs'. No good purpose will be served by setting out in full detail this great section - the details will unfold themselves before our eyes as our studies proceed - but in order to make this analytical survey in a measure complete, we must show how this central section is arranged.

The Eight Signs (2:1 to 21:14)

FIRST SIGN. MARRIAGE AT CANA (2:1-11).

'My meat ... to finish His work' (*ergon*).

'Now we believe' (*pisteuo*) (2:13 to 4:42).

SECOND SIGN. NOBLEMAN'S SON. 'Except ye see signs' (4:43-52).

'He believed' (*pisteuo*) (4:53,54).

THIRD SIGN. IMPOTENT MAN (5:1-15).

'My Father worketh ... and I work' (*ergon*).

'Believe on Him that sent Me' (*pisteuo*) (5:16-47).

FOURTH AND FIFTH SIGNS. 5,000 FED. WALKING ON SEA (6:1-25).

'This is the work (*ergon*) of God that ye believe (*pisteuo*) ... the works of your father' (6 to 8).

SIXTH SIGN. MAN BORN BLIND (9:1-41).

'The works (*ergon*) ... in My Father's name bear witness'.

'Ye believed not' (*pisteuo*) (10:1-42).

SEVENTH SIGN. SISTERS' BROTHER RAISED (11:1-46).

'I have finished the work' (*ergon*).

'That the world may believe' (*pisteuo*) (11:47 to 20:31).

EIGHTH SIGN. DRAUGHT OF FISHES (21:1-14).

The eight 'signs' alternate with six intervening sections, each of which is characterized by a double reference to 'works' and 'belief', except in the case of the healing of the nobleman's son, where 'works' are not mentioned. The eight signs are patently in correspondence, but it will be useful to make sure that all see that the six intervening sections are also carefully arranged and in perfect balance. The importance of this may not at the moment be obvious, but we trust that, by the time we have finished our study, the working out of the revelation given in the prologue will be evident. The following is the structure of the intervening links:

- A 2:13 to 4:42. My meat is ... to finish His work.
 B 4:53,54. He believed.
 C 5:16-47. My Father worketh ... and I work.
 C 6:26 to 8:59. This is the work of God ... the works of your father.
 B 10:1-42. The works ... in My Father's name bear witness.
 A 11:47 to 20:31. I have finished the work.

This important inter-relation gives us the Lord's own emphasis, and the more of this we can see, the less we need the help of man. Some may have already observed that the structure given of John's Gospel is entirely different from any hitherto published. It would have been easy to have adopted the structure already set out in *The Companion Bible*, and hours of labour would have been saved, but this would not have been living up to the title of *The Berean Expositor*. We could not ignore John's own significant statement in chapter 20, and a new structure was therefore necessary.

‘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’ (30,31).

Any structure that ignores this testimony must be faulty, and consequently misleading. We were therefore obliged to start afresh, and the result we commend to the discriminating reader.

CHAPTER 2

The Prologue in Outline (1:1-18)

In reading the fourth Gospel, most of us find that it is the prologue that contains the more difficult expressions, while in the body of the Gospel itself we feel on more familiar ground. It is probable, however, that those who were primarily in the apostle's mind when he wrote this record, would find the reverse to be true. As they began to read about the *Logos*, at the beginning of the Gospel, they would be on familiar ground, but they would feel that they were entering quite new territory as they followed the earthly footsteps of Him Who was the *Logos* 'made flesh'. We have thought so frequently of the Hebrew people as the channel of Divine revelation and as the supreme example of the failure of the creature to *attain unto righteousness* that we have tended to forget the Greek nation, as the example of the failure of human reason to *attain unto wisdom*. We are expressly told that the Jew sought after righteousness but did not attain it, because he sought it by law and not by faith (Rom. 9:31,32; 10:3), and in 1Corinthians we read:

'The Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom' (1:22).

Just as 'Christ' was the true Righteousness of the Jew, so He was equally the true Wisdom of the Greek.

'But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption' (1 Cor. 1:30).

In the first three Gospels the Jew is distinctly prominent, and there are abundant references to the Old Covenant Scriptures. Both are conspicuous, too, in the body of the Gospel of John - for it is a faithful record of the Lord's deeds and words in Jerusalem, Judaea and Samaria - but in the prologue the Greek point of view is prominent, and the problem of the Greeks is shown to be solved in the person and work of the Son of God.

It is interesting to notice that this Gospel is the only one that uses the word *Hellen*, 'Greeks'. With the coming of the 'Greeks' and their request: 'Sir, we would see Jesus' (12:20,21), the Saviour says *for the first time*: 'The hour is come, that the Son of Man should be glorified' (12:23). To his mother at the marriage feast He had said: 'Mine hour

is not yet come' (2:4). To the Samaritan woman He says: 'The hour cometh' (4:21,23). In chapter 5 He says: 'The hour is coming, (and now is), when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God' (5:25). In 7:30 and 8:20, we read that 'His hour was not yet come'. And then in the twelfth chapter, *with the quest of the Greeks*, we reach the turning-point of the Gospel: 'The hour is come, that the Son of Man should be glorified'. It is clear, therefore, that the Greek point of view cannot be ignored without serious loss.

As we are not 'Greeks', and have not been brought up in an atmosphere of philosophic discussion, we shall have to pause at various points, as we go through the prologue, and acquaint ourselves with some of the ideas that John seems to have had vividly in mind as he wrote. We all know something of what is intended by the title 'The Word', but how many of us know anything of the history of the quest for the *Logos*?

Coming now to the structure of these first eighteen verses, it is at once clear that verses 1 and 18 are in correspondence.

- a** In the beginning was the WORD.
- b** The Word was WITH God.
- c** The Word was GOD.
- c** God only begotten.
- b** In the BOSOM of the FATHER.
- a** He hath DECLARED Him.

Here the 'Word' is echoed by 'declared', and the term 'with God' finds its echo in 'in the bosom of the Father'. The reading 'God only begotten' echoes the statement that the 'Word was God'. We defer the proofs for this reading until later. The structure of the complete section is as follows:

- A 1:1. **a** THE WORD. In the beginning.
- b** WITH. The Word was with God.
- c** GOD. The Word was God.
- B 2. The same was in the beginning with God.
- C 3. All things were made by Him (*egeneto dia*).
- D 4,5. In Him light and life (*en*).
- E 6-8. JOHN. Witness (*marturia*).

- F 9. True light cometh into the world
(*erchomenon*).
- G 10,11. Received not (*paralambano*).
- G 12,13. Received (*lambano*).
- F 14. The Word made flesh dwelt among us
(*eskenosen*).
- E 15. JOHN. Witness (*martureo*).
- D 16. Out of His fulness (*ek*).
- C 17. Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ (*egeneto dia*).
- B 18. No man hath seen God at any time.
- A 18. *c* GOD. God only begotten (*The Word was God*).
- b* BOSOM. The bosom of the Father (*With God*).
- a* DECLARED. He hath declared Him (*The Word*).

The reader is asked to note the correspondences in this outline. We have already drawn attention to the balancing members at the beginning and end. Passing to verse 3, we see that it corresponds with verse 17, the two passages revealing Christ as Creator both in nature and in the realm of grace. The words *egeneto dia*, 'came to be through', are used in each case. In the members marked *EE* we have a double reference to the witness of John the Baptist, while *erchomen*, 'coming', verse 9, is echoed by *eskenosen*, 'dwell' or 'tabernacle', in verse 14. The central passages revolve around the thought of reception.

Having sketched out the conditions under which John wrote his Gospel, and having given in outline the structure of the prologue and of the Gospel as a whole, we are now ready to undertake the joyful task of opening up some of the treasures of wisdom, and grace, and glory, that are to be found in what is perhaps the last book in the Holy Scriptures.

'In the Beginning was the Word' (1:1)

Within the ambit of human experience, two conditions are inseparable from existence and action - the conditions of time and space. It is true that in a certain sense 'thought' is free from the conditions of space, for thought cannot be regarded as occupying so many cubic inches, but, on the other hand, there can be no thought

without a thinker and, speaking humanly, the living personality of the thinker must conform to all the conditions of space and time. So that we come back to the fundamental fact, that there must be a place *where*, and a time *when*, for all human experience. With the first verse before us we are thinking particularly of the limitations of time, and the reader will remember that the Preacher, who examined all things that are done 'under the sun', found that there was a time and a season for every purpose (Eccles. 3). The synoptic Gospels, and the narrative sections of this Gospel are no exceptions to this rule. The earthly life of the Son of God was as much conditioned by time and space as that of the sons of men.

'Now when Jesus was born *in* Bethlehem of Judaea *in* the days of Herod the King' (Matt. 2:1).

Here we have the two essential conditions: the place, 'in Bethlehem', and the time, 'in the days of Herod'. We also read that Herod inquired 'where' Christ should be born, and at 'what time' the star appeared. We also discover that, from the beginning of His ministry, the Lord was conscious of a set time in which His work was to be accomplished, and a set hour in which that work should reach its crisis.

When we turn to the opening words of the Gospel we are immediately confronted with a state of being that is not conditioned in the same way as our own. We do not read about the beginning of any particular event or action which could be used as a sort of date line. There is no possibility of printing a date in the margin here, for all is timeless. We are simply told that 'in the beginning', however far back that may be, the Word already 'was'. Nothing is said about activity; it is just sheer existence. The passage is quite different from Genesis 1:1, where we read that 'in the beginning God *created*'. Here, in John, it is just pure unconditioned existence that confronts us, and if we are honest we shall say, concerning this sphere of being, that we can know nothing apart from what we are told. To import into this first verse arguments drawn from our own experience would be simply irrelevant. Our difficulty in understanding the statement that the Word was 'with God', and also that the Word was 'God' is inevitable with our present human limitations. We cannot make the unconditioned being of God conform to the limitations of time and space.

‘In the beginning was the Word’ (*En arche en ho logos*). Every student of the Greek New Testament can call to mind the opening sentences of this Gospel. They represent, so far as mere words are concerned, perhaps the acme of simplicity. But what a difference there can be between ‘form’ (the actual words used) and ‘content’ (the truth that those words are designed to teach), for who among us can ever hope to plumb the depths or scale the heights of such a revelation? Nevertheless, just as one may be impressed with the serene majesty of the Jungfrau, without ever having set foot upon its frozen slopes, so we may contemplate the majesty of this first verse without pretending that such infinitude has been comprehended. We can believe what God has told us, even though the subject matter transcends our experience.

En arche. - First of all, let us note the four occurrences of this phrase in the New Testament.

‘In the beginning was the Word’ (1:1).

‘The same was in the beginning with God’ (1:2).

‘And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning’ (Acts 11:15).

‘Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel ... no church communicated with me ... but ye only’ (Phil. 4:15).

It will be seen that in each case something must be understood, if we are to grasp the writer’s full meaning. For example, in Acts 11:15 the reference is to the beginning of the apostle’s ministry, and looks back to Acts 2:4. In Philippians 4:15 the apostle supplies the necessary explanation, which we purposely omitted in the quotation above, for, immediately after the words ‘in the beginning of the gospel’, he adds ‘when I departed from Macedonia’. It would appear then, that after each occurrence of the phrase ‘in the beginning’ we must add an explanatory term commencing with the word ‘when’ - and we must now consider the question of what should be added to this first verse.

Bloomfield says ‘at *en arche*, understand *ton panton* ("of all things") from the subsequent context at verse 3, *panta egeneto* ("all things were made by Him")’. However, if we pay regard to Colossians 1:16-18, we shall remember that there, where Christ is described as the Creator of all things visible and invisible, He is said to be ‘before all things’, both as to time and pre-eminence. *The Companion Bible*

supplies the words 'of the ages' and refers to Hebrews 1:2 and 11:3, where the ages are said to be prepared by Him.

There is an obvious parallel between the first verse of Genesis and that of John but there is also an important distinction to be observed. In Genesis it is an act done, whereas in John it is a Being existing. Genesis speaks of the first moment of time, while John goes back to a period before the ages. In the seventeenth chapter we have two references to this period 'before the age times'.

'And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was' (17:5).

We can therefore read 'In the beginning (before the world was) was the Word'. The second passage in the seventeenth chapter reads: 'Thou lovest Me before the foundation (overthrow, *katabole*) of the world' (17:24). This refers to a period before Genesis 1:2, and so is not parallel with the first verse of John. The relation seems therefore to be:

Primarily, originally, before the ages, before the world was, was the Word (John).

'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth' (Gen.).

Subsequent revelation teaches us that He Who is called *Elohim* or God in Genesis is called *Ho Logos* or God in John, and all things without exception were made by Him.

It is a mistake to regard 'Wisdom' in Proverbs 8, and the *Logos* in John as though they were identical. In John the *Logos* is *the Creator*, whereas in Proverbs, the Creator is said to have *possessed* wisdom 'in the beginning of His way'. So long as we remember this important difference Proverbs 8:22-36 will reveal a great deal as to the character of the Creator, the *Logos*, Who by His wisdom made all things.

When one speaks in one's mother-tongue, there are always present in the back of the mind, certain other meanings besides the one primarily intended. For example, when we use the words 'right' and 'righteousness,' there is at the back of the mind the idea of a 'right' line or 'plumb' line, something absolute, incapable of deflection. In the same way, when we use the word 'wrong' we have a dim consciousness of the idea of 'wringing' or 'twisting' away from the 'right'. Similarly a Greek, or anyone thoroughly acquainted with the

Greek language, could not use the word *arche*, in the sense of 'beginning', without having at the back of his mind the various shades of meaning that elsewhere attach to it. It will therefore be of service to the reader if he becomes acquainted with the various meanings of *arche* in the New Testament:

A beginning, in order of time, as in John 1:1.

A first or original state 'the angels which kept not their first estate' (Jude 6).

Authority, whether human or angelic.

Human: 'Be subject to principalities' (Tit. 3:1).

Angelic: 'Far above all principality' (Eph. 1:21).

The 'Chief', 'Head' or 'Beginning' as title of Christ.

'These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the Beginning of the creation of God' (Rev. 3:14).

'Behold, I make all things new ... I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End' (Rev. 21:5,6).

In combination with other words, we find the following:

Arhegos. Leader, Captain, Author (Heb. 2:10; 12:2).

Archiereus. High Priest (Heb. 2:17).

Architekton. Architect (1 Cor. 3:10).

Christ's title as 'the Beginning of the creation of God' is suggestive of great depths. There is a Rabbinical note to the first verse of Genesis in which the words 'In the beginning' (*B'reshith*) are taken to refer to the Messiah, for *rosh* means 'head' as well as 'beginning' (compare the Greek equivalent *arche*, meaning 'chief' as well as 'beginning'). The *Logos* created all things 'in the beginning' and He Himself is 'the Beginning of the creation of God'.

Returning to John's Gospel we notice how this beginning of all things is related to Him Who is the Word. 'In the beginning WAS the Word'. We draw particular attention here to the word 'was', which is part of the verb *eimi*, 'to be'. In contrast to this we read in the third verse that 'all things *were made* by Him', the verb being *egeneto*, 'to come into being'. We must therefore repudiate the slightest suggestion that John tells us that the Word *came into being* in the beginning. We

are simply told that He 'was' in the beginning. We have here the basis of the stupendous claim made by the Lord in John 8:58, 'Before Abraham was (*genesthai*, "came into being") I AM (*Ego eimi*)'. As 'the Word' He is the 'I AM' absolute and transcendent. As the Word made flesh, He can say, 'I am *the Bread of life*', 'I am *the good Shepherd*'. In all such cases, the absolute 'I AM' has become relative and immanent.

If we endeavour to think of God *as He is*, we are attempting the impossible. 'No man hath seen God *at any time*'. Both John and Paul reveal the fact that God in His essence is 'invisible'; He is 'spirit' and no man has seen His 'shape' or heard His 'voice'. Yet this same God is revealed as essentially 'love' and we know that He 'created' heaven and earth and finally, man in His Own image. It is clear that He purposed to reveal Himself and, being love, He must inevitably reveal this love in revealing Himself. He therefore takes a step which involves self-limitation. He, the invisible One, becomes visible; so that Paul can speak of the 'Image of the Invisible God'. He Whose voice no man has ever heard, becomes audible; and we further read that He Who cannot be approached (1 Tim. 6:16) has been 'handled' by men and women like ourselves (1 John 1:1,2).

The name whereby John is inspired to set forth this glorious self-limitation and mediation of the Most High is that of the *Logos*, or 'the Word'. In writing to the Philippians Paul uses the word *morphe*, 'form'; to the Colossians he uses *eikon*, 'image'; to the Hebrews, *charakter*, 'express image'; while in 1 Timothy 3:16, at the centre of an epistle which begins and ends with the thought of the invisibility of God (1 Tim. 1:17 and 6:16), he speaks of the Mystery of Godliness; 'God was manifest in the flesh'. In all these cases we must be most careful not to use any of these revealed titles out of their context. Each has its own setting, and taken together they provide a wonderfully complete presentation of the truth. The examination of these various passages cannot, however, be undertaken until we have first examined with some care the opening section of John's prologue (1-5).

We have already given some indication of the growing conception of the *Logos* in the minds of thinking men from early days. Unaided human reason discovered the need for the *Logos*, but was entirely unable to supply the need. The *Logos* was a felt necessity, but beyond the wit or power of man to provide. The words of Professor Burton on this point are suggestive:

‘St. John was as far as possible from being the first to apply the term *Logos* to Christ. I suppose him to have found it so universally applied, that he did not attempt to stay the current of popular language, but only kept it to its proper channel, and guarded it from extraneous corruption’ (‘Inquiries’, p. 220).

Our English translation of *Logos* as ‘the Word’ has come to us through the Latin. In early times two words were used by the Latin translators, *Sermo* and *Verbum*, but as time went on *Sermo* was dropped and *Verbum* universally adopted. Tertullian (*circ.*, A.D. 160-220), while giving us both Latin words as a translation of *Logos*, preferred himself the word *Ratio*.

‘*Logos* means the "word", not however in a grammatical sense, for which either *rhema*, *noema*, or *epos* is used, but always like *vox*, of the *living spoken word*, not in its outward form, but with reference to the thought connected with the form’ (Passow).

The *Logos* of 1:1 denotes Christ as He Who represents, or in Whom had been hidden from eternity, and especially from the beginning of the world, what God had to say to man (see Cremer). Just as Christ had to say to His disciples, ‘I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now’ (16:12), so God has had to speak to man in successive stages. In his original state of innocency, man walked and talked with God (Gen. 3:8), but subsequent to his expulsion from Eden, he walked and talked with God to a less and less degree. To the nations at large, the only voice that was heard was the voice of creation (Rom. 1:19,20, Acts 14:17; Psa. 19:1-4). Fallen man, even though specially chosen, as were the people of Israel, could not bear to hear the immediate word of God, and so we read:

‘And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die’ (Exod. 20:19).

And then at length we have the coming of Christ Himself, and we read:

‘God, Who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken to us by His Son’ (Heb. 1:1,2).

But even though the time had come for ‘the Word’ to appear among men, and do what neither the Law nor the Prophets could

accomplish, even then He could not reveal all, until the time came for the advent of the Spirit of truth - Who, not 'speaking from Himself', would 'take of the things that are Mine, and show them unto you'.

We find in the New Testament a very close parallel between the living *Logos*, and the written *Logos*. A lengthy list could be compiled, but the following will be sufficient to illustrate our meaning:

<i>The Living Word</i>	<i>The Written Word</i>
THE TRUTH (14:6).	THE TRUTH (17:17).
THE LIFE (11:25).	THE LIFE (6:63).
THE JUDGE (5:26,27).	THE JUDGE (12:48).
SANCTIFIER (17:19)	SANCTIFIED (17:17)

These few parallels taken from John's Gospel could be supplemented from practically every book in the New Testament.

Two words that attach to the Greek word *Logos* which must not be missed, are indicated by the translations 'account' and 'reason':

'I desire fruit that may abound to your *account*' (*logos*) (Phil. 4:17).

'Be ready always to give an answer (*apologia*) to every man that asketh you a *reason* (*logos*) of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear' (1 Pet. 3:15).

Christ the *Logos*, speaks to man, that man may know the thoughts of God, Who in His essence is beyond human comprehension. In Christ the *Logos*, we have God's reason for all that He has planned and made, the *logical account* of the creation and the purpose of the ages. This we shall see more fully when we come to verse 18, and its echo in Colossians 2:2,3.

Webster and Wilkinson's Greek Testament note at this point is worth recording:

'The indecision, instability and presumption of German Rationalists, in their criticism on this term, are, whether intentionally or not, admirably satirized by Goethe, when he makes Faust translate it first "the Word", then "the thought", then "the power", and lastly by *the Spirit's help*, "the deed"'. .

We have now learned that before all things and before all time, there 'was' in timeless existence, the Word, the Reason, the Archetype, the Mediator, the Revealer. The world is the destined sphere, and man the destined recipient of the priceless revelation of God, not only as almighty and invisible, but, through the Word become flesh, as the God Who is love, and the God Who is also Father.

'In the beginning *was the Word*'.

'He hath *declared Him*'.

The Word was 'with' God (1:1)

We have already noticed that the truth contained in the opening sentence of this Gospel is beyond anything of which we can have direct experience. 'In the beginning was the Word' is a statement simply expressed, and easy to believe, but it speaks of a condition of being entirely removed from our own experience. And what is true of the opening sentence is also true of each successive link in the chain of revelation that covers the first five verses. All is clear to faith so long as we do not seek to go beyond our limitations, but as soon as we endeavour to measure infinity with the yardstick of the finite we must inevitably flounder in confusion. The next link in the chain that is presented to us is the statement:

'And the Word was with God'.

The Greek language is rich in particles, and in the New Testament there are no less than fourteen different Greek prepositions that are translated 'with'. If John had been conversant by personal experience with the subject of his opening verse, he would have been obliged to exercise the most scrupulous care in determining which would express just the precise shade of meaning that suited the case; but when we realize that even the beloved disciple, who had leaned on the Lord's bosom at the last supper, had no possible personal and experimental acquaintance with the conditions that obtained 'in the beginning', we can readily see that nothing but the superintending inspiration of God could have infallibly selected that one preposition out of the fourteen available, which would express the complete truth. In what sense then, was the *Logos* 'with' God? Let us take first the preposition *meta*. This is the word used by Nicodemus:

‘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’ (3:2).

God was ‘with’ the Lord Jesus Christ in the sense of *meta*, but that is not the meaning here, for John does not use this word. *Meta* does not imply so close and intimate a fellowship as some other prepositions which we are to examine. Its root meaning is ‘after’, as in the word ‘Metaphysics’, the treatise written by Aristotle ‘after’ the one on Physics. It denotes association, however, for one thing could not come after another unless it were joined in some sort of sequence.

Next let us take the preposition *sun*. Was the *Logos* ‘with’ God in the sense that *sun* would indicate? *Sun* (*syn*, *sym*) indicates a closer association than is implied by *meta*, and is used largely by the apostle Paul in speaking of the fellowship that exists between the members of the One Body and Christ, the Head. It only occurs three times in this Gospel (12:2; 18:1 and 21:3) and is not used at all in John’s epistles or the Apocalypse. Since *sun* is not used here, we conclude that the Word is not there represented as being merely ‘in fellowship’ with God.

Another possible preposition could have been *para*. Was the *Logos* ‘with’ God in the sense that *para* would indicate? This word means ‘beside’ as in ‘parallel’, and occurs in 16:27, ‘I came out from the Father’- i.e. ‘from beside the Father’. *Para* can therefore be used, just as *meta* can, to indicate certain relationships between the Father and the Son, but neither *meta* nor *para* is used.

We will not go on to deal with the remaining possible prepositions, but come at once to the positive teaching of the passage. The word actually used by John is the preposition *pros*. The *Logos*, as revealed by John was not simply ‘with God’ in the sense of being coexistent, *einai meta* (‘He that was with thee beyond Jordan’ 3:26); or united by things held in common, *einai sun* (‘This man was also with Him’, Luke 22:56); or in connection with local relations, *einai para* (‘The glory which I had with Thee before the world was’, John 17:5); but in a sense different from any of these, that could only be expressed by the preposition *pros*.

At this point, let us turn for a moment to the fourth chapter of Hebrews, where the same word *pros* is used. It would seem presumptuous for any one person, unless most fully qualified to speak, to suggest that all existing translations of Hebrews 4:13 have missed the mark; and yet, as we shall see, there is much to be said for a more

literal rendering. The Authorized and Revised Versions read 'with Whom we have *to do*', while alternative renderings given in other translations are either 'to Whom we must give *an account*', or 'about Whom is our *discourse*'. The original is *pros hon hemin ho logos*, or, translating literally 'with Whom for us the Word'. We may compare this with John, *Kai ho logos en pros ton theon*, 'And the Word was with the God'. There is so much in common between John 1:1-5 and Hebrews 1 which we must consider later, that we are compelled to ask why Hebrews 4:13 should not be accepted literally:

'For the word of God is quick, and powerful ... all things are naked and opened in the eyes of Him, *with Whom for us is the Word*'.

The argument in Hebrews concerning Christ is much the same as that of John. Hebrews 4:14-16 follows the reference to the Word that was 'with' God (*pros*) by an encouraging statement concerning the sympathy of Him, Who has now passed through the heavens to the place where He was before. However, we must leave this very intricate point and turn to the wider consideration of the distinctive meaning of the preposition *pros*. It has been pointed out by others that *pros* is used very much with the verbs *lego*, *laleo*, &c., meaning 'to speak'. One very common translation of *pros* is 'to', as for example, 'He brought him *to* Jesus' (1:42). It is also sometimes translated 'toward' as in Ephesians 2:7. 'Unto' is also a very common translation, as in John 1:29, and occasionally we meet with 'for,' as in the sentence: 'If ye have any word of exhortation *for* the people, say on' (Acts 13:15).

A very suggestive rendering is found in 13:28, 'Now no man at the table knew *for what intent* He spake this unto him'. Observe also the usage of *pros* in the following passages:

‘The Pharisee stood and prayed thus *with himself*’ (Luke 18:11).

‘They reasoned *with themselves*’ (Luke 20:5).

‘We have peace *with God*’ (Rom. 5:1).

‘What communion hath light *with* darkness?’ (2 Cor. 6:14).

Now we could easily ‘prove’ that *pros* in Luke 20:5 implies at least two separate persons, ‘They reasoned with themselves’; but can we discover two people in Luke 18:11: ‘He prayed *with himself*?’ Until we can, let us not be deceived by the show of wisdom that would argue about two separate individuals in John 1:1, because the passage reads ‘The Word was *with God*’. Man faces a mystery when he faces his own nature. How much more, then, when he is confronted with a revelation that touches upon the nature of God!

We may perhaps catch a glimpse of the meaning in John by looking at the last reference given above. As 2 Corinthians 6 indicates, there can be no possible communion between light and darkness. We know that God is light, and that the Word was both light and life - and so the Word was ‘with’ God.

We can no more introduce separate personalities here than we can into Luke 18:11 or Romans 7:15-25. Moreover, we trust that no one will object to the argument that uses the nature of man as a guide to the nature of God, for the Scriptures themselves endorse this viewpoint. Man was made in the image and likeness of his Creator, and in the realm of grace the ‘new man’ is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him (Col. 3:10). Even with regard to the natural man, Paul could write:

‘For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God’ (1 Cor. 2:11).

Man, body, soul and spirit, is still a mystery to himself. He is but a faint adumbration* of the ideal Being, God Himself, and it is surely unbecoming for him to attempt to ‘explain’ the nature of the Divine Essence, when he himself has to confess that he cannot set forth, without the aid of metaphysics, what he discerns regarding even his own personality. We can at least appreciate something of the intention

* foreshadowing

behind the choice of *pros* in John when we remember how we use the same idea among ourselves, without any suggestion of physical proximity.

The Word was God (1:1)

We now come to the third statement in the first verse:

‘And the Word was God - *Kai Theos en ho logos*’.

We have already seen that man, in his effort to find some explanation of the universe, and some sort of mediator between things seen and unseen, got as far as giving that mediating something the name of the *Logos*, though without realising that the *Logos* was a Person. We now come to the word *Theos*, the Greek equivalent for ‘God’.

The following quotation from Dr. Bullinger’s Greek Lexicon will give some idea of the word’s derivation:

‘*Theos*, God. - A name reclaimed from the heathen, and used in the N.T. for the true God. Various derivations, ancient and modern, have been proposed, but it is nearly certain that its origin is from the East and comes from the Sanscrit root, *DU-S* (pronounced *dyus*), which means (1) masc: fire, the sun, (2) fem: a ray of light, day (hence Lat. *Dies* (fem. day)), (3) neut: the sky, heaven’.

The translation of the Hebrew Scriptures known as the Septuagint, adopted the word *Theos* as the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew *Elohim* but, with a few exceptions, the singular *Theos* is used to translate the plural *Elohim*.

‘The Talmudists themselves were so persuaded of a plurality expressed in the word *Elohim* as to teach that the LXX. interpreters did purposely change the notion ... lest Ptolemy Philadelphus should conclude that the Jews had a belief in polytheism’ (Allix).

The New Testament follows the same procedure, and retains the singular *Theos* for the plural *Elohim*. Both the LXX. and the New Testament frequently use *Theos* for *Jehovah*, as for example in Matthew 4:4, which cites Deuteronomy 8:3. It should be noted that all the best texts omit the word *Theos* in Mark 12:32. Instead of ‘there is one God’, the passage should read:

‘There is but ONE (Jehovah, namely, which is the word used in Deuteronomy 6:4 but for which the Greek language supplied no equivalent term), and there is none other but He’ (Parkhurst).

We are thankful that we live in a day when revelation is complete, and we can see the full truth as presented by the books of both Covenants. If we were shut up exclusively to the Greek New Testament we might frame an argument as to the nature of the Godhead that would stress the *singular* use of *Theos*. On the other hand, if we had only the Hebrew Old Testament we might stress unduly the *plural* use of *Elohim*. With both testaments before us we have the complete truth, and this alone brings harmony. Before we attempt to consider the nature of God, however, let us think for a moment of one or two statements concerning ourselves as they would be regarded by a being of another order.

‘They two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery’ (Eph. 5:31,32).

‘God created man in His Own Image, in the Image of God created He *him*; male and female created He *them*’ (Gen. 1:27).

‘And called *their* name Adam... and Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son ... ‘ (Gen. 5:2,3).

We can well imagine beings of another order, when faced with these statements, dividing up into opposing camps, and framing theologies and creeds, which would simply demonstrate their lack of true knowledge. We shall make no such attempts in our studies here. Humanly devised terms may be useful when they relate to matters within our cognizance, but they are almost sure to be misleading and the cause of bitterness and controversy, when used of things outside our ken.

We are *told* by John that ‘the Word was God’. If John himself had any difficulties or problems with regard to this statement, he has not told us of them. No explanation is offered. We are expected to believe the revelation given, because the One Who speaks is true, and we are also expected to examine His words to discover all the meaning in them of which they are capable. We do not hesitate, therefore, to inquire: (1) Why the order of the words is the reverse of the usual one and (2) Why the word *Theos* is without the article.

(1) *The order of the words.* - In the second sentence of the first verse the original is: *Ho logos en pros ton Theon* ('The Word was toward the God'). In the third sentence, however, the order of the words is reversed, *Kai Theos en ho logos* ('And God was the Word'). This change of order is an example of the figure called in Greek *Hyperbaton* ('To step over') and in English 'Transposition'.

'Special attention is desired for some particular word. Placed in its ordinary and usual position, it may not be noticed. But, put out of its usual and placed at the beginning, instead of at the end of a sentence, it is impossible for the reader not to be arrested by it' (Dr. Bullinger's 'Figures of Speech').

The particular word brought into prominence in this case is *Theos*. The figure therefore emphasises the fact that the One Who is revealed under the title *Ho Logos* is Himself truly and essentially 'God'. With a few exceptions, we may tell which is the subject or the predicate of a sentence by the presence or absence of the article. In all three clauses here it is 'The Word' that is the subject:

'THE WORD'. - He it is Who was in the beginning.

'THE WORD'. - He it is Who was with God.

'THE WORD'. - He it is Who was God.

Parallel with this last form of expression is that found in 4:24, *Pneuma ho Theos*. Literally, this would be 'Spirit the God', but if we render it so that the English reader will get the same effect as the original would give to a Greek, we should have: 'God is (as to His essence) SPIRIT' (not 'a spirit'). So in 1:1, 'The Word was (as to His essence) GOD' (not 'a god').

(2) *The absence of the article.* - There are some who would translate it thus: 'The Word was a God', because *Theos* is without the article. The following references, however, all of which occur in the prologue, will be enough to show the incorrectness of such a translation.

'There was a man sent from a God' (6).

'Power to become children of a God' (12).

'Which were born of a God' (13).

'No man hath seen a God at any time' (18).

The last reference from verse 18 corresponds with that of verse 1, as is seen by the structure:

‘The Word was God’ (as to His substance or essence).

‘No man hath seen God’ (as to His substance or essence).

A similar usage of the article, or rather of its absence, is found in verse 14: ‘The Word was made flesh’. It would be manifestly absurd to translate this ‘The Word was made a flesh’.

The word *Theos* is used of God in the Scriptures in three different ways:

- (1) Essentially, as in John 4:24: ‘God is Spirit’.
- (2) Personally, as of the Father: ‘God the Father’ (Gal. 1:1).
Personally, as of the Son: ‘Unto the Son, He saith ... O God’ (Heb. 1:8).
Personally, as of the Spirit: ‘The Holy Ghost ... God’ (Acts 5:3,4).
- (3) Manifestly, as of the Word: ‘The Word was God’ (1:1).

In the narrative section of the Gospel, John seizes many opportunities to bring into prominence the controversy concerning the Deity of Christ. These passages will come before us in their order as we follow the exposition of the Gospel, but there are three that most readers will call to mind that seem to carry the theme forward from argument and hostility to adoration and worship:

- (1) ‘Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God’ (5:18).
- (2) ‘I and My Father are one. Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him ... Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God’ (10:30-33).
- (3) ‘Thomas answered and said unto Him, My Lord and my God’ (20:28).

We have already seen that it is the object of this Gospel to expand and prove the truth revealed in the prologue, and we shall hope to deal in detail with the passages quoted above as we come to them in the course of our exposition.

The Life was the Light of Men (1:4)

The majestic simplicity of the opening verse called for worship rather than further scrutiny, and we therefore proceed, without attempting to explain that which lies outside our sphere. Whatever may be the name under which He is revealed, God must always be made known to us *relatively*. We must always remember that the words used are symbols and not the realities themselves. The great object of the Scriptures is not to make us theologians (though the day is coming when we shall 'know even as we are known'), but to teach us our own need and God's provision for it, in view of the future day of glory. We believe the statements of the first verse without reserve, but this does not mean that we have comprehended the mystery of the Godhead. If John had been inspired to devote several chapters to the exposition of this opening verse, we should have been delighted to follow in his steps, but he has not done so. He leads us from the height of uncreated glory in verse 1 to the 'glory as of the only begotten of the Father' in verse 14, and then he travels back again in the closing verse of the prologue, where the introduction of the title 'Father' seems to supply the missing feature that we were perhaps unconsciously waiting for as we read the opening statement.

After the introductory reference to the Person of the Creator, John moves on in verse 3 to His work: 'All things were made by Him'. Then, by a beautiful transition, he suggests that what 'life' is to the physical creation, 'light' must be in the new creation; and so we reach the central point of the prologue (10-13), where some 'received Him not', and some 'received Him'. The narrative then commences its return ascent, placing the new creation of verse 17 over against the material creation of verse 3, and so back to the starting-point, the declaring of God by Him Who in the beginning was the Word, and Who since the incarnation, has been made known as 'the Son'. We shall look in vain in the unfolding revelation of this Gospel, for any further explanation of the title 'The Word', and we shall learn nothing further concerning the physical creation of 'all things'. Instead, we shall be led step by step from one sign to another, to the great objective of the Gospel, that we might believe that 'Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing we might have life through His name'. We are led, in effect, from the contemplation of Him, in Whom our *physical* life is found, to Him in Whom alone we may find that life which is *age-abiding*.

With these remarks, we must now take up our study at John 1:3, remembering amidst all the wealth of detail that thin red line of redeeming love, that not only binds the opening and closing verses of the prologue together, but runs through the whole Gospel, revealing that He Who made all things is 'Love', and that in the fulness of time He gave His all on our behalf.

Had verse 3 been a direct continuation from verse 1, we might have been uncertain as to whether the phrase: 'All things were made by Him' referred to *Theos*, 'God', or *Logos*, 'the Word'. Verse 2, however, makes it clear that the reference is to 'the Word'.

A literal translation of the third verse would read: 'All things through Him became, and apart from Him became not one thing that has become'. We may not approve of this as a piece of English, but it has the merit of forcing the reader to perceive, in the insistent use of the verb *ginomai*, the intended contrast between the Creator, and all things that He has created. *Ginomai* means 'to become', as in Acts 12:18, 'what was *become* of Peter'. The word is also often used in the sense of 'to make' (1:3) and 'to come to pass', 'to happen', 'to be born' (Gal. 4:4). *Ginomai* is essentially a word that denotes origin, and such words as 'generations', 'beget', 'parent', are derived from it. In contrast with *ginomai*, we have the verb *eimi*, 'to be', which meets us in the first two verses. The reader will perhaps appreciate the contrast better if we turn to 8:58.

'Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham came into being (*ginomai*), I am (*ego eimi*)'.

The Jews fully understood what such words portended. Such a claim they regarded as 'blasphemy' (10:31-33), and we read that they took up stones to stone Him (8:59).

There must always be a fundamental distinction between the One Who can say 'I am', the One Who *was* 'in the beginning', and all who have come into being (*ginomai*) as finite creatures. Further on in our study of this prologue, we shall discover that, after the Word was made flesh, the word *ginomai* is used of Him. This, however, we must leave to be dealt with later.

We have already observed that each Gospel has its own point of view and it is interesting to notice that John is the only one of the four evangelists to put forward the claim represented in the third verse.

Paul also has his own particular point of view, and it is enlightening to compare the way in which he refers to the same truth. Where John says 'All things were made by Him', Paul writes in Colossians, 'All things were created by Him'. John leaves the expression 'all things' without further expansion, but Paul, whose theme is Christ as the Head of the Church, and the glory of the dispensation of the Mystery, expands the thought of the creation of all things, and speaks of 'things that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible'. Moreover, in harmony with his theme in Colossians - the sphere of blessing belonging to the Mystery - he continues: 'Whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by Him, and for Him' (Col. 1:16).

Where John speaks of Christ as 'the Word', Paul speaks of Him as 'the Image of the invisible God'. Moreover the reader will notice that, while John defers the title 'the Only-begotten of the Father' until the Word is 'made flesh', Paul goes back to the beginning and speaks of Him then as 'the Firstborn of every creature'.

In his epistle to the Hebrews, the apostle refers to the Lord and creation in yet another set of terms. He speaks of Christ as 'the express Image of His person', or 'the external and manifest character of His unseen substance' (Heb. 1:3), and also refers to the earth, whose foundation He had laid, and the heaven, which His hands had made. The apostle speaks of these things as being transient and destined to vanish away, so as to enforce the necessary lesson that Christ 'remaineth' - a lesson which was much needed by the Hebrews, as they saw all that they had regarded as most vital (the law, the priesthood, the sacrifices, the temple) vanish away. Every book of the Bible resolves itself at last into some fresh aspect of the Person and Work of Christ.

The observant reader will have noticed that when Augustine quotes John 1:1-4 in his Confessions, (see p. 17), he divides verses 3 and 4 in a way which differs a little from that found in the Authorized Version. Instead of, 'All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life', he reads:

'All things were made by Him, and without Him was nothing made: that which was made by Him is life'. This rendering is placed in the Revised Version margin. Rotherham, on the other hand, adopts this reading, and puts the Authorized Version punctuation in the

margin, while Alford cites John's usage and gives grammatical reasons for retaining the Authorized Version rendering. Webster and Wilkinson comment is:

'Many of the ancient commentators place the period at *hen* (one), thus reading, *ho gegonen en hauto zoe en* - "Whatever hath come into being derives its origin and existence from Him".'

Whatever punctuation we may at length accept, the meaning of the apostle remains unchanged. Just as Paul could say that 'in Him we live, and move, and have our being', so John reveals, that in Him, Who was the Word, and Who at the incarnation was made known as the Only-begotten of the Father, was life. And then, transferring his thought from the physical realm to the spiritual, he translates 'life' into terms of 'light' and says 'The life was the light of men'.

Just as God divided the light from the darkness, so we read:

'And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not' (1:5).

The word 'comprehend' here is a translation of *katalambano*, from *kata*, an intensive, and *lambano*, 'to take'. In the middle voice, it is rightly translated 'comprehend', as in Ephesians 3:18; but where it occurs in the active or passive, its meaning is 'to grasp', 'to seize', 'to overtake'. So, in John 8:3,4: *taken* in adultery', or in 12:35: 'lest darkness *come upon you*'.

And in 1 Thessalonians 5:4: 'but ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should *overtake* you as a thief'.

Some read John 1:5 as though the thought were that the darkness did not 'overpower' or 'hold down' the light. The primary meaning 'to grasp', however, seems to be the most fitting here, 'the darkness did not *grasp* it'. Physical darkness is dispersed immediately the light shines, but spiritual and mental darkness is more like a dense fog, that remains obscure and dark even though the light of the sun be actually shining. That this is the writer's meaning seems clear from verse 11, 'He came unto His own, and His own received (*paralambano*) Him not'.

The sudden transition to the ministry of John the Baptist in verse 6 shows that John is not concerned with the question of the physical realm of life and light, but is using the analogy of creation to enforce

the truth of spiritual things. That this is so is confirmed by the structure of the passage which is here set out.

C 1:3. All things were made by Him (*egeneto dia*).

C 1:17. Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ (*egeneto dia*).

Christ is the Originator in both realms. He is the Spring and Source, both of physical life and light, and of spiritual grace and truth.

While we have this outline before us, let us notice further that verse 4: *'In Him was life; and the life was the light of men'*, is balanced by verse 16: *'Out of His fulness have all we received'*. The latter verse is really an expansion of the spiritual principle of the earlier one. With the prologue concluded, John returns once more to the witness of John the Baptist and this time deals with it in detail (19-36), focussing our attention on the great purpose for which he came - namely, that the Messiah should be made manifest to Israel (31). In the prologue itself, instead of referring to the Lamb of God, or the Messiah of Israel, John keeps to the *Logos* theme and speaks of 'life' and 'light'. He tells us in verse 7 that John the Baptist was sent 'to bear witness of that Light, that all men through him (i.e. John the Baptist's witness) might believe'. The same scrupulous care that differentiated between the Word Who 'was', and all creation that 'became', is evident again in verse 8, where our attention is drawn to the fact that John 'was not that Light'. Later on in this Gospel we read of John the Baptist that 'he was a burning and a shining light'(5:35), but the word 'light' here is not *phos*, 'light itself,' but *luchnos*, 'a lamp'. The distinction is similar to that found in Genesis, where 'light' in verse 3 is *or*, while the word for 'lights' in verse 14 (referring to the sun and moon) is *maor*, 'a lightholder'.

Another very beautiful illustration of the character of John's service is found in 1:23. Christ Himself is described as 'the Word'; John on the other hand, describes himself as 'a voice'. What greater service can one render than that which is expressed in this verse? To be a voice to make the Word known, a lamp through which His light may shine, a finger raised to point out the Lamb of God. Such a ministry would lead those who came under its influence to leave the testifier and follow the One testified to. As we read in 3:30: 'He must increase, but I must decrease'.

In verse 8, he 'was sent to bear witness of that Light', the preposition *peri* ('concerning') is used. The reader will call to mind many words in our own language that begin with these four letters - for example, 'perimeter,' meaning 'circumference'; 'period', a cycle of time; and 'periphrasis', a roundabout form of speech. The idea in this verse is that Christ was the centre around which John's ministry revolved. His witness was '*concerning*' Him.

There has been much dispute over the apostle's meaning in the next verse:

'That was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world'.

The crux of the problem is the verb 'cometh'. Does this refer to 'every man' or to 'the true light'? J. N. Darby's translation and note are worth quoting as a contribution here:

'The true light was that which, coming into the world, lightens every man'.

'Or, "is light to every man". Not "enlightens" but "sheds its light upon". Not, I judge, "every man coming", in spite of the ancients. "Comer into the world", is a Rabbinical expression for "man", but this refers to the incarnation as ver. 10 shews. The Fathers' view of it was Platonism which John refutes in every point. The introduction of *anthropon* makes the citing the Rabbinical expression as an argument for the interpretation "every one coming into the world" a mistake: for the Rabbis use "Comers into the world" as equivalent to "men".'

The Lord's own testimony seems conclusive here:

'I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on Me should not abide in darkness' (12:46).

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

A man may be in the light, and yet be unenlightened. Darkness can fail to grasp the light, even though it be shining as brightly as the sun. A glance at the structure confirms this meaning, for the word *erchomenon* 'cometh', is balanced by *eskenosen* 'dwelt', both words

referring to the incarnation, the coming into the world of 'the Word made flesh'.

We now reach the central member of the prologue, the great dividing of the ways.

Revelation, its Reception or Rejection (1:10-13)

We have descended by a series of six steps, from the 'beginning', down through the fact of creation, and the vital function of light, to the witness of John the Baptist in connection with the true light that 'came into the world'. The seventh step (*see* page 25) leads us to the great issue of 'reception' or 'rejection'.

If 'revelation' is to prove effective it must be 'received'; otherwise it is stultified. The very object for which the Lord came into the world would be rendered void by unbelief. If it were true that not one believer had ever existed or would exist, then the whole scheme of revelation and redemption would have come to an abrupt end. Blessed be God this has never been the case and His purpose therefore goes on. It is good for us, however, to visualize the negative side for a moment, if only that we may appreciate more fully the place that faith occupies in the Divine plan. Just as there can be no selling if there be no buyer, no music if there be no listener, no colour if there be no retina, so there can be no revelation if there be no reception. God could have spoken, of course, but the only result would have been a series of echoes down the corridors of time.

Turning back to the structure of the passage, we find that the verses before us occupy the central position and are concerned with the question of receiving and rejecting.

G 1:10,11. Received not (*parelabon*).

G 1:12,13. Received (*elabon*).

The reader should note carefully the difference between verses 10 and 11. In the earlier verse we read: 'He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not'. This does not refer to the birth at Bethlehem, but to the fact that the Creator, though 'in the world' in His providence and made manifest by the works of His hands to every seeing eye, was nevertheless unknown - 'the world knew Him not'. A similar thought is expressed by the apostle:

‘... the living God, Which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein ... He left not Himself without witness, in that He did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness’ (Acts 14:15-17).

Yet in spite of all this outpouring of undeserved ‘goodness’, the world knew Him not. The revelation of God in creation is again referred to in Romans:

‘For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse ... when they knew God ... they did not like to retain God in their knowledge’ (1:20,21,28).

To come back to the Gospel, John, in verse 11, leaves creation, what the Word ‘was’ and ‘made’ and goes on to the incarnation, what the Word ‘became’. ‘He came unto His own, and His own received Him not’.

‘In the world He WAS’, *en to kosmo en*.

‘Unto His own He CAME’, *eis ta idia elthen*.

The expression ‘His own’ comes twice in verse 11 and is repeated in the Authorized Version without alteration. There is, however, a difference in the original that is intended and should be noted. The first occurrence ‘He came unto His own’ is *ta idia* (neuter), while the second occurrence ‘His own received Him not’ is *hoi idioi* (masculine). The same Greek word is used in 19:27 and in Acts 21:6 and Moulton gives a number of references to the use of this term in the Papyri. The latter also illustrates the use of the masculine *hoi idioi* for ‘one’s relations’.

When Christ was born in Bethlehem ‘He came to His own’, for the land was peculiarly His: ‘the land shall not be sold for ever, for the land is *Mine*’ (Lev. 25:23). When Christ came to Jerusalem, He again ‘came unto His own’, for this city is spoken of by Daniel as ‘Thy city’, ‘the city which is called by Thy Name’ (Dan. 9:16,18). When Christ came to Israel, also, ‘He came unto His own’, for of the people of Israel we read: ‘the LORD Thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself’ (Deut. 7:6).

The word ‘receive’ in verse 11 is *parelabon*, and following the reference to His coming to His own, implies an offer which they would not ‘accept’. Dr. Weymouth translates the word ‘gave Him no welcome’. In verse 12 the word ‘receive’ is simply *elabon*, which is parallel with ‘believe’ at the end of the same verse.

If the Lord’s ‘own people’ who ‘received Him not’ are Israel, who, then, are those who did receive Him? If we reply that those who received Him were ‘some of Israel’, it would seem that the statement of verse 11 is too sweeping. There was certainly a remnant of

believers throughout the Acts that were of Israel, but at Acts 28, it became manifest that 'His own' people as a whole would not receive Him. The other Gospels lead the reader step by step to the crisis of the Lord's rejection. John, on the other hand, places it in his prologue, and the whole Gospel is written with the previous knowledge that Israel had failed. John speaks of 'the world', and of 'other sheep' that must be sought, and his witness is related to the revelation that had already been made in Paul's epistles.

We read that to those who did receive Him, the Lord gave 'power to become the sons of God' (1:12). The words 'power' and 'sons' here need a little revision. The word translated 'power' is *exousia*, from *exesti*, 'lawful'. For example, 'It is not *lawful* for thee to carry thy bed' (5:10). A little further on in the same chapter we meet with *exousia*: 'and hath given Him *authority* to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man' (27). The word is in constant use, for example, 'one having *authority*' (Matt. 7:29), 'by what *authority*?' (Matt. 21:23). It is often translated 'power', as in the phrase 'principality and power' (Eph. 1:21), and 'prince of the power of the air' (Eph. 2:2). The last occurrence in the New Testament is in Revelation 22:14, 'that they may have *right* to the tree of life'. It is not a question of 'power' in John 1:12, but of 'right' or 'authority'. When Israel as a nation was set aside, the Lord gave to all believers, irrespective of nationality, the 'right' or 'authority' to become 'children of God'.

The word for 'sons' also needs revision. There are two possible words which may be translated 'son', *huios* and *teknon*. *Huios* occurs in 1:18 (in the Received Text): 'the only begotten Son', and with *thesia* forms the word translated 'adoption', 'to be given the standing and dignity of the heir'. The word used in 1:12, however, is not *huios* but *teknon*. In his epistles John uses *huios* twenty-four times, but never in connection with the believer. The familiar words of 1John 3: 'That we should be called the *sons* of God ... Now are we the *sons* of God', are not a correct translation. In both cases the word used is *teknon*, 'a child'. On the other hand, the familiar title 'the children of Israel' should read 'the sons of Israel'. Sonship (or 'adoption') belongs on earth to Israel (Rom. 9:1-4). When Israel failed (Acts 28), the Lord did not give those to whom John ministered Israel's *sonship*, but rather the right to be called 'the *children* of God'.

John uses the word *teknon* in chapter 11 of his Gospel, where the Lord speaks of 'the children of God that were scattered abroad' (52). It is clear in this passage that those called 'children' were outside the nation of Israel, for we read: 'And not for that nation only, but that also He should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad'. Those who receive this wonderful privilege are described as those that 'believe on His name' (1:12). The thought of the 'name' in Scripture is a most important one. The 'name of the Lord' symbolizes His nature. When the infant Christ was born, He received two names:

'... thou shalt call His name *IESUS*: for *He* shall save His people from their sins'.

'... they shall call His name *EMMANUEL*, which being interpreted, is, God with us' (Matt. 1:21,23).

It will be observed that both names have a definite meaning, and the interpretation is given. From the way in which John uses the 'name' (20:31) it would appear to sum up the Lord's whole Messianic character:

'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'.

In the great prayer of the seventeenth chapter there is a fourfold emphasis on the Father's name.

A 6 Thy *name* manifested to those given out of the world.

B 11 Keep through Thine own *name* those given. I am no more in the world.

B 12 Kept in Thy *name*. While with them in the world.

A 25,26 Thy *name* declared. The world hath not known Thee.

To appreciate fully the significance of the 'name' we must know something of the conditions and customs in Old Testament times. When law and order were not sustained by the same legal machinery as at present, a man in trouble 'called on the name' of his kinsman. And so we find (in the Psalm of the name) the 'name' of the Lord as something in which the believer can take refuge:

'... the *name* of the God of Jacob defend thee' (Psa. 20:1).

‘... in the *name* of our God we will set up our banners’ (Psa. 20:5).

‘Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the *name* of the LORD our God’ (Psa. 20:7).

Applying all this we may say that those who ‘received Him’ and ‘believed on His name’, accepted Him in all the fulness of what His name represented - both as the Word (His name ‘in the beginning’) and as ‘Jesus Christ’, His name when ‘the Word was made flesh’. The word translated ‘on’ in the expression ‘believe on His name’ here, is *eis* and literally means ‘unto’. This word usually indicates the believing of a person; the fuller word *eipi* (‘upon’) denotes *trust*, which is a step in advance of John 1:12. In verse 13 we read:

‘Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God’.

It is interesting to inquire whether this verse completes the statement of verse 12, or introduces the glorious doctrine of verse 14. As the Authorized Version rendering stands, the words ‘*were* born’, being plural, must necessarily refer to those that believe, whose new birth is entirely dissociated from ‘bloods’ - that is to say ‘ancestry’ - and from the ‘will of the flesh’, and the ‘will of man’. Griesbach, however, has called attention to a different reading. Instead of *hoi ... egennethesan*, he reads *hos ... egennethe*, ‘Who was not begotten of blood ... but of God’. This reading would mean that verse 13 refers to Christ.

The Companion Bible has the following note in connection with this verse:

‘But antecedent to any ancient MSS., Iren -us (A.D. 178), Tertullian (A.D. 208), Augustine (A.D. 395) and other Fathers read "Who was begotten" (Sing. not pl.). The *hos*, (Who) agreeing with *autou* (His name. Gr. *onoma autou*, name of Him). Verse 14 goes on to speak of the incarnation of Him Who was not begotten by human generation. The Latin Codex *Veronensis* (before Jerome’s Vulgate) reads ‘*Qui ... natus est*’. Tertullian ... ascribes the reading of the Received text to the artifice of the Valentinian Gnostics of the second and third centuries. See ‘Encyclopaedia Britannica’, eleventh (Camb.) edition, vol. 27, pp. 852-7’.

It is evident from the above note, that Dr. Bullinger (who personally prepared the notes up to the tenth chapter before his death)

believed 'Who was begotten' to be the true reading. It is too late now for any one to express more than an opinion on this point. It would seem, however, that every word in verse 13 would apply more appropriately to Christ as 'made flesh' than to 'believers', for it would hardly seem necessary to say that a believer was not 'born of the will of the flesh'. In any case, no doctrinal truth is modified in the slightest degree, whichever reading we adopt. All we can say is that the proximity of the incarnation in verse 14, and the way in which verse 13 leads up to it, is an argument in favour of the reading found by Griesbach and adopted in *The Companion Bible*.

The Word made Flesh (1:14)

‘The Glory of the Only Begotten of the Father’

The structure of the prologue is rather like the letter V. It begins with a steady descent from the first verse until the lowest point is reached at verse 14, and then, from this point onwards, there is a steady rise until the Son of God is ‘back where He was before’. We have reached verse 14, where we have the marvellous words:

‘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’.

It will be noticed that John makes no reference to the various features in connection with the actual birth of Christ that are dwelt upon by Matthew and Luke. He does not even mention Mary, the mother of Christ, until the Lord is about to start His public ministry; and although Mary is mentioned ten times in the Gospel nothing is said of the virgin birth or of the fulfilment of prophecy at Bethlehem, except in a discussion among the Jews, who only knew that Christ had come from Galilee. It would seem that John purposely refrains from pointing out the fulfilment of Old Testament Scriptures - a very definite feature of Matthew’s Gospel which was written particularly for those who knew them - and instead, brings before us one piece of evidence after another until we are forced by its sheer weight to say, with Thomas, ‘My Lord and my God’. Thomas was not convinced by an appeal to Scripture that Jesus was the Christ, or that He was risen again. He was convinced by the testimony of his own senses.

‘... 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’ (John 20:27).

In Nathanael’s case, too, the evidence was personal rather than scriptural. He was convinced that the Lord was the Son of God and the King of Israel, not by the fulfilment of prophecy, but by evidence of a purely personal character - ‘Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree’ (1:50). So here, in the prologue, John says nothing about the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14 that we find stressed in Matthew, and nothing about the revelation made by Gabriel to Mary that we find in Luke. He simply makes a statement of fact: ‘the Word was made flesh’, and follows it by a personal testimony, ‘we beheld His glory’.

As we proceed in our study we trust that we too will be able to behold His glory, and gladly acknowledge that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

The occurrences of the word 'flesh' in relation to Christ in the Synoptic Gospels are very few indeed. If the words of Matthew 26:41 and Mark 14:38, 'the flesh is weak', may be taken to be the Lord's words with reference to Himself and His physical weakness in the garden of Gethsemane, they constitute the only reference to His 'flesh' found in those two Gospels, while Luke has only one reference (24:39), where the risen Christ says: 'A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have'. Over against these three references in the Synoptic Gospels (or one reference only if those cited from Matthew and Mark are of doubtful application) we have seven references in John's Gospel, and three in his Epistles. The seven are 1:14 and 6:51,52,53,54,55,56. The expansion of 1:14 in 6:51, where the Lord says: 'The bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world', shows the essential purpose of the incarnation. We have the same thought in Hebrews 10:5: 'Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me'.

The three references in the epistles are 1 John 4:2, (1 John 4:3 in the Received Text) and 2 John 7. These references are in contexts of great solemnity.

'Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is *come in the flesh* is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is *come in the flesh* is not of God'.

'For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is *come in the flesh*. This is a deceiver and an antichrist'.

John uses two different tenses of the verb 'to come' in these two epistles. In the earlier passage he is speaking of the historic fact, and so the verb is *elēluthota*, the perfect participle, meaning 'has come'. In 2 John 7, on the other hand, it is not in effect a question of time, and the present participle, *erchomenon*, is used. In the first passage it is a question of the *historicity* of the incarnation; in the second it is its *possibility*.

In the very early Church it was not so much the *Deity* of Christ that was the subject of attack, but rather His *humanity*. Today the

pendulum has swung over to the other extreme, and the 'humanists' have insisted so much on the essential humanity of Christ, that they obscure or even deny His equal Deity. Neither the Deity nor the humanity of Jesus Christ can be understood separately. They must be considered together. This essential unity is referred to in 1 John 5:8, the last clause of which should be rendered, 'and the three are unto the one', viz., unto that unity which obtained between the humanity and Deity of the Son of God. This is also made very clear in Paul's epistles. In Romans 1:3 for example, we read that the Lord was 'made of the seed of David according to the flesh', while in Romans 8:3 the apostle safeguards His sinlessness by saying that He came in 'the likeness of sinful flesh'. In the same epistle we find the strongest terms used in connection with His Deity:

'... of Whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, Who is over all, God blessed for ever (unto the ages)' (9:5).

Both in Ephesians and in Colossians we meet with references to 'His flesh', and the 'body of His flesh', while we find that He Who is 'God' and 'Creator' in Hebrews 1:8,10 becomes a partaker of 'flesh and blood' in Hebrews 2:14.

Returning to John's Gospel, we find that there are six references to *soma*, 'body', each referring to the Lord's physical body (2:21; 19:31,38 twice, 40; 20:12). In 1:1 where we read that 'the Word was God', the verb is *eimi* 'to be', but in 1:14, 'The Word was made flesh', it is *ginomai* 'to become'. The two verbs appear together in 8:58, where the Lord says of Himself, 'Before Abraham came into being (*ginomai*), I, I am (*eimi*)'. In 1:1,14 we have two modes of existence, but however much the mode may change the Person remains. He was just as much the Word after His birth at Bethlehem as He was 'in the beginning'.

'And dwelt among us'. The word 'dwelt' here is *eskenosen*, from *skene*, a 'tent' or 'tabernacle'. The word is allied to the Hebrew *shaken*, 'to dwell as in a tabernacle', and gives us the expression - often used without recognition of its true meaning - 'the Shekinah glory'. Not only does the apostle intend by the use of this word to indicate the transient character of this life, in which the Lord for thirty-three years shared (see 2 Cor. 5:1), but he is also referring to the tabernacle in the wilderness as a type of Christ. When we come to the second chapter we shall find the Lord speaking also of the Temple as a

figure of His body. Here it is the tabernacle. All that the tabernacle typified, with its mercy-seat, ark, light, shewbread, altar of incense, laver, brazen altar, and veil, was at length seen in reality in the 'Word made flesh'. The words 'grace and truth' in verse 17 really signify 'true grace', i.e., that which was real and antitypical in contrast with the shadows of the law. This, however, we must deal with more fully when we come to the verses concerned.

The Authorized Version places in parenthesis the words 'And we beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father'. In the original, the reader is at once struck by the sudden vagueness of the words here, which read literally, 'Glory as of an only begotten from a father'. This is noted in the Revised Version margin, and in such revised translations as those of Rotherham, Darby, and Cunningham. The apostle's intention seems to be: We beheld His glory, a glory such as one would associate with one who was only begotten of a father. The word 'father', while ultimately referring to God Himself, is used here in a general sense. The glory that was beheld by the wondering disciples was not the 'glory' which the Saviour 'had' with the Father 'before the world was' (17:5), for that glory, which is yet to be unveiled and manifested (17:24) was tempered and veiled while the Saviour lived here and bore the likeness of sinful flesh. The 'glory' referred to by the apostle here in 1:14 is rather the kind of glory that is compatible with the status of being an only begotten one of a father. He Who is Himself God, and Who had made the world, humbled Himself, and spoke of Himself as 'the Sent One'. He acknowledged that 'My Father is greater than I', and that as 'the Son' He has received power and authority from the Father. None of these acknowledgments, of course, in any way touch His Deity; they merely speak of the humble place that He was pleased to take when He was 'made flesh'.

We have no wish to take any part in the controversy concerning the Lord's Sonship that is wrecking one evangelical witness. The very terms used in this controversy are themselves unscriptural. Nowhere does Scripture say: 'In the beginning was the Son'. Only when the Word was made flesh, does His sonship appear. Such phrases, therefore, as the 'Eternal Generations of the Son' we cannot regard as being scripturally sound.

The words 'the only begotten', wherever they are used apart from Christ, always refer to a son or a daughter who has been begotten by a father. The words are used of Isaac (Heb. 11:17) of the only son of the

widow of Nain (Luke 7:12), of the only daughter of Jairus (Luke 8:42), and of the man whose only child was possessed of an evil spirit (Luke 9:38). There is nothing unusual about the word *monogenes*. If we remove the word for 'only' we have *genes*, which is intimately related to the words translated 'begetting' (Matt. 1:2), 'born' (Matt. 1:16), and 'generation' (Matt. 1:1). If the 'generation', the 'birth', the 'begetting' of Jesus Christ are thus attested by Scripture, who are we to put our hands to save the Ark of His Deity, by robbing Him of the glory of His perfect manhood and sonship?

We have said little about the virgin birth, for we are following the line of teaching given by John, but, lest any should misconstrue our silence, we affirm in passing our unwavering faith in the testimony of those Scriptures that insist upon the supernatural conception of the Son of God, His virgin birth and His untainted manhood.

A day is coming, when the Son shall be subject unto Him that subjected all things under Him, 'that *God* may be all in all'. We have no right here to read 'that the *Father* may be all in all' for we must remember John's statement that 'the Word was God'. The glorious manhood of Him Who came to be the Mediator and the Sacrifice for sin is vital to our hope and our peace. Let us beware lest, by using unscriptural language when speaking of 'the Son', we should be denying that 'Jesus Christ has come in the flesh'.

Fulness and True Grace, in contrast with type and shadow (1:15-17)

Once again the apostle reverts to the testimony of John the Baptist, whose first witness, as recorded in this Gospel, is to Christ, 'the true Light', with the object that 'all men through Him might believe' (1:6-8).

John the apostle and John the Baptist have but one testimony, the Baptist's witness becoming imperceptibly interwoven with the testimony of the apostle, neither breaking its thread nor spoiling its harmony.

'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' (1:15).

The Baptist is but confirming the marvellous testimony of the apostle given in 1:1 and 14. In point of time Christ as 'the Word' was before John; Christ as 'the Word made flesh' was after him. This testimony of the Baptist is expanded in 3:27-31 and will be given fuller consideration when that passage is reached. It is inserted to supplement the apostle's statement here, so that in the mouth of two witnesses every word may be established. Accordingly we proceed to the next three verses.

In verse 14 the apostle had spoken of Christ as 'full of grace and truth'. He now refers to that 'fulness' (1:16) as the source of that 'grace and truth' (1:17) which believers have received. In verse 14 the apostle had spoken for the first time of Christ as 'the only begotten of the Father'. In verse 18 he now carries the title back to counterbalance, in time, what the Word was 'in the beginning'. These verses, therefore are an expansion and exposition both of what accrues to man and what pertains to God from the incarnation. 'And of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace' (1:16). We cannot hope to understand this passage merely by concentrating upon the meaning of the word 'fulness', but must ascertain what is associated with that fulness and in what manner the statement carries forward the apostle's theme. This will necessitate consideration of the expression 'grace for grace', and inasmuch as the fulness of the Lord is first of all associated with 'grace and truth' and that 'grace and truth' is placed over against the law given to Moses in verse 17, it will be necessary to include and consider these references before we can appreciate in any measure the intention in verse 16. We observe therefore a marked contrast indicated between 'the law' that was given by 'Moses' and the 'grace and truth' that 'came by Jesus Christ'.

Here, together with verse 18, we have two contrasted lines of teaching:

<i>Moses.</i>	<i>Jesus Christ.</i>
Law.	Grace and Truth.
Given by (<i>edothē</i>).	Came into being by (<i>egeneto</i>).
God.	Father.
Not seen.	Declared.
Back parts (Exod. 33:23).	Bosom.
Servants (Heb. 3:5).	Son (Heb. 3:6).

For the moment our attention is directed to the expression 'grace and truth'. Now, whatever that term may mean, it is obvious that it belongs to one, and to one only, of these two categories. It does belong to that headed by 'Jesus Christ'; it does not belong to that headed by Moses. Is it however true that there was no 'grace' in the law?

'How came Israel to have it and not the Babylonians, Egyptians, Philistines, Assyrians, &c.? Yes, it was all grace: as God asks and tells them so earnestly and so often, in Deuteronomy 4:32-40 and other places. And was there no "truth" in the law? Yes, surely every word was truth. But in John 1:17 the contrast is between one thing that was given by Moses, and a different thing that came by Jesus Christ' (Dr. Bullinger's *Figures of Speech*).

The use of the figure of speech called Hendiadys, *Hen-dia-dys*, the 'one by means of two' figure, is the explanation of the apparent difficulty. The two words 'grace and truth' really represent but one thing and are employed solely to emphasize the word 'truth'. The one thing intended is the term *true* grace', with emphasis on the word 'true'. We have now contrasted with one another 'law' and 'true grace'. But we must discover what 'true' grace is. There can be no such thing as 'false' grace, and the words 'true grace' here must therefore stand in contrast with some other conception. To elucidate the point let us consider the usage of the word *alethinōs*, 'true'.

'That was the *true* Light' (John was not that light) (1:9).

'... *true* worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth' (In contrast to the worship either in Samaria or Jerusalem) (4:23).

'... My Father giveth you the *true* bread' (in contrast with the type given by Moses) (6:32).

'I am the *true* Vine' (of which the Old Testament references were types) (15:1).

It will have been seen that John has frequently used this word with the meaning 'antitypical, or real'. There is one reference which actually places the word 'true' over against 'type' and it is in Hebrews:

'For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures (antitypes) of the true; but into heaven itself' (Heb. 9:24).

We can now return to John 1:17 and bring the expressions 'law' and 'grace and truth' under a common denominator, for both may be called 'grace', but in the law the grace was 'typical', and the offerings 'shadows', while in the gospel grace was 'real', and the work of Christ the fulfilment of the shadows and types of the law.

We have already indicated the difference between the law that was 'given' by Moses, and real grace that 'came' by Jesus Christ. In the structure of the prologue (on p. 25) this is found in correspondence with the statement in verse 3 that 'all things were made by Him'. Here, Christ is seen as Creator in both realms.

We can now return to 1:16 and understand the expression 'grace for grace'. The word translated 'for' is *anti*, which means 'over against'; 'grace over against grace' means, in the light of verse 17, 'the grace of gospel realities in place of the grace of types and shadows'. This 'real grace', we learn, is 'out of His fulness'.

'For of His fulness have all we received, and (or even) grace over against grace; for the law by Moses was given, but true grace came into being by Jesus Christ' (John 1:16,17 Author's translation).

The 'fulness' which is the source of this rich supply is that which we have already noted in verse 14, and arises only from the fact that 'the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us'. In the epistle to the Colossians we note that the 'fulness', *pleroma*, links the testimony of John to that of Paul and that apart from the one passage of John 1:16, the word *pleroma* is used, in reference to Christ, exclusively by Paul. We now give an analysis of the distribution of the word.

The Fulness

A John 1:1-18. HIS TITLE. - In the beginning. The Word.

HIS OFFICE. - Maker of all things.
His title in the flesh. The only begotten Son.
God declared to be invisible.

B Gal. 4:1-10. The elements of the world.
Ye observe days, months, times and years.
Made of a woman. Made under the law. Sonship
(*Adoption*).

C Ephesians. a 1:10. Goal. Head up all things in heaven
Christ and and earth.
His Church. b 1:23. Foreshadowing Head. Fulness
of Him.
a 3:19. Goal. Filled unto all the fulness of
God.
b 4:13. Measure. Fulness of Christ.

A Col. 1:12-22. HIS TITLE. - Before all things. The Image.
HIS OFFICE. - Creator of all things.
His title in the two spheres. Firstborn of all creation.
Firstborn from the dead.
God declared to be invisible.

B Col. 2:8-23. The rudiments of the world.
Holydays, new moons and sabbaths.
Bodily. Completeness.

The expression in Galatians 4:4, 'the fulness of the time' refers to the glorious complement, the generation which should bring in the glorious readjustment by the birth, death and resurrection of the One Who was then born.

'We beheld His *glory* ... *full* of grace and truth ... and of His *fulness* have all we received, even the grace of the gospel for the grace of type and shadow (the *pleroma*)' (John 1:14-16 Author's translation).

The reader will observe that there, where 'the fulness of the time' is mentioned, we have the repudiation of the elements of the world, 'days, months, times and years', as religious observances, and there also we have the parallel with John 1:14, the Word made flesh, for we read that in the fulness of the time, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman.

If we further pursue our investigation we shall observe the same features in the corresponding section, Colossians 2:8-23. When John wrote his Gospel, all ceremonial observance was finished. The epistle to the Hebrews had been sent to those who were involved in the transition; the epistle to the Colossians had demonstrated once and for all the completeness of the believer in Christ, and even John, though he ministered a message of 'life' to the 'world' and had no commission to speak of the mystery and its blessings, could not and would not put upon the 'other sheep' the bondage of ceremonial, now removed by grace. This is made clear in 4:20-24, but we must leave consideration of its message until we reach that chapter.

In all testimony, especially where change, opposition, and contention are involved, there is danger of leaving a wrong impression by over or under stating the truth or by omitting some feature, so well known and so fully believed, as to appear to be in no need of vindication. We want, therefore, to avoid the slightest appearance of evil, and evil it would be if but one reader suspected that we belittled the inspiration and moral glory of the law given by Moses. We will therefore quote the thirteen references to Moses in the Gospel of John, and thus complete the presentation of the truth.

Moses in John's Gospel

'For the law was given by Moses, but true grace came by Jesus Christ' (John 1:17 Author's translation).

'... We have found Him, of Whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write' (John 1:45).

'And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up' (John 3:14).

'... there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me: for he wrote of Me' (John 5:45,46).

'Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but My Father giveth you the True Bread from heaven' (John 6:32).

'Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill Me?' (John 7:19).

‘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 (or without breaking the law of Moses); are ye angry at Me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath day?’ (John 7:22,23).

‘... Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest Thou?’ (John 8:5).

‘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’ (John 9:28,29).

Let the reader trace the story of these references. First we have the distinction ‘law’ and ‘grace’, and then the finding of the Messiah, the Subject of prophecy. The very gospel message of 3:16 finds its foreshadowing in the act of Moses, even as the True Bread was typified by the Manna. So far, the references, with one exception, have been an expansion of 1:17. The exception was the warning of 5:45,46.

The remaining references indicate the growing opposition of the blind disciples of Moses which culminates in chapter 9. At the close of this chapter we find much that makes us think of the fifth verse of chapter 1. The darkness comprehended not, or did not grasp, the Light.

‘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’ (John 9:39-41).

In this chapter He Who was the Word made flesh is called by His enemies ‘a sinner’, ‘a fellow’, a ‘man not of God’, but by the man born blind He is first of all called: ‘a man that is called Jesus’, then ‘a Prophet’, and at last ‘the Son of God’ and ‘Lord’.

Moses therefore is given his rightful place in John’s Gospel. Like John the Baptist, he was but a voice, a lamp, a lifted finger. It is Christ Who is the Word, the Light, and the Lamb of God.

The Invisible and the Only Begotten (1:18)

We have now arrived at the stupendous conclusion to this great prologue, from the revelation of 'the Word' in the beginning, we have descended to creation, to manifestation and to incarnation. The Word was made flesh. Then we commence the ascent to 'the glory that He had before', but the coming of the Word in the flesh was for the purpose of redemption.

'No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, Which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him' (John 1:18).

The 'Word' of verse 1 becomes here 'the only begotten Son', while 'God' becomes 'the Father'. When we speak of the Holy Spirit, we do not mentally conjure up some particular shape or form, but when believers speak of the 'Father' they are apt to forget the words of John 4:

'... the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth' (John 4:23,24 Author's translation).

There can be no mistaking the meaning of this passage. 'The Father' is placed in correspondence with 'God', Who is spirit. Again, in John 5 we read:

'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' (John 5:37).

And again in chapter 6, 'Not that any man hath seen the Father, save He which is of God, He hath seen the Father' (46). Similarly, in 1 Timothy 1:17 God is declared to be 'the King eternal, incorruptible, *invisible*', while in chapter 6 of the same epistle we read, 'Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; Whom no man hath seen, nor can see' (16). Such is the consistent testimony of Scripture. It is of the very essence of material things that they can be either seen, or heard, or felt. The world of matter is intimately linked with the bodily senses, but it is of the very essence of spirit that the human eye, and ear, and hand cannot apprehend it: 'Handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see Me have' (Luke 24:39). While the reader will readily

acquiesce in all that has been advanced from the Scriptures, there will probably be, nevertheless, in the back of the mind, a number of Old Testament passages that seem at first sight to contradict this testimony. For example, in Genesis 35 we read:

‘... God *appeared* unto Jacob ... I am God Almighty ... And God went up from him in the place where He talked with him ... And Jacob called the name of the *place* where God spake with him, Bethel’ (Gen. 35:9-15).

Here, Jacob obviously had very personal dealings with ‘The Lord God Almighty’. Moreover, on an earlier occasion where Jacob had travelled from Bethel to Jabbok, we read:

‘... there wrestled a Man with him until the breaking of the day ... And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved’ (Gen. 32:24,30).

Again, in Exodus, we read:

‘Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel: and they saw the God of Israel ... they saw God, and did eat and drink’ (Exod. 24:9-11).

‘... the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend’ (Exod. 33:11).

We have already dealt with the place that the incarnation holds in the Divine scheme, and have drawn attention to the fact that John 1:14 does not say, ‘The Word became *man*’, but that ‘The Word became flesh’. The New Testament declares that Jesus Christ was a ‘man’, but it does not say that He became such at the incarnation. Philippians 2 declares that He was found in fashion as a man, and Romans 8 that He was made in ‘the likeness of sinful flesh’, but Genesis 32 had already indicated that the God of Jacob was a ‘man’ long before the lowly birth at Bethlehem. All this we have already considered when dealing with John 1:14, but it is so important that we repeat some of our conclusions here. The invisible God expressed Himself before time began. He Who created the world and all things, first of all humbled Himself by taking visible shape. He became the Image of the invisible God, the Firstborn of every creature, the Beginning of the creation of God. He, the visible God, was the One after Whose image and likeness Adam was created, and He it was Who walked in Eden in the cool of the day. He, the visible God, was the God of Israel seen by Moses and the

Seventy. And so, when John 1:18 declares that ‘no man hath seen God *at any time*’, and the Old Testament declares that certain men did see God, there is no contradiction. John refers to God Who is Spirit, whereas the Old Testament speaks of the One Who, for the purposes of creation and mediation, became the Image of the invisible God, and in the fulness of time, for the putting away of sin, became flesh, and the Only Begotten of the Father.

The second clause of John 1:18 reads in the Authorized Version as follows: ‘The only begotten Son, Which is in the bosom of the Father’. The Revised Version margin reads: ‘Many very ancient authorities read *God only begotten*’. This reading is found in the Codex Sinaiticus, the Codex Vaticanus, the Codex Ephraemi, and the Codex Regius. It is also found in 33 of the cursive manuscripts, the Peshito versions, the Memphitic and Ethiopian, and a host of the Fathers. Arius, though opposed to the doctrine of the deity of Christ, upheld this reading, and it was incorporated in the creed of Antioch. Lachmann, Tregelles, and Westcott and Hort also accept it as the true version. The words ‘only begotten Son’ are the words we should expect, and it hardly seems possible that so strange a reading as ‘God only begotten’ should have been inserted in place of the more usual ‘the only begotten Son’.

In this marvellous prologue we have some wonderful revelations of movements in the Godhead, all directed towards manifestation and realization - ‘the Word’, ‘the Light’, ‘the Glory’, ‘the Fulness’, ‘the Word was God’, ‘the Word was made flesh’, and now ‘God only begotten’. He ‘was’ in the beginning; He ‘tabernacled’ among us; He ‘is’ in the bosom of the Father. This last statement uses the words *ho on*: ‘the One Who is’. These words speak of the Lord’s ascension, as in John 3:13 :

‘... no man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man Which is (*ho on*) in heaven’.

The Saviour, as the Son of man, has gone back ‘where He was before’ (6:62), and it is as the ‘Only Begotten’ Who is in the bosom of ‘the Father’ that John 1:18 now speaks of Him. Before the incarnation, before the Word was made flesh, the Lord is not spoken of as ‘the Only Begotten’, neither is He called ‘the Son of man’. He has gone back now to the glory, but He has gone back with the evidences of

redemption accomplished, and so can reveal the invisible God as Father.

There is only one other reference to the word 'bosom' in John's Gospel, and that is in 13:23: 'Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples whom Jesus loved'. The word indicates not only a place of warm affection, but also a place in which confidences are received, as we see from Peter's suggestion that John should ask the Lord in confidence as to who was the betrayer. In 13:23 we have the word *en* ('in the bosom'); in verse 25 it is *epi* ('on the breast'); while in 1:18 it is *eis* ('unto'). The latter indicates something more intimate and resembles the word 'with' (*pros*) in John 1:1.

We find this same emphasis upon the new relationship of the ascended Lord in Hebrews 1:3-5. In verse 3 He is spoken of as 'the brightness of His glory' and 'the express image of His person' (titles comparable with 'The Word' of John 1:1). He is also credited in Hebrew 1:10 with the work of creation just as in John 1:3. The parallel is again evident in Hebrews 2:14, which is comparable with John 1:14, and in Hebrews 1:3-5, parallel with John 1:18, we read:

'... when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said He at any time, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee?'

The Lord returns as 'the only Begotten Son', having 'obtained' a more excellent name than angels. To say such a thing of the Lord as 'God' would be absurd. No one needs to be told that He who is 'God' (John 1:1; Heb. 1:8) has a more excellent name than angels. In what sense, then, could 'the Word' Who 'was God' 'obtain' this name? The answer is that He who was so high, stooped to man's estate and was made a little lower than the angels for our sake and for our redemption. As the Man Who had thus triumphed He could be spoken of as having 'obtained' by inheritance a more excellent name, this name being 'the Only Begotten Son of God'.

As 'the Word', the Lord's office was to make known the will and the glory of the invisible God. Sin, however, had come into the world; and so the Word 'was made flesh'. He became 'the Light of the world' and the believer was able to see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. He told His disciples that 'he that hath seen Me hath seen the

Father' (John 14:9), and so the apostle, looking up to the right hand of the Father, could say: 'He hath declared Him' (John 1:18).

The word 'declare' here is *exegeomai* (giving our word 'exegesis'), and means literally 'to lead out'. The word occurs six times in the New Testament, including the passage in Luke:

'And they *told* what things were done in the way, and how He was known of them in breaking of bread' (Luke 24:35).

The other occurrences are in Acts 10:8; 15:12,14, and 21:19.

It is not surprising, seeing that in this prologue John has taken up the language of philosophy, to find that this word 'declare' was a technical term much used in connection with speaking by oracle, and interpreting things regarded as being Divine. Christ is the true Interpreter of God to man. He came from heaven, not to demonstrate His own Deity, but to show us what the invisible God was like. Those who have rightly 'seen' Christ, have 'seen' the Father. We know what the love of God is, because we have seen it manifested in Christ. We know His patience, His peace, His power, His mind, His will - we know Him, for the 'Only Begotten Son' has given a complete exposition of Him. He is our Interpreter, our Mediator, our Daysman. He has 'shown' us the Father 'and it sufficeth us'.

The prologue has now accomplished its purpose. The Gospel itself now awaits us, and from first to last we shall discover that in it the Son of God is manifesting, revealing, interpreting the Father to His children. It must now be our delightful task to endeavour to open up these treasures and exhibit them for the blessing and comfort of the believer, and to the glory of the Lord.

CHAPTER 3

The Witnesses and First Sign

John the Baptist (John 1:19-34)

'I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God' (1:34).

It will be observed that in the structure of this Gospel, which has already been indicated, p. 19, that the whole book, apart from the prologue, is covered by the word 'Witnesses'. Omitting all details, the structure is as follows:

- A 1:19-34. The Witness of John the Baptist.
- B 1:35-51. Simon, son of Jona: 'Follow Me'.
- C 2 to 21:14. The Witness of the Eight Signs.
- B 21:15-23. Simon son of Jonas: 'Follow Me'.
- A 21:24,25. The Witness of John the apostle.

Even in the prologue itself, the witness of John the Baptist is introduced twice, and in such a way as to form a definite part of the structure:

- E 1:6-8. John. Witness (*marturia*).
- E 1:15. John. Witness (*martureo*).

Of all the writers in the New Testament John is the one who uses the idea of 'bearing witness' most frequently. From start to finish his Gospel is based upon testimony borne. This fact is confirmed by the following figures giving the occurrences of:

Martureo. - In the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) 3 occurrences.

In John's Gospel 33 occurrences, and in his other writings 14 occurrences.

Marturia. - In the Synoptic Gospels 4 occurrences.

In John's Gospel 14 occurrences and in his other writings 16 occurrences.

This presentation demonstrates very clearly the supreme place that John gives to the question of 'testimony'. In addition, another fact emerges. The Synoptic Gospels use these two words *seven* times, and John himself *seventy-seven* times. The numbers indicate completeness

and perfection. For the purposes with which the Gospels were written, their respective witnesses were complete. John's purpose seems to have demanded much more in the way of witness than was the case with Matthew, Mark and Luke. Those addressed by the Synoptic writers would have had a fuller acquaintance with the prophecies of the Old Testament than would those for whom John wrote, and the genealogies given by Matthew and Luke would in themselves have gone a long way towards providing convincing evidence. John, writing to the world, depends more on the records borne by John the Baptist and himself and others, than on the appeal to Old Testament prophecy. There are only eight or nine references to the fulfilment of prophecy in this Gospel, as against the forty-seven references to *martureo* and *marturia*.

An examination of the fourteen references to *marturia* in this Gospel divides the witness into three groups - the opening testimony of John the Baptist, the closing testimony of John the apostle, and the threefold testimony of the Lord Himself:

***Marturia* ('witness') in John's Gospel**

- A 1:7,19. The two-fold witness of John the Baptist.
- B The threefold witness of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- | | |
|----------------|---|
| a 3:11. | Not receive. |
| b 3:32. | No man received. <i>Man.</i> |
| c 3:33. | He that received. <i>True.</i> |
| a 5:31. | Not true. |
| c 5:32. | My witness is true. <i>True.</i> |
| b 5:34. | I receive not witness from man. <i>Man.</i> |
| d 5:36. | Greater than John. <i>The Works.</i> |
| a 8:13. | Not true. |
| c 8:14. | My record is true. <i>True.</i> |
| b 8:17. | Testimony of two men. <i>Man.</i> |
- A 19:35; 21:24. The twofold witness of John the apostle.

It is very clear from the above analysis of these fourteen references that this 'record' or 'witness' plays a great part in his presentation of the truth.

We must now turn our attention to the opening testimony in the structure - namely, that given by John the Baptist. This testimony, which is given in fairly full detail, settles a number of vital points with

regard to the One Whose Person and Work fill the Gospel with their glory, and Who is set forth as 'the Way, the Truth, and the Life'. John the Baptist's testimony settled the following crucial facts:

- Jesus Christ was the long promised and expected Lord, Whose word of restoration and comfort opens the second portion of Isaiah's prophecy (Isa. 40; John 1:23).
- Jesus Christ was the Lamb of God, the great Antitype of all the sacrificial lambs offered under the dispensation of type and shadow (1:29,36).
- Jesus Christ was the Messiah, 'Which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost' (1:31-33).
- Jesus Christ was the Son of God (1:34).

Upon closer examination we find that John the Baptist's witness is twofold. The first part is his answer to the Sanhedrin, the most powerful ruling body among the Jews; the second part is given unasked, and represents his own spontaneous conviction upon seeing the evidence promised to him in connection with the baptizing of the Saviour. The structure is as follows:

The Witness of John the Baptist (1:19-34)

- A 19-28. The record of John, when asked by Jews.
- a 19. 'Who art thou?'
 - b 20-21. Not the Christ, Elijah or that Prophet.
 - a 22. 'Who art thou?'
 - b 23. I am a Voice.
 - a 24,25. 'Why baptizest thou?'
 - b 26,27. He it is.
- A 29-34. The record of John when he saw the sign.
- c 29,30. Behold the Lamb of God.
 - d 31. I knew Him not.
 - e 31. John's baptism.
 - f 31. Water.
 - c 32. I saw the Spirit.
 - d 33. I knew Him not.
 - e 33. Christ's baptism.
 - f 33. Holy Ghost.
 - c 34. The Son of God.

We must now acquaint ourselves a little more fully with the facts brought out by this witness, and their bearing upon the purpose of the Gospel.

Unless the reader has already made a study of the testimony of John the Baptist, it is very unlikely, if he were asked how many times he is mentioned by name in the Gospels and the Acts, that his answer would be anywhere near the correct number. John the Baptist is actually mentioned no less than ninety times in the New Testament, whereas John, the writer of the Gospel, is mentioned only thirty-five times by name, including the references in the Revelation.

Luke, in his first chapter, gives the detailed story of the Baptist's birth, and in chapter 3 speaks of his unworthiness when compared with the One Who was to follow:

'And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not; John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I cometh, the latchet of Whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire' (Luke 3:15,16).

The Lord's own testimony to His forerunner we find in Matthew:

'... A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send My messenger before Thy face, which shall prepare Thy way before Thee. Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist' (11:9-11).

The events immediately associated with the birth of John the Baptist obviously indicated the arrival of some one of no small importance, and it is not surprising that those who heard of them said, 'What manner of child shall this be?' We must also remember the testimony of the Acts to the fact that his ministry had had an effect outside the land of Palestine, for we find that Apollos of Alexandria, and the twelve disciples at Ephesus had come under its influence (18:25; 19:1-4). The greater must be the King he represents: if the forerunner therefore be so great, Whose shoe-latchet John felt himself not worthy to unloose, how great must He be!

John opens his testimony in verse 19 by recording the questions put to John the Baptist and his answers to them. The priests and Levites sent from Jerusalem simply asked the question, 'Who art thou?' They did not actually say, 'Art thou the Christ?' but knowing that this question was uppermost in men's minds (see Luke 3:15), John anticipates the inquiry by confessing - 'denying not, but confessing', 'I am not the Christ'. Let us pause a moment here. John says that those who asked the question were 'Jews'. Matthew refers to his own people as 'Jews' only once (28:15), his other four references being the statements of others. Mark speaks of the Jews only once out of six occurrences, when he describes, apparently for the sake of the Gentile reader, the Jewish custom of washing (Mark 7:3). And Luke, who has the Gentile reader in mind, has only two references out of a total of five (7:3, 23:51). John, on the other hand, uses the word 'Jew' sixty-eight times, an indication that by the time he wrote his Gospel, his own people had ceased to be a nation, and could only be referred to by the name in common use among the Gentiles. In contrast with John's sixty-eight references to the 'Jews' we must place his four references to 'Israel' (1:31,49; 3:10; 12:13), and Matthew's twelve references. These are significant numbers, especially as we view them in the light of Israel's position before and after Acts 28.

The Sanhedrin were well within their province when they sent to ask John the Baptist who he was, for they were responsible for the religious life of the people. Seeing that John so emphatically denied that he was the Christ, his questioners ask, 'Art thou Elias?' There is an insistent testimony in the Rabbinical writings to the expectation that Elijah would appear just before the advent of the Messiah, an expectation justified by the prophecy of Malachi 4:5. John answers this second inquiry with the words, 'I am not'. The deputation then puts one more question, 'Art thou that prophet?' This is a reference to the promise of Deuteronomy 18:18, a promise fulfilled in Christ Himself. John answers with the one word, 'No'. A mere negative, however, would not be a satisfactory answer to take back to the Sanhedrin, and the Jews therefore put their question in another form: 'Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself?' To many, alas, such a question would open the door to pride, but John remains true. He begins by saying, 'I am a voice - not even 'I am *the* voice' for there is no article - and then he goes on to explain that he is the forerunner promised by Isaiah, and that the One Whose coming he announced was none other than the *Lord*.

This, however, raised further problems in the minds of the Jews. The teaching of the Rabbis was that the world would be restored at the coming of the Messiah, and Kimchi speaks of the Rabbinical tradition that Elijah would so purify the people at his coming that even the illegitimate child would be restored to the congregation. If then John the Baptist, with his baptism and his new order of things, was neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor 'that prophet', by what authority did he baptize? We learn from the account that those who asked the question were 'of the Pharisees', a sect which was most scrupulous regarding ceremonial. Hitherto baptism had been employed when Gentile proselytes were admitted into the commonwealth of Israel, but now John is baptizing Jews as well, and they naturally ask for an explanation. John is only too ready to give the answer. He tells them that his baptism is but an introductory ceremony. Someone infinitely superior to himself was already among them, for Whose advent it was John's office to prepare.

Following this catechism of John comes his own spontaneous testimony in verses 29-34. Here we come at once to the heart of the Gospel. At one step we leave the arguments of the Pharisees and their

scruples concerning baptism, for the clear and evangelical testimony of verse 29: 'Behold the Lamb of God, Which taketh away the sin of the world'. Here, in one brief, clear-cut sentence is crystallized the supreme purpose of the prologue. It was for this purpose that the Word was made flesh.

'In the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in His sight' (Col. 1:22).

'... that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver ...' (Heb. 2:14,15).

This same purpose, expressed in varied language, is the testimony of prophet, evangelist and apostle alike.

Throughout the sacrificial system of the law of Moses, the offering of a lamb is of constant recurrence. No Jew could forget that at the beginning of every year (Exod. 12:1) there was the offering of the Passover lamb, and at the beginning and end of each day the sacrifice of a lamb upon the altar. There would be one passage, however, that would be uppermost in their minds when they heard the cry, 'Behold the Lamb of God' - the well-known passage in Isaiah 53.

‘... He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter’ (7).

‘... He shall bear their iniquities’ (11).

‘... He bare the sin of many’ (12).

It was John’s testimony that he was the forerunner of the Lord of Isaiah 40, and of the Lamb of Isaiah 53.

The phrase, ‘which taketh away the sin of the world’ is not recorded by the other evangelists. Matthew, for example, says, ‘He shall save *His people* from their sins’. John, however, rejoices to put on record this early testimony. It also is interesting to note, in passing, that the next occurrence of the word, *kosmos* ‘world’, is in 3:16.

The title ‘The Lamb’ (*amnos*) used by John in 1:29 is not found in the other three Gospels. A similar word *arnion* is used in the Revelation, where it occurs as a title of Christ no less than twenty-eight times (4 x 7). It is never used in the epistles of Paul.

John now reverts to the purpose of his baptizing, and explains that it was appointed, among other things, as a means of identifying the Messiah. Comparing the record in Matthew 3 with that of John 1 we gather that John the Baptist had a personal knowledge of the Lord and knew about His birth and His exemplary life. What he did not know, however, until the sign was given was that ‘Jesus is the Christ’. That sign he saw, and so John the Baptist becomes the first of a long line of witnesses, leading up to the closing testimony of chapter 20: ‘*Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God*’.

The significance of the words, ‘the spirit descending and remaining on Him’, is explained more fully in 3:34. As Alford says:

‘We receive Him only *as we can*, only as far as our receptivity extends *by measure*; but He, into the very fulness and infinite capacity of His Divine Being’.

We must now pass on to the second testimony, this time a collective witness.

Andrew, Philip and Nathanael (1:35-51)

‘We have found Him - Messiah, Son of God, King of Israel’.

We have, in 1:19-51 a testimony given on four consecutive days.

- 1st day.* - The testimony of John to those sent to him from the Sanhedrin. - The Lord, the Coming One, Who was preferred before him (19-28).
- 2nd day.* - The testimony of John to all who attended. - His baptizing at Bethabara. The Lamb of God. The Son of God. He who baptizeth with Holy Spirit (29-34).
- 3rd day.* - The testimony of John - The Lamb of God, and Andrew - The Messiah (35-42).
- 4th day.* - The testimony of Philip and Nathanael. - Him of Whom Moses wrote. The Son of God. The Son of man. The King of Israel (43-51).

We have considered the testimony of John the Baptist on the first and second days: we have now to hear the testimony given by others on the two following days. First let us discover the structure, so that the salient features may be made manifest.

- A 35. The next day. John and the two disciples. They followed Him.
- | | |
|--|---|
| B ₁ 36-39. JOHN'S.
TESTIMONY | a 36. The Lamb of God.
b 38. Rabbi.
c 39. Come and see. |
| B ₂ 40-42. ANDREW'S.
TESTIMONY | d 41. Findeth Simon.
e 41. We have found the Messiah. |
- A 43. The next day. Jesus and Philip. Follow Me.
- | | |
|--|---|
| B ₁ 43-46. PHILIP'S.
TESTIMONY | d 45. Findeth Nathanael.
e 45. We have found Him.
c 46. Come and see. |
| B ₂ 46-51. NATHANAEL'S
TESTIMONY | b 49. Rabbi.
a 49-51. Son of God. Son of Man. King of Israel. |

The keen speaker or preacher, desirous of giving out the best that the Lord has given him, is often sensitive about repeating himself. We speak feelingly on this matter for we have several times hesitated to go over the ground already traversed, yet, for the sake of some newcomer, we have risked incurring the censure of mere repetition, only to find afterwards that the help directed towards the one was welcome to not a few. Paul has given his testimony to this same thing in Philippians 3:1, and John the Baptist exemplifies it in the following passage:

‘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’ (John 1:35-37).

We do not know if these two disciples had been present the previous day, but if they had, the repetition of the testimony seems to have been blessed to them, and if they had not they now had the opportunity of heeding it. John knew that he must decrease, and the movement of his two disciples was for him the beginning of the end. But what a glorious end, to preach away one’s disciples so that they become followers of Christ. It seems that our Saviour, seeing them following Him, encouraged them by the inquiry, ‘What seek ye?’ It is salutary that we should be met with this question at the beginning of our discipleship. What are we seeking? What is our quest? What are our motives? Their reply was simple, almost naïve, ‘Rabbi, where dwellest Thou?’ It will be observed that the apostle here feels called upon parenthetically to interpret for his reader the title of ‘Rabbi’. This, of itself, indicates the writer’s anticipation of his Gospel having a Gentile audience, and a Gentile audience far removed from Jewish influence. Any synagogue-goer would know the meaning of ‘Rabbi’ and even those Gentiles to whom Paul spoke in the synagogue at Antioch would have no need of John’s interpretation. When, however, we observe that in this Gospel interpretation of Hebrew or Aramaic terms is customary, it becomes evident that the readers John envisaged could not have been Jews. Not only is ‘Rabbi’ interpreted, but so also is ‘Messias’ (1:41), ‘Cephas’ (1:42), ‘Siloam’ (9:7) and ‘Rabboni’ (20:16).

Possibly the question ‘Where dwellest Thou?’ covered deeper feelings, but, whatever their degree, the Lord is not One Who quenches smoking flax, and He replied by the invitation, ‘Come and see’. No description is given of the humble abode of the Son of God, but one cannot refrain from thinking of the wonder of those few hours spent beneath that roof with such a teacher. From that abode these two disciples went forth with the conviction that they had found the Messiah. ‘One of the two which heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother’ (1:40). Who was the other, unnamed, disciple? John never names himself in this Gospel: in the ordinary way he would almost certainly have given the names of both disciples. So also we read:

‘And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high priest’ (18:15).

‘When Jesus therefore saw His mother, 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’ (19:26,27).

Again, in John 20:2,3,4,8 and 21:7,20,23,24, we have references to ‘that disciple’. The last reference, however, leaves no room for doubt: ‘This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things’.

The statement in verse 41, ‘He first findeth his own brother Simon’, seems to demand the sequel, ‘and John then found his own brother James’. However, it is to Andrew’s testimony that attention must now be given. ‘We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ’ (1:41).

The express object of John’s Gospel is that we may believe that ‘Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name’ (20:31). Andrew’s testimony, therefore, is timely, and if we need to be informed on the point, we may learn from the parenthesis that ‘the Christ’ is the Greek interpretation of the Hebrew ‘Messiah’. We may then discover that the ‘Messiah’ is ‘the Anointed’, *Mashiach* (Psa. 2:2), and that this anointing applies to the Prophet (1 Kings 19:16), the Priest (Exod. 29:7), and the King (2 Sam. 2:4). The choice of every theme in John’s Gospel, the production of every witness, and the omission of much that is found in other Gospels is made with the view of demonstrating this glorious fact. Andrew’s testimony therefore is directly to the point. Jesus Christ is the Messiah, the Son of God. The Lord confirms the faith of the disciples in His Messiahship, by the renaming of Simon. The name Cephas means ‘a stone’, and renaming proved to be prophetic (Matt. 16:16-18).

We must now turn to Philip’s testimony. We do not know how Philip became acquainted with the Lord; whether he also had heard John the Baptist; or whether his was a personal call, but we are informed that Philip was of the same city as Andrew and Peter, a circumstance of itself likely to form a bond between them. However that may be, the Lord would go into Galilee, and He wanted disciples, and Philip was called. Before leaving for Galilee, Philip emulates

Andrew's example, and finds Nathanael, saying: 'We have found Him, of Whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph' (1:45).

Instead of using the title of 'the Messiah' Philip refers to the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy that pointed Him out. It is unjustifiable to magnify the added words, 'the son of Joseph' into a text from which to discuss the validity of the virgin birth. The Gospel of Matthew, which clearly sets Joseph aside so far as actual parenthood is concerned (1:18-25), gives the genealogy of the Saviour through 'Joseph the husband of Mary', and Luke who gives very explicit information about the virgin birth of Christ, says in Luke 3:23: 'And Jesus Himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph'. Mary, herself, who certainly knew the facts concerning the birth of Christ, did not hesitate to say to Him, 'Thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing' (Luke 2:48). Philip's remark therefore cannot rightly be made into a theological term. He said what all said, 'the son of Joseph', for such He was 'in law'.

The testimony of Nathanael gathers up what has been distributed among the witnesses, and brings the opening set of testimony to a climax. Like Thomas, Nathanael was not easily convinced. He seized on the reference to 'Nazareth', saying, 'Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?' (1:46). This was the attitude of mind which prompted the rejoinder of the officers of the chief priest: 'Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet' (7:52). The fact that John records the opinion of Nathanael regarding Nazareth, and the opinion of the leaders of the Jews regarding Galilee (and we must remember that Christ was called 'the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee' Matt. 21:11), suggests that he was here meeting an objection.

Some who knew the prophecy concerning Bethlehem may not have known how it could be reconciled with the reference to Nazareth. Here it is faced, though not explained. Possibly the emphasis on Bethlehem fits the kingdom purpose of Matthew, and the emphasis on 'Galilee of the nations' and despised Nazareth, fits the world-wide purpose of John's Gospel. Apparently Philip did not debate the matter with Nathanael, but used the argument that had proved irresistible with Andrew and John, 'Come and see'. As Nathanael approached the Lord, the Saviour said: 'Behold an Israelite indeed in whom is no guile' (1:47). Had there been a trace of guile in Nathanael's character he would have affected a little modesty and disclaimed such an

unqualified description of his character as flattering, but, genuinely guileless, he accepts the description as true, nevertheless asks in astonishment how the Lord could thus know his character. The answer revealed that he stood before a Prophet: 'Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee' (1:48).

It was not unusual for some such place of seclusion to be sought for prayer, and the fact that the Lord had knowledge not only of Nathanael's character, but of his private devotions, brought him to his great confession: 'Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel' (1:49).

There is something in Nathanael's sudden conversion that reminds one of Thomas, and the very reply of the Lord to Nathanael has something reminiscent in it of the scene in that room when the disciples were assembled, described in 20:26-29.

'... Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these. 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' (1:50,51).

'Verily' is the translation of the word *Amen*, a word brought over from the Hebrew into the Greek. John is the only one that records these double Amens of the Lord, of which there are no less than twenty-five. The words are used to introduce some teaching or statement of importance, and we feel that we cannot omit presenting to the reader the complete list so that, should time permit, he may be able to weigh them over in the balance of the sanctuary.

The Double Verities (Amens) of John's Gospel

Verily, verily, I say unto you. Open heaven. Angels ascending and descending (1:51).

Verily, verily, I say unto thee. Without new birth, cannot see kingdom (3:3).

Verily, verily, I say unto thee. Unless born of water and spirit, no entrance (3:5).

Verily, verily, I say unto thee. We speak that we do know (3:11).

Verily, verily, I say unto you. The Son can do nothing of Himself (5:19).

Verily, verily, I say unto you. He that heareth ... hath ... life (5:24).

Verily, verily, I say unto you. The dead shall hear ... and live (5:25).

Verily, verily, I say unto you. Ye seek Me ... because ye did eat ... (6:26).

Verily, verily, I say unto you. Moses gave you not that bread from heaven (6:32).

Verily, verily, I say unto you. He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life (6:47).

Verily, verily, I say unto you. Except ye eat ... drink ... no life (6:53).

Verily, verily, I say unto you. Whosoever commits sin is its servant (8:34).

Verily, verily, I say unto you. If a man keep My saying ... never see death (8:51).

Verily, verily, I say unto you. Before Abraham was, I am (8:58).

Verily, verily, I say unto you. Thieves climb up some other way (10:1).

Verily, verily, I say unto you. I am the door of the sheep (10:7).

Verily, verily, I say unto you. Except wheat ... die ... abideth alone (12:24).

Verily, verily, I say unto you. Servant is not greater than his lord (13:16).

Verily, verily, I say unto you. He that receiveth whom I send, receiveth Me (13:20).

Verily, verily, I say unto you. One of you shall betray Me (13:21).

Verily, verily, I say unto thee. The cock shall not crow, before denial (13:38).

Verily, verily, I say unto you. The believer shall do greater works (14:12).

Verily, verily, I say unto you. Ye shall weep ... but it will turn to joy (16:20).

Verily, verily, I say unto you. Whatever you ask in My Name, (16:23).

Verily, verily, I say unto thee. When young ... girdest self ... when old another gird thee (21:18).

Unless one can bring to the task unlimited time and patience, and has available unlimited space, analysis of this formidable list is doomed to failure. That these sentences, so solemnly introduced, are of the greatest weight we have no doubt, and we shall better appreciate their contribution to the great testimony of the whole if we note their place and association as the story of this Gospel unfolds. We therefore keep the list before us for future reference. There is no reason, of course, why the reader should not make his own analysis. He will soon discover that these statements of our Lord have to do with life and death, the kingdom and service, or the Lord's own relationship with the Father and the believer. For example, he may observe that the fourteenth reference is the great 'I am' passage (8:58). So far, however, we have enough in hand to cope with the first of these double Amens.

When attempting to show the way in which John refers to Christ as the Word, and the Word made flesh, we said, speaking of the philosophical use of *logos* and the failure of human wisdom,

'As we realize the immensity of the gulf that yawned between the far-off Platonist God, and the things of time and sense, we may perhaps better understand why the Lord used the figure of Jacob's ladder as representing Himself in John 1:51'.

At the top, as it were, of Nathanael's opening confession stands 'The Son of God'. At the bottom stands the Lord's own assumption, 'The Son of man'. Jacob, before he became 'an Israelite indeed' (for he had manifested considerable guile), was vouchsafed the vision of Bethel.

'... he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, the LORD stood above it' (Gen. 28:12,13).

The Rabbis have allowed their fancy full rein in connection with Jacob's ladder, and while it would be waste of space to give quotations from their speculations, their prevalence would make the Lord's allusion to Jacob's ladder quite reasonable in Nathanael's ears. The bringing of heaven and earth together, the placing of the Son of God at the one extreme and the Son of man at the other, is perhaps the most important feature of the imagery.

With the testimony of Nathanael the opening witness to the person and work of Christ comes to a close. We now approach the great central portion of the Gospel, chapters 2:1 to 21:14, and the witness we shall there hear will be not only that of men, but of miracle; not only the testimony of fallible flesh and blood, but of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. To this great theme we must now address ourselves, and we hope that in doing so many hours of delightful fellowship will be ours in tracing the testimony of the eight signs up to their evangelical conclusion, 'Life through His name' (20:31).

The Marriage in Cana (2:1-12)

The First of the Eight Signs

Having given our attention to the successive witnesses that are brought forward by John in substantiation of the great truth unfolded in the prologue (1:1-18), we arrive at the body of the Gospel, extending from chapter 2:1 to chapter 21:14, and with the opening of the second chapter we come to the first of the eight signs that are so distinctive a characteristic of the Gospel. We have already given the outline structure of this great section on page 4, and have shown how these eight signs form as it were the backbone of the book.

We must now acquaint ourselves with another remarkable feature, which has been dealt with very fully in Appendix 176 of *The Companion Bible*. As it takes at least two pages of type to set out in full the inter-relationship of these eight signs, we shall adopt the briefer method of setting out the grouping in skeleton only, and then, as our studies proceed, lift out each pair of signs and show their balance *in extenso*.

The Eight Signs of John's Gospel

A 2:1-11. THE MARRIAGE IN CANA. The third day.

No wine. Glory manifested.

B 4:43-52. THE NOBLEMAN'S SON. After two days.

At the point of death.

- C 5:1-15. THE IMPOTENT MAN. Pool. 38 years.
Sabbath. Sin.
- D 6:1-14. FEEDING OF FIVE THOUSAND.
The only sign (with *D*) recorded in
the other Gospels.
- D 6:15-21. WALKING ON THE SEA.
The only sign (with *D*) recorded in
the other Gospels.
- C 9:1-41. THE MAN BORN BLIND. Pool. From birth.
Sabbath. Sin.
- B 11:1-46. THE SISTERS' BROTHER. Two days. Lazarus is
dead.
- A 21:1-14. THE DRAUGHT OF FISHES. The third time. No meat.
Lord manifested.

We now lift out the first and eighth signs, in order to show their complete parallelism.

A 2:1-11. **THE MARRIAGE IN CANA.**

- a 1:49-51. THE BACKGROUND. - Nathanael's diffidence, then full confession.
- b 2:1. THE PLACE. - Galilee.
- c 2:1. TIME. - The third day.
- d 2:2. INVITATION. - Jesus called, and His disciples.
- e 2:3. FAILURE CONFESSED. - They have no wine.
- f 2:6. NUMBERS. - Six waterpots, two or three firkins.
- g 2:7. COMMAND. - Fill the waterpots with water.
- h 2:7. OBEDIENCE. - They filled them.
- i 2:7. WATERPOTS FILLED. - Up to the brim.
- j 2:8. THE SERVANTS. - The servants bare
(*enenkan*).
- k 2:11. RESULT. Glory manifested (*ephanerosen*).

A 21:1-14. **THE DRAUGHT OF FISHES.**

- a 20:24-29. THE BACKGROUND. - Thomas' unbelief, then full confession.
- b 21:1. THE PLACE. - Galilee.
- c 21:14. TIME. - The third time.
- d 21:12. INVITATION. - Come and dine.
- e 21:3,5. FAILURE CONFESSED. - Nothing. No meat.
- f 21:8,11. NUMBERS. - 200 cubits; 153 fishes.
- g 21:6. COMMAND. - Cast net into water.
- h 21:6. OBEDIENCE. - They cast therefore.
- i 21:8,11. NETS FILLED. - So many.
- j 21:10. THE DISCIPLES. - Bring the fish
(*enenkate*).
- k 21:14. RESULT. - Manifested (*ephanerothe*).
(*The Companion Bible*).

But as we discover that this detailed parallelism extends to the whole of the eight signs, it becomes evident that, not accident or coincidence accounts for the phenomenon, but purpose and design. John assures us that he had a wealth of material to select from, and if, out of hundreds of miracles performed, he selects but eight, we may well believe that these form such a chain of evidence, that they set forth 'the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of true grace', so fully that no further evidence could be demanded, or has been given. With these eight signs and the recurring 'witness' of this

Gospel, the evidence is complete, and since that moment heaven has been silent.

In the record of the opening sign at Cana the first assertion is one referring to time: 'And the third day there was a marriage'. We have already seen that John 1:19-51 gives the witness of four consecutive days: 1st day (19-28); 2nd day (29-34); 3rd day (35-42); 4th day (43-51); 7th day (i.e., third day after last event, 2:1). It was on the seventh day of the creation week that the Lord rested and the day was sanctified. On the seventh thousand year-day of earth's great week, the sabbath-keeping for the children of God shall come (Heb. 4:9, *sabbatismos*), and 'The Marriage of the Lamb'. On the first day of his testimony John the Baptist pointed out the Lord as 'The Lamb of God'; only the apostle John uses this title.

Dr. Lightfoot gives a long list of laws and regulations regarding marriage, as found in the Talmud and Rabbinical writings, but it is only the last of these that has any bearing upon John 2. 'The nuptial festival was continued for the whole seven days'. We find Laban saying to Jacob at the marriage of Leah, and also at his request for Rachel, 'Fulfil her week'.

As seems to have been the case at Cana, it will easily be understood that at a festivity extending over a period of seven days, the supply of wine might prematurely run out.

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

The way in which Mary speaks and acts in this passage makes it fairly clear that she was a relative of the household, and the fact that she told the Lord of the lack of wine indicates that she was in expectation of some action on His part to remedy the fault, for she knew of the baptism of John, the descent of the Spirit as a dove, and the attestation of the Baptist and others. To our ears, the Saviour's reply sounds rather abrupt, but we must remember that the use of the word 'woman' was a respectful form of address, as can be seen from 19:26 and 20:13,15. We must also understand that these words were spoken exclusively for Mary's ear, and that we have nothing to indicate the accompanying tone, inflection or look that so modify the spoken word. On more than one occasion the Lord had to check the intrusion of even His own mother, into that sphere which lay outside all earthly relationships. At the age of twelve, when Mary, having

found Him in the Temple, said, 'Behold thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing', the Lord gently told them that these home ties were to be broken and that He must soon be about His Father's business (Luke 2:48,49). Similarly, on another occasion, when 'His brethren and His mother' sought Him, He answered 'Who is my mother, or my brethren?' (Mark 3:31-35). Again, the expression, 'What have I to do with thee?' may not have sounded so harsh in Mary's ear as in ours, for it seems to have been a Hebraism, and therefore not to be taken by us too literally. It was used in 2Samuel 16:10 and 19:22 by David, and in 1 Kings 17:18, by the widow to Elijah. It was also used by the demons who were cast out by the Lord (Matt. 8:29; Mark 1:24; Luke 4:34). The words were however decisive enough, and indicated that the Lord had now embarked upon that ministry wherein the Father's will alone was supreme and which inflexibly led on to the death of the cross. The words 'Mine hour is not yet come' seem to suggest that the cross was in mind, even at the marriage at Cana. Some have said that, in the present case, no such solemn association must be read into the words, but the way in which this saying recurs in this Gospel compels us to see in this first occurrence, even at a festive marriage scene, the shadow of the cross. Here are the eight occurrences of this or similar expressions:

'Mine hour is not yet come'. Answer to mother's suggestion (2:4).

'My time is not yet come'. Answer to brethren's suggestion (7:6).

'My time is not yet full come'. Reason for secrecy at feast (7:8).

'His hour was not yet come'. Hence, no man laid hands on Him (7:30).

'His hour was not yet come'. Hence, no man laid hands on Him (8:20).

'The hour is come'. Greeks seek Him. Death mentioned (12:23).

'Jesus knew that His hour was come'. His departure from the world spoken of (13:1).

'Father, the hour is come'. The work finished (17:1).

To this list might be added 12:27 and 16:25,32.

Whatever view we may take, it is clear from her caution to the servants, which immediately follows, that Mary did not feel altogether set aside: 'Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it'.

Before proceeding it is necessary to notice the material with which the Lord worked.

‘And there were set there six water pots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece’ (John 2:6).

Authorities differ as to the exact amount of water a firkin represents. The LXX uses the word to translate the Hebrew measure of a ‘bath’ (2 Chron. 4:5). Josephus says, ‘Now a bath is able to contain seventy-two sextaries’ (*Ant.* viii. 2, 9). As a sextarie was a little under an English pint, a firkin was probably about eight or nine gallons. *The Companion Bible* gives for ‘bath’, ‘about six English gallons’, and for ‘firkin’, ‘about nine gallons’. If we take the highest figures, that is six water pots at three firkins, and each firkin reckoned as nine gallons, we have a total of one hundred and sixty-two gallons; if we take the lowest figures, six water pots at two firkins and each firkin reckoned as six gallons, we have the total seventy-two gallons, which gives us a mean of 117 gallons. This amount of water may seem excessive, but we have checked our findings with other commentators and find that there is general agreement. Alford makes the amount 126 gallons; a figure endorsed by Bloomfield. Theodoret, born at Antioch A.D. 386, says, ‘Follow in these things Josephus, who well understood the measures of the nation’.

It was the ceremonial necessities of the Jews that brought into requisition such large quantities of water. For instance, we learn from a rabbinical writer, that:

‘They allot a fourth part of a log (a log is two-thirds of a pint) for the washing of one person’s hands, it may be of two; half a log for three or four; and a whole log for five or ten, to a hundred; with the provision, said Rabbi Jose, that the last that washeth, hath no less than a fourth of a log to himself’ (*Jadaim* Cap. i. pat. 1).

It will thus be seen that so large a quantity of water as has been considered would not be at all out of place for a festival lasting seven days, and at which a number of guests were present.

The question that now arises is ‘Why was so enormous a quantity of wine provided at the end of the feast?’ To this question all sorts of answers have been given. Unbelievers and critics have cavilled at it or made unseemly fun of it. Devout commentators have sought to justify

the superfluity by various conjectures. Before we attempt a solution let us first make sure from Scripture that the Lord made such a quantity. The general belief is that the whole six water pots were converted into wine. This however we hope to show is not the case. Our attention was drawn to this, many years ago, by a writer whose name we have forgotten, or we would have given him his due, but seeing that in 'that day' sower and reaper shall stand together, all is well.

The water pots were first of all filled to the brim with water. This water must have been drawn from a well, and the fact that the servants passed and repassed from the well to the water pots would suffice to show that there had been no tampering with the water beforehand. When the last drop of water was emptied into the water pots, the Lord said 'Draw out now', and the reader, in spite of the statement that the water pots were for purification, jumps to the conclusion that He meant the servants to 'draw out of the water pots'. This however, we believe is not so, and here is the reason for our belief.

The word translated 'draw out' is *antleo*. *Antleo* is derived from *antlos*, 'the hold of a ship where bilge water settles', and so came to stand for 'the bilge water' itself. *Antlema* is 'a bucket', and *antleo* meant in the classics 'to bale' out a ship. In the LXX version of the Old Testament it is confined to the one idea of drawing water from a well.

'Moses stood up and helped them, and *drew water* for them and watered their flock' (Exod. 2:17 LXX).

'An Egyptian ... *drew water* for us, and watered our sheep' (Exod. 2:19).

'Lo, I stand by the well of water, and the daughters of the men of the city come out to *draw water* ... (Gen. 24:13).

'Therefore with joy, shall ye *draw water* out of the wells of salvation' (Isa. 12:3).

The only other occurrence in the LXX is Proverbs 9:12, where the word is used in a highly figurative sense 'to bear' evil, a use of that word that demands a deeper acquaintance with manners and customs than we possess. We have recorded the passage for the sake of completeness, but it makes no contribution to the point at issue.

We now come to the use of *antleo* in the New Testament and find that there are four occurrences, John 2:8,9; 4:7 and 15, and one occurrence of *antlema*, 'a bucket', 'something to draw with' (4:11). These references are, confessedly, to drawing water out of a very deep well, and the references in the LXX all speak to the same effect.

With this information we return to the marriage at Cana and understand what the Lord did. After the servants had filled the water pots to the brim, in full view of the guests, He said, in effect, 'Go now once more to the well, and draw out again, but, this time, take it to the governor of the feast'. Having tasted it the governor expressed astonishment at its excellent quality, and that his testimony was entirely unbiassed is clear from the words, and 'knew not whence it was'. We are told however that the servants which drew (*antleo*, drew out of a well, with an *antlema*, a bucket) knew.

The method adopted by our Lord was such that everyone must have admitted the genuineness of the miracle. In this Gospel we are dealing with 'testimony', hence this very evident miracle is brought forward.

'This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth His glory; and His disciples believed on Him' (John 2:11).

John had already said that he had beheld 'His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of real grace' and in this miracle that glory was 'manifested'.

The homely associations of marriage and the turning of water into wine, form a striking contrast with the severe character of John the Baptist who came 'neither eating nor drinking'. Ceremonial water gives place to wine, the Law of Moses to true grace, and out of this fulness all we have received. Not only did the Lord 'manifest' His glory, but the great aim of the Gospel was attained also, 'His disciples believed on Him'.

Matthew uses the word *dunamis*, 'wonderful works' (7:22), 'mighty works' (11:20,21,23; 13:54,58; 14:2), a word used also by Mark and Luke to describe the Lord's miracles. This word is not used by John, but, in its stead he uses *semeion*, which is translated 'miracle' thirteen times, and 'sign' four times. The Synoptic Gospels use *semeion* about as many times as they use *dunamis*. John's purpose is not to point out mighty power, but to provide evidence. Just as the

miracles wrought by Paul were 'signs' of his apostleship (2 Cor. 12:12), so were these miracles selected as signs of 'the apostle' (Heb. 3:1), the great 'Sent One', the Son of God.

The fact that this miracle was the 'beginning' of miracles nullifies the validity of the fantastic traditions that have come down from early days of the miracles wrought by the child Jesus, just as the setting aside of Mary in the fourth verse of the chapter is the death blow of Mariolatry. When he has 'beheld His glory', man needs not the intercession of saints, angels or the Virgin.

CHAPTER 4

Testimony in Jerusalem, Judaea and Samaria (2:13 to 4:42)

Jerusalem. The Temple cleansed (2:13-23)

We now come to the first of the six links in the chain that binds together the eight signs. The inter-relation of these links with the signs themselves and the six links as a whole have been set out on pp. 20,21. In each of these links there is an emphasis on works and faith, except in the second case, where, although work is performed, it is not specifically mentioned.

The passage before us is 2:13 to 4:42, and we find that this is balanced by 11:47 to 20:31.

- A 2:13 to 4:42. Jerusalem, Judaea, Samaria.
'My meat is ... to finish His work'.
- A 11:47 to 20:31. Ephraim, Bethany, Jerusalem.
'I have finished the work'.

Each of the geographical subdivisions in the first of these sections leads up to a great Messianic witness, and continues the testimony already given in 1:19-51.

JERUSALEM. 2:13 to 3:21. 'The Son of Man'. 'The only begotten Son of God' (3:13,18).

JUDAEA. 3:22 to 4:2. 'I am not the Christ'. 'The Son' (3:28,35,36).

SAMARIA. 4:3-42. 'I am He'. 'The Christ, the Saviour of the world' (4:26,42).

The wealth of material here is overwhelming, and, unless we exercise care, we may easily miss the main theme. In Jerusalem we have the cleansing of the Temple, the prophetic reference to the Lord's resurrection, the solemn words to Nicodemus, and the gospel illustrated by the brazen serpent. After this we have the controversy about purifying and the report that the Lord was attracting all men to Himself. This gives John the Baptist a further opportunity of witnessing for Christ. The Lord then enters Samaria, and we have the conversation with the woman at the well - a conversation that is full of teaching, as is the subsequent witness to Christ by the people of

Samaria. The ninety verses that comprise this section are replete with truth, doctrinal, dispensational and devotional. With such a wealth of subject-matter, we are only too conscious of our limitations, and we must therefore concentrate upon the salient points only; these we shall discover from an examination of the structure, which is given below.

THE TESTIMONY IN JERUSALEM. THE ONLY BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD,
THE SON OF MAN

- A₁ THE TEMPLE (2:13-23).
a 13. The Passover. Jerusalem.
b 14-16. The Temple. The Scourge.
c 17. Disciples remember the Scripture.
d 18. The Sign. Question.
b 19-21. The Temple. I will raise it up.
c 22. Disciples remember the Scripture.
a 23. The Passover. Jerusalem.
d 23. The Signs. Belief.
- A₂ NEW BIRTH (2:24 to 3:12).
e 24,25. Testimony not needed.
f 3:1,2. We know.
g 3. Verily, verily. The Lord.
h 4. How? Nicodemus.
g 5-8. Verily, verily. The Lord.
h 9. How? Nicodemus.
g 10,11. Verily, verily. The Lord.
f 10,11. We know.
e 11,12. Testimony not received.
- A₃ AIONION LIFE (3:13-21).
i 13. The Son of Man. Ascended.
j 13. He came down from heaven.
i 14. The Son of Man. Lifted up.
j 15. Perish. Eternal life.
i 16. The only begotten Son. Given.
j 16. Perish. Eternal life.
i 17. His Son. Sent.
j 17,18. Condemned. Saved.
i 18. The only begotten Son of God.
j 19-21. **k** Light has come.
l Deeds evil.
k Light. Not come.
l Deeds reprov'd.
k Light. Come.
l Deeds manifest.

Such, then, is the analysis of the testimony given in Jerusalem.

The section opens with a reference to the Passover, just as earlier John the Baptist had spoken of the Lord as 'The Lamb of God'. As a type of redemption the Passover teaches the absolute necessity of the shedding of blood, but as a 'feast' it also stresses the personal response of the participator, expressed, according to the law, by the removal of all leaven from the house. This symbolic purging out of the leaven is fulfilled in the Lord's cleansing of the Temple. In connection with this, there are two facts that should be noticed.

(1) This purging of the Temple was the Saviour's first public act at Jerusalem; (2) The cleansing of the Temple as recorded by Matthew, Mark and Luke, came after His public entry into Jerusalem riding upon the ass, and was His last public act in Jerusalem before His apprehension and crucifixion, which took place, as did the first cleansing of the Temple, just before the Passover.

In John, from under the fig tree the 'Israelite indeed in whom there was no guile' comes forth to acknowledge the Saviour as 'The King of Israel' (1:49). In Matthew, after the cleansing of the Temple (21:12), we have the Hosannas of the children, but the fig tree withers away (21:19,20), and the house is left desolate (23:38) until the second coming of the Lord takes place.

We do not believe that any of our readers will need detailed proof that the cleansing described by John and that recorded by Matthew are entirely distinct occurrences. The whole of the history of Israel, from the time of David up to the return from the Babylonian captivity, is vitally linked with the attitude of king and people to the House of God. Mere ceremonial is of no value, but true worship lies at the foundation of all truth. This same principle can be seen in operation even before the overthrow of the world, for we are told that Satan, whose fall is set forth under the figure of the King of Tyre in Ezekiel 28, was originally associated with holy things. He later became profane, and introduced 'merchandise' (28:16). Worship is the basic principle underlying the ten commandments, and the Satanic conflict of the ages has worship as its goal (Rev. 13:4 compare also Matt. 4:9). It will also be remembered that in the section of John that we are now considering the passage occurs that speaks of worshipping the Father in spirit and in truth (4:24).

In 1:23 John the Baptist declares that he had been sent before the Lord as a forerunner and that this was in fulfilment of the prophecy of Isaiah. It will be remembered that those sent by the Sanhedrin had inquired of John as to whether he was 'Elijah' and John had replied that he was not. At the same time Matthew 17:10-13 shows that there was a definite relationship between John the Baptist and Elijah, and at John's birth the angel declared that he should go before the Lord 'in the spirit and power of Elijah' (Luke 1:17).

The Jew who knew the Old Testament prophecies would not be slow in associating the Lord's sudden appearance in the Temple with the prophecy of Malachi: 'Behold, I will send My messenger, and he shall prepare the way before Me: and the Lord, Whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple ... He is like a refiner's fire ... He shall purify the sons of Levi ... Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD' (Mal. 3:1-3; 4:5). We see therefore, that the sudden appearance of the Lord, scourge in hand, was a public witness to His Messianic office.

Coming back to the actual record of 2:13-23; we read: 'And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem, and found in the Temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting' (2:13,14). While these particular verses speak of those that sold the various animals being found in the Temple, verse 15 clearly shows that the animals themselves were there. It also seems fairly clear from other records that the animals were actually brought into the court. The Talmud, for example, records the zeal of Baba Ben Bota, who, finding the court empty, sent and fetched three thousand sheep and brought them into the court of the Temple. It was also necessary that every Jew should pay his half-shekel. Maimonides speaks of its being 'an affirmative precept of the law, that every Israelite should *pay*, yearly, half a shekel'. A proclamation was made on the first day of the month Adar, in order that the people should get ready. On the fifteenth day, collectors sat in every street; and the twenty-fifth day they began to sit in the Temple - 'and then forced men to pay; and if they refused, they distrained'.

The Saviour's indignation was not roused by either the selling of the oxen or the changing of the money, for both operations were necessary, but rather by the greed that actuated the dealers, and the profits exacted by the money-changers. Taking up a few 'rush-ropes' (*schoinion*, from *schoinos* 'a rush') that had been used for tying the

cattle, the Lord drives the sheep and oxen out of the Temple, pours out the changers' money, and overthrows the tables, saying unto them that sold doves, 'Take these things hence: make not My Father's house an house of merchandise' (2:16). At the beginning of His public ministry, the Lord calls the Temple 'My Father's house', and refers to their 'merchandise'; at the close, He speaks of the Temple as having been made a 'den of thieves' and calls it 'your house' that is 'left unto you desolate'.

In 2:18 the Jews ask the Lord for a sign to justify His action in the Temple. Just as on another occasion He gave them 'the sign of the prophet Jonah', so here He speaks of the Temple as a symbol of His resurrection. The Jews, however, misunderstand the Lord's answer and say: 'Forty-and-six years was this temple in building, and wilt Thou rear it up in three days?' Josephus tells us in his *Antiquities* that the Temple was begun by Herod the Great in the eighteenth year of his reign. He also states that Herod lived thirty-seven years from that time and that in his thirty-fifth year Christ was born. If the Lord was thirty years old at the time of the cleansing of the Temple, then we have a period of forty-eight years, which if reckoned exclusively (i.e., not counting the opening or closing years which were incomplete) would become a period of forty-six years, as the Jews are reported to have said. The Temple was not actually completed until A.D. 64 under Herod Agrippa II, so that the Jews must have been referring to the part of it that had been finished up to that time. The disciples remembered the Lord's prophecy after His resurrection, and the Jews remembered it against Him, when they sought some evidence upon which to put Him to death. 'He spake of the temple of His body' (2:21). We have already drawn the reader's attention to the fact that when the Word was made flesh, He 'tabernacled' among us, and that this is connected with 'the glory of the Only Begotten of the Father' and the 'real grace' that was found in Him. So here, Herod's temple, though a magnificent structure and lavishly decorated, is contrasted with the living temple of the Lord's body. In the Jerusalem Talmud we read:

'In the second temple there wanted the fire from heaven, the Ark with the Propitiatory and the Cherubim, the Urim and Thummim, the Shechinah or tabernacling glory, the Hbly Ghost, and the anointing oil'.

‘Things are not asked or inquired after now (by Urim and Thummim) by the high priest, because he does not speak by the Holy Ghost, nor does any divine afflatus breathe on him’.

What the Temple of Zerubbabel and of Herod lacked, was found in its fulness and reality in the Lord Jesus. The fire from heaven, which spoke of the acceptance of the offering, found its fulfilment when heaven was opened and the voice was heard saying: ‘This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased’. The Ark, Propitiatory, and Cherubim are all included in the fact that Christ was ‘The Lamb of God’. The Urim and Thummim are found in Him too, and in the Holy Spirit of Whom He said: ‘He shall lead you into all truth’. We have already explained that the Shechinah glory is referred to in 1:14, and we also read that the Holy Ghost was not given to Him by measure. Finally, in connection with the anointing oil, we have the advent of the Messiah Himself, the Christ, the Anointed One.

Jerusalem. - The New Birth (2:24 to 3:12)

We have heard the first of the threefold testimony given in Jerusalem, and now take up the second witness given in Jerusalem, this time ‘by night’. The structure is simple, and has been set out on page 102. This section commences in the closing verses of chapter 2, where the words ‘He knew what was in man’ are followed by ‘there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus’, and we do not read far before we realize how truly ‘He knew’ what was in that man’s heart. Nicodemus is referred to by John on three different occasions:

- (1) As the man who came by night, as recorded in 3:2.
- (2) When he interposed at a meeting of the Pharisees, saying: ‘Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?’ (7:51).
- (3) After the death of Christ, when Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pound weight (19:39).

Nicodemus may have had more than one office and title, but he has passed into the Scriptures with but one title and will be known for all time as the Pharisee that ‘came to Jesus by night’ (3:2; 7:50; 19:39). We have had the clear, unselfish, testimony of John the Baptist, the bold announcement of Andrew, and the conviction of Nathanael, but what good purpose is served by the halting admission of this man who came by night? There are at least two great purposes served. (1)

Nicodemuses was a Pharisee, a Ruler, a man of some degree of learning. The testimony of such a man would be valuable addition to that of fishermen. (2) An enunciation of the doctrine of the new birth which lies near the root of the doctrine of *aionion* life; no birth, no life. This, of itself, was of extreme value and demanded early recognition.

As to Nicodemus himself little is known. A Nicodemus is mentioned by the Talmudists as a man of great wealth, and he is reported to have become a 'follower of Jesus', but this man flourished at the time of the destruction of the temple at Jerusalem. It is not, of course, impossible, that Nicodemus lived till that event, but the words of 3:4, 'when he is old', might have been a passing reference to himself. The matter cannot be settled and is of small importance. We do know, however, that he was a Pharisee, so that it will be of interest to note the part played by the Pharisees in John's record.

We learn from 3:25 that a dispute arose between the followers of John the Baptist and the Jews about purifying, and from the account it appears that an attempt was made to create jealousy, for these Jews went to John the Baptist, and referring to Christ, said, 'Behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to Him'. When the Lord knew that the Pharisees were using these circumstances for evil purposes He left Judaea (4:1-3). We meet with no further reference to the Pharisees until we are well through the seventh chapter, where we approach the Feast of Tabernacles and the urgency of the Lord's brethren upon Him to go up to the feast openly. The Jews sought Him at the feast also, and 'some said, He is a good man; others said, Nay; but He deceiveth the people' (7:12). Into this divided company, about half-way through the feast, the Lord came, and as a result of His boldness some of the people began to ask, 'Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ?' (7:26). Others, taking an opposite view, sought to lay hands upon Him. When the Pharisees heard that many of the people believed on Him, they sent officers to take Him (7:32), but the power of His testimony was such that these men were rendered powerless. Upon making their report the Pharisees asked, 'Are ye also deceived? Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on Him?' (7:45-48). It was here that Nicodemus made his ineffectual interposition (7:50-52). Failing to take the Lord by force, the Pharisees resort to guile, and we have the incident of the woman taken in adultery with the striking account of the conviction and discomfiture of the accusers (8:3,9), and for the first time we get the grave charge of blasphemy brought against

the Lord by the Pharisees (8:13). Then follows the miracle of the man born blind, his attempted intimidation by the Pharisees and their question, 'Are we blind also?' (9:40).

The raising of Lazarus is reported to the Pharisees, and they make the confession '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' (11:46-48).

Here is valuable testimony indeed, for the very enemies of the Lord admit the fact of the miracles, yet they are more concerned about the possible loss of prestige, 'their place and nation', than for the truth or Kingdom of God. Again, for the last time, the Pharisee is allowed to speak. We read:

'The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after Him' (John 12:19).

With the end of chapter 12 we reach the close of the Lord's public ministry, and here we meet a few more Nicodemus-like rulers:

'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' (John 12:42,43).

The reluctant testimony of a non-adherent is of great weight as evidence. This must be borne in mind as we attempt to assess the value of the recorded visit of Nicodemus, 'a ruler of the Jews'. Though he may have spoken only for himself, it seems probable that Nicodemus, when he said 'we know', intended the Lord to understand that the Rulers and Pharisees shared his conviction that this new ministry, attested as it was by undoubted miracles, proved that its Minister was a 'Teacher come from God', in spite of His despised Galilean connection and the fact that He was a Nazarene. The word 'Teacher', *didaskalos*, is the same as the word 'Master', an appellation to which men of Nicodemus' rank were entitled (3:10), and yet this highly-placed official of the Sanhedrin approached an unknown, and apparently unlearned, young visitor from Galilee by addressing Him as 'Rabbi'. This was in the nature of an intended concession. How many have since succumbed to similar approaches only 'that day' will reveal. But we have already been informed that our Lord 'knew what

was in man', and His 'answer' agreed with this divine knowledge, for instead of touching upon anything that Nicodemus had 'said', it answered the inmost need of his heart. It must have come as a shock to the pride and belief of Nicodemus to have his overtures apparently ignored, and a plain statement made to him of his need of a new birth. John the Baptist warned the Pharisees, saying: 'Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father' (Matt. 3:9), and in the eighth chapter of John we have a continued argument along the same lines (33,37,39,40,52,56,57,58).

Nicodemus knew and acknowledged that a proselyte became 'newborn', for 'if any one become a proselyte, he is like a child new-born' (Jeremoth). Maimonides taught that the Gentile proselyte was so really like a child new-born, that it became lawful for him to marry his own mother or the sister of his mother, and it was only forbidden upon other grounds. This at least will show that the idea could not have been entirely new to Nicodemus. What was new, and what was hard to hear, was, that *he*, a Ruler of the Jews, a Teacher in Israel, a Pharisee, an undoubted son of Abraham, needed the same new birth.

The words translated 'born again' are *gennethe anothēn*. Now the verb *gennaō* is used for *either* the begetting by a father, or the giving birth by a mother. This word that is used is translated in Matthew 1:1-20 'begat' thirty-nine times, 'born' once, and 'conceived' once. The word *anothen* occurs in John's Gospel as follows:

'Except a man be born *again*' (3:3).

'Ye must be born *again*' (3:7)

'He that cometh *from above*' (3:31).

'Except it were given thee *from above*' (19:11).

'Woven *from the top*' (19:23).

Elsewhere it is rendered 'from the top' (Matt. 27:51; Mark 15:38), 'from the very first', 'from the beginning' (Luke 1:3; Acts 26:5), 'from above' (Jas. 1:17; 3:15,17). *Ano* from which *anothen* is formed, is never translated 'again', but 'the brim', 'up', 'high' and 'above'.

The perplexed answer of Nicodemus, and his reference to natural motherhood, makes it evident that he took our Lord's words in a wrong sense. In effect, what the Saviour said to Nicodemus was that in spite of all his learning, his dignity and his racial connection with Abraham, he needed to be 'begotten from above'. What this begetting from

above implied is made known in the Lord's second statement. Here He replaces the word *anōthen*, 'from above', by 'water and spirit'. There is great need for care and unbiased judgment here. In the reference to 'water' and 'spirit', the Churchman, the Ritualist, and the Baptist, will find justification for baptism as a church ordinance. Those who have the light of dispensational truth, who know full well that there was no 'church' in formation during the opening weeks of Christ's public testimony, and have realized that for the church of the mystery there is but 'one baptism', which cannot be that of water; these have looked upon the expression 'water and spirit' as a figure of speech, and read 'spiritual water', i.e., 'not water but spirit'. We feel however that Nicodemus would not so understand our Lord's words. The visit of Nicodemus is divided from the witness of John the Baptist by only one chapter and by a few days. John and his baptism come before us once more before this chapter is finished (3:23). John had testified: 'I baptize with water ... the same is He Which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost' (1:26-33).

Among those who went to John's baptism were Pharisees, who received the warning 'think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham ... I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, Whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire' (Matt. 3:7,9,11).

We do not know whether Nicodemus himself had attended John's baptism, but some of the Pharisees had been baptized, and later many of the Rulers became secret believers, but Nicodemus is warned by the Lord of the futility of trusting to anything accomplished on, in, or by, the flesh, even though it be an ordinance of divine origin. Therefore before the evangelical note of eonian life is sounded, divine and spiritual begetting is shown to be absolutely necessary ('ye must') for admittance into the kingdom of God.

The utter repudiation of the flesh in 3:6, is somewhat veiled by the Authorized Version translation, a fault not rectified by the Revised Version. A literal rendering of the verse is: 'That which hath been begotten out of the flesh, is flesh; and that which hath been begotten out of the Spirit, is spirit'. The emphasis on 'out of' directs us to the source or origin. The perfect tense gives the thought 'that which has been and remains', like Pilate's 'What I have written, I have written',

an emphatic statement which carries home its message even to those unacquainted with the niceties of grammar.

The word 'flesh' has three shades of meaning in John's gospel:

- (1) The sinless humanity of the Son of God (1:14, &c.),
- (2) Mankind, 'power over all flesh' (17:2),
- (3) The flesh as representing fallen human nature and opposed to spirit. The reference, 'which were born, not ... of the will of the flesh' (1:13) may be referred to either (2) or (3), or both.

'It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life' (John 6:63).

'Ye judge after the flesh' (John 8:15).

These two references have in view fallen, erring man. The flesh in Nicodemus was identical with the flesh of the common and despised *fellaheen*. The attitude of mind that characterized the Pharisees and the Rulers of the time is expressed in the words:

'Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on Him? But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed' (7:48,49).

It was the same attitude of mind that led the Jews to marvel and to say: 'How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?' (7:15). But all the lore and learning of the law must be put aside as unprofitable, the pride of the Pharisee must be humbled, and the apostle Paul's testimony that there is 'no difference', either in the matter of sin or of salvation, must be accepted.

Much of what the Lord taught him should have been known by Nicodemus. He was a teacher of Israel, if not 'the teacher of Israel', as the presence of the article may indicate, but the Lord says he was 'ignorant of these things', yet he might have gathered the necessity of the spiritual begetting from Ezekiel 11:19,20 :

'And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take (away) the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh: that they may walk in My statutes, and keep Mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be My people, and I will be their God'.

Without this new spirit, no man of Israel could 'see' or 'enter' the kingdom of God.

The Lord follows this statement concerning the flesh and the spirit with the words:

'Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be begotten from above. 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 begotten of the Spirit' (3:7,8 Author's translation).

This is the only occasion in the New Testament where the words *to pneuma* are translated 'the wind', which word in 6:18 is *anemos* and is so translated thirty-one times. The word 'listeth' is *thelo*, 'to will', and is found in 5:21, 'quickeneth whom He *will*'. This word occurs twenty-three times in this Gospel, and in twenty-two of the references personal will is intended. The word 'sound' is *phone* and is always translated 'voice' in John's Gospel, except in 3:8 (see 1:23; 3:29; 5:25,28,37; 10:3,4,5,16,27; 11:43; 12:28,30; 18:37). Verse 8 therefore should be translated thus:

'The Spirit breatheth where He willeth, and thou hearest His voice, but thou knowest not whence He cometh or whither He goeth; thus is everyone that hath been begotten of the Spirit'.

To one who, like Nicodemus, was familiar with Old Testament prophecies, the connection between 3:6,8, and Ezekiel 11:19 (quoted above) and Ezekiel 37:9, 'Prophesy unto the wind ... breathe upon these slain that they may live', and Ezekiel 37:12-14, 'I will open your graves ... and shall put My spirit in you, and ye shall live', would be obvious, and to us who read the Gospel and remember the remote context of 5:21-29, with the parallels, 'quickeneth whom *He will*', 'all that are in the graves shall hear *His voice*', further associations will be suggested.

Nicodemus, however, apparently still held by the traditions of his sect and still holding to the advantages of being a physical descendant of Abraham, could only reply, 'How can these things be?' The Lord, perhaps with sorrow at the thickness of the veil that still blinded his eyes, said: 'Art thou the teacher of Israel, and knowest not these things?' Dr. Lightfoot tells us that there were four sorts of teachers. The teacher of children, public teachers in the synagogues, those who

had their 'midrashoth', or divinity schools, like the schools of Hillel and Shammai or Gamaliel, and those in the Sanhedrin, the great school of the nation. Of this company of the great doctors and teachers of the Sanhedrin, Nicodemus was one.

'Their divinity, that they taught and learned, was generally to this tenor: - to build upon their *birth privileges* from Abraham, to rest in the law, to rely upon their own works, to care for no faith but historical, to patter over prayers as efficacious ... How was it imaginable, that ever the doctrine of the new birth should be dreamed of among them, who looked for salvation upon such principles and terms as these?' (Dr. Lightfoot, Vol. v., p. 44).

The doctrine of the new birth is not a new revelation, it belongs to the Old Testament, and the Lord implied as much when He said to Nicodemus: 'If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?' (3:12). Any reference to 'heavenly' things should quicken the reader's interest, for such things may belong to his own calling and sphere. It will not be out of place, therefore, if we take a slightly wider survey than the reference in John might at first seem to warrant. But may we first of all speak a word about the use of the concordance?

The reader knows, but he may need reminding, that a concordance is a human invention, and should therefore be treated as such. A concordance deals simply with the *occurrences* of words, and it is entirely outside its scope to deal with the *meaning* of words. Further, while it is a good servant, it is a bad master. Let us show what we mean. Turn to any Greek -English concordance and open at the word *ge* and note that the occurrences occupy several columns of print. We are assured that we have before us every occurrence of the word *ge*. So far, so good. But what do we 'know' about this word? The first occurrence in the New Testament reads 'the *ge* of Judah' (Matt. 2:6), and we might (if we did not already know better) think that *ge* was something particularly connected with the Jews. The next reference is more extended but not fundamentally different, 'the *ge* of Israel' (2:20). We cannot here go through the 241 occurrences, so we omit a few lines and at 5:18 read, 'till heaven and *ge* pass' while at 13:5 we read, of seed, that it 'had no deepness of *ge*'. We pass over the Gospels and our eye lights on 1 Corinthians 15:47, 'the first man is of the *ge*'. We glance at Hebrews, where we find that 'Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the *ge* (1:10), and that this *ge*

'drinketh in the rain' (6:7), that if the Lord 'were on *ge*, He would not be a Priest' (8:4), and that Israel were led 'out of the *ge* of Egypt' (8:9).

The reader, however, is not misled by this assortment. He knows that the one word *ge* denotes the *earth* as distinct from heaven, the *ground* into which seed may be sown, or any particular *land*, whether of Judah, Egypt or elsewhere. *But the reader should remember that he does not get this from the concordance.* A spirit being, wishing to convince other spirit beings, who had no personal acquaintance with the earth, that these various meanings of the one word were fantastic and untrue, might impress some of his hearers by a formidable concordance of passages. To us it would prove nothing, but to them it might prove an end of all argument.

Now let us reverse the point of view and ask, What do we know of 'heaven' by acquaintance with it? Is it all one undivided space? Is there a top and bottom to it? Can it be measured by miles? Is it three-dimensional space? Is there anything outside or over heaven? If so, can anything that is over the heavens also be spoken of as in heaven? How can we answer? If at this point another, equally ignorant by acquaintance with the heavens, should produce a concordance of occurrences of the word 'heaven', the long list of words might impress the fearful, but it would no more 'prove' anything about 'heaven' than the list of the occurrences of the word *ge* proved that 'land' and 'ground' and 'earth' were all one and the same in meaning and intention.

Let us now turn from the known to the less known, and to the unknown. Let us turn from *ge*, 'earth' to *ouranos*, 'heaven'. The concordance presents us with a list of 283 occurrences. Let us proceed as we did with *ge*.

'The kingdom of *ouranos* (plural) is at hand' (Matt. 3:2).

'Behold the fowls of the *ouranos* (sing.)' (Matt. 6:26).

'The *ouranos* (sing.) is red and lowring' (Matt. 16:3).

'The stars shall fall from *ouranos* (sing.)' (Matt. 24:29).

'The *ouranos* (sing.) gave rain' (Jas. 5:18).

'Descending out of *ouranos* (sing.) from God' (Rev. 21:2 Author's translation).

Here we find that ‘stars’ and ‘fowls’ and ‘rain’ and the ‘New Jerusalem’ all belong to *ouranos*, in the singular, but that the kingdom which the Lord came to establish upon *earth* was the kingdom of *ouranos*, in the plural.

We read in Ephesians 4:10 that the Lord ascended ‘far above all *ouranos*’ (plural), and that we have a Master in *ouranos* (plural) (Eph. 6:9). It is easy to pour ridicule upon the attempt to distinguish things that differ, and, as we know less of the heavens than we do of the earth, the attempt is sometimes sadly successful. But ‘Bereans’ are not daunted by columns of words, they ‘search and see’ whether the things taught about those words ‘are so’: they use the concordance as a servant, but do not let it become their master. Furthermore, what arguments could be invented as to the basic distinction that must be observed between the heavens (plural) or heaven (singular). Yet Matthew 3:16 says ‘heavens’ (plural) and John 1:32 says ‘heaven’ (singular). John 3:13 says, concerning the ascension, ‘the Son of man which is in heaven’ (singular), whereas Hebrews 8:1 says He is in the heavens (plural) and Ephesians 4:10 that He ascended far above all heavens (plural).

Now, just as, from one point of view, a Jew living at Jerusalem could be described as living in (*en*) the *ge* (in the land), he could also be described as living upon (*epi*) the *ge* (on the surface of the earth) without involving a contradiction. So also, and in a greater number of ways, can the heavens be spoken of without confusion or contradiction.

We now turn from this polemic to more constructive reading. In Matthew 6:10 we must remember that our Lord said, ‘Thy will be done ON (*epi*) earth, as it is IN (*en*) heaven’. Again, speaking of the selfsame kingdom, He said, ‘All authority has been given to me IN (*en*) heaven and UPON (*epi*) earth’ (Matt. 28:18). *Epigeios* ‘earthly things’, occurs seven times in the New Testament. In 1 Corinthians 15:40 it is translated ‘terrestrial’ and refers to the resurrection body of some whose inheritance may be ‘on the earth’. In 2 Corinthians 5:1 the reference is to the present body, before resurrection. Philippians 2:10 contrasts things on earth with things in the heavens (*epouranios*), and things subterranean (*katachthonios*), and in Philippians 3:19 the exhortation is to avoid the example of those who ‘mind earthly things’. James uses the word to contrast heavenly wisdom which cometh from *anōthen* (Jas. 3:15).

On page 5 we have suggested, in chart form, the relationship that exists between the teaching of John and Paul's prison ministry, and that while John goes to the 'world' Paul addresses the 'saints' who already have 'faith in our Lord Jesus'. Thus John gives an outside testimony, whose goal is 'life', while Paul gives an inside testimony, whose goal is membership of the Body of Christ.

The language of our Lord to Nicodemus warrants our going into the world with John 3:16, and assuring those who believe that there are 'heavenly things' to be entered by the same exercise of faith. The 'pastors' included in the gifts of Ephesians 4 have legitimate work to do among 'the other sheep' of whom John speaks, without confusing the dispensation of the mystery with the witness of John. We commend to every reader the fuller exercise of the Berean spirit - Search and see.

Jerusalem. 'The Son of Man which is in heaven' (3:13)

If the reader is at all acquainted with Biblical commentaries, he will know what a variety of explanations have been offered of the problem raised by these words: 'The Son of Man Which is in heaven'. In the first place it is important to recognise that grammar and logic are only relevant when kept within their own true domain. It is true in the realm of the flesh that a person cannot be in two different places at one and the same time, but is it necessarily true in the realm of the spirit? It is also true of all that pertains to man and his sphere that that which never had a beginning in the past, does not exist in the present, but is this true of God? Did God have a beginning? And, if not, must we all become atheists?

The grammar of speech is one example of applied logic. No one who was man, and only man, could say with either truth or sense, 'Before Abraham was, *I am*'. And yet these were the words uttered by the Lord (8:58). To take another example from the same Gospel, the Lord (16:13) uses *ekeinos* (masculine) to go with *pneuma* (neuter) because the need to emphasize personality of the Spirit was more important than conformity to the ordinary rules of language. Similarly, in the passage before us, we have a statement that transcends the bounds of human logic. No mere man here upon earth could refer to himself as being at the same time 'in heaven'.

We have weighed over most of the evidence that has been brought forward, both for and against the suggestion that Christ Himself is the speaker in verses 13-21, and are inclined to agree with the view that the record of the Saviour's conversation with Nicodemus ends at verse 12, and that the speaker in verse 13 is John the Evangelist. This, however, is no basis for argument or foundation for doctrine. We must simply regard these words as divinely inspired words of eternal life, whether uttered by Christ Himself on earth, or by His servant John, inspired by His Spirit after His ascension. The first part of verse 13 reads as follows:

‘And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven’.

References, either direct or indirect, to the fact that the Lord ‘came down’ from heaven and ‘went back’ to heaven are encountered frequently in this Gospel. In the sixth chapter, for example, there are seven references to this ‘coming down’ from heaven, and one to the ascending back again:

***Katabaino* ‘to come down’, in John 6**

‘For the bread of God is He Which *cometh down from heaven*, and giveth life unto the world’ (33).

‘For I *came down from heaven*, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him That sent Me’ (38).

‘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*?’ (41,42).

‘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*’ (50,51).

‘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’ (58).

Anabaino 'to ascend', in John 6

'What and if ye shall see the Son of Man *ascend up* where He was before?' (62).

In the third of John the immediate context of verse 13 speaks of the lifting up of the serpent in the wilderness by Moses, and its typical association with the gift of life. In chapter 6, where the ascension is again referred to, we have a further reference to Moses in the wilderness, but this time in connection with the manna. In the next two chapters we have several further allusions to this 'coming down' and 'going back':

'Then said Jesus unto them, Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto Him that sent Me' (7:33).

'Ye cannot tell whence I come and whither I go' (8:14).

'I go My way, and ye shall seek Me, and shall die in your sins. Whither I go, ye cannot come ... And He said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world' (8:21,23).

With the end of chapter 12 the first part of John's Gospel reaches its close. The new section, beginning with chapter 13 deals with the more intimate and personal instruction, which the Lord gave to 'His own' before He was taken from them. We find, however, the same testimony to the ascension in this chapter and the next, as we have already found in chapters 7 and 8:

'Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God, and went to God ...' (13:3).

'Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek Me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you ... Simon Peter said unto Him, Lord, whither goest Thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow Me now; but thou shalt follow Me afterwards' (13:33,36).

'I go to prepare a place for you ... and whither I go ye know, and the way ye know' (14:2,4).

'I go away, and come again unto you ... I go unto the Father' (14:28).

Two similar references to the ascension are found in chapter 16:

‘But now I go My way to Him that sent Me; and none of you asketh Me, Whither goes Thou?’ (16:5)

‘A little while, and ye shall not see Me ... because I go to the Father’ (16:16).

In the next chapter, where the finishing of the work which He had come to do is prominent, the Lord’s return to ‘where He was before’ is again referred to:

‘And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to Thee’ (17:11).

‘And now come I to Thee’ (17:13).

In chapter 20, on the glorious resurrection morning, this message of the ascension is the one that the Lord chooses as His first greeting to His grieving disciples:

‘Jesus saith unto her, Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father: but go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God’ (17).

We are not attempting to deal with these passages at the moment, or to consider their contexts. We are merely citing them to show how intimately this fact of the descent and ascent of Christ is interwoven into the theme of John’s Gospel.

Coming back to the third chapter, we find the structure of verses 13 and 14 to be as follows:

- i**₁ 13. THE SON OF MAN. Ascended.
- j**₁ 13. HE came down from heaven.
- i**₂ 14. THE SON OF MAN. Lifted up.

Verses 14 and 15 read as follows:

‘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’.

In chapter 5 the Lord says of Moses:

‘There is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me: for he wrote of Me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe My words?’ (45-47).

It is reported that a Modernist Bishop, visiting a public school, was asked by the Headmaster what he should do about the teaching of John 3:16.

‘I take it’, said the Headmaster, ‘that you desire me to teach the truth of John 3:16’.

‘Yes, yes’, replied the Bishop. ‘By all means’.

‘Yet’, said the Headmaster, ‘I am also teaching these boys Logic’.

‘Well’, replied the Bishop. ‘What of that?’

‘If I teach these boys Logic, together with John 3:16’, said the Headmaster, ‘and yet teach them at the same time that Moses never existed, or at any rate never lifted up a serpent in the wilderness, will they not see, and quite rightly, that the "as" and "so" of John 3:14 link Moses, the serpent, the wilderness, and the gospel of John 3:16 so vitally together that to reject the one is to reject the other?’

It is useless to say that it does not matter whether the Old Testament is fact or fiction, so long as we preach ‘the simple gospel’, for there is no such thing as ‘the simple gospel’ if Moses, Abraham, Adam, Noah and the other characters are only mythical. The grace of Christ is contrasted with the law of Moses. The fulfilment by Christ is set over against the promises made to Abraham. And the life given by Christ is presented as the glorious substitute for the life forfeited by Adam.

When we consider the superhuman nature of the One Who speaks in this Gospel, in relation to the same Speaker’s testimony to Moses and the records of the Pentateuch is recognized, no doubt can possibly be entertained as to the integrity of the Old Testament records by any who believe ‘the Son of Man, Which is in heaven’. The living Word and the written Word must stand or fall together.

Jerusalem. Aionion Life (3:13-21)

We have now arrived at the section of the Gospel which contains one of the most well-known and best loved passages of Holy Writ, namely, 3:16.

As, by undue emphasis, tradition often distorts truth, so sectarian bias has the tendency of pushing one aspect of truth to the fore to the concealment or minimizing of another. While this and much more could be said as a warning against the acceptance of traditional views, on trust, it is also true that where any doctrine has received well-nigh universal acceptance, where any particular aspect of truth has been hailed with joy and preached with fervour by men representative of almost every important schism in the Church, and where it has been instrumental in leading souls out of death into life, we do well to hesitate long and meditate deeply before setting aside such unity of testimony. This is such a text. It stands so arrestingly supreme in comprehensive scope, simple grandeur and clear issues, as to demand the most careful and prayerful consideration. Upon examination it is evident that what is said in verses 14 and 15 is expanded in verse 16.

A 14. AS (the first element in the simile demanding the sequel 'SO').

B 14. MOSES lifted up the serpent in the wilderness.

A 14. SO (the second element in the simile).

B 14. THE SON OF MAN, lifted up.

C 15. THAT, 'the object', that a whosoever
b believeth
c not perish
d eternal life.

D 16. FOR (connecting link between type and fulfilment).

A 16. SO (the extension of the simile to the sequel).

B 16. THE ONLY BEGOTTEN SON given.

C 16. THAT, 'the object', that a whosoever
b believeth
c not perish
d everlasting life.

Verse 16 is connected with the preceding verses by the sign of correlation, 'for', the Greek *gar*. This Greek word is a contraction of *ge*, 'verily', and *ara*, 'therefore', 'further'. The two parts of speech, in

reverse order and in uncontrasted form, are of frequent occurrence in the New Testament, *arage* being translated 'wherefore', 'then', 'what manner', 'truly', &c.

In verse 19 *gar* is rendered 'because', and this is a good rendering of the *causal conjunction*. Verse 16 therefore arises logically out of verses 14 and 15. Old Testament type, as set forth in the Law of Moses, demands, as a logical sequence, New Testament reality as set forth in the gospel of Christ. The serpent lifted up was no fetish, but a prophetic anticipation of Him Who, though knowing no sin, 'was made sin', for us. The fact that Moses 'lifted up' the serpent in the wilderness must be taken as a definite foreshadowing of the cross. That this is not merely a pious wish, advanced to the position of proof, the following facts bear witness. *Hupsoo*, the word translated 'to lift up', occurs twenty times in the New Testament. Fourteen of these are translated 'to exalt', and the one occurrence in James 4:10 should be so translated. This leaves five, all of which are found in John's Gospel and are translated 'to lift up': they have no reference to the 'exaltation' of the Lord.

The Five Occurrences of *hupsoo*.

'As Moses *lifted up* the serpent' (3:14).

'Even so must the Son of Man be *lifted up*' (3:14).

'When ye have *lifted up* the Son of Man' (8:28).

'If I be *lifted up* from the earth' (12:32).

'The Son of Man must be *lifted up*' (12:34).

In order that there should be no doubt as to the significance of this term, John adds the explanation in 12:33: 'This He said, signifying *what death* He should die'. All this and more is implied in the use of the word 'for'.

The next word that demands attention is the adverb *houto*, 'so': 'For God *so* loved the world'. At first we are inclined to see in the word a suggestion of the *greatness* of that love, but *houto* is an adverb of *manner*, and the following different translations will reveal the meaning which must be attached to the word here.

'Now the birth of Jesus Christ was *on this wise*' (Matt. 1:18).

'*After this manner* therefore pray ye' (Matt. 6:9).

'Likewise shall also the Son of Man' (Matt. 17:12).

The phrase 'even so' in Paul's epistles, as for example in Romans 5:18,21; 6:4,19; 11:5,31, also shows its meaning, as does the descriptive 'thus' in the passage: 'being wearied with His journey, (He) sat *thus* on the well' (4:6). If we ask what 'thus' indicates here, we must reply, 'in a manner that expressed weariness', for sat is the verb, without which the adverb is meaningless.

'For', the causal conjunction, links, not merely by addition, but by logical sequence, the Old Testament type with the Gospel fulfilment. 'So', the adverb of manner in the phrase 'God *so* loved', modifies the verb 'loved' by showing the manner of that love, as though John had said loved 'like this', loved 'in this manner', loved 'on this wise', loved 'thus'. If we ask, 'Loved like what?' we are driven back for answer to the type and its fulfilment. In verse 14 we have the 'even so' already used: 'As Moses lifted ... **EVEN SO** must the Son of Man be lifted up'.

God's love was 'on this wise'; a love essentially associated with the offering of His Son, and not to be confounded with His providence, which sends His rain upon the just and the unjust, or His tender mercy, which is over all His works.

The order of the books in the New Testament is artificial, and no doctrine must be built upon it, but, taking the four Gospels as a unit, we are certain that John's Gospel was written last. Now here is a wonderful fact. Any believer who was in possession only of Matthew or Mark or Luke, would never have read the statement that God 'loved' anybody. It is a startling thing to discover, that while we may learn from either Matthew, Mark or Luke of our obligation to 'love the Lord our God' or 'to love our neighbour', or from Matthew and Luke that we should 'love our enemies', yet we could read twenty-three passages, containing *agapao*, 'to love', and never read that *God* loved either Israel, the Church or the world. *The first reference to the love of God in the four Gospels is John 3:16*. In the past we have, perhaps, used this precious statement too freely, and by so doing have given credence to doctrines that are not of God.

We gather that however much a man may have experienced the *kindness* and *mercy* of God, he can never know the *love* of God apart from the gift of His beloved Son. But as this aspect of truth may seem somewhat strange, let us consider another illustration of this

conservative view of the love of God. Is there no love of God manifested in the gospel of Christ which is 'the power of God unto salvation'? Most surely there is, but Romans 1:16,17, where this statement occurs, breathes not a word about it. Is there no love in the provision of a righteousness as a free gift to guilty sinners? Was there no love at work in passing over the sins that are past? Can we read that faith is counted for righteousness and forget that love found the way? While we know that love is the source of all these things, yet for all that, in the foundation epistle of Romans we find not one reference to the love of God until we read chapter 5:5. Then, of a truth, the love of God breaks through all constraint and is 'shed abroad', but it was held back until it could be written, 'Therefore *being justified* by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ'.

The love of God is a limitless ocean, yet there is but one entrance to it, the offering of Christ. The very Gospel that addresses 'the world', nevertheless contains the closest restriction in this respect, that 'no man cometh unto the Father *but by Me*'. In an earlier dispensation we read that God 'loved *the people*' (Deut. 33:3), meaning Israel (Deut. 7:7,8); later, of the Church we read that nothing can separate *the believer* from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. But here (3:16) for the first time we read that God loved *the world*.

The intimate association of the love of God with the sacrifice of His Son is implied in the word 'so', and receives substantiation from other Scriptures. In the first Epistle of John we read:

'Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us' (1 John 3:16).

'In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him' (1 John 4:9).

'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His son to be the propitiation for our sins' (1 John 4:10).

Notice the two words 'perceive' and 'manifest' in these references. In John 3:16 we are not dealing with God's timeless love, a term we use for lack of a better, but with the manifestation of that love which took place *in time*. This love is associated with one historic event, the coming into the world of Him Who was the only begotten Son of God, the Word made flesh. This event is not 'timeless' but historic, for it took place when 'the fulness of the time' was come (Gal. 4:4). The

fact that we date all our documents from that period is an admission that the time element enters into the things of God. For this reason we emphatically refuse the translation that has been offered that God 'loves' the world, and 'gives' His Only begotten Son. For the English reader it is not possible to read that God 'gives' His Son, without dulling the edge of truth. It is the insistent testimony of Scripture that Christ was given 'once', that He was 'once' offered, and there is no more offering for sin; He dies no more. Therefore to circulate a translation of 3:16 which states that God 'loves' and 'gives' is misleading and dangerous, and unwittingly gives substance to a vague idea of the doctrine of second chances and kindred errors. In itself God's love may be timeless, but its manifestation was once and at a particular juncture. To this, and to this only, John 3:16 refers.

It is of the very nature of love to give. This we have already seen in the argument of the passages cited above from the first Epistle of John. There are others that come readily to mind, as:

'The son of God, Who *loved* me, and *gave* Himself for me' (Gal. 2:20).

'Christ ... *loved* the church, and *gave* Himself for it' (Eph. 5:25).

Here, in 3:16, it is the 'world' that was the object of the love of God. As we have already learned, this word *kosmos*, 'world', is one of the great key words of John's Gospel. Aristotle defined the *kosmos* as:

'A system composed of the heaven and the earth, and of beings contained in them; otherwise, the order and *beautiful arrangement* of the universe'.

Diakosmesis is the word used by Aristotle for 'beautiful arrangement'. Pliny, the Latin writer, says:

'What the Greeks called *kosmos*, we from its perfect and complete elegance, denominate *mundus*'.

In the New Testament 'the world' is a term more often used to denote that part of the universe that we call 'the earth', as when it speaks of Christ coming into the world. Dr. Bullinger's note in his Lexicon reads:

'Thus, *kosmos*, denotes the order of the world, the ordered universe, the ordered entirety of God's creation, *but considered as separated from God*. Then, the abode of humanity, *or* that order of

things in which humanity moves, *or* of which man is the centre; *then*, mankind as it manifests itself in and through such an order; *then*, that order of things which, in consequence of and since the Fall, is alienated from God, as manifested in and through the human race'.

It is evident that 'the world' of 3:16 is the last of these, for its denizens are saved from 'perishing' and from 'condemnation' only by this interposition of Christ on their behalf.

Many and rich are the titles that belong to the Saviour. Some belong to the period prior to His birth at Bethlehem, such as 'the Word' and 'the Image', and some to the post-natal period. Among others are the three which follow:

'JESUS' (Matt. 1:21).

'EMMANUEL' (Matt. 1:23).

'SON OF MAN' (Matt. 8:20).

To which period shall we ascribe the title, 'His only begotten Son'? Had there been no theological controversy in connection with the person of the Lord, reasonable men would never have tried to believe the unintelligible phrase, 'the eternal generations of the Son', for to do so either the word 'eternal' or the word 'generations' must lose its meaning and be changed. Readers of our magazine know that we believe the doctrine of the Deity of Christ. But while this has been our testimony from the beginning, and is held as firmly as ever today, we have no warrant for spoiling the teaching of the Scripture regarding the glorious person of the Lord merely because we want to emphasize His Deity. The Scripture is equally emphatic upon the doctrines of His sinless humanity, and of His coming in flesh, and ever, and essentially, associated with His coming in flesh is the dominating purpose of His sacrificial death, which necessitated the possession of a human body. This is so vital both to all truth and to the testimony of 3:16 that we must prove each statement.

'Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of *flesh and blood*, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that *through death* He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage' (Heb. 2:14,15).

‘Wherefore when He cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a *body* hast Thou prepared Me ... we are sanctified through (by) the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all’ (Heb. 10:5,10).

The testimony of Hebrews is clear. One passage speaks of flesh and blood, and another of a body, but in both the object is an offering. In the epistle to the Colossians we read:

‘In the *body* of His *flesh* through *death*, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in His sight’ (Col. 1:22).

Here again the incarnation has sacrifice in view. Let us see one more passage:

‘For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His Own Son in the likeness of sinful *flesh*, and for sin, condemned sin in the *flesh*’ (Rom. 8:3).

Here, once again, the coming of Christ in the flesh, was in order that He might bear the condemnation which our sinful flesh had merited through the breaking of the law.

We believe that when the Saviour is called ‘the only begotten Son of God’, the Spirit of God has in mind this blessed condescension of the Son when He stooped to take upon Him the nature of man. Now, if we turn to the prologue of John’s Gospel we shall find that this is what the apostle taught. ‘In the beginning was the Word’. John does not say ‘In the beginning was the Son’; that is what many creeds confess, and many believers assume to be true, but as our faith stands, not in the wisdom of men but in the testimony of inspired Scripture, we must, perforce, reject such an intrusion.

‘The Word was made flesh’ (John 1:14). Here is a mighty change: here, if anywhere, we ought to read of the only begotten Son. Let us see:

‘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 1:14).

When He, the Word, became flesh, His titles were ‘Emmanuel ... God with us’, ‘the only begotten of the Father’, ‘the Son of God’ and ‘the Son of Man’. Surely, if we have no creed to support, or system to

uphold, John's clear testimony in 1:14 should be authoritative and final.

What is the Scriptural meaning of *gennaō*, 'to beget'? If the word is used of a father, it should be translated 'to beget', and if of a mother, 'to be born, or give birth'. In Matthew 1:1-16 we have a genealogy from Abraham to Joseph where there is no possibility of missing the meaning of *gennaō*. 'Abraham *begat* Isaac ... Jacob *begat* Joseph'. In this same sixteenth verse the word *gennaō* is used of the mother, 'of whom was *born* Jesus'.

The words 'only begotten' represent one word in the Greek, *monogenēs*. Is it possible that by the addition of the word *monos* 'only', the normal, rational, meaning of *gennaō* should be so changed as to lose all its former meaning? To such a question we can give no answer, but we can show that no such alchemy is practised by the inspired writers.

'The only son of his mother' (*monogenēs*, Luke 7:12).

'For he had one only daughter' (*monogenēs*, Luke 8:42).

'For he is mine only child' (*monogenēs*, Luke 9:38).

'By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son' (*monogenēs*, Heb. 11:17).

Here are four occurrences of the word, and its meaning is plain. There are five others, and these refer to the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the epistle to the Romans the gift of Christ is compared with the offering up by Abraham of his only son. 'He that spared not His own son' (Rom. 8:32), where the Greek words, 'spared not', are the same as those which are used in the LXX of Genesis 22:16. The Lord Jesus Christ, the Word, became flesh, Emmanuel, God manifest in the flesh. He it is Who is the only begotten Son of God, and He it is Who is the only Mediator, Offering and Saviour of man.

Dr. Bullinger, whose orthodoxy on this doctrine is beyond question, says of the word *monogenēs* in his Lexicon: 'The relation of Christ to the Father'. In that simple statement the whole matter is compressed.

- (1) It is a matter of 'relation'. It is not dealing with God as Absolute and Unconditioned, for that is not a subject dwelt upon in Scripture.
- (2) It has to do with 'Christ'. Now 'Christ' is the title given to 'Jesus', and means 'The Anointed'. This title has no reference to a period before creation or before the miraculous birth at Bethlehem.
- (3) It has to do with 'The Father'. Wherever we see the title 'the Son of God', 'God' refers to the 'Father' and both 'Father' and 'Son' are relative terms.

'For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son'. Here is the Divine half of John 3:16. What follows touches human need and human response. 'That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life'.

First, let us consider human need. It is summed up in the word 'perish'. The Greek word which is so translated is *apollumi*, and occurs ninety-two times in the New Testament. It occurs in the LXX nearly 300 times, and in order completely to understand its meaning, these passages should be examined and the equivalent Hebrew words investigated. We shall however find all that we require for our present purpose in the New Testament.

An objection has been raised by some advocates of the doctrine known as *Eternal Conscious Suffering*, that it is unscientific and strictly untrue to teach that anything can be 'destroyed', as, for instance, a piece of burning wood. It is pointed out that certain parts of the wood go off into gases which are combined with oxygen in the process of combustion; other components go off as smoke and vapour, leaving a residue of mineral ash, and the chemist's scales would show that not a particle of the wood had really been destroyed, but that all of it still existed though in other forms. In spite of the apparently dispassionate and scientific tone of this objection it is fundamentally and experimentally false, for it is not the question of the indestructibility of 'matter' that is involved, but the destruction of the piece of wood, *as wood*. No one who swept up the ashes and presented a few glass jars of gases, could say with truth, 'There is your piece of wood'; the falsity and foolishness of the statement would be apparent. So when we teach that the unsaved sinner will suffer 'destruction' or will 'perish', we are speaking of him as *a person*, not a

collection of organic minerals, and it is in this sense that the word is used in the Scriptures.

It is further objected that 'the soul' cannot be destroyed, and that therefore the unsaved sinner will continue in a miserable state of existence in eternal fire. We have no need to plunge into an examination of the meaning or attributes of the soul, for one plain statement of Scripture will sufficiently answer this objection.

'Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to *destroy* both soul and body in hell (Gehenna)' (Matt. 10:28).

Here the word 'destroy' is *apollumi*, the same word which is used in 3:16. If we bow before the authority of the inspired Word, strictly speaking, there is therefore nothing more to be said. We can however supplement and illustrate a little before passing to the alternative, 'eternal life'. Here are some of the ways in which *apollumi* is used in Matthew:

'Herod will seek the young child to *destroy* Him' (Matt. 2:13).

Had Herod accomplished his fell ^{*} purpose, would the advocate of the doctrine we are refuting have found any consolation in the theory of the indestructibility of matter? or that the same word translated 'destroy' can also be used of a 'lost sheep'?

'If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should *perish*, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell (Gehenna)' (Matt. 5:29).

Would anyone, could anyone, attempt to console a person who had lost his eyes by urging the argument that nothing can really be destroyed?

Need we go on? The word is used of drowning (Matt. 8:25), of leather bottles splitting (Matt. 9:17), of sheep being lost (Matt. 10:6), of loss of life, soul or reward (Matt. 10:39,42), and of the destruction of a person by death (Matt. 21:41; 22:7; 26:52; 27:20). What is true of the testimony of usage in Matthew, is true of the other Gospels, and the

* Fell = ruthless or destructive

rest of the New Testament. Nearly every word in either Greek or English has secondary meanings, but it betrays poverty of argument, and a prepossession, to fasten upon the secondary meaning when some doctrinal teaching is at stake. It is noteworthy that when the apostle Paul refers to the incident, in the book of Numbers, where Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, he too uses the word *apollumi*:

‘Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were *destroyed* of serpents’ (1 Cor. 10:9).

So also, he uses the word in 1 Corinthians 15:18 of all who have fallen asleep in Christ, ‘if so be that the dead rise not’. Jude also when referring to the book of Numbers, speaking of the rebellion of Korah and his company, uses this same Greek word (Jude 11).

At the close of John 3 the great and solemn alternatives of 3:16 are brought forward. This time, however, the wording is changed. Instead of reading ‘should not perish but have everlasting life’, we read:

‘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’ (3:36).

This abiding of the wrath of God is consonant with the parallel statement of verse 18, ‘He that believeth not is *condemned already*’.

We turn from ‘perishing’, the dread result of sin, to the blessed gift of ‘everlasting life’ to those who believe in the only-begotten Son of God. The goal of the Gospel is ‘life’, life from the dead; life unqualified by dispensational distinctions.

‘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’ (20:31).

Here is the simple issue of this record, ‘life through His name’. This question of ‘life’ runs through the Gospel from chapter 1 to chapter 20, and it is helpful to observe the way in which ‘life’ alternates with ‘eternal life’. As there are thirty-six references involved we will not set them out in detail, but the following presentation may be of service to those who will but ‘search and see’.

A LIFE (1:4).

B ETERNAL LIFE (3:15,16,36).

- A LIFE (3:36).
 - B ETERNAL LIFE (4:14,36; 5:24).
- A LIFE (5:24,26,29).
 - B ETERNAL LIFE (5:39).
- A LIFE (5:40).
 - B ETERNAL LIFE (6:27).
- A LIFE (6:33,35).
 - B ETERNAL LIFE (6:40,47).
- A LIFE (6:48,51,53).
 - B ETERNAL LIFE (6:54).
- A LIFE (6:63).
 - B ETERNAL LIFE (6:68).
- A LIFE (8:12; 10:10).
 - B ETERNAL LIFE (10:28).
- A LIFE (11:25).
 - B ETERNAL LIFE (12:25,50).
- A LIFE (14:6).
 - B ETERNAL LIFE (17:2,3).
- A LIFE (20:31).

Are we to draw a distinction between these two sets of statements? Are we to say 'life' is one thing and 'eternal life' is another? Apart from the inspired Word none can answer, and none to whom the foregoing list is a list and nothing more is qualified to express even an opinion. For example, upon examination we find that when Christ said, 'The words that I speak unto you, they are *spirit* and they are *life*' (6:63), Peter replied, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of *eternal life*' (6:68). Are we to see some subtle distinction here? Or does the word 'life' cover all its subdivisions? In the same chapter the Lord said, 'The bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth *life* unto the world' (6:33). Was there any intentional difference when He said, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me hath *everlasting life*. I am that bread of life' (6:47,48)? Or, once again, when we read verses 53 and 54, 'Ye have no *life* in you ... hath *eternal life*', is there an intentional distinction?

In the third chapter we have 'eternal life' in the presentation of the gospel (3:15,16,36), but in the summary and conclusion we read, 'shall not see life'. It is evident that 'life' in John's Gospel includes 'eternal life', and this life is not to be confused with the life lived by fallen man, for John never once uses it in that way. He does, however, say:

'In Him was life' (1:4).

'Passed from death unto life' (5:24).

'The resurrection of life' (5:29).

'Life ... more abundantly' (10:10).

'The resurrection, and the life' (11:25).

The life from the dead, which was 'in Him' and is given to those who believe, who have passed from death unto life and who shall not come into condemnation, evidently is synonymous with, if not greater than, and so inclusive of, 'eternal life', which is the great gift of 3:16. The word translated 'eternal' and 'everlasting' is *aionios* and occurs in John's Gospel seventeen times. The word *aionios*, 'eternal', is derived from *aion*, a word which is variously translated 'world' 'age' 'ever'. In this Gospel *aion* is six times translated 'ever' in the phrase 'for ever', 'never' (literally 'not for ever') six times, and 'world' once.

We must examine these translations of the same word, for, at least, on the surface they seem too divergent to be true. Let us take the negative form 'never'. This is the phrase *eis ton aiona*, with the negative, and has been the occasion of some very foolish attempts at literality. Thus, 'they shall never perish' (10:28) becomes 'they shall not perish *unto the age*', which leaves the impression on the mind that at the end of the age they will perish, which of course is entirely contrary to the thought. 'Thou shalt never wash my feet' (13:8) becomes 'Thou shalt not wash my feet unto the age', an absurdity requiring no repudiation. When the Scriptures intend a statement to carry over from one age to another, it has ample means of making this clear, as in such a passage as 'neither in this world, neither in the world to come' (Matt. 12:32). In most cases 'never' is the idiomatic use of 'not ever' or 'not for the age', which is parallel with the etymology and usage of 'never' in the English tongue. There is no need to import 'age' meanings into such idiomatic and popular usages.

In connection with the renderings 'ever' and 'world', there is much more to be said. First of all, however, let us remember that in the best

of us a little genuine modesty will never be amiss. For instance whenever we feel tempted to sweep aside renderings that are found not only in the Authorized Version, but retained in the Revised Version, we should remember that, however remote it may seem, there is the possibility that these men did actually possess a modicum of common sense, as well as scholarship! It would be so much nearer the true spirit that should animate us, if, first of all, we endeavoured to discover *why* the translators used the words 'ever' and 'world', while literalists demand 'age' in every case. The truth is that many who are moved to adopt the attitude of critics would, if an answer were demanded of them, have to confess that they did not know the etymology of the English word 'world', and possibly would also have to plead ignorance as to the source and affinities of 'ever' and 'eternal'. Let us get this matter settled first.

It may surprise many of our readers to learn that under the heading 'world', the 'Oxford Dictionary' devotes sixty-two closely printed lines in a column, dealing with 'Human existence, a period of this (world)', before coming to the second great heading: 'The earth or a region of it; the universe or a part of it'. Moreover, the English word 'world', through Germanic sources, is derived from *wer* = man, and *ald* = age, 'the age of man', consequently, if language never developed, if meanings never changed by common usage, and if all men were etymologists, then the affinity between the Greek *aion* and the English 'world' would be obvious and need no explanation.

There is, in common usage, no evident connection between such English words as 'eternal' and 'everlasting' on the one hand, and 'age' and 'world' on the other, yet, once again, the differences are superficial, being the result of the passage of time, for, at base, they are one. 'Age', derived from the Latin *aevum*, 'eternal', comes from *aeuiternus*, 'lasting for an age'. 'Everlasting' comes from the Anglo-Saxon *aefre*, which is related to the Gothic *aiw*, which, in its turn, links on to the Greek *aion*. The Revisers have retained most of the passages where the Authorized Version used 'world' for *aion*, but have placed in the margin the note 'age', so that the English reader need not confuse this word with *kosmos*.

However, we must still face the fact that present usage now makes 'eternal' and 'everlasting' unfit translations for a word which means 'an age', 'the period of human existence', therefore some modification is called for. If, however, in 3:16 we substitute 'age-enduring life' for

‘eternal’ or ‘everlasting’ life, we create another problem as important to resolve as that induced by the Authorized Version.

Upon reading the translation: ‘should not perish, but have age-enduring life’ the mind can hardly help thinking along the line suggested by the latter clause and, thus started, arriving at the possible conclusion that at the end of this age, however long it may endure, life will cease! At this point the reader may appreciate the analysis of the terms ‘life’ and ‘eternal life’ found in John’s gospel as set out on page 136.

There are various ways in which ‘eternal life’ is used in the New Testament. Sometimes it is bestowed as a reward, either under law or under grace (Matt. 19:16; Rom. 6:22), sometimes as an equivalent to entering into the kingdom on earth (as for example Matt. 25:46); sometimes, as in John 3:16, or Romans 6:23, it is considered as a gift in grace. These have been tabulated and examined in a series entitled ‘Eternal Life’, which may be found in *The Berean Expositor*, Vols. 6,7 and 8, and should be referred to by the interested student.

We conclude therefore that life, not only when time shall be no more, but life abundant and rich in its association with the concluding phases of the Divine purpose, is the blessing for all who believe the testimony of John 3:16, which is flanked on either side, thus:

- A₁ 14,15. **a** The serpent in the wilderness lifted up.
b Whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.
- A₂ 16. **a** The only begotten Son of God given.
b Whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.
- A₃ 17,18. **a** God sent not His Son into the world to condemn,
b but that the world through Him might be saved. He that believeth - saved. He that believeth not - condemned.

Instead of dwelling longer let us follow the guidance of the inspired evangelist and consider the way in which he amplifies and expands the theme of that wonderful verse.

Where 3:16 says that God 'gave',	17 says 'sent'.
Where 3:16 says 'only begotten Son',	17 says 'His Son'.
Where 3:16 says 'perish',	17 says 'condemned'.
Where 3:16 says 'have everlasting life',	17 says 'be saved'.

Let us consider these alternative words and so gain the further light which they throw upon the message.

'SENT'. *Apostello*. - It is not in 3:17 that we find the first occurrence of this word, but it is the first which refers to Christ. In the first occurrence it is used of John the Baptist, 'There was a man *sent* from God, whose name was John' (1:6), and the first use of the word in the New Testament, in connection with the Lord, is found in Matthew 10:5, 'these twelve Jesus *sent forth*', which is but the meaning of verse 2 of the same chapter; 'The names of the twelve *apostles* are these', for, as the reader can easily see, the word *apostle* is simply the Greek word derived from *apostello*. In Hebrews 3:1 the believer is exhorted to, 'consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession'. This is comparable with the double title of Hebrews 12, where we are again exhorted to 'consider Him' (3), Who is the Author and Finisher of faith (2). The Gospel of John not only stresses the fact that, as the 'Sent One', the Lord Jesus was the great Apostle, but leads us to the One Who could say, 'I have finished the work ... now come I to Thee' (John 17:4,13), and Whom when the work was done, sent the message to His disciples, 'I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God' (20:17).

John's Gospel presents us with the Apostle ('Sent') and High Priest ('I ascend'), the Author ('Grace and truth came into being by Jesus Christ') and the Finisher ('I have finished the work'). The actual word 'apostle' does not appear in the Authorized Version of the Gospel, but *apostolos* is found in the original.

'The servant is not greater than his Lord; neither *he that is sent* (the apostle) greater than He that sent him' (13:16).

Here, moreover, is a strange thing. One would expect that in 'He that sent him' the kindred verb would be *apostello*, simply and easily rounding off the subject, but it is *pempo*, which occurs thirty-three times in John, while *apostello* occurs twenty-eight times. *Apostello* means 'to send away', 'despatch', 'dismiss', and *pempo*, while including these meanings, adds the idea of 'accompaniment' and 'escort'.

In John 20:21 there is therefore a gracious reason for the change of verb:

‘As My Father hath sent Me (*apostello*, sent Me as on a mission, with some element of "despatch" and "dismissal", or at least "distance", adhering to the word), even so send I you’, (*pempo*, but this time, ‘escorted’, ‘accompanied’, for He had said ‘I will not leave you comfortless’).

Eternal, or *aionion* life, is bound up with this ‘Sent One’ for it is written not only at the opening, but also at the close of the Gospel:

‘And this is life eternal (*aionion*), that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou hast sent’ (*apostello*) (17:3).

We might also note that whereas *apostello* occurs seven times in the great prayer of Chapter 17, *pempo* is never used. When God so loved the world and ‘gave’ His only begotten Son, He ‘sent’ Him to execute a commission; He came as the great ‘Apostle’, even as He returned as the great High Priest.

‘HIS SON’. - In this Gospel the Lord is referred to as the ‘Son’, with the following additions to the title:

‘The only begotten Son’ (1:18, 3:16).

‘The Son of God’ (1:34,49).

‘The Son of Joseph’ (1:45).

‘The Son of man’ (1:51, 3:13,14).

‘The Son of the living God’ (6:69).

The references given are not complete, as some of the titles recur with frequency, but by far the greatest number are to ‘the Son’, without additional title, as: ‘the Father loveth the Son’ (3:35); ‘he that believeth on the Son’ (3:36).

Whichever title is used, it is the same glorious Person, and the same most blessed relationship both as regards the Father that sent Him, and the children, who were partakers of flesh and blood, among whom He came. The simple title, ‘the Son’ seems to be used on purpose to focus the heart’s attention on this one mediatorial relationship, ‘the Word Who became flesh’, Who, in the body of His flesh, through death, made a sacrifice for sin, and thus became the Saviour of all who trust in Him.

'CONDEMNED'. - The Greek word which is translated 'condemn' is *krino*, and occurs nineteen times in the Gospel. Out of the number of occurrences however it is only translated 'condemn' thrice, namely in 3:17,18. In the majority of passages it is translated 'judge', and the primary meaning of the word is 'to separate', 'distinguish', 'discern'. Of itself, *krino* does not imply condemnation, for it is used in Matthew 19:28 in the clause '*judging* the twelve tribes of Israel', and its primitive meaning is discerned in the rendering found in Romans 14:5 where it is translated 'esteemeth'.

Such however is the nature and extent of sin that it is enough to know that an unsaved man will stand before the Lord as his Judge, and that such judgment must issue in condemnation.

'This is the condemnation (judgment), that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil' (3:19).

The way in which John speaks of light in this passage is very like Paul's use of the same figure in Ephesians. John says that light 'reproves' and 'makes manifest' 'deeds' (20,21), and Paul says:

'Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works (*ergon* same word as 'deeds') of darkness, but rather *reprove* them ... all things that are *reproved* are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever *doth make manifest* is light' (Eph. 5:11-13).

Here, at the conclusion of the testimony at Jerusalem, the charge uttered in the prologue is found true:

'The light shineth (*phaino*, root of the word translated 'manifest') in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not' (1:5).

'SAVED'. - To receive the gift of eternal life, according to this extension of the subject, is to be 'saved'. Salvation includes both life and deliverance from condemnation, the subjects of which will not perish, but, as another passage has it, have 'passed from death unto life' (5:24).

Thus, all who are redeemed, whatever their calling, sphere and destiny, can rejoice as they contemplate the love, the gift, and the deliverance revealed in verse 16.

Judaea. The Bride and the Bridegroom (3:22 to 4:2)

With special reference to the dispensational position of John's Gospel

This section is a short one bounded at either end with a reference to the entry of the Lord into Judaea, and His leaving it for Galilee. The teaching of the intervening verses is distributed under references to baptism, either the baptism of the Lord (3:22; 4:1,2), the baptism of John (3:23,24), or controversy arising out of these ordinances (3:25-36; 4:1).

In the course of the testimony of John the Baptist, and in illustration of his declaration 'He must increase, but I must decrease', he uses the figures of the Bride, the Bridegroom and the Friend of the Bridegroom.

'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' (3:29).

While *numphe*, 'bride', occurs in Matthew and Luke, where it is translated 'daughter-in-law', John is the only New Testament writer who uses the word of that company of believers known as 'the Bride': he does so once in the Gospel (3:29), and three times in the Revelation (21:2,9; 22:17).

The title 'the friend of the bridegroom' refers to the *Shoshebin*, a word very common in Hebrew writings and comments, and the office is well illustrated by the 'best man' of the modern wedding. No attempt is made to elaborate the doctrine of the 'Bride', but in the Apocalypse John devotes considerable space to it and supplies a wealth of detail in his description of that company whose sphere is the heavenly, or new, Jerusalem.

Turning for a moment to the book of the Revelation, we observe that the marriage of the Lamb and the fall of Babylon are announced: that the association of these two events is by no means accidental or slight, the following features will reveal.

The Harlot

'And there came one of the

The Bride

'And there came unto me

seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters' (Rev. 17:1).

'So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy ... And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls ... And upon her forehead was a

name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH' (Rev. 17:3-5).

'And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth' (Rev. 17:18).

The reader will note the many ways in which these two companies are brought into contrast by the record of these chapters. Leaving that subject to the reader's own research, we proceed to note one or two distinctive items in the descriptions of the bride, or those associated

one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife' (Rev. 21:9).

'And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal ...

and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel ... and the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones ... every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass' (Rev. 21:10-21).

'And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband' (Rev. 21:2).

with her, to which reference will again be made after setting out the argument for the peculiar constitution of that company called 'The Bride'.

'The Bride, the Lamb's wife' (21:9).

'Every several gate was of one pearl' (21:21).

'He that overcometh shall inherit these things' (21:7 margin).

'They which are written in the Lamb's book of life' (21:27).

While 'the bride' is most intimately associated with Israel (21:12), for the following scriptural reasons it must not be confused with Israel as a nation.

Those purposes of God which by way of distinction we refer to as 'kingdom' purposes, relate not only to the earth, but also to a heavenly sphere. This is made clear by considering the teaching of Scripture concerning Abraham.

Genesis 12 to 15 reveals that to Abraham and to his seed was granted, unconditionally, the earthly sphere of blessing. To Abraham, however, was opened up the further possibility of rising higher and of becoming a partaker of the heavenly calling. This is shown in Hebrews 3:1; 11:8-10,13-16; 12:22. During early days Gentile believers were associated with Israel's hope under the New Covenant (2 Cor. 3; Rom. 15:12,13). As Galatians 4:26 shows, however, they were not to be partakers of the earthly, but of the heavenly, sphere of the kingdom.

Israel, *as a nation*, became 'the wife', when they entered into covenant relationship *at Sinai*.

'... the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which My covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD' (Jer. 31:32).

By the great love and mercy of the Lord, Israel, though thus 'put away', shall yet be brought back again.

'They say, If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man's, shall he return unto her again? shall not that land be greatly polluted? but thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to Me, saith the LORD' (Jer. 3:1).

‘Surely as a wife treacherously departeth from her husband, so have ye dealt treacherously with Me, O house of Israel, saith the LORD ... Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings’ (Jer. 3:20-22).

This blessed restoration is the theme of Isaiah’s prophecies:

‘Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah: for the LORD delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married’ (Isa. 62:4).

The restoration of a divorced woman and the betrothal and marriage of ‘the chaste virgin’ which Paul speaks of in 2Corinthians 11:2; and which John speaks of as the ‘bride’, must not be confused. Israel, as a nation, is the restored wife, but a remnant out of Israel, together with some believing Gentiles, constitute the new company, ‘the bride, the Lamb’s wife’. During the Acts, Gentile believers were, equally with Jewish believers, Abraham’s seed and heirs, and to this company belongs Jerusalem which is above (Gal. 3:29, 4:26).

The distinction between these two companies is suggested in the two parables of Matthew 13:44-46. The treasure hid in a field, which, after discovery, was hidden again, represents the nation of Israel, God’s peculiar treasure.

‘For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people (*segullah*) unto Himself’ (Deut. 14:2).

‘For the LORD hath chosen Jacob unto Himself, and Israel for His peculiar treasure (*segullah*)’ (Psa. 135:4).

While ‘all Israel’ was a treasure, the Lord noted with special approbation those ‘of Israel’ who walked by faith, and these, such as Abraham, were granted the heavenly prospect, associated with the heavenly city, and are represented in the parable as the ‘one pearl’. The reader will remember that ‘one pearl’ is noted in the description of the gates of the New Jerusalem. While the pearl is a part of the Lord’s treasure, it is signally different from other treasures in that it is organic, being produced by suffering and so typical of that remnant, according to the election of grace, that walked by faith, while the bulk of their fellows fell into idolatry and unbelief.

'All Israel' shall be saved (Rom. 11:26); the erring wife shall be restored; but the marriage of the Lamb refers not to this restoration but to the new company that inherits the heavenly sphere of the kingdom. It is to this marriage of the Lamb that the parable of Matthew 22 looks forward, where particular emphasis is put upon the invitation which was sent out to the 'guests'. Not by any stretch of imagination can 'guests' at a marriage be made to refer to 'the bride', and they must therefore represent a yet further and separate company who are neither restored Israel nor the elect remnant.

As the 'Lamb' the Lord Jesus is 'the King's Son', and for Him a marriage has been made. The king's servants went out and called those who had been bidden, but they would not come. A second invitation, corresponding with the renewal of the gospel in Acts 2, where 'all things are ready', was made, but this was met by excuses and abuse; 'they made light of it'. The result of this hardness of heart was that these were destroyed and their city burned up (Matt. 22:7). This is a plain allusion to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D 70, and the words 'ye would not' of Matthew 23:37 and the destruction of the temple (24:2) confirm the interpretation.

After A.D. 70 the hope of Israel and the New Covenant were suspended. Necessarily, with the suspension of that hope and that New Covenant, went the restoration of Israel as the wife, and the calling of the remnant as the bride, but one feature was perpetuated, namely, the calling of those who should be guests at the marriage. These were gathered out from the highways, 'bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests' (22:9,10). Those who 'were (had been) bidden' (22:3) and to whom a second invitation had been sent (22:4) were Israel. Those who subsequently took the place forfeited by Israel are referred to by John: 'He came unto His own, and His own received Him not, *but as many as received Him ...*' (John 1:11,12). These are 'the other sheep' not acknowledged by Israel (10:16).

John's Gospel differs from the synoptic Gospels in many ways, and prominent among these is the dispensational position of those who believe its message. Such do not form part of the kingdom of Israel, neither do they constitute the Bride of the Lamb, but they do fit into Matthew 22:9,10, and those who today respond to the gospel of John 3:16 and order their lives according to the teaching of that gospel constitute that distinctive and blessed company who shall be the guests

at the marriage of the Lamb, an honour high indeed for such as were gathered from highways and byways, both bad and good.

In harmony with this intention, the first miracle recorded as a sign in John's Gospel is that of a marriage, where the 'friend of the bridegroom' is introduced (2:9) and where the Lord and His disciples were there as 'guests'.

John's Gospel is unique. It differs from Matthew in that it is not concerned with the kingdom, but rather with one phase of that purpose of the ages by which God fills the interval occasioned by Israel's failure. Both the prison ministry of Paul and the Gospel according to John are written in view of the crisis of Acts 28. In John's prologue the presentation of Christ as the Word is very close to the presentation of Christ as the Image of the invisible God in Paul's prison ministry, but the callings are distinct and differ essentially. In John's Gospel the believer is numbered among those of the Gentiles called after A.D 70 to be guests of the marriage feast, whereas in Paul's prison ministry the Gentile believer called after Acts 28:28 becomes a member of the body of Christ. In both Acts 28 and in the climax chapter of John 12, the crisis is indicated by the quotation of Isaiah 6:9,10 (John 12:40,41; Acts 28:26,27). In John 12:20,21 it is 'Greeks' that seek the Lord; in Acts 28:28 it is 'Gentiles' that are the object of grace.

Samaria. The bearing of the words 'must needs go' upon the dispensational position of John's Gospel (4:3-42)

The Lord's ministry, as recorded by John, and the command which the Lord gave concerning the ministry of the twelve after Pentecost, follow the same course - Jerusalem, Jud -a, Samaria - and the section now before us deals with the Lord's testimony in Samaria. In order that the place and people of Samaria may be appreciated, we give a brief account of these which will also throw light upon one or two statements in the fourth chapter.

At the disruption of the kingdom on the death of Solomon, the Ten Tribes, usually referred to as Israel, made their capital city, Samaria, which was built on a hill by Omri, King of Israel, in the portion of Ephraim, forty-two miles north of Jerusalem:

'And he bought the hill Samaria of Shemer for two talents of silver, and built on the hill, and called the name of the city which he built,

after the name of Shemer, owner of the hill, Samaria' (1 Kings 16:24).

In 2Kings 17:5,6 we read that the King of Assyria went up to Samaria, and besieged it three years and that in the ninth year of Hoshea, the King of Assyria took Samaria and carried Israel away captive. In the place of the deported Israelites the King of Assyria brought men from Babylon and other parts of his dominion 'and placed them in the cities of Samaria' (17:24). The people thus established were subjected to a devastation by wild beasts, because they feared not the Lord. A petition was made to the King of Assyria saying, 'The nations which thou hast removed, and placed in the cities of Samaria, know not the manner of the God of the land: therefore He hath sent lions among them' (17:26). The king replied: 'Carry thither one of the priests whom ye brought from thence; and let them go and dwell there, and let him teach them the manner of the God of the land' (17:27). This was done but, alas, the result of the attempted palliation is thus recorded: 'They feared the LORD, and served their own gods' (17:33).

After the return of the Jews from Babylon the Samaritans wished to join them in the rebuilding of the temple at Jerusalem, saying: 'Let us build with you: for we seek your God, as ye do; and we do sacrifice unto Him since the days of Esar-haddon King of Assur, which brought us up hither' (Ezra 4:2). The offer was refused, and the repudiation continued even in New Testament times, for we read 'the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans'. The Samaritans possess to this day a most ancient copy of the Pentateuch, written in characters resembling the Siloam Inscription and the Moabite Stone, characters earlier than those known as 'Hebrew' today.

Maimonides admits that the Samaritans rigidly practised the law, and Dr. Wait in his 'Repertorium Theologicum' has shown that the Samaritans had a clear notion of the coming of the Messiah. We shall presently revert to these items, but for the moment turn our attention to the passage that records the Saviour's dealings with the woman of Samaria. The section before us (4:3-42) divides into three parts:

- 3-7. The COMING OF THE LORD TO SAMARIA. 'Give Me to drink'.
- 7-27. The WOMAN OF SAMARIA. 'Messiah cometh'.
- 28-42. The PEOPLE OF SAMARIA. 'This is indeed the Christ'.

The section dealing with the Woman of Samaria falls naturally into seven parts, for the twenty-one verses that relate to her consist mainly of the dialogue between her and the Lord.

John 4:7-27

- A **a** 7. THE LORD. Give Me to drink.
b 8. THE DISCIPLES. Gone away to buy meat.
- B **c** 9. THE WOMAN. How? Jews and Samaritans.
d 10. THE LORD. If thou knewest the Gift of God.
c 11,12. THE WOMAN. From whence? Well is deep.
d 13,14. THE LORD. A well ... everlasting life.
c 15. THE WOMAN. Sir, give me this water.
d 16. THE LORD. Go, call thy husband.
c 17. THE WOMAN. I have no husband.
d 17,18. THE LORD. Thou hast well said.
c 19,20. THE WOMAN. Sir, I perceive Thou art a prophet.
d 21-24. THE LORD. The worship of the Father.
c 25. THE WOMAN. I know that Messiah cometh.
- A **a** 26. THE LORD. I that speak unto thee am He.
b 27. THE DISCIPLES. Return.

When the Lord sent out His twelve apostles to preach the gospel of the Kingdom, He said:

‘Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel’ (Matt. 10:5,6).

In the passage which we are considering, however, we learn that our Lord Himself entered a city of the Samaritans and that many were saved, a firstfruits of those ‘other sheep’ (John 10:16) for whose blessing this Gospel was written. ‘Go not’ (Matt. 10:5) and ‘must needs go’ (John 4:4) mark the two dispensational aspects of these two Gospels. Matthew’s purpose would not have been served by revealing this ministry of the Lord, for he set forth the Saviour the seed of David and of Abraham, as Israel’s King. John had another purpose in view. This same Christ, Who was Israel’s King and Messiah, came to give life where death abounded, but He had limited His earthly ministry to Israel, because of the peculiar place they occupied in the purpose of the ages, yet that one life, death and resurrection is the basis of all callings,

all salvation, all hope. Thus Paul revealed facts concerning that one sacrifice which, though surely accomplished, were as surely unknown at the time, even as John also revealed, by his inspired selection of the earthly ministry of Christ, a wider purpose of God than could be gathered from Matthew's narrative.

We must remember that dispensational changes take place when the time for their *announcement* arrives, not when the work upon which they rest was *accomplished*. Whether recorded by Matthew or by John, by Peter or by Paul, it is the *same* Christ and the *same* cross; the *same* resurrection and the *same* ascension, but the doctrines that are related to that one work of Christ vary considerably, and are made known only in their appointed seasons.

John the Baptist not only said 'Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand', but 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world'. The former utterance was made known by Matthew, who did not include the latter, whereas John ignores the former and includes the latter. It is therefore suggestive of the non-Jewish trend of the Gospel of John that he is inspired to record the ministry of the Lord in Samaria. Moreover, it is in entire accord with the confessed purpose of John in writing this record, which was:

'That ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name' (20:31).

This Woman of Samaria is led on to believe that Jesus is the Christ, and many of her own townspeople believed with her. Just as Nicodemus stumbled at the announcement of the new birth, saying, 'How?' (3:4) so, at first, the woman took the reference to 'living water' physically, saying: 'Sir, Thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast Thou that living water?'

The testimony given to Nicodemus is prefaced by the words, 'and needed not that any should testify of man: for He knew what was in man' (2:25). It was this same, intimate, knowledge that convicted the woman of Samaria. When she admitted that she had no husband, the Lord revealed that He knew all about it, and that she previously had had five husbands; consequently, upon her return to the city, she said:

'Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?' (4:29).

‘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 ... 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’ (39-42).

We have already drawn attention to the fact that, where Matthew will refer to the fulfilment of a prophecy, John adduces the evidence of individual testimony. We have seen this in the case of Nathanael, who was convinced that Jesus was the Son of God and the King of Israel by the omniscient knowledge which the Lord manifested. It was by similar evidence that the Woman of Samaria and her fellow-townfolk were convinced. The man born blind and Thomas himself are further examples. Evidently the appeal is not to the Jew as such and his sacred Scriptures, but to the world at large. The introduction of such a controversial matter as the disputed place of worship, ‘Jerusalem or this mountain’, may have been the natural attempt of the woman to turn the conversation into less personal and intimate channels. On the other hand every Jew and every Samaritan must have felt that the matter was one of the first importance. The woman, realizing by the Lord’s intimate knowledge of her life that he must be a prophet (4:19) seemed to feel that this was an opportunity too good to be missed, and said:

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

In selecting his incidents as a means of teaching the special line of doctrine inculcated in his Gospel, John seems to have been guided by two features.

- (1) Evidence, upon which faith can rest (as in the cases of Nathanael, the woman of Samaria, or Thomas), that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.
- (2) Special aspects of truth (such as the New Birth), which the recounted incidents bring to light.

Here, in the story of the Samaritan woman, while supplying the evidence, ‘a Man, which told me all things that ever I did’, and, most pointedly, evidence as to ‘eternal life’ being ‘the gift of God’, he also brings into prominence the question of the true nature of worship.

Speaking after the manner of men, it is in the Lord's dealings with Nicodemus, the teacher in Israel, that one would have expected a discourse on the nature of worship, and a lesson on the need of new birth to the poor sinful Samaritan woman; but it is not so.

When the writers of the Synoptic Gospels spoke to the Jews, they quoted the law and the prophets. It was sufficient evidence of truth to show that such and such an event fulfilled the prophets. This is the line of argument adopted by Matthew, although some of his 'proofs' need careful examination if those unaccustomed to Hebrew methods of handling the Scriptures are to be convinced of their relevancy, as for example the 'fulfilment' of the prophecy of Hosea in Matthew 2:15, or that of Jeremiah in 2:18. When John wrote his Gospel it was not the Jew with his Scriptures, that was before his mind, but 'the world', a world that knew not the Hebrew Scriptures. He opens his Gospel with a philosophic presentation of the Christ as 'the Logos made flesh' (1:14), and while Philip told Nathanael that they had found Him of Whom Moses and the Prophets wrote, the guileless Israelite is not convinced by an array of prophetic fulfilments, but by personal conviction brought about by the Lord's absolute knowledge of his being and actions (1:50).

In chapter 2 the testimony of the Scripture and the force of its fulfilment does not operate in the minds of the apostles until after the resurrection:

'When therefore He was risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this unto them; and they (then) believed the Scripture, and the word which Jesus had said' (2:22).

The general trend of the teaching of the Gospel is to prove by evidence, that 'Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God', and then, because Christ is believed, the Scriptures which He endorsed would of necessity also be believed (5:46,47). This is not of course a hard and fast rule; there are occasions when John does draw attention to the fulfilment of prophecy, but it remains true that the main basis of the Gospel is accredited testimony.

In his prison ministry, Paul does not quote Old Testament Scripture in support of the mystery, because, being a mystery hid in God, it formed no part of an earlier revelation. In his Gospel, John does not appeal to Old Testament Scripture to prove that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, because those to whom he addressed his message were not

likely either to be in possession of the Scriptures or to be believers in them. His line of teaching is rather faith in Christ as the Giver of Life first, then the recognition that this Christ is the *Messiah* of prophecy, and consequently the acceptance of those Scriptures which spoke of Him.

Of the writers of the New Testament John alone uses the title 'Messiah'. A superficial reading has led some to affirm that this is 'proof' that John had the Jew in mind, but the reverse is the fact. Most evidently he had an untaught Gentile in view, for what Jew needed the following explanation?

'Which is, being interpreted, *the Christ*' (1:41).

'I know that Messiah cometh, *which is called Christ*' (4:25).

The more we examine the Gospel, the more convinced we are that John did not write 'kingdom' truth, did not write to the circumcision, but to the world. One 'argument' against this view is that John was an apostle of the circumcision (Gal. 2:7,9), but if that would prevent John, in his old age, after the circumcision had been set aside, from writing a message to the world, it would also prevent Paul from writing the epistle to the Hebrews (which we do not believe or teach). Moreover, apart from John's Gospel, there is no ministry that fulfils the call of the guests after A.D. 70, but, with it, every phase of God's gracious purpose in each sphere of blessing is provided for, for which we give Him thanks.

Samaria. 'The hour cometh'. Dispensational changes, true worship, and the purpose of John's Gospel illuminated (4:3-42)

We now examine the Lord's teaching in John 4 concerning the nature of worship. The commencement of the argument is upon a low plane; it deals with the conflicting claims of Mount Gerizim in Samaria, and Jerusalem in Judaea, but in the hand of the Lord the matter is soon raised to a higher realm and, by the addition of the words 'and now is', is made applicable to the period that followed the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70.

The argument falls into two parts: the woman's question, and the Lord's answer.

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

The words 'the place where' reveal the heart of the question; it was a matter of 'in' this mountain or 'in' Jerusalem.

From the point of view of Philippians 3:3, any localizing of the worship of God, or holding one 'place' as more sacred than another, seems childish, but we must not wrongly divide the word of truth. In the older dispensation it was a matter of extreme importance to be sure of the 'place' of acceptable worship.

'Unto the place which the LORD your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put His Name there, even unto His habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come' (Deut. 12:5).

In Deuteronomy 27:4, the Samaritan Pentateuch reads 'Gerizim', where the Hebrew reads 'Ebal', and it is this falsification of the original that was at the bottom of most of the controversy between the Samaritans and the Jews in the matter of worship.

In Nehemiah 13:28 we read that the grandson of the high priest Eliashib was banished by Nehemiah because he was the son-in-law of Sanballat, and Josephus tells us that this man fled to Samaria, where his father-in-law made him high priest of the temple which he had built at Gerizim. There was also a revolt of other Jews who had married strange wives, consequently there would be a strong temptation to justify themselves by altering the place of the words Ebal and Gerizim in the Law. Added to this was the strain of idolatry that had been brought by the men transferred from Babylon by the king of Assyria and the resulting mixture would justify the abhorrence of the Jew and the language of the Lord when He said, 'Ye worship ye know not what'. The Lord was about to reveal to the Samaritan woman that change of dispensation which would set aside Jerusalem itself as the 'place' of worship, but, before doing so, He makes it clear that 'salvation was of the Jews' and that worship at Jerusalem was of Divine appointment.

The Lord's answer to the woman's question occupies verses 21-24, and the structure is as follows:

A 21. - DISPENSATIONAL CHANGE. The hour cometh.

B 21. - WORSHIP OF THE FATHER. Neither *in* this mountain, nor *in* Jerusalem.

- C 22. - SALVATION IS OF THE JEWS. - Ye worship ye know not what. We worship we know what.
- A 23. - DISPENSATIONAL CHANGE. The hour cometh and now is.
- B 23. - WORSHIP OF THE FATHER. True worshippers, worship *in* spirit and truth.
- C 24. - GOD IS SPIRIT. Worship must be in spirit and truth.

Let us examine this very important pronouncement on the nature of worship. First of all we observe that the Lord indicated that a time was coming when there would be no further need to debate whether Gerizim or Jerusalem was the 'place' where men 'ought' to worship.

'*The hour cometh*'. - In verse 23, this reference to the dispensational change is repeated, but with the added comment 'and now is'. What are we to understand by these words? In chapter 5 we have the same expansion, only in this passage the order is reversed.

'The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God' (5:25).

'The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice' (5:28).

From verses 21, 22, 28 and 29 of chapter 5 it is clear that actual physical resurrection is in view, and from verse 24 that a *spiritual* application of 'life from the dead' is in view. Here the 'hearing' is equivalent to 'believing'. The 'word' is equivalent to His 'voice'; 'coming out of the grave' is equivalent to 'passing from death unto life'. So in chapter 4, '*The hour cometh*'. Even the 'place' chosen by God, and the 'ordinances' enjoined in the law, were, after all, 'carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation' (Heb. 9:10); and while, in the matter which the woman raised, the Samaritans were in error ('Ye worship ye know not what; we know', - and so far as prophetic truth was concerned, the coming of Messiah and the hope attached - 'salvation is of the Jews', - was its purport) yet, just as, later, Paul was to sweep aside both circumcision and uncircumcision as superseded by the new creation (Gal. 6:15), so now the Lord set aside both Jerusalem and Gerizim, and that not only as a future effect of the change that was coming, but, by the added words, 'and now is', as a then present effect. While still continuing to worship in the temple, the true worshipper could, even then, anticipate the day that was fully coming later, when they that worship God will worship Him in spirit

and in truth. The Lord does not say 'God *will then* be Spirit', but that 'God *is* Spirit'. God's essence remains unchanged by His successive dispensational dealings with men. The imposition of carnal ordinances upon Israel was not because God had changed, but because of man's inability to rise to spiritual heights.

'*God is Spirit*'. - It is a serious mistake to read 'God is *a* spirit', for that would only be true if God were one of the angelic order of beings. This sublime statement refers, not to His Personality, but His essence. He is Spirit. It follows therefore that, to be acceptable, worship, at its zenith, must be spiritual. 'The true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth'.

What is the meaning of 'true' worshippers?

What is the meaning of 'in spirit and in truth'?

Why does the Lord introduce the 'Father' here?

The word translated 'true' is *alethinos*.

'The endings *inos* and *inos* denote that the quality, as a fundamental idea, exists in abundance' (Kruger).

‘Accordingly, *alethinos* is related to *alethes* (true) as form to contents or substance; *alethos* denotes the reality of a thing; *alethinos* defines the relation of the conception to the thing to which it corresponds - genuine’ (Cremer).

When the Saviour said, ‘Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven’ (6:32), He did not deny that manna fell in the wilderness; He affirmed, that He was the reality of which the manna was a type.

When Paul contrasted the earthly tabernacle with the ‘true’ (Heb. 8:2; 9:24) he did not impugn the integrity of the Old Testament, but asserted that the tabernacle built by Moses was not the real holiest of all, which was nothing less than heaven itself. The ‘true’ worshipper therefore was one who had risen above the mediation of type and symbol - Jerusalem and Gerizim - and drew near with a ‘true’ heart. The word ‘truth’ in the phrase ‘in spirit and in truth’ is *aletheia*. This too, sometimes has the same meaning as *alethinos*.

‘Grace and truth’ came by Jesus Christ in contrast with the ‘law’ that was given by Moses (1:17). Yet the law was as true as the gospel, and he who rejects Moses rejects Christ (5:46,47). The meaning of this passage is, ‘The law which had a shadow of good things to come was given by Moses, but true, real, anti-typical grace came by Jesus Christ’.

In the phrase ‘in spirit and in truth’ the second ‘in’ should be omitted. The preposition before the noun ‘in spirit’ turns it into an adverb, as though it read ‘spiritually’. The complete phrase, ‘in spirit and truth’, is cast in the form of a figure of speech called ‘hendiadys’, the ‘one-by-means-of two’ figure, for just as in the expression ‘grace and truth’ considered above, one thing, not two, is intended, so here.

‘God is spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him spiritually - yes, in a truly spiritual manner, genuinely, without the intervention of types and shadows’.

It is not without a bearing upon the subject that we read in 2 Kings 17:26 that the Samaritans were troubled about the ‘manner’ of the God of the land, as we saw when dealing with the inception of this people. The method adopted by the King of Assyria led to a worship of ‘they knew not what’, but the teaching given by the Lord leads to worship that is acceptable.

Moreover, we observed that the Lord introduced the name of 'Father'. Though 'God is Spirit' and His worship *must* be spiritual, it is evident that sinful man can never approach such a God with such a worship. Consequently the Saviour speaks first of the 'Father', and the 'fatherhood' of God is intimately associated with the 'sonship' of Christ. Consequently, immediately following the statement concerning true spiritual worship, the woman speaks of the coming of Messiah, and the Lord makes the blessed revelation: 'I that speak unto thee am He'.

This is the Lord's seventh statement (see structure of 4:7-27 on p. 152), and is the climax of this section. Both by the series of signs which he selected and in the intervening sections that link these signs together, John, again and again, leads up to the one supreme fact that 'Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God'.

When setting out the structure (pp. 20,21) of the great section which includes the eight signs (2:1 to 21:14), we drew attention to the way in which 'work', *ergon*, and 'believe', *pisteuo*, were a characteristic of each of the intervening passages that linked the eight signs together.

In the section we have now considered, the Lord introduced this subject of His 'work' when His disciples returned to find Him in conversation with the Samaritan.

'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' (4:31-34).

To this and accompanying works, the Lord makes constant appeal throughout the Gospel, and the eight signs are so many 'works' intended to lead to faith in Himself. While this is the only occasion in this section where 'work' is associated with the Lord, as all know, there are a number of references to 'believing'. The word , , 'believing', is used fifteen times in this connection. The significance of the fact that the Lord abode 'two days' at Sychar (4:40) becomes more evident when we consider the next sign (4:43-54), but for the moment let us not miss the significance of the closing words of this section:

‘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’ (4:41,42).

Here is the object of John’s Gospel realized, that men should be attracted to the Lord by the evidence of His works (in this case His supernatural knowledge), and by personal contact become convinced that He is the Christ, the Saviour of the world.

There is a marked parallel in the experience of this woman and that of the man born blind.

SHE said of Christ at the beginning.	‘A Jew’ (4:9).
HE said of Christ at the beginning.	‘A man that is called Jesus’ (9:11).
SHE said, after the Lord had spoken.	‘Thou art a prophet’ (4:19).
HE said, after questioning.	‘He is a prophet’ (9:17).
SHE finally received the revelation.	‘I am He’ (4:26).
HE finally received the revelation.	‘It is He that talketh with thee’ (9:37).

This parallel is indicative of John’s method. Sinful and blind though they be, he would lead men and women first to consider Him, the Man that is called Jesus; then to realize that His title of ‘the Word’ indicates that He is ‘the Prophet’ and finally to acknowledge Him as the Christ, the Son of God, so finding life and light in believing in His name.

The two companies form the subject of the Lord's revelation in John 11:

'I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth (Gk. "is alive") and believeth in Me shall never die' (25,26).

Attempt has been made to identify this sign of the healing of the nobleman's son, with that of the healing of the centurion's servant of Matthew 8:5-13, but, as *The Companion Bible* note reads:

'The two miracles differ as to time, place, person, pleading, plea, disease, the Lord's answer, and the man's faith, as may be easily seen by comparing the two as to these details'.

Commenting upon the difference, Chrysostom says that 'the weak faith of the nobleman is strengthened, while the humility of the centurion is honoured'.

When the returning nobleman was met by his servants, and heard their glad cry, 'Thy son liveth', his interest was quickened. He inquired of them the hour when he began to amend, and upon learning that it was 'Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him' (4:52), he was struck by the fact that it was at that self-same hour that the words of Christ were uttered, and this most evident witness to the saving power of the Saviour's word not only intensified the nobleman's faith, but led to the saving of his whole house.

Here therefore is the second sign which John selected out of many to lead to the conviction that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God, and so to the bestowal of life through His name.

The Third Sign. The Impotent Man. The beginning of conflict; the Sabbath controversy (5:1-15)

The record of this sign commences with a reference to a feast of the Jews at Jerusalem. Commentators, ancient and modern, have suggested almost every Jewish feast as the one concerned. Iren -us understood it to refer to the second *Passover* of our Lord's ministry. The third would therefore be the one mentioned in 6:4, and the fourth in 11:55. This is the view of Luther and Lightfoot. Chrysostom thought that it would be the feast of *Pentecost*, Kepler that it was the feast of *Purim*; and others the feast of *Tabernacles*, and the feast of

Dedication. The omission of the article before the word *heorte* 'feast', makes it unlikely that it was the Passover, and the fact that the feast of the Dedication was 'winter' (10:22) makes it very unlikely, seeing that a multitude of sick folk were waiting to plunge into the water.

Where John wishes the reader to know what particular feast is in mind, he says so. Thus 2:13 connects the money-changers and the sheep with the observance of the Feast of the Passover. In 7:2 the feast of Tabernacles is specified and, once again, the utterance of the Lord 'in the last day, that great day of the feast' (7:37) demands the knowledge that it was the feast of Tabernacles, to make it intelligible. We can therefore rest assured that no lesson is to be drawn from any particular feast except, perhaps, the fact that the reference to this feast as simply 'a feast of the Jews' indicates the hollowness and barrenness of much that then pertained to the Jew's religion.

The occasion of this third sign was that a pool of water near the sheep market or sheep gate, known in the Aramaic tongue as *Bethesda*, and having five porches, was endowed, at periods, with healing powers, which rightly or wrongly were attributed to the interposition of an angel who troubled the waters.

It is suggestive that the corresponding sign - that of the healing of the blind man at the pool of Siloam recorded in chapter 9 - deals with a pool, the name of which is interpreted for the reader and, moreover, the healing took place on a sabbath day, as does the parallel healing in chapter 5.

Bethesda means 'the house of mercy', and, like *Siloam*, which we are told means 'Sent', is intentionally introduced by the writer. The word *kolumbethra*, which means 'swimming pool', occurs in John five times, and in no other passage than John 9, the corresponding sixth sign. Why is attention drawn to the fact that the pool was surrounded by 'five porches'? If there were gates or steps they are not mentioned, but only the porches, which we must therefore consider have special significance. Is it possible that John saw in the five porches a reference to the Pentateuch, the five books of the law, which suggested the failure of the law to save? 'for the law was given by Moses, but true grace came by Jesus Christ'. Moses is most certainly introduced into these two signs (5:45,46; 9:28,29), as also the fact that the Saviour was Lord even of the sabbath day, for both signs were wrought on a sabbath.

The sick who waited for the troubling of the water were 'impotent' folk, and blind, halt, and withered. It is the 'impotent' (*astheneo*) man that is singled out for blessing. *Astheneia*, the word translated 'infirmity' in 5:5, indicates both physical infirmity and infirmity of the flesh (Rom. 6:19), as well as the infirmity of the law, because of the flesh (Rom. 8:3). *Asthenes* is used of the obsolete law, where it is referred to as the 'weak' and beggarly elements (Gal. 4:9). Moreover, the man had been impotent for thirty-eight years, the period that covered the wandering of the children of Israel.

'Waiting'. - From this word in verse 3 to the end of verse 4, the passage is omitted in many critical texts, though retained in the Syriac, but there is no justification for the omission, neither is there any reason to attempt to 'explain' the reference to angelic ministry. If, as has been suggested, John merely introduced a popular but mistaken superstition here, what is to prevent the application of the suggestion to other recorded instances of angelic ministry in the New Testament? It is also unnecessary to attempt an 'explanation' on natural lines. The pool might, or might not, have been an intermittent spring; it might, or might not, have been connected with the upper springs of the water of Gihon. The truth is that no one knows the site of the pool. The identification of the sheep gate with St. Stephen's gate is inaccurate for Robinson says no well existed in that quarter until the time of Agrippa. Against the 'natural' interpretation of the troubling of the water, we must place the testimony of the record:

- (1) Only *one* sufferer could be healed.
- (2) The *first* who stepped down was healed.
- (3) The action of the curative power was *instantaneous*.
- (4) The cure was not confined to any *specific* disease.

If the pool had consisted of some sort of medicinal water, its powers would not be exhausted in the cure of one sufferer, nor would it necessarily matter in what order the sufferers stepped into the water. Moreover medicinal waters do not cure instantaneously, nor every kind of disease or infirmity.

Among the items of extreme interest that yet await examination in this third sign is the question of verse 6, 'Wilt thou be made whole?'

Thelo, 'I will', occurs four times in this section and its expansion, which occupies chapter 5:

‘Wilt thou be made whole?’ (6).
 ‘The Son quickeneth whom He *will*’ (21).
 ‘Ye were *willing* for a season to rejoice in his light’ (35).
 ‘Ye *will* not come to Me, that ye might have life’ (40).

Before proceeding further we must discover the structure of the third sign.

The Third Sign (5:1-15)

- A₁ 1-4.
- a** A feast of the Jews.
 - b** Jerusalem. Jesus went up.
- GENERAL
- b** Jerusalem. A Pool.
- EXPECTATION
- a** Hebrew tongue. Five Porches.
- ‘Made whole’
- a** Impotent folk.
 - b** Waiting for troubling of water.
 - b** Angel at times troubled the water.
 - a** First to step in. Healed.
- A₂ 5-7.
- c** A certain man was there.
 - d** Impotent 38 years.
- PARTICULAR CASE.
- c** Jesus saw him lie.
 - d** Long time in that case.
 - e** *Question*: ‘Wilt thou be made whole?’
 - e** *Answer*: ‘Sir, I have no man’.
 - c** When water is troubled.
 - d** To put me in.
 - c** While I am coming.
 - d** Another steppeth before me.
- ‘Made whole’
- A₃ 8-11.
- f** Take up thy bed and walk.
 - g** The man was made whole.
 - h** Took up his bed and walked.
 - i** On same day was the sabbath.
 - i** It is the sabbath day.
 - h** Not lawful to carry thy bed.
 - g** He that made me whole.
 - f** Take up thy bed and walk.
- THE SIGN ITSELF
- ‘Made whole’
- A₄ 12-15.
- j** They asked him.
 - k** What man is that.
 - l** Take up thy bed and walk.
- THE SEQUEL.

- 'Made whole'*
- m** Jesus had conveyed Himself away. Jesus finds him in the temple.
 - m** Behold thou art made whole. Go and sin no more.
 - j** He told the Jews.
 - k** That it was Jesus.
 - l** Which had made him whole.

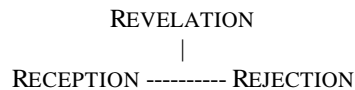
The faith of God's elect, the faith as taught in the Scriptures, must embrace *all* that has been written on the subject. To follow one's own leanings, and pick and choose texts and passages, is the surest way to produce another heresy (for the word heretic in the Greek, means, literally, 'a chooser'), but it does not lead to the wholesome doctrine that is taught in the Scriptures. In John 5 the Calvinist would be attracted to the pronouncement, 'The Son quickeneth whom He will'. The Arminian to the words, 'Wilt thou be made whole?' The *Berean* should be attracted by both passages, and his creed must embrace both. Those who deny freedom of will to man, seldom, if ever, quote or expound the pathetic words of Matthew 23:37. 'How often *would* I ... and ye *would* not' where the word translated 'would' is *thelo*.

Predestination does not stand alone; in Romans 8:29 it is stated to be *according to foreknowledge*. Election does not stand alone, but is *according to the foreknowledge* of God the Father (1 Pet. 1:2). For daring to believe and to teach these scriptural facts when writing the series on Romans, both we, and many of our readers in this country and abroad, were submitted to a series of anonymous letters wherein the writer, shielded by his anonymity, did not refrain from abusive language. It is in the doctrinal links that bind into a whole the eight signs of John, that this inter-relation of will, evidence, conviction, faith, choice, election, being drawn, being given the will, meet us. Among the last words of the New Testament canon are these: 'Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely' (Rev. 22:17), and they contain the last occurrence in the New Testament of *thelo*. As these various aspects of a great truth appear, will be the right time and place to deal with them.

On the occasion of the first sign, the turning of the water into wine, no opposition was manifested, 'His disciples believed on Him' (2:11).

After the second sign, not only did the nobleman believe, but his whole house (4:53), and again there is no indication of opposition. But on the occasion of the third sign opposition is manifested.

A characteristic of John's Gospel that can be summed up in a few words, is this:



After a revelation is given, we read of some who received Him not and of others who did receive Him, and this twofold attitude is apparent and throughout the Gospel.

In self-justification, however, opposition needs a reason, or an excuse. In this third sign the excuse was to hand. The man had been healed and had carried his bed *on the sabbath day*.

'And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: *and on the same day was the sabbath*' (5:9).

There are thirteen occurrences of the word 'sabbath' in John's Gospel, nine being found in chapters 5 to 9, and the remainder in those chapters which deal with the crucifixion and the resurrection (19 and 20). It is evident that John has placed the third and the sixth signs in correspondence, for, among many other parallel features, these are the two which were wrought on the sabbath day.

'And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes' (9:14).

The way in which John adds this comment in 5:9 and 9:14, mentally makes us supply the ellipsis, 'How shocking!'

These passages that deal with the sabbath, group themselves sufficiently to enable us to perceive the underlying intention behind them.

Sabbaton in John 5 to 9

- A 5:9. The same day was the SABBATH.
 B 5:10,16,18. The SABBATH broken. 'Sought to slay Him'.
 C 7:22,23. Moses and the SABBATH. The principle involved.
 A 9:14. It was the SABBATH day.
 B 9:16. He keepeth not the SABBATH day.

If there are thirteen references to the sabbath in John's Gospel, there are also thirteen to Moses. If those to the sabbath are distributed under the grouping nine and four, (nine as in the above, and four at the close of the Gospel), so is the name Moses distributed under a grouping of nine and four. Four times John spells the name *Mouses*, and nine times *Moses*. The latter spelling is more in line with the Hebrew, whereas the former is derived from the Egyptian.

'Hereupon it was that Thermuthis imposed this name *Mouses* upon him, from what had happened when he was put into the river; for the Egyptians call water by the name *Mo*, and such as are saved out of it by the name of *Uses*' (Josephus Ant. ii. ix. 6).

There is no discovered assignable reason why one spelling or the other should have been used by the writers of the New Testament, and we will not waste time in empty speculation.

The conflict in this gospel is due to the misunderstanding of the law as interpreted by the legalists and ritualists of the day, and the gracious interpretation put upon it by the Lord. Thus, Moses lifted up the serpent, a blessed anticipation of 3:16. Moses gave the Manna, a blessed type of the True Bread that came down from heaven. To avoid breaking the law of Moses, circumcision was performed even on the sabbath day (7:22,23), and healing a man, and the carrying of his bed by the healed man, were in full harmony with the gracious intention of the sabbath. It is well to perceive that the attitude of our Lord to the traditional sabbath day observance awoke the first murderous opposition recorded by John.

The fourfold division of the structure of this sign, (given on p. 171) throws into prominence the words 'be made whole'. This word *hugies*, 'whole', that gives us *hygiene*, occurs seven times in this Gospel, viz., 5:4,6,9,11,14,15; 7:23. It will be observed that every reference

has to do with this third sign. Verse 14 associates the impotent man's condition with sin, 'Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon thee'.

The first sign made up a deficiency, and ministered to a people's joy. The second ministered life, 'Thy son liveth', and is the thrice-repeated key to the structure. The third sign ministered health, and by the fact that it was given on the sabbath indicated that a greater than Moses had come. Each sign reflects some one phase of our Lord's many-sided fulness, and each contributed its quota of evidence to the fact that this was indeed the Christ, the Son of God, and that life results from faith in His name.

The Sabbath and Sabbatarianism

The conflict over the healing of the impotent man arose, not in connection with the nature of the cure, but entirely in connection with the Pharisees' attitude to the sabbath:

'And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay Him, because He had done these things *on the sabbath day*' (5:16).

The Lord's defence is brief but full: 'My Father worketh hitherto, and I work' (5:17). This outrages the Jews more than ever, and we read that:

'Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God' (5:18).

This double charge is met by a longer explanatory defence given in verses 19-30, in which the equality of the Son is demonstrated and proved. This appeal to the evidence of His own works and appointment is supplemented by an appeal to the witness of John the Baptist, the Father, the Scriptures generally, and the writings of Moses. The Lord also speaks of the blinding power of the Jews' self-seeking spirit, a spirit in marked contrast to His own (5:19 and 30). An appeal to the evidence of the Scriptures brings the section to an end (5:31-47).

The subject-matter of this section lies very near the heart of all truth, and we must spare no pains in our endeavour to understand its teaching. Let us first seek, by grace, to discover the structure of this great controversy, for if we can once perceive the underlying structure, an examination of the details can then be pursued with less risk of

confusion. Following our usual custom, a custom justified by results over many years, let us consider first the large outline, and then the subdivisions later.

John 5:16-47

- A WORKS. 16-30. Opposition arising out of the Lord's attitude to the sabbath day and His claim to equality with the Father, met by the evidence of His works.
- A WORD. 31-47. This evidence of His works is supplemented by the witness of John the Baptist and the Scriptures, with a comment on the reason for Jewish blindness.

Taking now each of these large sections separately, we find the progress of the argument marked by the following subdivisions:

- A 16. Jewish opposition. The Sabbath.
 - B 17. The defence. 'My Father worketh hitherto, and I work'.
- A 18. Jewish opposition intensified. The Sabbath and the claim to equality with God.
 - B 19-30. The defence. An expansion of the defence given in verse 17, with special reference to the question of equality with God.

In the second section we find the following subdivision of the subject:

A 31. Witness concerning Myself. True.

A 32-47. The witness of others. True.

The Witness of Others (John 5:32-47).

A₁ 32-36. The witness of John the Baptist 'concerning Me'
(*ho marturon peri emou*).

B₁ 36-38. The Sent One. 'Ye believe not'.

A₂ 39,40. The witness of the Scriptures 'concerning Me'
(*hai marturousai peri emou*).

B₂ 41-44. The one in his own name. 'How can ye believe?'

A₃ 45-47. The witness of Moses 'concerning Me'
(*peri emou egrapsen*).

Here we have a threefold witness 'concerning Me', but the witness was not received. The witness of John the Baptist was only received 'for a season'. The witness of the Scriptures was nullified because, even though the Scriptures were 'searched', those who searched them never came to the Lord of Whom these Scriptures testified. And thirdly, the Jews were actually persecuting the Lord out of zeal for 'Moses' in whom they trusted, and yet Moses was one of those who wrote of Him.

In the two sections marked B₁ and B₂ the Lord reveals the reason for Israel's blindness: (1) they had not the word of God abiding in them and (2) they received honour from man, and did not seek that honour which comes from God only - and this blinded their eyes to the value of the evidences before them.

The most important subdivision of this great section is the defence that occupies verses 19-30. This has a most wonderful structure which we will reserve until we have considered those passages that lead up to it. The detailed analysis of the second great division (32-47) must also await the time when we arrive at it in the course of our studies. Let us now turn our attention to the opposition indicated in verses 16 and 18, so that the way may be cleared for the consideration of the great defence found in verses 19-30.

The words *sabbata*, *sabbaton* and *prosabbaton*, translated 'sabbath day', 'sabbath' and 'day before the sabbath', occur in the Gospels forty-nine times (7 X 7). Not only is there evidence of intention here

in the multiple of seven, but we also find that the expression 'the first day of the week', *sabbata* (the exact translation of the original we do not now question) occurs seven times in the New Testament. John, also, uses the word *sabbaton* seven times in connection with the healing of the impotent man (John 5:9,10,16,18; 7:22,23).

We shall never understand the bitter animosity created over the observance or non-observance of the sabbath, if we do not know something of the teaching of the Rabbis, and the dominant place the sabbath occupied in the life and heart of every orthodox Jew.

'It had become the most distinctive and the most passionately revered of all ordinances which separated the Jew from the Gentile as a peculiar people. It was at once the sign of their exclusive privileges, and the centre of their barren formalism. Their traditions, their patriotism, even their obstinacy, were all enlisted in its scrupulous maintenance ... Their devotion to it was only deepened by the universal ridicule, inconvenience and loss which it entailed upon them in the heathen world' (Farrar).

Turning now to the first reference to the sabbath in the Gospels, we read:

'And at that time Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn; and His disciples were an hundred, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat. But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto Him, Behold, Thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day' (Matt. 12:1,2).

The Rabbis by no means taught that on the sabbath men should fast or practise self-denial over their food; on the contrary, they interpreted the words 'Thou shalt call the sabbath a delight' to mean that extra food, and daintier food should be eaten:

'He that feasts thrice on the sabbath, shall be delivered from the calamities of the Messiah, from the judgment of hell, and from the war of Gog and Magog' (Maimon).

The disciples were satisfying their hunger with a few ears of barley. The Pharisees could not object to the nature of their food, except that it was poor and coarse, and the fact that the disciples were hungry shows that they had observed the custom of abstaining from food on the sabbath day until the morning prayers of the synagogue

were over. Moreover, the Pharisees were not raising any legal objection to the disciples taking a few ears of corn, for that was a lawful act:

‘When thou comest into the standing corn of thy neighbour, then thou mayest pluck the ears with thine hand; but thou shalt not move a sickle unto thy neighbour’s standing corn’ (Deut. 23:25).

The whole question was the lawfulness or otherwise of plucking ears of corn *on the sabbath*. The tradition reads:

‘He that reaps on the sabbath, though never so little, is guilty’ (Maimon).

It may well be objected that plucking a few ears of corn is not ‘reaping’. But, in the Rabbinical tradition the two things were classed together:

‘And to pluck the ears of corn is a kind of reaping’ (Maimon).

As the Saviour well knew, this simple act was punishable by death; hence His intervention on His disciples’ behalf.

‘The works whereby a man is guilty of stoning and cutting off ... are either primitive or derivative’ (Maimon).

There were thirty-nine ‘primitive’ kinds of work, which if done presumptuously on the sabbath rendered a man liable to death - including ploughing, sowing and reaping. The ‘derivative’ works were, for example, ‘digging’ - for that was a sort of ploughing; and ‘plucking’ ears of corn - for that was a sort of reaping. Knowing that death by stoning was the punishment for this action, if done presumptuously, the Saviour interposes to show that they had been moved by the necessity of hunger, and not by contempt for the Law or Jewish scruples. He then cites the example of David and the priests (Matt. 12:3-5).

In verse 5 the Lord refers to the fact that ‘the priests in the temple profane the sabbath and are blameless’. The traditional law concerning the working of priests on the sabbath reads:

‘The servile work, which is done in the holy things is not servile’ (Hieros. Schabb).

‘There is no sabbatism at all in the temple’ (Maimon).

In verses 68 we have the Lord's first great claim recorded in Matthew:

'But I say unto you, That in this place is One greater than the temple ... For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day' (Matt. 12:6-8).

And Mark, in his Gospel, adds the significant words: 'The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath' (2:27).

Here then were two related claims, stupendous in their sublimity, and far-reaching in their effect upon subsequent doctrine. The Son of man was Lord of the sabbath day, and the sabbath day was made for the sons of men. No wonder such words were offensive in the ears of those whose teaching bound heavy burdens upon men, and who made void the law by their traditions.

Immediately following this incident, and as though to confirm His claim, comes the record of the healing of the man with a withered hand. The Lord's attention is drawn to this man by the Pharisees themselves, 'that they might accuse Him' (Matt. 12:10). He replies to their question by referring to their own laws. A sheep, if fallen into a pit, could be released on the sabbath, and the Lord knew only too well the kind of subterfuge that enabled the Pharisees to evade even their own laws, e.g., 'He that hath a sore throat, let him not gargle it with oil' - but he was permitted to 'swallow down the oil', and so on, through a whole series of laws and their evasion. Rejecting their pettifogging scruples, the Lord continues:

'How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days' (Matt. 12:12).

And, suiting the action to the word, the Lord commands the man with the withered hand to stretch it forth.

In contrast with this beneficent act, the Pharisees hold a council 'how they might destroy Him'. And so the enmity that bore the bitter fruit of the cross was sown in the soil of a perverted sabbatarianism.

It is no accident that the man's hand was 'withered'. The word is used again in Matthew 13:6 and 21:19,20. The Pharisees' whole conception of the law was dry and withered. They had never learned the 'meaning' of the words: 'I will have mercy, and not sacrifice' (12:7).

In view of the Jews' attitude towards the sabbath day, there may have been more in the Lord's question to the impotent man than at first appears. The words 'Wilt thou be made whole?' may have implied the unspoken thought, Wilt thou be made whole on the sabbath, with all that it may bring with it? The command to the man to take up his bed and walk was a further example of the Lord's dominion over the sabbath, and His disregard for the scruples of the Pharisees. According to their traditions:

'Whoever on the sabbath carries out anything either from a private place to a public, or from a public place to a private, he is bound to offer a sacrifice for his sin, but if presumptuously, he is punished by cutting off, and being stoned' (Schabb).

We must give fuller consideration to the corresponding sabbath day controversy in the ninth chapter of John when we come to the sign of the healing of the man born blind. Sufficient, we trust has been said to enable the reader to understand the great difference between the Divine intention of the sabbath as taught by the Lord in word and deed, and the barren, lifeless, merciless imposition of the tradition of the elders. This exclusive, withered, merciless sabbatarian spirit still lingers among some Christians even today. Such believers no doubt mean well, but they have never entered into the spirit of Him Who is Lord even of the sabbath.

Space will not permit us to deal here with Paul's attitude towards the observance of 'days' and 'sabbaths'. We must be content with the suggestion that the reader should study for himself the apostle's words in Romans 14, Galatians 4, and Colossians 2.

The Relationship of the Son

Instead of acknowledging that He had in any way transgressed the law by bidding the healed man carry his bed on the sabbath day, the Lord went further and associated Himself and His action with God Himself.

'But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work' (John 5:17).

When dealing with Divine truth there is a great need to realize and distinguish the relative from the absolute. For example, holiness is expressed by the Hebrew word *qodesh*, which primarily means

'separation'. From the point of view of man, this idea of 'separation' is most important, for he is surrounded by so much evil that one of the first elements in practical sanctification is separateness. We must however avoid the error of transferring this idea to the full conception of holiness when applied to God. Was God not holy before sin entered into the universe? Most surely. Were not the angels holy? They were. Would this primal holiness know anything of 'separation'? Most certainly not. Would this primal holiness therefore be lower than the present manifestation? Surely no. So, from man's point of view, the great feature that marks off the sabbath day from the remaining six is that on that day man should do no work. This, however, is because man needs to recuperate; needs to have time to think on work and ways that are higher than those which occupy the greater part of his time. Can we conceive, however, that there is any essential moral or spiritual difference in the work that God does on Monday as compared with that done on Sunday or Saturday? To ask the question is to expose its folly.

The Pharisees had fastened upon the necessary observation of rest from toil that man's nature demanded if the sabbath were to be enjoyed, and made it contradict the very purpose of its institution. If all were as holy, as good, as merciful as the Son of man, all could go on working without cessation from one week's end to another. A moment's thought would convince anyone open to argument, that were God to withdraw from His creation for a single moment to say nothing of twenty-four hours, creation would cease to exist. Our breath is in His hand (Dan. 5:23), He upholds all things by the word of His power (Heb. 1:3), by Him all things consist (Col. 1:17). Do we not breathe on the sabbath day? Does not the sun shine on the sabbath day? Does the whole composite labour of creation, generation, growth, decomposition, life and death, stand still on the sabbath day?

'My Father worketh hitherto'.

In the second miracle wrought on the sabbath day that John records, the Lord emphasized this great, but misunderstood truth: 'I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day' (9:4). In Matthew, Mark and Luke there are but nine occurrences of *ergon*, 'work', but in John there are no less than twenty-seven occurrences. The words of 4:34, 'My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work', is the opening reference to the Lord's works, while

the words of 17:4, 'I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do', closes the references.

Every intervening link between the eight signs is marked by the inter-relation of *ergon*, 'work', and *pisteuo*, 'believe', except 4:53,54, where the Lord's statement, 'except ye see signs and wonders' (4:48) indicates what the reference to 'works' is.

Instead of subduing the anger of the Jews the Lord's answer increased it.

'Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God' (5:18).

No Jew could really object to another Jew calling God his Father, but the Saviour did not say 'Our Father' but 'My Father'. He never did say 'Our Father', as we are taught to do. When He instructed His disciples to pray He taught them to say 'Our Father', but when He prayed He never said 'Our Father'. On the resurrection morning this distinction is emphasized:

'I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God' (20:17).

The Revised Version corrects the Authorized Version in 5:18, by translating the word *idios*, 'own', 'but also called God His *Own* Father'.

We do not go to the angry Jews to find a ground for the deity of Christ, and the words, 'making himself equal with God', arise out of the claim that the Saviour made that God was His own Father. He did not claim to be the Father, but he did claim equality with the Father. *Isos* means 'equal', and is quite distinct from 'identity'. There is here no confusion of the Persons of the Father and the Son. When the labourers who had worked all day complained, 'Thou hast made them equal unto us' (Matt. 20:12), the equality was not of nature or person but of wages. When Peter said of the Gentiles that God had given them the 'like' gift to that already bestowed upon the Jews at Pentecost, the equality was of gift, not nationality; Cornelius was not made a Jew. The truth concerning the relation of the Father and the Son is the great theme of the Lord's reply to these words. He does not deny the equality which the Jews accused Him of claiming, but

demonstrates and enforces it. While He readily admitted that the Son could do nothing of Himself, yet He not only claimed to 'see' what the Father did, but also that He, the Son, did 'likewise'. Is this not equality? He twice uses the familiar figure of simile - 'For *as ... so*' - and does not simile imply equality? This simile is used of two tremendous statements. The first, that as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, 'even so the Son quickeneth whom He will' (5:21); the second, that as the Father hath life in Himself even 'so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself' (5:26). We are not however left to our own failing powers of logic; the Lord definitely states the case.

'That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father' (5:23).

Before we proceed, we must seek the structure of this passage, for this will set the course of our investigation and prevent us from mistaking an incidental remark for one of first magnitude. In other words, the structure provides the Lord's own emphasis, as though He had actually underlined the Bible for us. Here is the structure of this great defence.

John 5:19-30

'My Father worketh hitherto, and I work' expanded from verse 17.

- A 19. Nothing of Self. **a** The Son can do nothing of Himself.
'What He seeth' **b** What He seeth the Father do.
b What things soever He doeth.
a These also doeth the Son likewise.
- B 20. Greater works, that ye may marvel.
- C 21-23. Equality of the Son. **c** For as ... so ... rais eth and quickeneth.
d *Krino, krisis*: Judgment.
e The Son sent.
- D 24,25. The hour and the voice. No condemnation (*krisis*). **f** Verily, verily.
g Hear my Word.
h Hath everlasting life.
i The hour cometh and now is.
f Verily, verily.
g Hear the voice of the Son of God.
h They that hear shall live.
- C 26,27. Equality of the Son. **c** For as ... so ... life in Himself.
d *Krisis*: Judgment.
e The Son of man.
- B 28. Marvel not at this, for something greater follows.
- D 28,29. The hour and the voice. Some come to condemnation (*krisis*). **i** The hour cometh.
g Hear His voice.
h Resurrection of life or judgment.
- A 30. Nothing of Self. **a** I can of Mine own self do nothing.
'As I hear'. **b** As I hear I judge.
b My judgment is just.
a Not My own will, but His.

These corresponding members of the structure must therefore be the object of our investigation - A 5:19 and A 5:30, 'What He seeth' and 'As I hear'.

In 3:34 the testimony is given, 'He Whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God', and we shall have occasion to consider this statement more fully when we arrive at chapter 7:16, where the Lord says, 'My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me'. Here, in chapter 5, it is not 'words' or 'doctrine' but 'works' that are in view.

The Lord claimed that He both 'saw' and 'heard' the Father. In this He stands apart from all other men. In the prologue it is written, 'No man hath seen God at any time' (1:18), and in the very passage where the Lord's great claim is asserted, He said 'Ye have neither *heard* His voice at any time, nor *seen* His shape' (5:37). This unique claim is repeated, 'Not that any man hath seen the Father, save He which is of God, He hath *seen* the Father' (6:46). Yet again, in the chapter where He claims the title 'I AM' (8:58), this unique vision of the Father is repeated, 'I speak that which I have seen with My Father' (8:38).

On the other hand, Who so dependent as the Son of God?

'The Son can do nothing of Himself' (5:19).

'I can of Mine own self do nothing' (5:30).

Similarly, the Lord said later to His disciples concerning the other Comforter, even the Spirit of truth, 'He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak' (16:13).

A superficial reading of these statements might lead to the conclusion that, of themselves, the Son and the Spirit were powerless, not even possessing the abilities common to man, yet we have but to consider the reasons put forward in this Gospel for this very limitation to see that they reveal not only the true relationship of the Son with the Father, but magnify the Son Himself.

Here then are the reasons given why the Son did nothing and said nothing 'of (*apo*, from) Himself'.

- (1) The Son spoke not 'from Himself' because one sent by another who so acted would evidently be seeking 'His own glory: but He that seeketh His glory that sent Him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is (found) in Him' (7:18).

- (2) The Son spoke not 'from Himself' because, not only had He been 'sent' and found His meat and drink in finishing the work He had been sent to do, but He had the further reason and further joy that, My 'Father hath not left Me alone; for I do always those things that please Him' (8:29).
- (3) And He added (verse 42), 'neither came I of Myself'. The Son was not self-commissioned. It is the glory of the gospel that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son; consequently, as the Sent One, He spoke and wrought only those things that pertained to His blessed commission.
- (4) Both His 'words' and His 'works' partook of this character, but another and deeper reason was given why He did not speak or act 'from Himself'; it was, 'I am in the Father, and the Father in Me' (14:10,11).

It took a long time; it took the working of many signs; it took the patient teaching of well-nigh another three years, before the claim of the fifth chapter was recognized by His disciples, but, in chapter 16 they made this confession,

'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' (30).

We may learn what 'speaking of Himself' means by turning to 11:51, 'And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation'. If a sinful man like Caiaphas could not say anything 'of himself' when the glory and purpose of God so demanded, how much more may we not expect it of the Son of God when He was in the position of willingly and joyfully limiting Himself to the execution of that work for which He had been sent by the Father. Moreover, on another occasion, He said, 'I and my Father are One' (10:30), so that the truth of His equality is not a matter of inference but of revelation.

It may be said that every child of God 'sees' and 'hears' something of the words and works of the Father, and this would be true. In the Lord's claim, however, there is a plenitude that does not belong to men: 'for *whatever* He may do, *these things also* doeth the Son, *in like manner*' (5:19). In the same verse the Lord had taught that the Son *cannot* work of Himself, because *He is* the Son. Other creatures standing on a lower level may abuse their freedom and do things

contrary, but this would empty the title of THE SON of its essential meaning, namely, that of perfect unity with the Father. The same argument is also put in another form, 'For it is the very nature of the Son to do whatever the Father doeth'. Moreover, His works are 'in like manner' (*homoios*).

The question of the deity of Christ is not in view. It has already been taught that 'the Word was God'. We are now learning about 'the Word Who became flesh', and His relationship not with 'God', as such, but with God revealed as 'the Father'. These are important distinctions. Both the Father and the Son bear the same title, 'God', and the question of equality *there*, can never arise. If the Word, Who was God, became flesh, and was seen as the only begotten of the Father, then the question does arise, is He subordinate or is He equal with the Father? This chapter of John which we are considering opens the question and, step by step, the subject is developed until we reach the definite assertion, 'I and My Father are One', and the ultimate confession of Thomas, 'My Lord and my God'.

As we follow the lead given by the structure, the succeeding signs, and their intermediate links, these further steps in the argument await us, for there is no question so crucial as that which He Himself asked, 'What think ye of Christ?' (Matt. 22:42).

Equality of the Father and Son

The charge laid against the Saviour in this chapter is twofold. (1) That He had broken the sabbath day, and (2) that He called God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.

The opening and closing words of the Lord's great defence, have occupied our attention and we found that He claimed two vital and exclusive things.

He saw and He heard what the Father did.

He did whatever He saw the Father do.

A possible objection is now met by the Lord's subsequent words. True, a Pharisee may interpose, you do those things which you 'see' the Father do; but what you actually see may be but a remnant of His ways and deeds; therefore your answer does not justify your claiming equality with God. To this the Lord gives a conclusive reply, leaving no loophole for further objection on the score of the possible limitation

of His own vision: 'For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth Him *all things* that Himself doeth' (5:20). Here are three most conclusive elements in the argument:

- (1) The great actuating principle of love.
- (2) Not only did Christ 'see', but the Father 'showed'.
- (3) Not only did the Father show, but He showed 'all things'.

This is not the first time that the love of the Father to the Son has been given as the great reason why 'all things' were committed into His hands.

'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 by measure unto Him. *The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand*' (3:31-35).

Here the Lord's ministry is compared and contrasted with that of John the Baptist. He came from above; He came from heaven; He both heard and saw. He was sent; the Spirit was given to Him without measure, and, being loved of the Father, all things were given into His hands.

'*All things*'. - Let us acquaint ourselves with the way in which this expression is used of the Lord:

- (1) All things were made by Him (1:3).
- (2) All things were known by Him (2:24; 4:25,29,39; 16:30; 18:4; 19:28; 21:17).
- (3) All things were committed to Him (3:35; 5:22,26,27; 13:3; 17:2).
- (4) All things that the Father had were His (16:15; 17:10).

These four sets include the whole creation, all things whatever that the Father does or has, all flesh, all judgment, all that are in the graves. In the face of this testimony, the question as to the Son's equality with the Father dies before it can be uttered. If these things do not mean equality, then there is no possibility of demonstrating the meaning of

the word. He, for our sakes, left the glory which He had before the world was (17:5); He left the riches that He had (2 Cor. 8:9); He divested Himself of the form of God, wherein His equality with God was evident (Phil. 2:6) and took upon Him the form of a servant, wherein that equality was veiled (verse 7) and it is in the gradual unfolding of His glory as 'the Son', with special reference to His words and works, that the revelation is made that this 'Sent One', though according to the flesh, of Israel and Man, is nevertheless 'over all, GOD blessed for ever' (Rom. 9:5).

The Father 'showed' all things that He did to the Son. This word *deiknuo*, showed, occurs seven times in John's Gospel. It is used of a sign (2:18); of good works (10:32); and of the Lord's pierced hands (20:20). It presupposes vision in the beholder that corresponds with the vision granted. When the disciples said 'Show us the Father' (14:8), they were asking for something which could not be granted to them without mediation, but there is no suggestion that any mediation was necessary when the Father 'showed' the Son whatever He was doing, for the Son declared that He 'saw' all things.

Man can see the things of man:

'For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God' (1 Cor. 2:11).

'No man hath seen God at any time' (John 1:18).

He therefore that could 'see' all things, 'know' all things, 'possess' all things, 'make' all things, must be God:

'For every house is builded by some one; but He that built all things is God' (Heb. 3:4 R.V.).

The works which had commenced with the miraculous signs wrought by Christ, were to go on with increasing greatness until the evidence was complete that 'Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God'.

'*Marvel* not', said Christ to Nicodemus, 'that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again' (3:7).

'And He will shew Him greater works than these, that ye may *marvel*' (5:20).

'*Marvel* not', said Christ, at the fact that 'All judgment hath been given unto the Son' (5:22,28 and 29).

‘The Jews *marvelled*’ when they heard the words of Christ, saying, ‘How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?’ (7:15).

‘Ye all *marvel*’, said Christ, because ‘I have done one work’ (7:21).

Greater and more marvellous things were to be accomplished by the Son of God before His work was done, and among them the Saviour specifies:

The resurrection and quickening of the dead.

The judgment of all men,

and this with the avowed object, ‘that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father’ (5:21-23).

It is the abundant testimony of the Scriptures, that it is God that raiseth the dead, and that it was He Who raised Christ up from the dead.

‘God Which raiseth the dead’ (2 Cor. 1:9).

‘If we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead’ (Rom. 4:24).

Yet we observe that in the verse where the word *egeiro*, ‘raise’, first occurs the Lord says:

‘In three days I will *raise* it up’ (2:19).

‘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’ (10:17,18).

The Lord’s resurrection was, therefore, not accomplished without His own co-operation. How this could be may be beyond the power of mortal mind to know, but that it is so is revealed, and revealed for the express purpose that all men should give honour to the Son equal to that which they give to the Father: ‘The Son quickeneth whom *He will*’ (5:21). With this impressive claim, read the prayer: ‘Father, *I will* that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am’ (17:24). The holiest saint that ever breathed would be condemned the moment such a ‘prayer’ escaped his lips. He Who can say, ‘I will’, and the dead are quickened, and Who can say, ‘I will’, in addressing the Father, is certainly an equal.

There is a transition in 5:21,22 from resurrection to the sequel of resurrection, namely 'judgment' (*see* 5:29).

'For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son' (5:22).

The solemn passages which speak of God the Judge of all; the awful grandeur of the day of judgment; the tremendous responsibility that rests in the hands of that Judge Whose verdict is eternal; all speak of Christ, and Christ as the Son of man (5:27).

'He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man Whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead' (Acts 17:31).

We must not allow ourselves to lose the main line of argument because, in themselves, the side issues are so great. The matter before us, as it was before the Lord, His disciples and the Jews, was His claim to equality with God, a claim resident in His Sonship, and by the fact that He declared that the works which He did were the self-same that the Father did. We resist therefore the temptation to explore the doctrines of resurrection, of quickening, of judgment; each theme demanding a study to itself, and pass on, with the Lord, to His conclusion,

'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' (5:23).

How should men honour the Father? They must worship Him 'in spirit and in truth' (4:23).

'All men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father'.

'The Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them' (5:21).

'Jesus said ... I am the *resurrection*, and the *life*' (11:25).

'All men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father'.

'Shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us' (14:8).

'He that hath seen ME hath seen the FATHER ... Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me?' (14:9,10).

'All men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father'.

‘Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee’ (17:1).

‘I have glorified Thee ... glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was’ (17:4,5).

‘All men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father’.

Let us not miss the second part of 5:23. A man may say that he honours the Father, for He indeed is God, but that he cannot bring himself to honour the Son in the same way, because that appears to be honouring One Who was subordinate. Let not such think that it is possible thus to honour the Father. It is impossible. Any who withhold equal honour to the Son, render themselves unable to honour the Father at all.

‘I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me’ (14:6).

To think that the Person and Character of the Father is less understandable than the Person and Character of the Son, betrays a dangerous ignorance:

‘All things are delivered unto me of My Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him’ (Matt. 11:27),

a statement parallel with those already considered in John’s Gospel.

Let us note with worship and wonder, the claim here made by the Lord in the hour of His rejection. The Father is revealed by the Son, but no such revelation is given of the Son Himself. The Son knows the Father in the same measure of fulness that the Father knows the Son, and this alone would be sufficient proof that the Son was equal with the Father, and must receive equal honour. But, added to this is the fact that, whereas the Fatherhood of God is a matter of revelation through the Son, the Sonship of Christ is not so revealed. The latter is evidently a more complete mystery than the former, and should for ever close all argument that would reason from the relationship of Father and Son to the belittling of the Son. None of the admitted facts, namely that Christ was ‘sent’ or that He said ‘My Father is greater than I’, can possibly alter the explicit testimony of Matthew 11:27 or John 5:23.

The Quickening or the Raising of the Dead

A glance at the structure given on page 186 shows that at verse 24 a new section opens, governed by the words, 'The hour and the voice'.

'He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life' (5:24).

Much is made of 'hearing' in this gospel. The Samaritans said:

'Now we believe ... for we have heard Him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world' (4:42).

Hearing is a characteristic of His sheep:

'The sheep hear His voice'. 'The sheep did not hear them' (the thieves and robbers).

'Other sheep I have ... they shall hear My voice'.

'My sheep hear My voice' (John 10:3,8,16,27).

Moreover, hearing is a characteristic of they that be 'of God' (8:47), and they that be 'of the truth' (18:37). Some, by their very nature, cannot, and will not, hear.

'Ye have neither heard His voice ... nor seen His shape' (5:37).

Hearing is a test of discipleship.

'This is an hard saying; who can hear it?' (6:60).

'From that time many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him' (6:66).

Inability to hear God's word is a mark of evil.

'Why do ye not understand My speech? even because ye cannot hear My word. Ye are of your father the devil ... when he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own ... he that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God' (8:43-47).

In 5:24,25, 'hearing' His 'word', and 'hearing' His 'voice', are intentional parallels, and both are ways of speaking of them that 'believe'. The 'believing' here has a specific object:

'And believeth on Him that sent Me' (5:24).

It is the insistent testimony of this gospel that Christ is the Sent One, this is intertwined with all the truth that is revealed in it. There are twenty-eight occurrences of *pempo* and seventeen of *apostello* (forty-five in all) that speak of Christ being 'sent'. The faith that receives everlasting life, comprehends the Father in the capacity of the One Who sent the Son, a statement that is not only the legitimate inference of 5:24, but the inspired declaration of 1 John 4:14:

'The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world'.

We must now give attention to the special feature of this section, which is placed in correspondence with verses 28,29 in the structure.

'The hour is coming, and now is' (5:25).

The additional words 'and now is', found in the first occurrence, are absent from the second. In the first passage, 'the dead' are said to hear the voice of the Son of God, whereas in the second 'all that are in the graves' hear His voice. In the first, they that hear 'shall live', in the second, they that hear 'shall come forth' (5:29). In the earlier passage they that live are those that do not come into condemnation (5:24), whereas in the later passages they that hear are those who are raised from the dead:

'They that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation' (*krisis*) (5:29).

It is evident that the former passage refers to those who are spiritually dead, but who, upon hearing the gospel, live; whereas, the latter passage refers to the physically dead, all of whom must hear His voice; but all these are not necessarily saved, neither does the hearing of the voice imply any element of faith on their part, for while some come forth to a resurrection of life the rest come forth to a resurrection of judgment. There is little or no satisfaction to be discovered in the commentaries as to the precise meaning of the added words 'and now is'. Let us conduct an investigation for ourselves and see whether we can learn enough from the Word itself to help us to appreciate what is intended. We remember, of course, that similar expressions are found in the fourth chapter, and it is fatal to ignore these when examining chapter 5. In the former, the question is one of worship; in the latter, one of life.

- (1) The hour was coming (an hour future to the time when the Saviour sat and talked at the well), when men would neither at Jerusalem, nor at Samaria, worship the Father. This 'hour' had not 'come' when Peter and John went up to the temple at the hour of prayer (Acts 3:1), and the type of worship that was offered and conducted at Jerusalem at the moment that Christ uttered the words in 4:21, continued until the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.
- (2) 'The hour cometh, and now is' looks to a day when the true worshipper should worship the Father in spirit and in truth. No time need elapse before that took place; even while the temple still stood at Jerusalem, 'true' worshippers could and did 'worship the Father in spirit and in truth'.

There is, however, a possibility that John, writing his gospel long after A.D. 70, brought the Lord's testimony to the Samaritan woman up to date, saying, the hour the Lord had said *was coming, is now* here, the words 'and now is' referring to the dispensation that had been instituted upon the setting aside of Israel, which in this gospel John particularly ministered to 'the world'. Parallels for this practice can be found in the Old Testament. In Genesis 6:4, the record reads: 'There were giants in the earth in those days', to which Moses added the words that referred to his own times, 'and after that'. In a similar manner Moses brings up to date the narrative of several other passages, as in Genesis 26:33; 35:20 and 47:26, where the name of Beer-sheba, the grave of Rachel, and the law made by Joseph, are related by Moses to his own day.

In our Lord's own day it was blessedly true that whoever believed Him received life, but the words 'and now is' were specially true when John wrote the record, for the very purpose for which he selected his material had in view 'life through His name'. John 5:24,25 is most emphatically true for the day in which we live. Quite independent of, and outside the dispensation of the mystery, 'the hour now is' that whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, whoever hears His voice and believes in Him that sent Him, hath everlasting life. For instance, no opposition or objection can override the blessed fact that the words 'He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life' were used by God to bring the present writer out of nature's darkness and death into the light of life, subsequent realization of a place in the glorious calling of the mystery, in no sense mitigating, cancelling or

altering this simple issue. Today John's ministry and Paul's ministry are both running together, John having 'the world' for his parish, and 'life' for his great object. Paul the prisoner, has the 'Gentile', as distinct from the 'Jew', as his charge, and the message of Paul presupposes the hearer to have 'life' and leads him on to the heights of that calling which finds its sphere in the heavenlies, and its inception 'before the overthrow of the world'.^{*}

In John 5:28 literal resurrection is in view, and 'all', not 'some', that are in the graves shall hear.

The reader of *The Berean Expositor* needs no lengthy argument to prove that Scripture teaches the resurrection of the dead and that each will then be clothed with a body suitable to the sphere of blessing he is to enter. There may be, however, a need to discover why the Lord divided, as He did, the two classes who shall be raised. It is the emphatic testimony of the Scriptures, that:

'There is none righteous, no, not one ... there is none that doeth good, no, not one' (Rom. 3:10-12).

If this passage is all that has been revealed on the subject, then our Lord could not have spoken of any who could be called 'they that have done good'. There would simply be the resurrection of but one class, the condemned; they who had done evil. Paul, on one occasion, spoke in the following words of the resurrection, and divided those thus raised into two companies:

'And have hope toward God ... that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust' (Acts 24:15).

If one may object that there is none that doeth good, one may object to Acts 24 that there is none righteous, and that there can no more be a resurrection of the just, than there can be a resurrection of those that have done good. But such sweeping statements cannot be allowed. There is a scriptural meaning and justification for all that is stated by John and in Acts. Does not the same epistle that teaches 'there is none righteous no not one', say 'the just by faith shall live'? It does, and so, though a man can never be accounted 'just' through

* See chart which sets out the relationship of John and Paul during the present time, page 5.

any merit of his own, he can still be called 'the just' even though he be just 'by faith'. So, also, with regard to 'doing good'. Ephesians 2:8-10, not only says that salvation is 'not of works'; it as surely says that it is 'unto good works'. The apostle has hardly written the words 'not by works' in Titus 3:5, than he is writing:

'... affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works' (Tit. 3:8).

Into John and Acts, the question as to how those in view become 'good' or 'just' does not enter; resurrection there is rather the time of harvest, when men shall be known by their fruits. If, throughout his life, a man has said that he has 'believed', but throughout that life he has 'practised evil', that man's 'faith' is an empty profession, and in the resurrection he will find himself raised to judgment. While it would not be true to say that the New Testament draws a distinct line between the usage of *poieo*, 'to do', and *prasso*, 'to practise', it is nevertheless true that *poieo* is used in this gospel twelve times of the Father and the Son, and once of those that 'have done good'. *Prasso* is used but twice, both passages referring to 'doing evil' (3:20; 5:29), and *prasso* differs from *poieo* in that, whereas *poieo* means 'to make', 'to build', 'to do', *prasso* is used only of actions, a line of conduct, a practice.

‘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’ (20:31).

It is therefore of the very essence of the teaching of this gospel that we should grasp the implication of this title ‘Son of God’. Firstly let us examine the way in which John speaks of Christ under the title ‘Son’. The first reference is critical in that it sets the limit to the title and governs every other reference.

‘The only begotten Son’ (1:18).

What is meant by ‘only begotten’ is made clear in the fourteenth verse, for it is only when ‘the Word’ became ‘flesh’ and tabernacled among us that the peculiar glory which belonged to Him as the only begotten of the Father could be seen. *Monogenes* is used of ordinary men and women in Luke 7:12 ‘the *only* son’, 8:42 ‘one *only* daughter’, 9:38 ‘mine *only* child’. It is used of Isaac, Abraham’s ‘only begotten Son’ (Heb. 11:17). Thus while Luke and Paul use the word *monogenes* of natural sonship, John is the only writer who uses the word of Christ (1:14,18; 3:16,18; 1John 4:9), and it is evident he did so in order to enforce upon the true meaning that is intended in John 20:31.

The title ‘Son of God’ occurs in this gospel eleven times, but in one or two references some addition is made which we will note as we proceed.

‘I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God’ (1:34).

‘Thou art the Son of God’ (1:49).

‘The name of the only begotten Son of God’ (3:18).

The last reference gives us the first occurrence with an addition and the first occurrence of John’s own testimony. It is the apostle’s endeavour to make sure that we do not separate the title ‘Son of God’ from ‘the only begotten’. John the Baptist and Nathanael have given their testimony and now John adds his. We shall observe the importance of this addition as we proceed.

‘The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God’ (5:25).

‘Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God’ (6:69).

Here is the testimony of the disciples, and two additional titles are found. *That Christ*, so the disciples recognize the Saviour as the Messiah, moreover they recognized Him as the Son of the 'living' God, a statement that must await examination.

'Dost thou believe on the Son of God?' (9:35).

'Because I said, I am the Son of God?' (10:36).

'That the Son of God might be glorified' (11:4).

'Thou art the Christ, the Son of God' (11:27).

This last is Martha's confession following the Lord's claim to the title 'I am the Resurrection, and the Life' (11:25).

'The Jews answered Him, We have a law, and by our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God' (19:7).

'That Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God' (20:31).

The title 'Son of Man' occurs in this Gospel twelve times (1:51; 3:13,14; 5:27; 6:27,53,62; 8:28; 12:23,34; 13:31).

The Lord's statement concerning angels ascending and descending on the Son of Man, evidently relates to the future Mediation of Christ, linking heaven and earth by His Own dual nature as the God Man. We have discussed the statement made in 3:13 'the Son of Man which is in heaven'; its claim to Deity cannot be lightly set aside. As the Son of Man, He could be 'lifted up', 'judge all men', 'give everlasting life', give His 'flesh and blood', 'ascend up where He was before' and 'be glorified'.

Two acts of very great disservice have been committed by some orthodox Christians, who, by putting out their hands to save the ark of God, have severed from its scriptural associations of 'only begotten', 'Word made flesh', the title 'Son of God' and where the Scriptures use 'the Word' or 'the Image' made it read as if it were a title belonging to pre-incarnation times. This has produced the meaningless expression 'the eternal generations of the Son' to which 20:31 gives no support. On the other hand the title 'Son of Man' has been relegated to the realm of the flesh, despite the fact that it was an Old Testament prophetic title, and that the Lord's claim to be *the Son of Man* in answer to the question 'tell us whether Thou be the Christ *the Son of God*' instead of tempering the animosity of the Jews, raised it to the highest pitch.

‘He hath spoken blasphemy ... He is guilty of death’ (Matt. 26:65-66).

The title Son of God, has much affinity with the Saviour’s manhood and the title Son of Man has much that emphasizes His Deity. Such would be an anomaly if the Lord were ‘such an one as ourselves’. But confessedly great is the mystery of godliness, ‘God was manifested in the flesh’, and if at the same time He be the Child born, the Son given, yet also the mighty God (Isa. 9:6) the mystery is not too much for faith, however much it transcends our ability to comprehend. Furthermore, this is not a matter of purposeful mystifying, or cloaking of ignorance by the use of high sounding words, but in complete agreement with and full recognition of the limitations imposed by Matthew 11:27, a passage demanding the same implicit acceptance as any other part of Holy Writ.

There remains the title without definition other than the article ‘The Son’. This occurs in John’s gospel eighteen times, and must be considered as all embracing. It refers to the Saviour viewed as ‘The only begotten of the Father’, ‘The Son of God’ and ‘The Son of Man’. This survey of the distinction of these filial titles reveals the intention of the writer of this gospel, but we must here note the way in which these titles are used. The references to ‘The Son’ in this passage are bounded by the words ‘of Himself’ and ‘in Himself’. ‘The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do’. The last says: ‘As the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself’.

‘Of Himself’; ‘In Himself’. There are depths here that lie beyond the reach of man. In the former, we have that most blessed self abnegation that forms the theme of Philippians 2:7: He ‘made Himself of no reputation’ (emptied Himself, Revised Version) by taking the form of a servant. This corresponds with the statement that the Son can do nothing of Himself. The very fact that the Scripture says ‘He emptied’ Himself reveals that He had somewhat which He voluntarily relinquished when he became ‘flesh’ and was ‘found in fashion as a man’. As the ‘Word’ in the beginning, He had ‘life in Himself’ (1:4) ‘in Him was life’.

When therefore we read that the Father had given the Son life in Himself, or that He had power to lay down His life, and power to take it up again, He was but receiving in His new sphere, that which was

His own. In the beginning He had life in Himself. Before the world was He had shared the glory with the Father, and when He spoke of His ascension, it was but to go up 'where He was before'. It was 'the living Father' that had sent him (6:57). He was the Son of the 'living God' (6:69). He came to dispense 'living water' (4:10); He Himself was 'the living bread' (6:51), and 'life through His name' is the purpose of the gospel. Moreover, His glorious titles include this life in many ways. He is 'the bread of life' (6:35,48), He is 'the resurrection and the life' (11:25); He is 'the way, the truth and the life' (14:6); 'I am come that they might have life' was the Lord's own summary of His commission (10:10). The life that is here offered is the fundamental need of all men, whether Jew, Gentile or Church of God, whether belonging to the earthly calling, the heavenly country, or the position of the One body 'far above all'. 'Life through His name' and that name 'the Christ, the Son of God' belongs to all callings and dispensations. Any attempt to limit John's Gospel to 'the Kingdom' is contrary to the express testimony of the book itself.

We now turn our attention to the references to 'judgment' that are a feature of this section. The following is the disposition of *krino* and *krisis*. In order that it may be easily followed, we retain the Authorized Version translation.

- A **a** 22. The Father judgeth no man, *krino*.
b 22. All judgment committed unto the Son, *krisis*.
- B **c** 24. No condemnation for those who believe, *krisis*.
d 27. As Son of Man, execute judgment, *krisis*.
c 29. Resurrection of damnation, *krisis*.
- A **a** 30. As I hear, I judge, *krino*.
b 30. Judgment, just, not seek own will, *krisis*.

Krisis means judgment, not necessarily a judgment that condemns, as can be proved from many a passage (Matt. 23:23). But *krisis* can and does mean damnation too, as another passage in this chapter makes clear 'the damnation of hell' (23:33), not permitting any softening down. The believer is exempted from *krisis*. 'Shall not come into condemnation' (5:24), and this is in correspondence with the fate of those who have 'done evil', for they shall be raised to a 'resurrection of condemnation' not merely a resurrection for the judgment of their service. It surely calls forth praise, to learn that all judgment is committed into the hands of Christ *because He is the Son*

of Man! The judgment of the Invisible God, must and would be just; had the Father reserved all judgment to Himself, or had it been committed to the Holy Spirit, who is he that dare protest? Yet the great God condescends to man and his estate. For the seeking sinner, there is the One Mediator, 'the Man Christ Jesus'; for the praying believer, there sits at the right hand on high, One Who is not untouched with the feeling of our infirmities; for the very condemned, is provided a Judge Who has walked this vale of tears, Who knows what temptation means, Who suffered at the hands of men, and Whose judgment is just. How inadequate are our words to explain or even point the way of truth.

The Testimony of the Lord and of the Baptist (5:31-36)

In the first half of this great section, no outside evidence is appealed to by the Lord. He claims that He both saw and heard the Father, that to Him, life in Himself had been given; that the raising of the dead, the salvation of those that believe, and the judgment of all were in His hands. The Lord now turns to evidence, and in the first place speaks of His Own testimony. The Authorized Version reads:

'If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true' (5:31).

It seems almost impossible to believe that this version is correct here. Had the Lord ever said 'My witness is NOT TRUE' our very salvation would be in jeopardy. The Pharisees actually said this of Christ:

'Thou bearest record of thyself; Thy record is not true' (8:13),

and in reply to this charge, the Saviour said:

'Though I bear record of Myself, yet My record IS TRUE' (8:14).

Supposing we admit, for the moment, that the Authorized Version rendering of 5:31 is correct, where will it lead us? Christ continues 'there is another that beareth witness of Me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of Me is true'. Now whether this refers to the Father, as is most likely, or as some think to John the Baptist, in either case, the testimony of our Lord would be stultified, for according to the Authorized Version the witness that he bore to the witness that someone else had borne was inadmissible! Again, of what use would it have been for the Lord to have said:

‘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’ (5:37).

This testimony would of necessity be ‘not true’ if the Authorized Version of verse 31 be admitted. Furthermore, men would be justified in refusing to believe any uncorroborated statement which the Son of God made. They could discredit the testimony already given in verses 17-29. No! The Authorized Version is not correct and the verse should be translated thus:

‘Though I bear witness of Myself, is not My witness true?’

Ean ‘if’ is sometimes concessive, and requires the translation ‘though’ as in 1Corinthians 13:1,2,3. There is no difference in the actual words used whether the sentence be a statement of fact or whether it be asking a question. Examples of the need to observe this are found in the parable of the unjust steward. The Authorized Version reads as though the Lord actually taught His disciples to copy the evil example of this unjust man, but the true rendering is:

‘Do I say unto you, make unto yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness?’

and the implied answer is ‘No’ (Luke 16:9). In the background of the Lord’s question in 5:31, and the Pharisees statement of 8:13, is the testimony of Moses:

‘One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established’ (Deut. 19:15).

This is repeated with slight modification in Deuteronomy 17:6, and Numbers 35:30. But the question in the law of Moses, was an accusation against a man which, if proven, involved the death penalty, and inasmuch as it is possible that man may bear false witness against his neighbour, justice was safeguarded in this manner. It is a misapplication of this law however, that endeavours to discredit the personal testimony of the Son of God. This law is referred to in Matthew 18:16, 2 Corinthians 13:1, and Hebrews 10:28, but the credibility of evidence is not in question. The Saviour however made

many concessions to the weakness of men, for love will yield where there may be no legal obligation. For example:

‘And Jesus lifted up His eyes, and said, Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me. And I knew that Thou hearest Me always: *but because of the people which stand by I said it*’ (11:41,42).

There is more in this passage than this element of concession, but it must await the time when the chapter is before us for exposition. Another example is found in 12:28-30:

‘This voice came not because of Me, but for your sakes’.

Returning to chapter 5, we note that the Lord’s remark runs along similar lines:

‘But I receive not testimony from man: but these things I say, that ye might be saved’ (5:34).

He needed no testimony from man, nevertheless, He acknowledged the testimony borne by John the Baptist and sought to bring it to bear upon the consciences of the hearers. In verse 31 therefore, we have no hesitation in translating the Lord’s words as already given above.

‘There is another that beareth witness of Me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of Me is true’ (5:32).

Of whom does the Lord speak? Who is the ‘other’? We find that the next verse speaks of John the Baptist, but the disposition of the subject matter lends weight to the interpretation of many, that verse 32 refers to the Father.

‘*Allos* ("another") can, by the inner coherence of the discourse, be no other than the Father, of Whom so much has been said in the former part ... similar modes of alluding to the Father occur ch. viii. 50, 54; see also ch. viii. 18 and Matt. x. 28’ (Alford).

The reference, John 8:18 reads:

‘I am One that bear witness of Myself, and the Father that sent Me beareth witness of Me’.

This witness was all that was necessary, nevertheless, for the sake of men and that they might be saved, the Lord refers to the testimony of others.

The Witness of others (5:32-47)

- A 32-36. The witness of John the Baptist ‘concerning Me’
ho marturon peri emou.
- B 36-38. The Father. The Sent One. ‘Ye believe not’.
- A 39,40. The witness of the Scriptures ‘concerning Me’
hai marturousai peri emou.
- B 41-44. The Father. The one in his own name ‘how can ye believe?’
- A 45-47. The witness of Moses ‘concerning Me’
peri emou egrapsen.

Here the Lord refers to three outstanding witnesses to Himself. John the Baptist, the Scriptures generally, the witness of Moses. In each case the witness thus appealed to had been accepted by the Jews.

John the Baptist, ‘ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light’.

The Scriptures, ‘in them ye think ye have eternal life’.

Moses, ‘in whom ye trust’.

Such evidence, if not needed by the Lord, could not be rejected by the Jews except at great peril. Returning to the witness of John, let us examine verses 33-36 more carefully.

- A 33. **a** Ye sent unto John.
 b He bare witness unto the truth.
- B 34. **c** But I receive not testimony from man.
 c But these things I say, that ye might be saved.
- A 35. **b** He was a burning and a shining light.
 a Ye were willing ... to rejoice in his light.
- B 36. **c** But I have a greater witness than that of John.

‘Ye sent unto John’. This refers to what is recorded earlier:

‘And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou?’ (1:19-28).

We have already noticed the way in which the witness of John the Baptist is introduced into the prologue (1:1-18).

‘There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness’ (1:6-7).

‘John bare witness of Him’ (1:15).

Again (1:29,36), John the Baptist twice testified that Jesus was the Lamb of God, and explained that the chief object of his baptizing was the recognition of the Son of God. The Lord confronted His enemies with the testimony of the Baptist to their confusion, but this is not recorded in John.

‘The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; He will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe Him? But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet’ (Matt. 21:25,26).

After the first reference to the witness of John, we read: ‘He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light’ (1:8). whereas in 5:35 we read, ‘He was a burning and a shining light’. He was not that Light, yet he was a light! There is no contradiction here. The words translated *‘Light’* are different. In 1:4,5,7,8,9 it is *phos*, whereas in 5:35 it is *luchnos*. *‘Phos* is light, the opposite of darkness, light underived, absolute; hence, the light of the sun or day; used therefore of God, Who is light’.

‘Luchnos, is a portable hand lamp fed with oil; (*not a candle.*) Hence, used of men, whose light is kindled by another, burns for a season, and then is extinguished. See John 5:35’ (Dr. E.W. Bullinger, *Lexicon and Concordance*).

Just as John was ‘the Lamp’ in relation to Christ ‘the Light’ so, by comparing the first verse with the twenty-third of chapter 1 we learn that John was ‘a voice’ in relation to Christ ‘the Word’. A lamp to burn, so that the Light may shine, a voice to speak so that the Word may be heard; such are the characteristics of true service so pre-eminent in that of John the Baptist. The Jews were ‘willing for a season to rejoice’ in this light, consequently, they must have heard and known the definite testimony to the Saviour given by John.

‘I am the (a) voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the LORD’ (1:23).

They had heard him say:

'He it is, Who coming after me is preferred before me ... for He was before me' (1:27-30).

They knew that he had borne record:

'This is the Son of God' (1:34).

'He must increase, but I must decrease. He that cometh from above (heaven) is above all' (3:30,31).

In this 'burning and shining' testimony the Jews had been willing 'for a season' to rejoice. Consequently, the Lord's reference to the testimony of the Baptist was to the point, for His claims in chapter 5 were after all but the legitimate outcome of the attributes accorded Him by the forerunner. By implication, He was 'Lord' (1:23). By positive testimony He was 'the Son of God' (1:34), and He was 'from heaven' (3:31). Notwithstanding the clear testimony, the Lord said, 'But I have greater witness than that of John'.

This 'greater witness', must be great indeed, if it will take us farther and confirm us deeper in the testimony already given.

The Greater Witness (36-38)

We have seen something of the nature of the testimony of John the Baptist, and how far that testimony would have led the Jews had they but believed! We now turn to something 'greater'.

The Greater Witness.

- A 36. WORKS. External.
- B 36,37. **a** Witness.
b Father sent.
b Father Himself which sent.
a Witness.
- B 37. **a** Ye have neither heard.
b His voice.
a Nor seen.
b His shape.
- A 38. WORD. Internal.

Like every human transaction, it takes two to make it complete. No one can be a seller if no one will be a buyer. Truth will be 'hard to be *uttered*' where 'ears are dull of *hearing*' (Heb. 5:11). The *external* evidence of the 'works' which the Son of God had been sent by the Father to finish, was 'evidence' only to those who had the *internal* abiding of His Word. This fact is exemplified in the eleventh chapter of Matthew: 'Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see' (4).

This appeal to the miracles would not have answered the Baptist's questions had he not the Word of God abiding in him. In John 5, however, we must look beyond the miracles, 'the works', in order that we may include 'the work' which the Saviour came to 'finish'. In 4:34, the Lord said:

'My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work'.

In 5:36, He spoke of:

'The works which the Father hath given Me to finish'.

The 'works' were evidences that *He had been sent* by the Father, the 'work' was that which the Father *had sent Him to do*.

'If I do not the works of My Father, believe Me not. But if I do, though ye believe not Me, believe the works' (10:37,38).

That these 'works' include the miracles is clear from 7:21 where the relation between 'the works' and 'the work' throws light upon the purpose of the miracles. If in these miracles we see nought but

exhibitions of power, we stand with the unbelieving and unintelligent multitude, but if we see that in them were 'powers of the world to come' (Heb. 6:5), as well as 'confirmation' of the disciples' faith (Heb. 2:3), then their inner meaning will be clear to us, and their chief object achieved. The first individual miracle recorded in the Gospels, is the cleansing of a leper (Matt. 8). This miracle was most certainly an exhibition of Divine power, it was also a signal blessing to the poor leper himself, *but it was more*. It was a symbolic act, foreshadowing one of the many blessed results of 'the work' which the Lord had come to accomplish, when all Israel will be saved, cleansed and rendered acceptable. The healing of the blind, the deaf and the lame, the raising of the dead and the feeding of the multitude, all foreshadowed further spiritual blessings that 'the work' would secure.

The appeal, in this section is to 'witness', but witness can be of varying kinds. Some may be of little or no value because of the incapacity of the hearers to assess its true value. *Martureo* 'to bear witness' comes seven times in the discourse, and *marturia* 'witness' itself four times. There is the Lord's Own witness of Himself (5:31), and that of John (5:32,33). The greater witness than that of John to which the Saviour appealed, was twofold, the works (5:36), and the witness of the Father (5:37). Now the works could be 'seen and heard', these were 'greater' than the witness of John, for 'John did no miracle' (10:41). All these, however, were subsidiary to the greatest of all evidence, the evidence which the Father Himself had borne. This however, could not be so easily manifested to men, as the witness of John the Baptist or the evidence of miracles.

'Ye have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His shape' (5:37).

How are we to understand these words? Are they a comment upon the limitation of the creature as in 1:18, 'No man hath seen God at any time'? or are they objurgatory, indicating some element of wilfulness on the part of the hearer? If we quote our Lord's words, as punctuated by the Authorized Version and forget that verses 37 and 38 form the complete sentence, then we shall probably spend much precious time in dealing with the obvious, the invisibility of God, but if we take the charge as a whole we shall see that the Lord introduces an element of responsibility into these words, and therefore the 'invisibility' of God cannot be His primary meaning, for no man is responsible for the

nature of the Godhead or for the limitations set by his own place in creation.

‘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’ (5:37,38 Author’s translation).

Already ‘the voice’ and ‘the word’ have been placed in alternation (5:24,25), and this must be kept in mind here. The external testimony of John the Baptist and the miracles was emptied of meaning and value, if those who saw or heard it had not the word of God abiding in them. Israel’s rejection of their Messiah was not because of the paucity of external evidence, but because of the absence of internal preparedness. They had rejected the Scriptures, even while they appeared to venerate them, and therefore all other testimony was valueless. Even the disciples themselves took a long time to realize that the Father was manifested in the Person of the Son, and that the works which the Son accomplished were actually wrought by the indwelling Father (14:9-11). Bloomfield feels that the Saviour’s intention is expressed as follows:

‘But to little purpose is it that I appeal to that high testimony (even the testimony of God through the Prophets of the Old Testament); (for) ye have never heard His voice so as to *heed* it, nor seen His glory so as to *recognize* it’.

As the apostle Paul charged the Jew later, he read the Old Covenant Scriptures with a vail on his heart (2 Cor. 3:15), or as Stephen accused his fellow countrymen:

‘Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of Whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers’ (Acts 7:51,52).

In like manner as ‘His voice’ and ‘His shape’ is related, not so much to the transcendent nature of the Godhead as to the medium of His manifestation, the Scriptures (John 5): so the resistance of ‘the Holy Ghost’ by the Sanhedrin is intimately connected with the persecution of the ‘Prophets’. A glance at the structure once more will be of service.

To ensure that such miracles shall be evidences and not merely wonders and exhibitions of power, the works that are *external*, depend upon the word that is *internal*, and truth in this particular is truth in general. We cannot believe or appreciate the high teaching of Ephesians, simply because we can read the printed page, or even construe a Greek sentence. Paul knew this, and so, after the basic revelation of Ephesians 1:3-14 he turns to prayer, and that prayer depends upon 'acknowledgment' for its answer.

The mere possession of the Scriptures is no guarantee of illumination, only as they are used to lead to Christ does their light become visible. This we shall see in the section that deals particularly with the Scriptures and Christ.

The Witness of the Scriptures (39-47)

Under the heading of 'witness' we have seen that the Lord gives His Own (5:31) and then condescends to appeal to that of others (5:32-47). We have also considered the witness of John the Baptist and the greater witness of the Father (5:33-38). We now come to that witness which remains with us, which is independent of the accidents of time and place, and which may be consulted and studied whenever its testimony is needed - the Scriptures. The outstanding feature of this section (5:33-47) is the threefold emphasis on the fact that this witness was 'concerning' Christ.

A 33-36. John the Baptist 'concerning Me'.

A 39,40. The Scriptures 'concerning Me'.

A 45-47. Moses 'concerning Me'.

We take up our study at the second of these witnesses, the Scriptures. 'Search the Scriptures'.

While in many things the Greek language is much more specific and exact than our own, in that the tense, mood, number and person can usually be recognized by the prefix, suffix or other marks, there are a few instances where the word itself cannot settle the question of mood or case, and where appeal has to be made to the context. Such is the case with the phrase before us. Shall we read with the Authorized Version 'Search the Scriptures', and see in this a command, and look upon *ereunate* as imperative? or shall we read with the Revised Version 'Ye search the Scriptures' and look upon it as the indicative?

J.N.D. translates 'Ye search', and puts a footnote 'Or search'; but in neither case is it a command, it is an appeal. It is of little help however to enlist the names of commentators, for a long list of great names can be produced as authority for either reading, which by mutually cancelling one another's authority, leaves the matter still open for personal investigation. If we look at the context we find that the Lord has made a series of statements in which the testimony of John is compared with the testimony of the Scriptures.

John the Baptist.

'Ye sent unto John'.

'Ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light'.

'John ... bare witness unto the Truth'.

Scriptures.

'Ye search the Scriptures'.

'Ye think that in them ye have eternal life'.

'They are they which testify of Me'.

The fact that the Lord added 'in them *ye think* ye have eternal life' must not be forgotten. The verb *dokeo* occurs seven times in John's Gospel and in no instance does the word indicate certainty. If the reader will permit the translation 'imagine' in these seven references he will not fail to perceive the need for the reading adopted by the Revised Version, 'Ye search', in place of that found in the Authorized Version.

Dokeo.

'In them *ye imagine* ye have eternal life' (5:39).

'Do not *imagine* that I will accuse you' (5:45).

'They *imagined* that He had spoken of ... sleep' (11:13).

'What *imagine* ye, that He will not come?' (11:56).

'Some of them *imagined*, because Judas had the bag' (13:29).

'Will *imagine* that he doeth God service' (16:2).

'She, *imagining* Him to be the gardener' (20:15).

While it is a most important obligation to 'search the Scriptures' and to miss no opportunity of pressing this obligation upon others, it must not be forgotten that our Lord was speaking to men who did search the Scriptures and boasted of their scrupulous care and indefatigable labour. The trouble was, not that the Jews failed to

search the Scriptures but that they did not come to Him concerning Whom the Scriptures testified. The Gospels are very clear about this. When Herod demanded of the chief priests and scribes where Christ should be born, their answer was prompt and accurate: 'In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written' (Matt. 2:5), *but they never went to see or to worship*. When the Saviour Himself challenged them saying: 'What think ye of Christ, Whose Son is He?' they responded without hesitation 'The Son of David' but when He further pressed them to acknowledge that He was both David's Lord and David's Son, they could not, because they would not answer Him (Matt. 22:41-46). The reader may be the more ready to reconsider the translation of 5:39, which demands a decision as to whether the indicative or the imperative is intended, if another instance is given.

'The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not' (Matt. 23:2,3).

The commentators are most unsatisfactory here. The attempt to disentangle the 'authoritative ministers of religion' from their unsatisfactory 'example' leaves the reader somewhat sceptical. Moreover, the Lord most certainly did not command any one at any time to 'observe and do' 'all' that the scribes and Pharisees bid them observe - much the reverse. The solution of the problem is not to be found in casuistry*, but in recognizing that the verbs translated 'observe and do' may be the *indicative* just as well as the *imperative*, and that the translation which does no violence either to grammar, conscience, nor the consistent teaching of the Lord is:

'All therefore (because these men "sit in Moses' seat") ye observe and do, BUT DO YE NOT after their work, &c'.

It has been said that the indicative 'ye search' could not commence a sentence without a pronoun or some other word, but it has also been pointed out that *humeis* has just preceded 'ye believe not', and was about to follow 'ye think', and that its introduction here would be just as awkward as its absence. However, in order that the reader shall not be unduly influenced by the remark 'the indicative never commences a sentence without the pronoun', he is referred to Matthew 27:65 '(Ye

* Casuistry = reasoning that is specious or over-subtle.

have a guard', James 4:2, '(Ye) lust, and have not: (ye) kill, and desire to have'. There is no pronoun in the original here.

Furthermore the Revisers were not sufficiently in agreement to alter the Authorized Version at John 14:1, '(ye) believe in God', but this we would not press, except by remarking that scholars who were well aware of the 'rule' concerning the indicative, were also aware of exceptions to that rule.

We return then to John 5:39 and suggest that the Lord did not command the Jews to search the Scriptures at that point, but observed that they did search them, thinking that by so doing they obtained eternal life, but that their labour was vain, seeing they would not come to the Lord Himself the Giver of life, of Whom these very Scriptures testified. Before the Lord proceeds to the specific testimony of Moses (5:45-47), He interposes a reason for their blindness and hardness of heart. He had already claimed and vindicated His claim to equal honour with the Father (5:23), and so it should have been abundantly clear that in this insistence upon Himself, concerning ME Ye will not come to ME there could be no idea of receiving 'honour from men' (5:41). This however was the very charge which He laid against the Jews, saying:

'How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another?' (5:44),

and this positive obstruction to belief was fortified by a terrible negative:

'But I know you, that ye have *not* the love of God in you' (5:42).

The Lord next looks forward to prophetic times, to the advent of the man of sin, saying:

'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' (5:43).

This sad prophecy will be fulfilled as 2Thessalonians 2 affirms, and the reason for such blindness and unbelief is explained there in terms similar to those given in John 5:42.

'Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved' (2 Thess. 2:10).

We need not wait however for the coming of the man of sin for proof of our Lord's utterance, for:

'Rabbi Akibah, the very head of the Sanhedrin in his time, became even armour-bearer to Ben Cozba, a false pretended Messiah, who drew many thousands into error and ruin' (Lightfoot).

After this exposure of the reason for Israel's failure, the Lord returned to the testimony of the Scriptures, and this time specifically speaks of Moses and his writings:

'Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me: for he wrote of Me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe My words?' (5:45-47).

The words of Stier, here, are suggestive:

'If, then, ye have rejected the *means* (for Moses leads to Christ), how shall ye reach the *end*? If your unbelief has stopped your path, how shall ye arrive at Him to Whom it leads?' (Stier, 'Reden Jesu').

The higher critic has discredited Moses, he scarcely admits that Moses was even an historic character, and as to the Pentateuch, he has decreed that scholarship has proved that Moses could not and did not write the five books accredited to him. Yet, with the New Testament in our hands, nothing can be clearer than that Christ unhesitatingly taught that Moses did write the books attributed to him, and therefore it appears impossible to say that one 'believes' the Lord Jesus Christ, concerning eternal life, but rejects His testimony concerning the authority of Holy Scripture. Let us observe the way in which the Lord referred to Moses in this controversy.

(1) 'Moses, in whom ye trust' (5:45). Here there can be no misunderstanding as to what the Lord intended by the word 'Moses'. It was the one whose name was revered above all others by the Jew. We need not go outside the gospel of John to discover that 'Moses' stands for the writer of the whole law.

'The law was given by Moses' (1:17).

'We have found Him, of Whom Moses in the law ... did write' (1:45).

‘As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness’ (3:14).

‘Moses gave you not that bread from heaven’ (6:32).

‘Did not Moses give you the law?’ (7:19).

‘We know that God spake unto Moses’ (9:29).

If we include the testimony of other gospels, we shall find the Lord endorsed the Levitical cleansing of the leper (Matt. 8:4), the law concerning divorce (Matt. 19:8), the law concerning the honouring of father and mother (Mark 7:10), the incident of the burning bush (Mark 12:26), and the conclusive character of the testimony of the law and prophets (Luke 16:29). Moreover, this testimony of the Lord to the historicity of Moses, is not confined to the days of his flesh, but after His resurrection, He endorses without reserve as ‘Scripture’ Moses and the prophets and the Psalms (Luke 24:27,44). There is therefore no reason in saying that the ‘Moses’ of Christ, differed essentially from the Moses of tradition.

(2) ‘Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me’ (John 5:46). There is not the slightest difference, even to a letter between the word translated ‘believe’ as it refers to Moses, and the word translated ‘believe’ as it refers to Christ, *episteuete*. The Saviour with blessed condescension places His own words no higher than those of inspired Moses, and so could add:

‘But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe My words?’ (5:47).

‘His writings’, ‘My words’. What one does with the ‘writings’ one must do with the ‘words’. If ‘his’ refers not to an historic person, then ‘My’ may refer also to a myth.

(3) ‘He wrote of Me’ (5:46). Moses ‘wrote’ and what he wrote are his ‘writings’. These dispose of the idea that all we possess has come down to us in the form of oral tradition. These writings *gramma* are referred to by Paul when he said to Timothy, that ‘from a child thou hast known the holy *Scriptures*’ (2 Tim. 3:15). Further, the Lord declared of Moses ‘he wrote of Me’, thereby endorsing their prophetic character. The conflict therefore which appeared to start because of a zeal for the law of Moses, turned out to be but a zeal for human additions to that law; and the very book which the Jews venerated, condemned them, for while they prided themselves on their knowledge of the Scriptures, they rejected Him of Whom those Scriptures spake.

An attempt has been made to belittle the fulness of the Lord's testimony to Moses, by saying that He had 'emptied' Himself upon becoming a man, and so knew no more about the facts of history than did his fellow men. This is a doctrine* which we cannot for one moment allow to pass unchallenged, but even if such a testimony be held, the claims of our Lord, as recorded in this very gospel, would prevent us from attributing error to His judgment, for He continually told his hearers:

'My doctrine is not Mine, *but His that sent Me*' (7:16),

and at the end of His witness said:

'I have given unto them the *words* which Thou gavest Me'.

'I have given them Thy *word*'. 'Thy *word is truth*' (17:8,14,17).

The issues are clear. Either Christ is worthy of *all* our trust, or He is worthy of *none*. There can be no neutral ground here. To profess to trust the Lord with eternal matters, but to distrust Him over temporal things is as illogical as it is fatal. We take up the challenge as we repeat the solemn question 'How?'

'If ye believe not his (Moses') writings, HOW shall ye believe My (Christ's) words?' (5:47).

* For a fuller examination of the *Kenosis* or 'emptying' of the Lord, the reader is referred to the Author's book, *The Prize of the High Calling*.

CHAPTER 7

Fourth and Fifth Signs

The Feeding of the five thousand (6:1-15)

A reference to the structure of the gospel as a whole will show that the fourth and the fifth signs come together, without the intervening link that characterises all the others, this serves as an indication that these two signs should be studied together. They are connected by the parenthesis of 6:23 and linked with the sixth sign, that of the man born blind, by the discourses of chapters 6 (27-71), 7 and 8. The opening words 'after these things' do not indicate any precise lapse of time. 'Lücke remarks that when John wishes to indicate immediate succession, he uses *meta touto* 2:12; 11:7,11; 19:28; when mediate, after an interval, *meta tauta*, 3:22; 5:14; 6:1; 7:1; 19:38' (Alford). In passing we observe that John explains two things which would require no explanation if his readers were Jews.

'He tells us that the Sea of Galilee, is the sea of Tiberius, a name better known to the Gentile world because of its association with the Emperor Tiberius' (Josephus *Ant.* xviii. 2, 3).

'He tells us that the passover was a feast of the Jews, a comment that seems pointless if the Jews were his readers'.

The proximity of the passover would account for the great concourse of people being found together at this time, and also for the apparent preponderance of 'men' (10 and 14). There is a good deal of speculation as to why Philip should have been especially addressed by the Lord:

'He saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?' (6:5).

One purpose is made evident in verse 6:

'And this He said to prove him: for He Himself knew what He would do'.

Peirazo, the word translated 'prove', occurs in the four gospels fifteen times, once only is it translated 'prove', the remaining fourteen times it is 'tempt'. The word itself is colourless, it means a temptation if it arises from evil motives, as in 8:6, or a testing as in the case before us. It is possible that this was but one occasion out of many in which

the Lord used the circumstances of the moment as a means of testing the disciples' faith.

It is also not without bearing upon the subject that Philip seems to have had a leaning towards the use of the word 'suffice' in his approach to any matter. The word *arkeo* occurs but twice in John's Gospel, but in both cases it is Philip that uses the word.

'Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not *sufficient*' (6:7).

'Shew us the Father, and it *sufficeth* us' (14:8).

His 'proving' on this particular occasion may have been due to this mental attitude. It is Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, who drew the Lord's attention to the presence of the lad with his loaves and fishes. This also is an instance of undesigned coincidence. Philip came from Bethsaida, 'the city of Andrew' (1:44). This close relationship of Philip and Andrew is again noticeable in 12:22:

'Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus'.

Moreover, we learn from Luke 9:10, that the feeding of the 5,000 took place near 'Bethsaida', twice referred to as the city of Philip. Some feel that the records of Matthew 14:13, and Mark 6:32-45, indicate that the feeding of the 5,000 did not take place in Galilee but on the Eastern side, and embrace the ingenious solution of Reland that there were two cities of this name, one on either side of the lake. The matter is too difficult for us to solve, but the proximity of Philip's own city lends point to the fact that he was questioned by the Lord as to how the feeding of the multitude could be accomplished. The presence of a lad with 'five barley loaves, and two small fishes' raised a forlorn hope in Andrew's mind, only to be dismissed by the remark 'but what are they among so many?' The observation 'there was much grass in the place' (verse 10) is one of those little touches that indicate personal eye-witness; at Passover, the grass would be at its best.

We have no idea as to how or when the miraculous multiplication of the loaves and fishes took place, whether in the hands of the Lord or as the disciples distributed the food, but not only was there enough for all to be 'filled', but 'twelve baskets' were afterwards filled of the fragments.

Most people have heard at some time that it is supposed to be 'polite' to leave a little on one's plate, although the practice may actually cause direct waste. There is a possibility that the custom is allied to one in vogue among Israel, this portion left was definitely set aside for those that served and was called *peah*. The custom is not recorded in Scripture but the principle is found in the law:

'When ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners (*peah*) of thy field ... thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger' (Lev. 19:9,10).

The twelve who 'served' gathered 'twelve' baskets of that which remained, and would doubtless associate the provision of their own needs with the custom of the *peah*. There is, however, another and perhaps weightier reason for the gathering up of the fragments. It is expressed by the Lord Himself in the words 'that nothing be lost'.

The word *apollumi* occurs twelve times in John's Gospel. It occurs in 3:15,16 for the first time, where the object of the Saviour's sacrifice is twice expressed as providing that whosoever believeth in Him 'should not perish'. It occurs again in 10:28 where the sheep of Christ 'never perish', and on three occasions the spiritual parallel with the gathering up of the fragments 'that nothing be lost' is most evident.

'And this is the Father's will which hath sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me *I should lose nothing*' (6:39),

a statement occurring in the discourse that arose out of the feeding of the 5,000; in His great prayer of chapter 17 this item is remembered:

'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' (17:12),

and the very attitude of the Lord upon His betrayal in the garden of Gethsemane, was governed by the self-same principle (18:9).

We remind ourselves at this point, that the true expansion of this sign is given by the Lord Himself in 6:26 onward, and that our present business is just to make the actual miracle as plain as possible. In the Gospel according to Matthew, there is a clear distinction made between the two kinds of 'baskets' that were filled with the fragments left over from the two miracles.

‘Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets (*kophinos*) ye took up? Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets (*spuris*) ye took up?’ (Matt. 16:9,10).

The *kophinos* was a wicker basket, or pannier, which has come into our own language through the French, in the words ‘coffin’, and ‘coffer’. The former of these words was used in the sixteenth century for a ‘basket’ but has since been dropped, probably because of its association with death. Owing to the possibility of contamination, the Jews carried such wicker baskets to hold their food. Juvenal in his ‘Satires’ referred to this practice:

‘The Jews equipped with baskets and with hay’;
‘Leaving her basket and her hay’.

The hay was probably used to stop up the interstices of the wicker baskets:

‘By banished Jews, who their whole wealth can lay
In a small basket, on a wisp of hay’ (Dryden).

The *spuris* (Matt. 15:37) was a larger kind of basket, and should be translated ‘hamper’. Seeing that it was large enough to hold a man (Acts 9:25), any attempt to compare the amount of fragments gathered at the end of feeding the 5,000 or the 4,000 is manifestly unwise. One outstanding effect this miracle of feeding the 5,000 had upon the men who had seen it, is in their own words:

‘This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world’
(John 6:14),

and when the Lord perceived that they would have come and taken Him by force ‘to make Him king’, He departed again into a mountain alone (6:15). The simple outline of this sign as given in *The Companion Bible* is as follows:

The Fourth Sign.

- A **a** 1,2. Crowd. Following.
- b** -2. Signs seen.
- B 3,4. Departure to the mountain.
- C 5-13. The Fourth sign. **c** 5. Question to Philip.

- d** 6. Sign purposed.
c 7-9. Answer of Philip.
d 10-13. Sign performed.
- A** **b** 14-. The sign seen.
 a -14. The crowd. Confession.
B 15. Departure to the mountain.

The Walking on the Sea (6:16-25)

This brings us immediately to the fifth sign, the walking on the water. While the Lord was thus alone on the mountain, His disciples attempted to reach Capernaum by boat, but being overtaken by darkness and a rising sea, after they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they became afraid, on seeing the Lord 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’. (6:19,20,21).

To men who had knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures this sign of walking on the sea would have been nothing less than a claim to Deity:

‘Which alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea’ (Job 9:8),

even as the calming of the storm, according to Psalms 89:9; 107:29, is the prerogative of God alone:

‘O LORD God of hosts, who is a strong LORD like unto Thee ... Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them’ (Psa. 89:8,9).

The claim of the Lord to Deity is somewhat veiled in the Authorized Version of John 6:20, for the words, ‘It is I’ are in the original *ego eimi* ‘I am’.

Seeing that there was but one boat, and that the Lord had certainly not gone aboard with the disciples the night before, the people took shipping (for other boats had come from Tiberias) and came to

Capernaum. They naturally expected that the Lord went round the end of the lake and would arrive later:

‘And when they had found Him on the other side of the sea, they said unto Him, Rabbi, when camest Thou hither?’ (6:25).

This question leads immediately to the great discourse which occupies the remainder of this and the next two chapters.

Link between Fifth and Sixth Signs

‘The Work of God that ye Believe’ (6:26-30)

The passage that now awaits exposition, namely 6:26-71, is so full both of doctrine and of detail that we have been obliged to give up the idea of presenting the literary structure owing to the complicated nature of its correspondences. We have therefore exhibited the main line of the teaching as it is found depending upon certain key words. The key words are these:

Manna. This occurs three times and subdivides the main body of the discourse (3 occurrences).

I am, the bread of life, the living bread which came down from heaven (3 occurrences).

From heaven (10 occurrences).

Bread (14 occurrences).

Taking these key words of the discourse, we have exhibited the main development of the theme, but before we set out either this main structure or attempt its exposition, we must see the passage as a whole, and endeavour to understand how the argument concerning the manna arose.

The Interpretation of the Feeding of the 5,000.

A 6:26-30. The Work. The Seal. The Sign.

B 31-59. The threefold argument concerning the Manna.

A 60-71. The Flesh. The Spirit. The Confession.

If we misunderstand the approach to this great argument, which occupies verses 26-30 we shall miss the point of the Lord’s explanation, and most of the commentators we have consulted appear

to have construed the reference to 'work' in verse 29 in such a way that the issue is clouded and lost in a maze of unnecessary explanations. This is a sample of the usual attitude of teachers to the subject:

'The truest way of working the work of God is to believe on Him Whom He hath sent'.

'He tells them of one work, one moral act, from which all the rest derive their value, continuous belief in Him Whom God has sent'.

The comments express a great and glorious truth, but they do not express the truth which is taught in this verse. The understanding of our Lord's introduction to the great argument which revolves around the Manna, turns upon our right apprehension of the words: 'This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him Whom He has sent'. One great check upon interpretation is the context, and there is no sequence in the argument when interpreted in the orthodox way. Let us exaggerate this a little in order that it may be appreciated.

'This is the work of God, namely, the only work that is acceptable to Him is faith in the One that He has sent. Oh, replied the Jews, if that be the case What sign do you show, that we may see, and believe Thee, what dost Thou work? Our fathers did eat manna &c'.

There is no obvious connection between the statement of the Lord and the rejoinder of the Jews, especially as we pursue the argument further and include their reference to Moses, and the Lord's correction. Let us therefore set aside our preconceptions and start afresh.

'Labour' verse 27, 'work' 'works' verses 28, 29, 30, are all translations of the words *ergazomai* and *ergon*, and we shall be wise therefore to translate the opening of verse 27 'work not':

'Work not for the meat which perisheth, but (work) for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you: *for Him hath God the Father sealed*'.

Note this reason given by the Lord 'for Him hath God the Father sealed'. The figure of a seal is used in Scripture when referring to some outward sign of an inward reality. For example, circumcision is explained in the fourth chapter of Romans as:

‘The *sign* of circumcision, a *seal* of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised’ (11).

Paul spoke of the Corinthian converts as the ‘seal’ of his apostleship (1 Cor. 9:2), and associates the ‘seal’ with ‘confirming’ (stablishing) and ‘anointing’ and with the ‘earnest’ (2 Cor. 1:21,22).

In John 6:27 the Lord referred to some external ‘sign’ as His ‘seal’, but this is challenged as we shall find in verse 30, for the Jews said ‘what *sign* shewest Thou then?’ Now it is inexplicable, if the ordinary interpretation be accepted, that men who had actually participated of the food miraculously provided on the shores of the sea of Galilee, should say ‘what sign shewest Thou?’ Something in the context must supply a reason if we are to follow the argument further. Perhaps the simplest way will be to give a paraphrase, so that we can enlarge and emphasize those features which supply the key to the interpretation of the passage.

Jesus answered them and said, This miracle which you have just seen is the work of God, wrought by Him with the very object that you should believe on Him Whom He hath sent. As a result of the Lord’s emphasis upon the fact that the miracle of feeding the 5,000 was the ‘work of GOD’, the Jews reply, Oh, that was not Thine Own work then, it was the work of GOD. What sign shewest THOU, then, that we may see and believe THEE? *What dost THOU work?* We Jews know full well that when Moses came before Israel, he came not without credentials. He worked miracles, for it is written ‘He gave them bread from heaven’. There, replied the Saviour, you are very wrong. The word ‘He’ does not refer to Moses, but to God. The Lord gave them bread from heaven, working through the instrumentality of Moses, but it was not Moses himself who gave this bread. The children of Israel might just as well have turned round on Moses after they learned that it was *God* Who had given the Manna, and have said to him ‘What sign shewest *thou*, that we may see and believe *thee*? What dost *thou* work?’

‘This is the work of God *that* ye believe’. The ambiguity that attaches to the English word ‘that’ is responsible for a good deal of misinterpretation, and a few words on this matter may not be amiss. There are twenty-five different Greek words, representing a number of parts of speech, which are translated ‘that’ in the Authorized Version.

It would be tedious to tabulate them all, we give a few examples as a guide. 'That' in English may be:

(1) A Demonstrative Pronoun.

This may be the translation of either *ekeinos* or *houtos*, as for example 'That day' *ekeinos* (1:39). 'This is the bread' *houtos* (6:50).

(2) A Relative Pronoun.

This may be the translation of either *hos ean*, *hosos* or *hostis*.

'Every sin *that* a man doeth' *hos ean*, which if, whatsoever (1 Cor. 6:18).

'All things *that* John spake' *hosos* how great, as many as (John 10:41).

'Even the same *that* I said unto you' *hostis* whoever, whatever (8:25).

(3) A Connective, emphasizing cause *hoti*.

'We believe ... *that* Thou art the Christ' (6:69).

(4) A Conjunction, emphasizing purpose, design or result *hina*.

This is the word translated 'that' in 6:29, and so we give several illustrations of its usage.

'*In order that* all men through Him might believe' (1:7).

'*In order that* all men should honour the Son' (5:23).

'*In order that* nothing be lost' (6:12).

'*In order that* we may see, and believe Thee' (6:30).

'*In order that* they might know Thee' (17:3).

'*In order that* ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ...

In order that believing ye might have life through His name' (20:31).

We have taken our examples from John's Gospel, and these fairly well illustrate the meaning of *hina*. In reply to the Jews, our Saviour said:

'This is the work of God, *in order that*, or *with the object that* ye believe on Him Whom He hath sent' (6:29).

The 'work of God' therefore must refer to something which God had wrought with the object of leading those who saw it, to believe in the Saviour. Now this is exactly what John himself said the selected

signs of his gospel were for (20:31). In the earlier controversy with the Jews, the fact that the Lord said:

‘My Father worketh hitherto, and I work ... The Son can do nothing of Himself’ (5:17-19),

had been used against Him, for His opponents construed these words as tantamount to equality with God. Now when He once again acknowledged that the feeding of the 5,000 was the ‘work of God’, they immediately swing round to the other extreme and say, ‘What sign shewest THOU then, that we may see, and believe THEE? What dost THOU work?’

This question and the false inference drawn from the reference to the Manna found in Psalm 78, leads to the great discourse of John 6:31-59, which must now occupy our attention.

The Typical and Antitypical Manna (6:31-59)

We have seen that a question arose which introduced the words ‘work’, ‘sign’ and ‘seal’, and that ‘the work of God’ was the miracle of the feeding of the 5,000 and had been wrought in order that the Jews might believe. Instead of recognizing such a work as the Lord’s seal, they quibbled about the fact that this miracle was ‘the work of God’ as distinct from the work of Christ, and ask what sign *He* wrought that they might believe *Him*. They appealed to the example of Moses, and under the influence of the Rabbinical interpretation, assumed that the manna was given by Moses. This the Lord corrects, saying, ‘Moses gave you not that bread from heaven’ (6:32). In the Gemara (the second part of the Talmud) we read:

‘There were three good shepherds of Israel, Moses, Aaron and Miriam, and there were three good things given us by their hands, a well, a cloud, and manna: the well, for the merits of Miriam, the pillar of cloud for the merits of Aaron, manna for the merits of Moses’ (Taanith, fol. 9,1).

The Lord’s Exposition of the Miracle of the Feeding of the 5,000

A 6:31-. The Jewish argument from the gift of the MANNA.

B 31-47. False inference from this argument refuted.

b 31. He gave them. False idea.

A 35. I AM

c 32. Not Moses, but Father.

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| | Bread of Life. | True bread. |
| | | <i>c</i> 33. Bread of God. Life unto the world. |
| | | <i>b</i> 34. Evermore give us. False idea. |
| A | 48-49. Those who ate the MANNA in the wilderness <i>are dead</i> . | |
| B | 48-50. | <i>b</i> 50. This is the bread. |
| | A 48. I AM Bread of Life. | <i>c</i> 50. Cometh down from heaven.
<i>c</i> 50. A man may eat thereof. |
| | | <i>b</i> 50. And not die. |
| A | 51-58. The Antitype of the MANNA - live for ever. | |
| B | 51-58. | <i>b</i> 51. Eat and live for ever. |
| | A 51. I AM Living Bread from heaven. | <i>c</i> 51. My flesh, given for life of the world.
<i>c</i> 58. This is that bread from heaven. |
| | | <i>b</i> 58. Eat and live for ever. |

The Lord does not deny the miracle of the manna as recorded in the Scriptures, He simply refuses the Rabbinical gloss which had been put upon the Scriptures, and which influenced the Jews in their attitude toward Himself.

In our search to find a simple exhibition of the scope of the present passage we found that by adhering closely to the key words, 'manna', 'I am', 'from heaven' and 'bread', that though a great deal of detail had to be omitted, a sufficiently faithful outline was presented, and one that fell within the limits of these studies. We accordingly present the above outline before proceeding with the exposition.

This discourse falls into four natural divisions, governed by the four questions or objections raised by the Jews. We will keep this natural subdivision before us, as this will enable us to deal with each department of the argument as it advances to its goal.

Fourfold Question and Answer (6:31-58)

- A 31. Jewish argument 'Our fathers did eat manna in the desert'.
 B 32,33. The Lord's answer.
 Moses was not the giver.
 The Father gives the true bread.
 This bread is He that giveth life unto the world.

A 34. Jewish mistaken request 'Lord, evermore give us this bread'.

B 35-40. The Lord's answer.

The first 'I am'.
Those given by the Father shall come.
None lost.
Raised up at the last day.

A 41,42. Jewish murmuring 'Is not this Jesus, the Son of Joseph?'

B 43-51. The Lord's answer.

Those taught of God come to Christ.
Believers have everlasting life.
Two more claims - 'I am'.
First statement as to His flesh which was given for the
life of the world.

A 52. Jewish striving 'How can this man give us His flesh to eat?'

B 53-58. The Lord's answer.

Except eat ... drink, no life.
Flesh is meat indeed.
He that eateth Me shall live by Me.
This is the bread that came down from heaven.

The first answer of the Lord deals with Moses, the Manna and its Antitype. The answer of the Lord is somewhat compressed, and there is a transition from the typical teaching of the Manna to the Antitype, Himself, without the actual statement of all the parts of the argument.

'Moses gave you not that bread from heaven'. First of all 'Moses' was not the giver, but God Who used Moses as His instrument. That disposed of the objection which was raised in verse 30. Then, even though Moses was but the instrument, and God the Giver, what God thus gave was not 'that bread from heaven' in the full sense of the word.

'My Father giveth you the True Bread from heaven'. We do not read that 'the Father' gave the manna to Israel, that precious title is not used of God in its full sense until 'the Word was made flesh'. When Christ became 'the only begotten Son' then God could be revealed as 'the Father'. Consequently we are prepared for the title 'the Son of Man', and for the emphasis upon His 'flesh and blood' (6:53-56).

‘The True Bread’. John sets forth the Lord as the *true* Light (1:9), the *true* Bread (6:32), and the *true* Vine (15:1). He contrasts the typical and shadowy nature of the law of Moses, with the *true* grace, that came through Jesus Christ (1:17). It is this relationship of type to antitype that the Lord had in view, when He contrasted the ‘bread’ given in the wilderness with Himself, ‘the True Bread’.

In explanation of the difference between the typical manna, and Himself, the *true* bread from heaven, the Lord continued:

‘For the bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world’ (6:33).

“For” *gar*. This word is a contraction of *ge* "verily" and *ara* "therefore" or "further" - in fact, having a more extensive meaning than the English "for" expressing the reason, cause, motive, principle, &c., of what has been previously said’ (Dr. Bullinger *Lex. and Con.*).

‘My Father giveth you the *true* bread from heaven. *In fact*, the bread of God is He ... ‘ &c.

The reader should pay particular attention to these little particles and conjunctions, for they are an integral part of the argument and illuminate the meaning of the writer. As there are at least twenty-two different Greek words translated ‘for’ in the Authorized Version it is obvious that some care should be taken before conclusions are drawn.

In speaking of Himself as the ‘true’ or ‘antitypical’ bread, the Lord uses a new title for Himself, and indicates the great outstanding difference between Himself and the manna in their effects upon the recipients.

First His title ‘The Bread of God’. Is this to be looked upon simply as the Genitive of Origin or possession? In view of the fact that the Lord had only just indicated that the typical manna itself was not of Moses but of God, there must be some added intention in this new title. He was speaking, let it be remembered, to Jews, and these would be familiar with the use of the Divine Name when simple emphasis and not divinity is intended.

For example. Nineveh, which is correctly translated in the Authorized Version of Jonah 3:3: ‘an exceeding great city’ is literally ‘a city great to God’, but no one in his senses would associate either ‘God’ or ‘godliness’ with Nineveh at the time of Jonah. In Genesis

30:8 'great wrestlings' are in the original 'wrestlings of God', so 'cedars of God' are translated 'goodly cedars' (Psa. 80:10), and the 'trees of Jehovah' of Psalm 104:16 mean the loftiest and noblest of trees. We therefore see in the title assumed by Christ, 'The Bread of God', an expansion of His reference to the manna 'The great antitypical Bread'. This He supplements by referring to its great effect. It 'giveth life unto the world' (6:33).

When next the Lord speaks of the manna it was to say:

'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' (6:49,50).

Further, there is a wonderful illumination of the claim that this bread of God gives 'life unto the world', for the Lord adds:

'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*' (6:51).

Here, the sacrifice of Christ is shown to be the one and only basis of 'life', and it is in line with the purpose of the Gospel that the Lord should speak of the life of the 'world'. John sets forth Christ as the Lamb of God Which taketh away the sin of 'the world' (1:29); that God so loved 'the world' as to give His only begotten Son (3:16); that He is the Saviour of 'the world' (4:42). Had the intention been to indicate the extension of the gospel to the Greek and to the Gentile, the language of Paul's epistles would have been adopted. John, however, flings a wider circle, he speaks of 'the world', and we cannot begin to understand the scope of his gospel until we have appreciated the intention of the apostle Paul, when he, too, departs from ethnic terms to use words of kosmic scope. (See Rom. 3:19; 5:12; 11:12-15, for example). There is a great difference between saying 'by one man sin entered into *the world*', and saying 'by one man sin entered into *the race*, or into *mankind*, or came upon *all men*'. The moment this distinction is sensed the reader will not rest satisfied, we trust, until the wider issues involved in the word *kosmos* are in some measure apprehended, and when this is once seen all attempts to limit John's Gospel to either 'kingdom' or 'Israel' are seen to be unscriptural.

The reply of the Jews, as translated in the Authorized Version, 'Lord, evermore give us this bread' (6:34), may appear at first sight to

be the language of faith. *Kurios*, the word translated 'Lord' and which often stands for the great Name Jehovah itself, is nevertheless a word of lowlier associations. In an earlier chapter we find the woman of Samaria using the title three times (4:11,15,19), the Nobleman, once (4:49), and the impotent man once (5:7), and in each case the Authorized Version translates the word 'Sir'. This is the word used by the Philippian gaoler (Acts 16:30). There are twelve occasions where the Authorized Version translates the title 'Sir', and John 6:34 should be added.

The request of the Jews, is on the same plane as the request of the woman of Samaria when she said: 'Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw' (4:15).

When the Lord made it clear that He claimed to be the True Bread from heaven, the Jews ceased to ask that this bread be given to them, but openly repudiated Him and His claim (6:41,42).

Before reverting to the figure of the Bread of Life, which He does in verse 48, the Lord turns aside from the main theme to correct any false impression His words may have left with His hearers. Why should the Lord have stayed in the course of His use of the type, the manna, to introduce a doctrinal argument involving apparently the deep doctrine of 'freewill' and 'Divine Sovereignty'? Perhaps every commentator is wrong, possibly we have all missed the point, probably the Lord *did not leave* the subject of the manna, but referred very pointedly to the attitude of Israel in the wilderness.

The Jews 'murmured' (6:43), so did their fathers, in direct relation with the gift of the manna (Exod. 16). The Jews 'strove' among themselves after the next revelation of the Lord (John 6:52), and the waters of Meribah (Num. 20:13) foreshadow their attitude. Finally, in John 6:60 and 66, many of the disciples called the Lord's teaching 'an hard saying' and 'went back, and walked no more with Him'. The word 'hard' is *skleros* meaning 'dry' or 'withered', and when Israel spoke against the manna they said:

'But now our soul is *dried away*: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes' (Num. 11:6),

and just as the disciples 'went back, and walked no more with Him', so Israel in the wilderness said:

‘Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt’ (Num. 14:4).

The strands of Divine Sovereignty and of human choice are not to be disentangled by either Philosophy or Theology. The Lord knew from the beginning who would betray Him (6:64) and had therefore said:

‘No man can come unto Me, except it were given unto him of My Father’ (6:65).

Yet, this did not prevent Him from addressing the twelve saying ‘Will ye also go away?’ and Simon Peter’s answer makes no reference to Divine decrees or Sovereignty, he simply says, as all in like circumstances must say:

‘Lord, to Whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life’ (6:68).

He had believed the testimony of the signs and had received life even as 20:31 declares. But this is not all. This chapter moves to the great confession, as do so many of the sections of this gospel:

‘And we believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God’ (6:69).

Sin had so blinded the eye, so corrupted the faculties, that did God not ‘draw’, men would never respond at all. Like the burning bush that quickened the witness of Moses, the Father draws. This may, or may not, result in salvation, for the next step is to hear and believe, the final step being that such ‘come’ to Christ.

The issues of this theme are too great to be disposed of in a sentence, and as we must conclude this survey with the next few paragraphs, we will reserve a fuller investigation into the questions raised by this parenthetical passage, until we arrive at the seventeenth chapter, where the matter is again to the fore.

The Lord resumed His exposition of the manna at the fifty-first verse and by the addition of the words ‘My flesh’, not only gave a glorious revelation of the supreme purpose of the incarnation but caused the Jews to become more violent in their opposition.

‘How can this man give us His flesh to eat?’ (6:52).

The figure of eating or drinking was well understood among the Jews.

‘Every eating or drinking, of which we find mention in the Book of Ecclesiastes, is to be understood of the Law and good works’, says the *Midras Coheleth*.

‘Bread’ too is often invested with the meaning ‘doctrine’. The *Chagigah* commenting upon Isaiah 3:1 says of ‘the whole stay of bread’ referred to there, ‘These are the masters of doctrine; as it is written, Come, eat of my bread’ (Prov. 9:5). The Talmudists were acquainted with the figure, indeed Rabh says ‘Israel shall eat the years of the Messiah’.

The natural revulsion which we experience upon reading the words ‘eat of My flesh’ and ‘drink of My blood’ would not have been experienced by the Jews, revolting as the literal eating of blood would have been to them, for they were so accustomed to the figure of ‘eating’ as meaning ‘believing’ a doctrine, that the physical and literal aspect which first strikes a modern reader would scarcely be present in their consciousness.

To look upon Christ in any sense as ‘The Bread of God’, sent down from heaven, would necessitate the continuance of the figure, for one could not speak literally of ‘believing’ the figurative ‘bread’. This claim of the Lord was not acceptable because the words ‘from heaven’ involved the necessity of a supernatural birth, which is evident by the reasoning of the Jews who 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?’ (6:42).

When the Saviour told the Jews that as the ‘true bread’ He had been sent ‘to give life *unto the world*’, no objection formed itself in the mind of His hearers; but, when, in the course of His explanation He also said:

‘The bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give *for the life of the world*’ (6:51),

the objection springs immediately into the Jewish mind. Life given ‘for’ (*huper*) implies sacrifice, as the next occurrence of *huper* in John proves (10:11).

It was this, not any revulsion against the literal acceptance of the reference to His flesh and blood, that caused the opposition of the Jews to harden. Largely as a result of Rabbinical teaching, the Jews had no room in their expectation for a suffering Messiah, but it is an integral part of the teaching of the Scriptures, that Christ came in the flesh, in a body prepared for Him, so that He might bare our sins in that body, that sin might be condemned in the flesh, and that in the body of His flesh through death the believer may be presented at last holy and unblameable (1:14; Rom. 8:3; Heb. 10:20; Col. 1:22; 1 John 4:2,3).

At the close of this long argument, the Saviour reverts to the challenge that had been made to His claim to be the bread 'which came down from heaven', saying:

'What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up *where he was before?*' (6:62).

It had already been expressed in this Gospel:

'No man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven' (3:13).

There are ten occurrences of the phrase 'from heaven' in this sixth chapter, namely in verses 31, 32, 33, 38, 41, 42, 50, 51 and 58.

We commend the re-reading of this great chapter with the aid of the structure and the accompanying notes, keeping in mind two passages found in the chapter itself:

'They shall be all taught of God' (6:45).

'It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life' (6:63).

CHAPTER 8

Teaching Associated with the Feast of Tabernacles (John 7)

Structure and Introductory Notes

We now turn our attention to the next great section of this link between the Signs, namely John 7:1 to 8:1. Just as the manna provided a key to unlock the difficult passage in the last chapter, so the Feast of Tabernacles will provide a key to unlock the true meaning of the Lord's discourse in this chapter.

The following introduction is not only suggestive, but will be found to follow fairly closely the way in which the argument proceeds:

'Chapter 7, like chapter 6 is very important for the estimate of the fourth Gospel. In it the scene of the Messianic crisis shifts from Galilee to Jerusalem; and, as we should naturally expect, the crisis itself becomes hotter. The division, the doubts, the hopes, the jealousies, and the casuistry of the Jews are vividly portrayed. We see the mass of the populace, especially those who had come up from Galilee, swaying to and fro, hardly knowing which way to turn, inclined to believe, but held back by the more sophisticated citizens of the metropolis. These meanwhile apply the fragments of Rabbinical learning at their command in order to test the claim of the new prophet. In the background looms the dark shadow of the hierarchy itself, entrenched behind its prejudices and refusing to hear the cause that it has already prejudged. A single, timid voice is raised against this injustice, but it is at once fiercely silenced' (Sanday).

Once again we are confronted with a somewhat formidable task, namely that of presenting the structure with enough fulness to make it serviceable, yet at the same time recognizing that these fifty-four verses contain far more detail than we can hope to include or exhibit.

The following structure is true in the main, but we have avoided any attempt at accurate subdivision, as the very mass of detail and the intricacy of the pattern in which the correspondences must be thrown, would defeat the object with which these structures are prepared.

Teaching associated with the Feast of Tabernacles (7:1 to 8:1)

A 1. GALILEE. 'Jesus walked in Galilee'. Sought to kill.

John passes over a good deal of the Lord's ministry that took place in Galilee. *Perieptei* (7:1) the imperfect, implies continued action, 'was walking', and the ministry thus passed over is supplied by Matthew in chapters 15 to 19.

The Feast of Tabernacles, like the Passover, is called here by John 'the Jew's feast'. The word 'Jew' occurs seventy-one times in the gospel according to John (once translated Judaea) in contrast with five occurrences only of the same word in Matthew. Now contrary to an unreflecting argument from this fact, the low number of occurrences in Matthew, Mark and Luke of the word 'Jew', shows that the Jew is *addressed*, whereas the frequency of the word in John shows that the Jew is being *discussed* and *described*. It would have been offensive to his readers had Matthew used the word 'Jew' as John does.

The Feast of Tabernacles is mentioned alone by John of all the writers of the New Testament, and we shall see presently how that feast would be associated in his mind with the incarnation, when the Word was made flesh. Before doing this, however, it will be profitable to acquaint ourselves, a little, with the intention and prophetic import of this feast.

The Feast of Tabernacles falls in the seventh month, commencing on the fifteenth day and lasting for seven days (Lev. 23:34). It must be remembered that at the first Passover, the year which had originally begun in the month Tisri, began at the Exodus, with the month Abib, and so what had originally been the first month of the year, now became the seventh, a confusion that is nevertheless eloquent of the consequences of sin and the purpose of the ages that reaches forward to its adjustment. The whole Bible with its burden of redemption, restoration and ultimate peace, is constructed on a Sabbatic system, commencing with the regular recurrence of the seventh day, on through an ever expanding sequence of 'weeks' (Lev. 23:15), 'months' (23:24), 'years' (25:2-5), 'jubile' (25:8-10). 'The Seventy Sevens' of Daniel 9:24-27, and the 'seven times' of Nebuchadnezzar's symbolic madness (4:16) cover the whole time of the Gentiles.

This series of sevens leads to the Octave, the new beginning, the new heavens and earth. We find consequently that the seventh feast of the year is expanded, and prominence given to 'the eighth day' (Lev. 23:39).

The prophetic forecast of the feasts of Israel is a study of itself, but the reader will catch something of its purport if we exhibit the whole set of feasts as set out in the twenty-third chapter.

THE SYMBOLIC FEASTS OF ISRAEL'S YEAR (Lev. 23)^{*}

First Fruits.

- A The Weekly Sabbath (1-3).
- B Passover. Redemption by blood (5-8).
- C Unleavened Bread. Present attitude (9-14).
- D Pentecost. The end of the first harvest (15-21).

(Interval, mention of the Stranger).

Harvest.

- A The Blowing of Trumpets (24,25).
- B The Day of Atonement. Atonement by blood (27-32).
- C Tabernacles (34-38).
- D The ingathering (39-44).

The Eighth Day.

This is not the place to enter into the complicated question of chronology^â, but *The Companion Bible* sets out in Appendix 179 very cogent reasons for believing that the Saviour was 'begotten' on December 25th and 'born' on the following September 29th of the year 4 B.C. Now September 29th is the fifteenth day of Tisri, in other words, our Lord was born on the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles, and circumcised on the eighth day of the feast. John is the only writer of the New Testament to speak of the Feast of Tabernacles, and he it is

^{*} For fuller notes see *The Berean Expositor*, Vol. 22, pp. 6-11.

^â Chronology in all its bearings, forms part of a series in *The Berean Expositor* (Vols. 33 to 37) entitled *Time and Place*, which should be consulted.

who says, 'The Word became flesh and *tabernacled* (*eskenosen*) among us' (1:14).

We must now return to the seventh chapter and endeavour to understand its import. There is a parallel between the suggestion of the Lord's brethren that He should go to Jerusalem and demonstrate by His works, His claims, and the tentative suggestion of Mary at the wedding feast when she said 'they have no wine' (2:3), the Lord's answer being in both instances:

'Mine hour is not yet come' (2:4).

'My time is not yet come' (7:6).

We must distinguish between 'time' (*kairos*), which is Christ's *opportunity* looked at from the human side, and 'hour' (*hora*), which was His *hour* looked at from the ordination of God.

The public working of signs and miracles by the Lord, yet the continual withdrawal and command that He must not be made known were, in the eyes of the worldly wise, just sheer contradictions.

The question of whether the Lord should or should not show Himself openly at the Feast was governed by the fact that His 'time' was not 'yet full come' (7:8). In 7:6 'come' is *pareimi* 'to be present', as in 11:28 'The Master is come', but 'full come' in 7:8 is *pleroo*, like 'until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled' (Luke 21:24).

The Lord's absence from the feast, and His subsequent arrival 'in secret' were all governed by the consciousness of 'His hour'. To provoke the latent 'hatred' before the time would have been just as wrong as to shrink back when that hour had come. Consequently, we learn from 12:1 and parallel statements in the other Gospels that nothing could dissuade Him from going up to Jerusalem, there to die, when the Feast of Passover was due.

We now leave the section devoted to Galilee and the unbelief of the Lord's brethren (7:1-10) and turn to the more positive teaching of 7:11-49. This portion, as the structure intimates, is twofold (1) 'in the midst' of the feast and (2) 'on the great day' of the feast.

That there was an air of expectation about the feast is evident from the fact that 'the Jews sought Him at the feast, and said, Where is He?' (7:11). 'The Jews' are distinguished from 'the people' (7:11,12), and

generally in John's Gospel 'the Jews' indicate the Rulers. The people 'murmured' (7:12), a word which recurs at verse 32.

While in the generality of cases 'murmuring' takes on the secondary meaning of 'complaining', it is used here in its primitive sense of 'muttering in a low voice', partly out of fear of the Rulers. This sense is evident, for no man in his senses would 'complain', saying 'He is a good Man'. This opinion however, was not shared by all. Others objected and said 'Nay; but He deceiveth the people'. This division of opinion meets us again, after the Lord had spoken to the people on the law and the sabbath.

'Lo, He speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto Him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ?' (7:26).

This movement towards acknowledging Him is again smothered, this time by the traditional teaching of the Rabbis:

'Howbeit we know this man whence He is: but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence He is' (7:27).

'We know'. In the preceding chapter, the Jews refused the Lord's claim to be the bread which came down from heaven, saying:

'Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?' (6:42).

The words, 'no man knoweth whence He is' cannot refer to His birth, for both the Rulers and the people knew that the Messiah should be born in Bethlehem, and be the Son of David, as a glance even at verse 42 of this chapter will prove.

The Rabbinical tradition, which misled the people, was really a misunderstanding of the typical character of Moses who was rejected by Israel the first time, and who fled to Midian there to abide forty years.

The Midrash Schir says:

'My beloved is like a roe or a young hart' (Song of Sol. 2:9).

'A roe appears and is hid, appears and is hid again. So our first redeemer (Moses) appeared and was hid, and at length appeared again. So our latter Redeemer (Messiah) shall be revealed to them, and shall be hid again from them'.

Dr. J. Lightfoot's comment is:

'They conceive a twofold manifestation of the Messiah, the first in Bethlehem; but will straightway disappear and lie hid. At length He will show Himself; but from what place and at what time that will be, no one knew. In His first appearance at Bethlehem, He should do nothing that was memorable; in His second, was the hope and expectation of the nation. The Jews, therefore, who tell our Saviour here, that "When Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence He is", whether they knew Him to have been born at Bethlehem or no, yet by His wonderful works they conceive this to have been the second manifestation of Himself: and, therefore, only doubt, whether He should be the Messiah or no, because they knew the place (Nazareth) from whence He came; having been taught by tradition, that Messiah should come, the second time, from a place perfectly unknown to all men' (Hebrew and Talmudical Exercitations upon John).

Special Reference to the Attitude of the Jews to the Teaching of the Lord (7:15-36)

It will be remembered that we have given an example of Rabbinical tradition which had such a blinding influence on the people, and we shall understand the question: 'How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?' (7:15) the better, if we acquaint ourselves with the attitude adopted by the Scribes in this particular.

The word *gramma* 'letters', is derived from *grapho* 'to write', and like the English word 'letters' it has a number of shades of meaning. In 5:47 it is translated 'writings' and refers to the writings of Moses. In Luke 23:38 it means the 'letters' of the alphabet, and in Acts 28:21 it means 'letters' in the form of epistles. 'Letter and circumcision' (Rom. 2:27), 'oldness of letter' (Rom. 7:6) and 'the letter killeth' (2 Cor. 3:6) are words to indicate the law as contrasted with the spirit and the gospel. In the mouth of a Roman, it meant 'learning' in Acts 26:24, and with the added qualification 'holy' it indicates the Old Testament Scriptures in 2 Timothy 3:15.

In the mind of a Jew 'learning' and the 'Scriptures' were so interwoven that secular learning must not be thought of here. The 'Scribe' *grammateus* might be a 'Town Clerk' among the Gentiles (Acts 19:35), but the remaining sixty-six occurrences of the word, with

the possible exception of 1 Corinthians 1:20, refer exclusively to those whose business was to do with the Scriptures. In the same way *graphe* means anything 'written', but there is no other meaning attached to the word in the New Testament than 'the Scriptures'. The word 'learned' in the question of the Jews does not refer to learning in general, but indicated that the one so named had attended a school, such as that of Hillel, Shammai or Gamaliel, to mention three names that left their mark on New Testament times. Much the same in intention to the question of John 7:15, are the words of Matthew 7:28,29:

'The people were astonished at His doctrine: for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes'.

Anyone who is acquainted with Rabbinical literature will remember how frequently the teaching is introduced by some such phrase 'As Rabbi so and so says'.

'Never passing a hair's breadth beyond the carefully watched boundary line of commentary and precedent; full of balanced inference, and orthodox hesitancy, and impossible literalism' (Farrar).

So great was the hold of tradition upon the minds of the people that it is written of the great teacher Hillel:

'But although he discoursed of that matter all day long, they received not his doctrine, until he said at last, So I heard from Shemaia and Abtalion' (*Hieros Pes.*).

When once we perceive that this frame of mind was characteristic of a people who were in such bondage to tradition and precedent, we can understand their astonishment and their diffidence, and can the better appreciate the Lord's reply:

'Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me. If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself' (7:16,17).

There are a number of passages in John's Gospel wherein the Lord declares that the doctrine or the word He spoke was not His Own but was the word of the Father which sent Him. There are seven such passages subsequent to the germinant statement of 3:34. 'For He Whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God'. This is a test

statement, and throughout John's Gospel this challenging test is met and affirmed.

This matter is so interwoven with the texture of the gospel of John, that no pains must be spared in order that this shall be seen and appreciated. Accordingly we give the remaining passages here:

'I speak to the world those things which I have heard of Him' (8:26).

'As My Father hath taught Me, I speak these things' (8:28).

'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' (12:49).

'Whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto Me, so I speak' (12:50).

'The words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself' (14:10).

'The word which ye hear is not Mine, but the Father's Which sent Me' (14:24).

'I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me' (17:8).

'I have given them Thy Word' (17:14).

Not only did the Lord emphasize the fact that as the Sent One He spoke the words that had been given Him, He threw light upon the moral side of the question, by giving more than once a comment upon the self-seeking spirit that chose otherwise.

'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' (7:18).

Not only did our Lord speak from the standpoint of the speaker, and place the glory of Him that sent Him foremost; He showed that the self-same spirit must actuate the hearer, for indeed hearing is but the obverse of speaking, and where either the speaker speaks with a view to his own glory, or a hearer hears for his own honour, witness is stultified and the message degenerates.

'I receive not honour from men ... How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?' (5:41,44).

The reader should remember that in these quotations, 'glory' and 'honour' are translations of the same Greek word '*doxa*'. The same is true of 8:50 and 54.

Further, on several occasions the Lord made known certain moral or spiritual qualifications in order to 'hear' or to 'know' aright.

'If any man will to do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself' (7:17).

The reader will have noticed that we have changed the wording of the Authorized Version, 'will do his will' to 'will to do His will'.

Thele to thelema. We must avoid confusing the verb *thelein* with the 'will' of the simple future. Another example awaits us in John 8:44, in the charge, 'the lusts of your father ye will to do'.

Thelein 'to will' comes in 5:6,40; 6:67; 9:27; 12:21; 16:19, where it reads 'will', 'would' and 'were desirous', and care should be taken in translation so that ambiguity be avoided and the full force of 'the will' be felt. Another aspect of the matter is given in 8:43 where the Saviour said:

'Why do ye not understand My speech? even because ye cannot hear My word'.

Yet another point of view is found in the tenth chapter:

'But ye believe not, because ye are not of My sheep' (26).

Earlier, John had recorded:

'Ye have not His word abiding in you: for Whom He hath sent, Him ye believe not ... But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you' (5:38,42).

Possibly in this last reference we have the key to all misunderstanding, all failure to hear and to apprehend. Where the love of God is found, there willingness to do His will, belief, understanding and hearing, will naturally follow, but without that love, those who hear will prove to be but shallow soil and the seed will soon wither away. They will 'hear' but 'understand not'.

Upon the Lord reiterating the fact that He was the Sent One, the rulers of the people sought to lay hands upon Him, but could not

'because His hour was not yet come' (7:30). Upon the coming of the servants of the Pharisees and Chief Priests to take Him, the Lord said:

'Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto Him that sent Me. Ye shall seek Me, and shall not find Me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come' (7:33,34).

This caused a deal of questioning among the Jews, but the farthest stretch that their unenlightened imagination could reach was:

'Will He go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles?' (7:35).

Something deeper, something vaster, something that had in it the very issues of life and death, were, however, contained in the Lord's answer. These men had been sent to take Him, and their masters sought to slay Him. Only because His hour had not yet come was their fell intention not put into effect,

'Yet a little while am I with you'.

Between the Feast of Tabernacles and the Feast of Passover was just about six months, and then His hour would have come. In the first half of John's Gospel we meet with *mikron chronon*, 'a little while' (7:33 and 12:35). In the second half of John's Gospel the word *chronon* is omitted, and the adverb *mikron* by itself is used seven times, and in the first occurrence the Lord reminds the disciples of what He had said earlier:

'Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek Me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you' (13:33).

The implications of this statement are startling. No difference is made here between the unbelieving Jew and the believing disciples. We must leave this problem until we reach the thirteenth chapter however and must keep to our present task. There is certainly nothing contrary to the hope of the believer to be read into these solemn words, for the next occurrence of *mikron* is full of hope and promise:

'Yet a little while, and the world seeth Me no more; but ye see Me: because I live, ye shall live also' (14:19).

Further problems await us in the passages, John 16:16,17,18 and 19, with which we must deal in their proper time. The disciples were

evidently perplexed as we can see at the Lord Himself admitting to them that He spake in parables to them (16:25, A.V. margin).

The Lord kept constantly before Him two related movements, which, when combined, brought His work to completion.

He was the Sent One.

He was to return to Him that sent Him.

We have drawn attention to the frequent occurrence of the word 'sent' in connection with the Lord and His ministry and will not repeat ourselves here, yet would not pass altogether, without comment, the fact that ever before the Lord was the return *via* ascension 'where He was before'. This can be seen plainly in 13:1 and 3.

'He was come from God, and He went to God'.

'I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do ... and I come to Thee' (17:4,11).

In this twofold aspect of the Lord's commission we can see Him as the 'Apostle', the 'One sent from God' and 'High Priest', the One Who went back to God, His work done (Heb. 8:1).

These things took place 'in the midst of the feast' (7:14), but the Lord reserved one phase of His teaching until 'the last day, that great day of the feast', and this we will now consider together.

The Great Day of the Feast (7:37 to 8:1)

The Stigma of Galilee (7:52)

'In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, 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 shall flow rivers of living water. (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.)' (7:37-39).

We have set out in outline on page 248 the great feasts of Israel as recorded in Leviticus 23, and we find that the feast of Tabernacles concludes the festal year. In the thirty-sixth verse we read of an 'eighth day' which was an holy convocation, and a solemn assembly. This eighth day is 'the last day' of the whole festal year and

foreshadows 'the last day' which formed part of the prophet's vision, and also finds a place in the Gospel we are considering.

It is not therefore to be considered accidental, that the expression 'the last day' occurs just seven times, of which six occurrences refer to the last day when men shall be raised and judged (6:39,40,44,54; 11:24; 12:48), and the one reference (7:37), in which the eighth day of the feast of tabernacles stands as a type of the great day of restoration and ingathering.

From Rabbinical sources we discover that there was associated with this feast a ceremonial drawing and offering of water. We give it in the words as quoted by Dr. J. Lightfoot:

'After what manner is this offering of water? They filled a golden phial containing three logs^{*}, out of Siloam. When they came to the watergate they sounded their trumpets and sang. Then a priest goes up the ascent of the altar, and turns to the left. There were two silver vessels, one with water, the other with wine: he pours some of the water into the wine, and some of the wine into the water, and so performs the service ... Who ever hath not seen the rejoicing, that was upon the drawing of this water, hath never seen any rejoicing at all'.

According to *Midrash Coheleth* the Jews acknowledged that the latter Redeemer is to procure water for them, as their former redeemer, Moses, had done.

There is a division of opinion among scholars as to whether the water ceremony was omitted on the eighth day, or included as Rabbi Juda Hakkadosh in his tract, *Succah*, affirms. If the ceremony was included on the eighth day the Lord would be referring to it and drawing attention to Himself as the great Antitype; if it were omitted, then He would use the very omission to draw attention to the fulness in Himself.

The ceremonial pouring of the water was reckoned by some to refer to the striking of the rock by Moses; others, that it was a symbolic representation of the rain that was needed for another year's crops, and yet others that it referred to Isaiah 12:3 and the outpouring of the spirit

* a log = slightly less than a pint, or about 500 ml.

in the day of Messiah. Whatever may have been the idea it was characteristic of the Lord's readiness to use some passing event as a means for preaching the truth. This He did in connection with the water while sitting at the well of Samaria (4:10). The words He cried 'If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink' (7:37), are reminiscent of Isaiah 55:1 and Revelation 21:6. Moreover there is a connected series of references in these early chapters of John that associate Christ as Antitype with the experiences of Israel. The brazen serpent (3:14), the manna (6:51) and now the water from the Rock, are outstanding examples. The words that follow in 7:38,39 have given rise to a great deal of conjecture. 'He that believeth on Me' has been read as connected with the previous verse, as 'Let him drink that believeth on Me'. Alford however says of this, 'The harshness (of this reading) is beyond all example'.

'As the Scripture hath said'. No Old Testament Scripture is quoted by the Lord in this passage, any more than any single passage of Scripture can be found for Matthew 2:23. However, the sense and prophetic import of many Scriptures justify the Lord's assertion, among them such prophecies as Isaiah 12:3; 55:1; 58:11, Ezekiel 47:1-12, and Zechariah 14:8. Moreover, there is a division of opinion as to who is referred to in the words: 'Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water'. Some see in these words an exclusive reference to Christ, that from Him the Giver shall flow rivers of living water, and justify the reading by the words of explanation that follow 'This He spake of the Spirit'. We cannot, however, ignore such a closely similar passage as that found in John 4:14:

'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 sentiment of 7:38 is not dissimilar to this.

We must not, in this chapter, fail to give full weight to the Rabbinical teaching which had so moulded the language and the thoughts of those that heard the Lord's utterance. Here is one example, quoted by Bloomfield:

'When a man turns to the Lord, he is like a fountain filled with living water, AND RIVERS FLOW FROM HIM to men of all nations and tribes' (*Sohar. Chadesch*).

Modern usage looks somewhat askance at the free use of the word 'belly', even as the seven references to 'bowels' found in Paul's epistles are not acceptable reading to the so-called 'refined' today. The Greek *koilia* like the Hebrew *beten* and *qereb*, often denotes the most inward part of man, and is almost synonymous with the use of the 'heart' among us today.

It is very characteristic of John to slip in a word of explanation as the narrative proceeds, and this he has done here.

'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' (7:39).

This tendency to help the readers with an explanatory word is seen in such passages as 2:25; 6:64; 9:22; 11:13, &c. Most textual critics agree that the word *dedomenon* 'given' is an addition to the original text, 'The Spirit was not yet, because Jesus was not yet glorified' (7:39). The evident meaning is that the dispensation of the Spirit was contingent upon the glorifying and ascension of Christ, and this is implied in John 14:16,17 and 16:7 and stated with clearness by Peter on the day of Pentecost:

'Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear' (Acts 2:33).

The reference to the Lord being 'glorified' in John's gospel often looks to the ascension and present session of the Saviour at the right hand of the Father (12:16; 13:32; 17:5), but this does not by any means limit the glory of the Lord to these events or periods. There is no article here before the word *pneuma*, and there is no real necessity to limit the reference to either the day of Pentecost or to Pentecostal gifts. The new nature and the spiritual life that depend upon the glorification of the Son of God must be included, especially when we realize that this comment of John's was penned years after pentecostal gifts had ceased to be the normal experience of the church.

Once again there was a division among the people concerning Christ:

'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' (7:40-43).

It is part of the confessed purpose of John to show how the signs wrought by the Lord led to the conviction that 'Jesus is the Christ'. This is associated in some passages with a vague reference to 'that' or 'the' or even 'a' prophet (1:21; 4:19; 6:14; 7:40; 9:17), and it will be observed that the final reference is to the conviction of the man born blind. We have already seen how the woman of Samaria advanced from the perception that the Saviour was 'a Prophet' (4:19) to the question as to whether He was 'the Christ' (4:29), and finally to the conviction that this was indeed the truth (4:42). At the close of the sixth chapter the confession is again recorded: 'We believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ' (69).

In the passage before us this question agitates the assembled multitude at Jerusalem:

'Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ?'

'When Christ cometh, will He do more miracles than these which this man hath done?'

'Others said, This is the Christ' (7:26,31,41).

The argument, drawn from the scriptural fact that the Christ must be born in Bethlehem, which was used against the Lord Himself, is a tragic example of using mere texts of Scripture and of not seeking a comprehensive understanding of them.

To those who had the love of God abiding in them, there would be as much scriptural evidence that the Saviour should dwell in the city of Nazareth (Matt. 2:23), as that He should have been born at Bethlehem (Matt. 5,6). The question 'Shall Christ come out of Galilee?' (John 7:41) is but an echo of the deep-seated prejudice which was found even in the Israelite without guile (1:46).

The Pharisees were angered when their servants returned without the Saviour as their prisoner, and doubly so when these men gave as their reason 'Never man spake like this man' (7:46).

In their insensate fury they ask 'Are ye also deceived?' even as they broke all rules of justice and of good manners, by replying to the

temperate suggestion of Nicodemus, 'Art thou also of Galilee?' (7:52). The only thing that weighed with the Pharisees evidently was 'Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on Him?' (7:48). What the common people believed, mattered not at all, for in the estimate of these men the people who know not the law are cursed.

Nicodemus did not publicly announce his faith, but he seems to have taken up the attitude of the Sanhedrin and used it to bring them back, if possible, to a sense of right and truth.

'You condemn the multitude for not knowing the law; but are we not forgetting the law in condemning a man unheard?' (*Cambridge Gk. Test.*).

Nineteen centuries have passed since Nicodemus interjected this most elementary principle. Instead of bigoted and unsaved Sanhedrists, there are pious, godly, learned Christians, who in other fields would scorn to emulate the Pharisees, yet, readers of *The Berean Expositor* have painful recollection of a number of booklets and articles purporting to expose and condemn what the writers call 'Bullingerism', in which the actual writings of Dr. Bullinger are *never quoted*, but in which he is 'condemned unheard'. Similar treatment both orally and by the printed page has been meted out to us, and it has been a sad comfort to realize that history is but repeating itself, or that we suffer in most gracious company. Let us - however we may be treated by others - never condemn a man 'unheard'. The reader is invited to search the pages of all our books over the past forty years to discover whether any criticism has been passed upon the writings of another without full quotation being given as the basis of such criticism. It is sad to think that the unconfessed Nicodemus, or the unenlightened Gamaliel could give points to Christians today. 'Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet'. We will not 'condemn' even these Pharisees 'unheard'. We will not jump to the untenable conclusion that they did not actually know what is patent to every reader, namely that Jonah was of Galilee; 'Jonah the son of Amittai, the prophet, which was of Gath-hepher' (2 Kings 14:25). The reader will find Gath-hepher marked on the map about four miles north of Nazareth.

Other prophets have been mentioned who may have come to Galilee, Nahum of Elkosh, Hosea of the northern kingdom, Elisha and Elijah, but it is not possible to be quite certain that they did actually

come from Galilee. It appears from the rejoinder to Nicodemus that the Pharisees did not deny that Jonah arose out of Galilee, but out of the prejudice in which the Jew held the Galilean they said:

‘Surely you would not have us, of Jerusalem, to believe that any prophet, and much less the Messiah Himself, should or could arise out of Galilee’.

He was indeed ‘despised and rejected of men’. And so ‘every man went unto his own house. Jesus went unto the Mount of Olives’ (7:53; 8:1).

The structure of John 8:2-59 together with an examination of the debated section, John 7:53 to 8:11

The reader is probably aware, without a word from us, that the passage before us is one of extreme difficulty, not so much as to its teaching, but as to whether it really should be included or excluded from the page of inspired Scripture. The Revised Version margin reads:

‘Most of the ancient authorities omit John 7:53 to 8:11. Those which contain it vary much from each other’.

Scrivener says:

‘It is absent from too many excellent copies not to have been wanting in some of the very earliest; while the arguments in its favour, internal even more than external, are so powerful, that we can scarcely be brought to think it an unauthorised appendage to the writings of one, who in another of his inspired books deprecated so solemnly the adding to or taking away from the blessed testimony he was commissioned to bear’ (Rev. 22:18,19).

Bloomfield has made an exhaustive analysis of the evidence both for and against the retention of this passage, which the interested reader should consult, the matter is too highly technical for the pages of this book. As a specimen of the extreme difficulty that attends textual criticism, the controversy between Bloomfield and Alford may be cited in passing.

‘As to Alford’s assertion, that "the most weighty argument *against* the passage is found in its *entire diversity* from the Evangelist’s style, not only in the use of many words and phrases not

Johannean, but from the whole cast and characters of the passage being alien to John's manner", I *deny* that it is so, and must *again* maintain, that the course of argument is very fallacious, leads to nothing but endless logomachies, and can never *settle* a question of this kind' (Bloomfield).

Webster and Wilkinson, sum up the matter thus:

'The external evidence for and against the genuineness of this passage, derived from the number and value of the MSS. and versions in which it is contained or omitted, is very nearly equal'.

'The internal evidence preponderates greatly in its favour as genuine.

- (1) No real discrepancy can be pointed out between its style and the usual style of the Evangelist. On the contrary, see (2), (4), (6), (7), (9)
- (2) The conduct of our Lord on the occasion here recorded, is in accordance with His general conduct ... so much so that it might be adduced as a good instance of undesigned coincidence ...
- (3) At the same time the treatment of the accused woman was obviously liable to be misunderstood, and would present many difficulties to the earlier commentators of the N.T.
- (4) The contrivance of the Scribes to find matters of accusation against Jesus is in accordance with the attempts related in Luke 20, namely, the inquiry concerning His authority and the question about tribute money.
- (5) His answer is of the same character ... creating a difficulty or dilemma.
- (6) Each of the other three Evangelists related, or alluded to, the attempt of the Scribes and Pharisees above mentioned ... hence it appears natural that John should relate one ... and one not referred to by them'.

The Companion Bible, after giving a synopsis of the state of the MSS says of this passage:

'It was another attempt following on 7:32, and referred to in 8:15'.

To pursue the question further would necessitate a thorough acquaintance with the principles of textual criticism, a study quite

beyond the scope of such a witness as is represented in these pages. We accordingly continue our studies in the Gospel, with the assurance that the passage before us forms an integral part of the inspired record, although we are unable to account for the omission of these twelve verses from some important Manuscripts.

We must now address ourselves to the purport, the theme, of the whole passage; we must ask how it carries on the great object of the Gospel. As we ask this question and seek the answer, the problem of the woman taken in adultery retires into the background and the antipathy of the Jews comes to the fore, for they but brought the case before the Lord, to tempt Him into making some remark antagonistic to the law of Moses, for they now 'sought to kill Him'.

We are again confronted with the problem of the structure. A glance at the structure of 8:21-59, as set out in *The Companion Bible* will show the nature of the difficulty before us. Here we have no fewer than eleven pairs of 'the Lord' alternately with 'the Jews', and an examination of the passage shows that the analysis is correct. On the other hand, we feel it may at times be in the interests of truth to sacrifice mere verbal accuracy so that the essential and underlying truth may be brought to the surface. As many of our readers have *The Companion Bible* and can refer to the structure there set out, we have the less hesitation in presenting the following outline and in doing so, draw attention to a few salient features.

Each of the three large sections, C 8:9-25, E 8:27-44 and C 8:45-58, throw into prominence the great claim of the Lord 'I AM'. We will deal with the question of the accuracy of this rendering presently. The passage opens and closes with the mention of the Mosaic penalty of 'stoning', B 8:3-8 and B 8:59. Much is made of the fact that the Lord spoke and stood for *the truth*. *Aletheia* 'truth' comes seven times in the eighth chapter, namely in verses 32,40,44,45 and 46. We are not surprised to find that the challenge of the Pharisees, 'Thy record is not true' (C b 12,13) is balanced by 'I should be a liar like unto you' (C b 47-55), or that the claim 'He that sent Me is true' (D 8:26), should find its echo in the accusation laid against the devil, 'He is a liar and the father of it' (D 8:-44).

Again, one cannot but rejoice to see the two passages concerning 'conviction' (9-11 and 45,46) placed in such strong contrast.

We are only too conscious of the inadequacy of the central member. There are eleven occurrences of *pater* 'father' in this section, and an argument that arose out of the Lord's statement concerning freedom, that leads on through the question of Abraham's seed and Abraham's deeds to the great cleavage: 'Ye do the deeds of your father'.

John 8:2-59

- A 2. Into the temple.
- B 3-8. Stoning (Mosaic penalty for adultery).
- C 9-25. **a** 9-11. They CONVICTED by own conscience.
b 12,13. Thy record is not true.
 I AM. **c** 14-24. I AM.
d 25. The same from the beginning.
- D 26. He that sent Me is TRUE.
- E 27-44. **e** 28. My Father.
f 39. If Abraham were your father.
 I AM. **f** 42. If God were your father.
e 44. Your father, the devil ...
 a murderer from the beginning.
- D -44. He is a LIAR and the father of it.
- C 45-58. **a** 45,46. Which of you CONVICTETH Me?
b 47-55. I should be a *liar* like unto you.
 I AM. **d** 56-58-. Before Abraham was.
c -58. I AM.
- B 59-. Stoning (Mosaic penalty for blasphemy).
- A -59. Out of the temple.

The member denominated E 8:27-44 exhibits but the skeleton upon which the teaching is hung. It may however serve its purpose in the general outline of John 8:2-59.

From the sixth verse we know that the only reason for bringing the woman taken in adultery to the Lord, was to induce Him to make some statement that would enable them to 'accuse' Him.

We find, from the record of Matthew, that some word or act of the Lord that had either foiled their attack or exposed their evil intent, rankled in the minds of His enemies, and that they sometimes

attempted to pay Him back with His own coin (See Matt. 22:15-22, with the dilemma of 21:23-27).

We see again in John 8:6 that these Scribes and Pharisees sought some way to 'accuse' Him. Now the only other occurrences of *kategoreo* in John's Gospel are:

'Do not think that I will *accuse* you ... there is one that *accuseth* you, even Moses' (5:45).

It was therefore just exactly what we might expect, that these words would rankle, and lead these men to endeavour to find a way in which the tables could be turned. In this, like in all other attempts they miserably failed, and not only so, they were compelled by their own conscience to acknowledge their own guilt, a feature of the structure and of the purpose of this chapter already noted (see 'convict'). Why did the Lord stoop down and write with His finger on the ground? Our version says, 'As though He heard them not' (8:6), but this is omitted by the Revised Version and all the critical Greek texts.

There are numerous suggestions offered to the reader by the commentators. One view is that He adopted the classical attitude referred to by Plutarch:

'Without uttering a syllable, by merely raising the eyebrows, or *stooping down, or fixing the eyes upon the ground*, you may baffle unreasonable importunities' (Quoted by McClellan).

'He probably meant to refer them to the written word, as if He said, You have the will of God on this subject written in the Scriptures; why ask Me?' (Webster and Wilkinson).

Sadler sees a reference to Numbers 5:11-30, where the test for adultery is associated with 'the dust that is in the floor of the tabernacle'.

The Companion Bible sees in this writing on the floor, an allusion to the curses that were written (Numbers 5:23).

The *Cambridge Greek Testament* says:

'It is just possible that by writing on the stone pavement of the Temple He wished to remind them of the "tables of stone", written by the finger of God'.

Stier sees in the action a reference to Jeremiah 17:13.

Dean Farrar sees in the act:

‘A symbol that the memory of things thus written in the dust might be obliterated and forgotten’.

Lightfoot tells us that Rabban Jochanan ben Zaccai, who he doubted not was a member of the Sanhedrin at this very time, had caused capital punishment for adultery to be laid aside, alleging that the words of Hosea 4:14 applied to the time then present. The Saviour would be fully cognisant of this fact, and would perceive the net that was spread for His feet. In connection with the trial of an adulterous woman the Jews had a maxim, that the trial would prove of none effect unless her husband were himself free from unchastity.

‘Our Saviour acts here directly according to the equity of this maxim, and sets Himself purposely to try these accusers who accused the woman, and brought her to be tried. As if He had thus spoken out unto them ... Let Me act this once, as personating the priest that was to try the suspected wife, and let Me go by the equity of your own rule: you say, the trial of an adulterous wife proved to no effect upon her to bring her to condign punishment, if her husband were guilty of like crime. You accuse this woman, and put her upon My trial; are you yourselves free from this like fault? If you be, stone her. He that is without sin, let him cast the first stone’ (Lightfoot Sermons).

For our part, a combination of Lightfoot and Farrar here seems to satisfy all that is necessary. The other suggestions quoted above appear cumbrous and overload the argument. However, it is a matter upon which dogmatism is out of place.

We cannot refrain from giving one more quotation, namely the memorable saying of Augustine:

‘Two things were here left alone together, Misery and Mercy’.

‘And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last’ (8:9).

‘Convicted’. What point this passage gives to the challenge of the Lord recorded in this same chapter!

‘Which of you convinceth Me of sin?’ (8:46).

Elencho occurs four times in John's gospel.

'Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light lest his deeds should be *reproved*' (3:20).

'Being *convicted* by their own conscience' (8:9).

'Which of you *convinceth* Me of sin?' (8:46).

'He will *reprove* the world of sin' (16:8).

There are only two other occurrences of this word in the Gospels, namely in Matthew 18:15 'tell him his fault', and Luke 3:19, 'reproved by him for Herodias'. It will be seen therefore that the usage of this word in John 8:9 is entirely in line with the acknowledged writing of John, but this does not seem to have been seen by those who reject the first eleven verses of this chapter.

The way is now open for the Lord to continue His teaching, and we shall find an increased insistence upon His Deity, culminating in that most marvellous claim:

'Before Abraham was, I AM'.

Light upon a difficult passage (from the first epistle of John)

If the section dealing with the woman taken in adultery be looked upon as an intrusion, then the opening words of John 8:13, go back to the discourse of the previous chapter. On the other hand if 8:1-11 forms part of the true text, then the reference to 'light' and 'walking in darkness' would be a legitimate expansion of the inner meaning of the story of the accused woman and her self-condemned accusers, for the reader may remember, that the first occurrence of *elencho* (the word translated 'convince' in verse 46) occurs in a context that speaks of 'light' and 'darkness'.

'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 reprovèd' (3:19,20).

This connection we believe to be the true one, and so referring to the conscience-stricken men who could not abide the light, the Saviour proceeded, as was His custom, to use the incident as a means for teaching the truth.

‘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’ (8:12).

‘The Rabbins denominated the Supreme Being, *the light of the world*, and this title being assumed by our Lord was a cause of offence to the Jews’ (Benjamin Wilson).

Lightfoot quotes Rabbi Biba Sangorius who said: ‘Light is the name of the Messiah’.

In chapter 8 the twofold claim is developed. The Lord claims to be the Messiah, the Sent One, He also claims to be the I AM. This claim, the Pharisees at first seek to turn aside by introducing the Rabbinical canon that no one can bear witness in his own case. This matter had already been discussed in 5:31 onward, where the confirming testimony of John the Baptist, the Father, and the Scriptures are all brought to bear upon the truthfulness of His claims. The answer of the Lord is, at first reading, somewhat obscure:

‘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 I go’ (8:14).

Although this is supplemented in the verses that follow by a reference to the fleshly character of their judgment and the contrasted character of His own judgment, the fact that He was not alone in this witness, but the Father Who had sent Him conformed to the law itself where it is written ‘the testimony of two men is true’; all this is ignored, and the Pharisees fasten upon the opening words ‘I know *whence* I came’, saying ‘Where is thy Father?’ (8:19). It is impossible to separate the Father and the Son in practice, even though it may be done theologically. In just the same way we may separate, theologically, faith and works, repentance and faith, &c., but not practically. These men knew not the Father and so could not receive the Son. They rejected the Son, and so remained in ignorance of the Father.

The fact that these things were taught in the *treasury* (8:20) which was in the court of the *women*, is an undesigned evidence in favour of the truthfulness of the disputed passage concerning the woman taken in adultery. The Lord resumes His witness, this time to add the solemn words:

‘I go My way, and ye shall seek Me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come’ (8:21).

Again the solemnity of the words causes them to halt, again they ask ‘Who art Thou?’ His answer was ‘Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning’ (25).

‘From the beginning’. It is but natural that we should link this expression up with verse 44, where we read ‘He (the devil) was a murderer from the beginning’, and we even dare to hope that some have actually turned back to the structure given on p. 267 to see whether this most evident parallel has been noted.

The two expressions are, however, only remotely connected. *Ap’ arches* is correctly translated ‘from the beginning’ in verse 44, but in verse 25 the words so translated are *ten archen*. Now these words may be rendered ‘at the first time’, as in Genesis 43:18,20. They may be rendered freely ‘all along’, ‘the same that I said unto you all along’.

Lightfoot gives a number of quotations from Rabbinical writings, where ‘the beginning’ stands for the chief item of a discourse, and ‘the end’ for that which is secondary, and he thinks the beginning or chief item here is the Lord’s claim to be the Messiah, the Light of the World, and the secondary item, the confirming signs and works. The Revised Version margin recognizing that *ten archen* has the meaning ‘at all’ in negative sentences, reads, ‘How is it that I even speak to you at all?’

The Companion Bible reckons that the Lord simply referred back to the beginning of His discourse at verse 12.

The word *arche* ‘beginning’, while often associated with time is also related to first principles as in Hebrews 5:12: or first estate as Jude 6; or principalities Ephesians 1:21.

Alford suggests ‘traced up to its principle’ or ‘essentially, that which I also discoursed with you’.

‘When Moses asked the name of God, *I am that (which) I am* - was the mysterious answer; the hidden essence of the yet unrevealed One could only be expressed by self comprehension, but when God manifest in the flesh is asked the same question, it is *I am that which I SPEAK*: what He reveals Himself to be that He is’ (Alford).

'I am He' (8:24) may possibly be better rendered 'I am', and form one of the many claims to Deity that John affords. *Ego eimi* without a predicate occurs also in verses 28 and 58; but in John 4:26 it is affirmative and is followed by 'He that speaketh unto thee'.

In this discourse the Lord once more speaks of the manner of His death: 'When ye have lifted up the Son of Man' (8:28).

This word translated 'lift up' has a double significance in the New Testament. In the three synoptic Gospels where it occurs nine times, the word is always rendered 'exalt' in the Authorized Version. It occurs three times in the Acts and three times in the epistles where the translation of this version is 'exalt', except in James 4:10 where 'He shall lift you up' is an exact equivalent.

The Gospel of John is the only book in the New Testament that uses *hupsoo* in the sense of 'lifting up' as Moses did the Serpent. There it occurs five times, and always with reference to the mode of Christ's death.

'As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up' (3:14).

'When ye have lifted up the Son of man' (8:28).

'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?' (12:32-34).

While it is clear that the word in John means 'to lift up', signifying what *death* He should die, the testimony of the remainder of Scripture usage cannot be ignored, and the Saviour saw beyond the cross, the exaltation at the right hand of the Father. Stier quotes the proverb '*Crux scala coeli*', 'The cross is the ladder to heaven'.

As a result of His testimony we read 'many believed on Him' (8:30). The Lord does not question faith, and He did not put obstacles in the way of faith. Where faith appeared, even though it be but as a grain of mustard seed, such faith was acknowledged. Discipleship however, is more than initial faith, it is progressive, it involves growth, it not only 'believes' it 'knows' and it leads to freedom. We meet with this same discrimination in 2:23-25 'Many believed ... but Jesus did

not commit Himself ... He knew what was in man'. Whether these Jews who believed attempted to range themselves with the disciples straightway we do not know, we only know that He Who does not quench the smoking flax said to them:

'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' (8:31,32).

We must remember that John's confessed object in writing this Gospel is to lead to believing 'that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God' (20:31), and it may be that the instances where 'believing' proved not to be the genuine thing and where, apparently, checks instead of help were given (as for example to Nicodemus), are recorded in order that we may distinguish between the acceptance of Christ as Messiah and King (6:15) in a carnal sense, and acceptance in a spiritual sense (1:49).

The word translated 'continue' is *meno* 'to abide', a word which is used in a doctrinal sense by John alone of the four evangelists. It is not too much to say that the inner teaching of this Gospel (13 to 17) and his first epistle, are unintelligible apart from this 'abiding'. This 'abiding in the Word' is the essence of discipleship and the thought is developed in great detail in chapter 15 where *meno* occurs twelve times.

As one anticipates the strong language of 8:44 which arises directly out of the controversy now started by the words 'the truth shall make you free', one can well understand the extreme difficulty that many have had in believing that the same company are addressed throughout. Is it possible we might ask for those who 'believed' to be addressed in the words of verse 44?

An attempt is made to distinguish between 'those that *had* believed *on* Him' (8:31), from those who 'believed into, (*eis*) Him' (8:30), but no one would see a distinction here, unless impelled by external pressure. It cannot be maintained that 'believing into' signifies true faith and 'believing on' mere profession, for John 2:23 uses 'believing into' and 5:24 uses 'believe on'.

It has been held by some that for some unaccountable reason those who really believed (8:30) stood aside, and that the Lord ignoring

them, addresses the Jews who believed merely in a carnal or national sense.

It has been suggested that 'they' who said 'We be Abraham's seed' were some unbelieving Jews among the crowd, of whom the Lord said 'Ye cannot hear My word' (8:43). It has been held that their faith was soon choked, and turned to deadly opposition, and if we object to such a possibility, the fall of Peter, the betrayal of Judas, the unbelief of the eleven as to the resurrection remain as evidence. Two things must be kept in mind during this examination:

(1) The controversy took place *before* Christ had died, and consequently the fact that some are said 'to believe', when they heard some of His statements, must not be construed as exactly equivalent to the teaching of Paul in his epistles, written in full view of the death and resurrection of the Lord, and of the believing sinner's identification with the crucified Saviour. This aspect can be further confirmed by observing that (a) *Pisteuein eis* 'to believe into' is the characteristic expression of John, who uses it some thirty-five times, whereas the phrase is found very rarely in Paul's epistles. Paul on the other hand uses *pistis* about one hundred and forty times, but this word is not found once in John's gospel. When considering the possibilities open to 'believing' as found in John, we must beware of substituting a false analogy with the incomparable teaching of Paul. (b) In the very context of the passage under review we find a warning and a qualification. 'When ... then'. 'When ye have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall ye know that I am He' &c. (8:28,29). Inasmuch as the Lord had not at that time been lifted up, then full faith does not seem to have been possible. The same limitation is found in association with 7:38,39. No man experienced the promise made by the Lord there and then, for the added words preclude the possibility 'they *should* receive ... Jesus was *not yet* glorified'. As always, 'right division' is intimately concerned with 'time'.

(2) The second corrective to misunderstanding, is found in the first epistle written by John himself. There, we find all or most of the disputed items of 8:30-44. There we have the 'abiding' which was stressed in 8:31. Let us remember that the discourse of which 8:30-44 forms a part, commenced at verse 12 with the claim that Christ was the light of the world, and the assurance that he that 'followed' should not 'walk in darkness'.

Here is John's expansion of the truth he recorded in the gospel:

John's Gospel.

'He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life' (8:12).

'The Son abideth ever' (8:35).

'Continue in My word, then are ye My disciples indeed' (8:31).

'When he (the devil) speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it' (8:44).

'Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin' (8:34).

'Ye seek to kill Me ... ye are of your father the devil' (8:40,44).

'The devil ... was a murderer from the beginning' (8:44).

'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' (20:31).

First Epistle of John.

'The true light now shineth. He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother *abideth* in the light' (2:8-10).

'He that doeth the will of God abideth for ever' (2:17).

'Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard ... ye also shall continue in the Son' (2:24).

'No lie is of the truth. Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ?' (2:21,22).

'He that committeth sin is of the devil' (3:8).

'Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother' (3:12).

'The devil sinneth from the beginning' (3:8).

'These things have I written unto you, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, *even* unto you that believe on the Name of the Son of God' (5:13 R.V.).

A comparison of the last items will prove to a demonstration that to ignore the inspired explanation and expansion of this first epistle when dealing with the teaching of the problems of the Gospel is to shut out the light provided by God Himself.

It is therefore clear that the words of John 8:30-44, despite the strangeness of the transition from 'believing' to 'murder', can and do apply to one and the same company. Inasmuch as 'life' is the result of 'belief' according to John, it is essential that there should be no hazy idea as to what is intended by this word 'believe'. 'Believers' such as are found in this passage have not the faith of God's elect.

'Before Abraham was, I AM' (8:58)

The moment the Lord uttered the words 'the truth shall make you free', all the pent-up antagonism and racial pride of his hearers came to the surface, and these Jews who 'believed' replied:

'We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest Thou, Ye shall be made free?' (8:33).

If these words be taken literally, then those who speak of the fact that the bondage in Egypt, the seventy years' captivity, and the Roman yoke, were all temporarily forgotten or passionately repudiated by the sudden antagonism which the words of Christ developed are right. Even should it be thought possible that Jews who observed the Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles, could deny that their fathers had been in bondage, even that would not settle the matter, for the Roman bondage was a present fact not susceptible to the denial of unbelief. Further, those who had been enslaved in Egypt or in the seventy years' captivity, could not have escaped such bondage by 'knowing the truth'. The many attempts therefore of the commentators to solve this problem are largely a waste of time, there is no problem to solve, the 'bondage' and the 'freedom' alike, are those which are related to 'truth', and the freedom is that which 'the Son' gives, which is freedom indeed (8:36).

The Lord Jesus Christ was, by birth, 'the son of Abraham' (Matt. 1:1), and it was a signal honour for any man to be able to say that he was of the seed of Abraham. Abraham the father of the faithful, Abraham the friend of God, Abraham the heir both of the land and of the heavenly city. It is one thing, however, to be a physical descendant of Abraham, and quite another thing to walk in the steps of his faith. John the Baptist met this barren boast of the Jews saying:

'Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: and think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say

unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham' (Matt. 3:8,9).

In the near context the descendants of Abraham are likened to wheat and chaff (3:12). The difference between being a descendant of Abraham and a 'child' or 'son' lies near the basis of the epistle to the Galatians.

'It is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise ... But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now' (Gal. 4:22-29).

There follows the ringing call to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free - for if the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. Abraham had two sons. Those who withstood the Lord, were manifesting that they were 'Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children'.

Again, the epistle to the Romans deals a blow at this magnifying of mere physical relationship. Paul's first blow was aimed at mere externalism:

'He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God' (Rom. 2:28,29).

His second at Jewish exclusivism:

'Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: and the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised' (Rom. 4:9-12).

The inclusion of the Gentile, which forms so large a part of Paul's ministry is not in view in the eighth chapter of John, but the insistence that he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, and that the external marks are as nothing if unaccompanied by a walk in the steps of the faith of Abraham, these truths are most prominently in view.

The Lord conceded that His hearers were Abraham's seed, but He adds:

'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' (8:39,40).

He then comes to the heart of the conflict: 'Ye do the deeds of your father ... ye are of your father the devil' (41-44). This terrible revelation had already been given in parable form, for the parable of the tares teaches that there are two seeds sown in the field:

'The good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil' (Matt. 13:38,39).

The devil is said to have been a murderer from the beginning and to have sinned from the beginning (1 John 3:8). The Saviour's words, added in explanation of this sin and murder from the beginning, are 'And abode (or stood) not in the truth'. Not only did the devil not stand in the truth, the explanation is given, 'because there is no truth in him'. When the devil speaks it is as natural for him to utter lies, as it is for God to utter truth:

'When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it' (8:44).

There can be no possible fellowship between the truth and the lie. 'No lie is of the truth' (1 John 2:21), and consequently no lie is of God. Satan is 'the father of it'. 'The lie' is used of idolatry (Rom. 1:25); 'the lie' will be the object of belief among those who, because they received not the love of the truth, will be deceived by signs and lying wonders in the days of Antichrist (2 Thess. 2:9-11).

We found that the first epistle of John contained much in it that illuminated this eighth chapter of the gospel. Let us hear what John has to say about the liar in his epistle.

'If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar' (1:10).

'He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him' (2:4).

'Who is the liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ?' (2:22).

'If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar' (4:20).

'He that believeth not God hath made Him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son' (5:10).

These are evidently essential features of 'the lie' of which the devil is the father. A deadness to their own sinful bondage, an empty profession devoid of fruits, a denial of the Son of God, and hatred instead of love, these marks of the liar are manifest throughout the eighth chapter of the Gospel. Nowhere do these Jews understand or appear to understand the Lord's words. Instead of pondering such a saying as: 'If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death' (8:51), they immediately seize upon it as a weapon with which to attack Him:

'Now we know that Thou hast a devil (demon). 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?' (52,53).

It mattered not that they altered the Lord's words. They were now obsessed with the one mad desire to slay Him. The woman of Samaria had raised the question: 'Art Thou greater than our father Jacob?' (4:12), but she eventually believed. These Jews presently took up stones to stone Him. He was indeed 'greater' than the temple, than Jonah, than Solomon (Matt. 12:6,41,42); He is counted worthy of 'more (greater)' glory than Moses (Heb. 3:3), to Him, in type Abraham and Levi offered tithes (Heb. 7:5-10), yet unbelief acknowledged none of these things.

The question of the opposing Jews was twofold and received a twofold answer. The words 'Whom makest Thou Thyself' insinuated self-seeking on His part, and this He disposed of in verses 54 and 55. 'If I honour Myself, My honour is nothing'. He then returned to the question of Abraham: 'Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day: and he saw it, and was glad' (8:56).

It is usually understood by commentators that the passage implies that Abraham in prophetic vision saw the advent of Christ, and some even go so far as to reason from the contextual reference to death, that Abraham is supposed to have seen the fulfilment of his prophetic vision in paradise! After the death and resurrection of Christ, the phrase 'the day of Christ' took on a new meaning. We must however seek to understand the words as they would have been understood at the time of utterance. Rightly or wrongly they interpreted the Lord's statement to a claim that He had actually 'seen' Abraham, and this will not appear so strange if we will acquaint ourselves with the Hebrew expression 'to see a day'. Job said:

'Why, seeing times are not hidden from the Almighty, do they that know Him not SEE HIS DAYS?' (Job 24:1).

This is a figure of speech, where 'to see the days' stands for 'visitation', 'judgment', &c.

'They that come after him shall be astonished at HIS DAY' (Job 18:20).

'The days will come, when ye shall desire to SEE ONE OF THE DAYS of the Son of Man' (Luke 17:22).

‘He that will love life, and SEE GOOD DAYS’ (1 Pet. 3:10).

For Abraham to *see the day* of Christ, therefore, may mean, not so much a prophetic vision, but that he actually enjoyed personal fellowship with the Lord. Such an idea was preposterous to the Jews:

‘Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast Thou seen Abraham?’ (8:57).

We know that the Saviour was a man of sorrows, and that His visage was more marred than that of any man. Nevertheless no such meaning attaches to the ‘more than fifty years old’ of this rejoinder. Among the ancients a man of fifty was a man just past his vigour and beginning to grow old, it was also the age of retirement of the priests (Num. 4:3) and would be equivalent to saying ‘You are still young, not even an elder, let alone an old man (*presbutes, geron*)’.

Moffatt draws attention to the reading of the MSS denoted by the letter Aleph, and the Sinaitic Syriac, and reads: ‘You are not fifty years old, and Abraham has seen you!’ but this seems to have been the attempt on the part of a translator to get over a difficulty.

Everything, however, that has hitherto been uttered in this Gospel by the Lord retires before the majestic claim with which this section ends:

Amen amen lego humin prin Abraham genesthai, ego eimi.

‘Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I AM’ (8:58).

Genesthai (ginomai), ‘to become’ is used in the prologue of this gospel in contrast with *eimi* ‘to be’:

‘In the beginning WAS (verb "to be") the Word ... all things were MADE (verb "to become") by Him’ (1:1-3).

‘The Word (Who WAS, verb "to be") was MADE (verb "to become") flesh’ (1:14).

It is evident that the Lord intended here to make the highest claim that is possible for any being, the claim of Deity. Had there been no such intention then the use of *ego eimi* in this special way is inexplicable.

(1) The Lord does not conform to grammatical usage in saying *ego eimi* here. It is a meaningless phrase if limited to the human sphere. He could have said ‘Before Abraham came into existence I lived, or I was born, or even I existed’, and this would have been intelligible. It would certainly have proved His pre-existence, but that would be all. The Lord, therefore, intended something more than pre-existence.

(2) *Ego eimi*, ever since the LXX version of Exodus 3:14 became the Authorized Version of Israel, signified nothing less than Deity. To say ‘Before Abraham was, I AM’ was to assert not mere pre-existence, but Deity.

The opening verse of John’s gospel asserts that He Who was the *Logos* was ‘God’. This One is then shown stepping down from His lofty throne and becoming ‘flesh’. From the beginning of His public ministry as recorded by John, the testimony has accumulated; Nathanael, the woman of Samaria and others adding their quota, testifying that He was ‘the prophet’, ‘the Christ’, ‘The Son of the Living God’. None had, however reached the point when they acknowledged the truth enshrined in the first verse. This He now openly claimed, and the result was the threat of stoning.

With the next sign, the opening of the eyes of the man born blind, we commence another series of revelations, culminating this time with the confession of Thomas ‘My Lord, and my God’, and ending in worship in place of stoning.

It is of the utmost importance that we remember these things for without them the belief that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God (20:31) may mean something lower, something other, than the words indicate to the inspired penman.

May we be numbered among those who stand with Thomas in his confession and worship, for there is no neutral ground here, the only logical alternative is to join with those who seek to stone Him.

CHAPTER 9

The Sixth Sign

The Man Born Blind (John 9)

Three outstanding features elaborated

We now reach the record of the sixth sign, the healing of the man that was born blind. A study of the passage, while it reveals a wealth of detail throws into relief three features which, if understood, renders the purpose of the sign more evident. These three features are:

- (1) The relationship between blindness and sin, as indicated in the opening and closing verses of the chapter.
- (2) The emphasis upon the fact that this miracle was wrought upon the Sabbath day.
- (3) The growing appreciation of the Person of the Lord, on the part of the blind man himself.

Before considering these three features of the chapter, let us acquaint ourselves with the structure of the sign as a whole. This is found in the form of a simple introversion where the central member is the actual sign itself, and the corresponding members of the structure deal with the purpose and the consequence of the sign, together with the physical and spiritual occasion and the relation of blindness with sin (see next page).

Before passing on to the three great features let us pause to make this outline speak its message. Notice the expanded section which deals with the Consequences of the Sign, and which occupies the bulk of the chapter. It is divided into five parts in which the man who was born blind is interrogated by his neighbours, the Pharisees, the Jews and the Lord. Three of the members, emphasize the matter of identity; the identity either of the man himself or of the One Who had opened his eyes.

The Man born Blind (John 9:1-41)

- A 1,2. The Physical occasion. Disciples question re sin and blindness.
- B 3-5. The Purpose of the Sign. I am the Light of the world.
- C 6,7. The Working of the Sign. Spittle, Clay, Wash.
- B 8-38. The Consequences of the Sign. He is a Man; a Prophet; the Son of God.
- A 39-41. The Spiritual Significance. Pharisees question re sin and blindness.

The Consequences of the Sign. Expansion of B.

- A 8-12. Neighbours and the man
Identity
- a Is not this he ... begged?
b This is he. Like him. I am he.
a How were eyes opened?
b A man. Jesus. Clay. Wash.
a Where is He?
b I know not.
- B 13-17. Pharisees and the man
He keepeth not Sabbath
He is a prophet
- c Sabbath day, when clay made.
d How receive sight?
e Clay. Washed. See.
c Sabbath day. He keepeth not.
d How sinner ... miracle?
e He is a prophet.
- A 18-23. Jews and the man
Identity
- e Jews. Did not believe.
Is this your son?
e Jews. Agreed cast out of synagogue.
f Parents. He is of age, ask him.
- B 24-34. Pharisees and the man
He is a sinner
He is of God
- g The Man. I know not, But, I know.
h Disciples. Moses. Christ.
i They reviled him.
j The Pharisees. We know. We know not.
g The Man. Ye know not. But we know.
h Worshipper. Teach.
i They cast him out.
- A 35-38. The Lord and the man.
Identity
- k Jesus heard ... found.
l Dost believe on Son of God?
m Who is He?
k Jesus said, Seen Him. He talketh.

know ... we know not.

I Lord I believe. He worshipped.

‘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’ (9:8,9).

‘Is this your son, who ye say was born blind?’ (9:19).

The reader has doubtless heard through a *friend*, of the miraculous healing of *that friend’s friend*, at some distant place, and of some uncertified malignant disease. Such, however, is not the nature of Scriptural miracles. ‘This thing was not done in a corner’. The fact of the blind man’s identity is established, the fact that he was born blind from birth is admitted, the fact that he was miraculously healed publicly demonstrated. We should be thankful for the testimony brought out by the antipathy of the Jews and Pharisees.

The remaining two sections of this expansion of the Consequences of the Sign bring into prominence the division of opinion that developed.

‘He keepeth not the Sabbath’, said the Jews.

‘He is a prophet’, said the man.

‘How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them’.

‘We know that this man is a sinner’, said the Jews.

‘We know that God heareth not sinners’, said the man.

So John pursues the plan that meets us in the prologue itself, and which has been summed up by another: ‘Revelation, Reception, Rejection’.*

Let us now turn our attention to the first of the three great subjects noted at the beginning of this chapter.

(1) *The relation of blindness with sin.* First there is the apostles’ question:

‘Who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?’ (9:2).

Just exactly what the popular idea on the subject of the transmigration of souls, the possibility of pre-natal sin, or the relationship of parental sin with the suffering of the offspring, we have

* The late Rev. W.H. Griffith Thomas.

now no means of discovering. From Josephus we gather that the Pharisees believed that the souls of 'the good' passed into another body, but that does not cover the question raised by the disciples. It is far more likely, however, that the question arose in the disciples' mind by reason of a well-known Rabbinical doctrine, expressed by Rabbi Akibah in the words:

'Those are the days of the Messiah, wherein there shall be neither merit nor demerit',

which Dr. Lightfoot interprets as meaning:

'That is, if I mistake not, wherein neither the good deserts of the parents shall be imputed to the children for their disadvantage - nor their deserts, for their fault and punishment'.

If we put ourselves into the place of the disciples and of those who heard Him, we shall better appreciate their problem. Believing that Jesus was the Messiah they found a number of apparent contradictions or of instances of non-fulfilment that baffled them.

'Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come?' (Matt. 17:10).

'Art Thou He that should come, or do we look for another?' (Matt. 11:3).

'Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet' (John 7:52).

'If He be the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him' (Matt. 27:42).

These passages give an idea of the problems that were afloat, and it will be perceived that there is a grain of truth underlying each of these objections - but that the main cause of the difficulty was the inability rightly to divide the word of truth and to distinguish between the first and second advents.

In answer to the disciples' question concerning the cause of the man's blindness, the Lord does not discuss the matter. So far as this man is concerned, his blindness was not the consequence of either his parents' sin nor of his own, it was 'that the works of God should be made manifest in him'. We shall meet the same tremendous doctrine when we come to the death of Lazarus.

‘This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby’ (John 11:4).

While we must usually take into account the ordinary working of cause and effect and attribute blindness like every other physical affliction to some predisposing cause, yet we must never forget that back and behind the working of these laws is the Creator Himself, Who may for His Own wise and gracious purpose, suspend, modify or reverse any such relations and interpose directly Himself:

‘Who hath made man’s mouth? or Who makest the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD?’ (Exod. 4:11).

To have lived for the whole of our days bereft of the blessing of sight is indeed grievous but, to be the honoured instrument in manifesting by that very affliction the works of God, surely more than compensated the man born blind. There is, however, a very real connection which the Scriptures enforce on many occasions between spiritual blindness and sin, and between the opening of the eyes and the work of the Gospel. This is the subject with which the sixth sign closes.

‘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’ (9:39-41).

There is no difficulty in understanding the first of the two purposes for which the Lord came into this world, ‘that they which see not might see’, for every allusion to Himself and His work as the Light of the world and the Dispeller of this world’s darkness, together with the specific prophecy recorded in Luke 4:18, teaches this blessed truth. It is the second aspect that demands serious thought, ‘And that they which see might be made blind’.

‘They which see’. How are we to understand this statement? Perhaps a parallel passage will be of help. Would it be considered a sane exposition of the Saviour’s words recorded in Luke 15:7, to teach that there were actually numbers of ‘just persons, which need no repentance’? This would be a direct contradiction of the teaching of Scripture. The Jew in his national pride and self-righteousness

considered that he was 'a guide of the blind' and 'a light of them that walk in darkness' (Rom. 2:19); yet the Saviour's indictment of the Pharisees and Sadducees was that they were 'fools and blind', 'blind guides' (Matt. 23:19,24), and further particularizes by saying:

'Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also' (26).

or, to return to Romans 2:28,29,

'For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly ... he is a Jew, which is one inwardly ... of the heart ... whose praise is not of men, but of God'.

Those which 'see' in John 9:39 are those who SAY, 'we see'. If the 'light' that is in you be darkness, said the Lord elsewhere, how great is that darkness. No one who actually could 'see' was ever made blind, but the truth is that all men were by nature like the man born blind, the difference being not in the blindness, but in the recognition of their need. The attitude of the Pharisees and the Jews here, is of itself sufficient illustration of the Lord's meaning. They appeared to be conscientious in their search for the truth in the matter of this miracle. They demanded proof that the man was the actual blind beggar, they demanded repeatedly a statement concerning the manner of his healing, but they also had 'agreed already that if any man did confess that He was the Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue'. They attempted to brow-beat the man who had been healed, and their words 'Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou TEACH US?' (34), was their claim that THEY could SEE! The Pharisees but epitomized the state of the nation, which at Acts 28 led to their rejection.

(2) *The emphasis upon the Sabbath day.*

'And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes' (9:14).

'This man is not of God, because He keepeth not the sabbath day' (9:16).

The reader will remember how the Sabbath day comes into prominence in the earlier sign recorded in the fifth chapter, and is referred to 'Sabbath and Sabbatarianism', page 175. The anointing of the eye with spittle was recognized by Rabbinical writers as having medicinal value.

'It was prohibited amongst them to besmear the eyes with spittle upon the sabbath day upon any medicinal account, although it was esteemed so very wholesome for them' (Dr. Lightfoot).

'As to fasting spittle it is not lawful to put it so much as upon the eyelids' (Maimonedes).

Another strange fact is that in the only other passage where 'anointing the eyes' is spoken of, the 'eye salve' *kollourion*, is also a form of clay (Rev. 3:18).

We know, and can understand, that 'reaping and threshing' were forbidden on the Sabbath, but the Pharisees decided that to pluck an ear of corn was 'reaping' and to rub it in the hand was 'threshing'! So, the anointing of the blind man's eyes with spittle, or the kneading of the clay, could easily be interpreted by the severe scrupulosity of the Pharisees as doing some manner of 'work' and thereby breaking the sabbath, and it is quite likely that the Lord adopted this method as a protest against their misrepresentation of the beneficent law of the sabbath.

(3) *'The growing appreciation of the Person of the Lord, on the part of the blind man himself,* is entirely in line with the confessed purpose of the gospel. John loses no opportunity of proving 'that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God', and here we see the growing conviction of the man born blind shared by some of the multitude. First, to the man born blind, his deliverer was:

'A man that is called Jesus' (9:11).

Upon being asked the second time 'what sayest thou of Him?' he said: 'He is a prophet' (9:17). At the third onslaught upon his growing faith, he said:

'If this man were not of God, he could do nothing' (9:33).

After the man had been excommunicated, the Saviour found him, and put one further question to him:

'Dost thou believe on the Son of God?' (9:35).

It is to be observed that the man did not immediately say 'yes'; he demanded that which all true faith demands, namely testimony. He was already convinced that 'Jesus' was a 'prophet' and 'of God',

consequently he would believe unquestionably, whatever the Lord told him, *but he wanted to be told*, for 'Faith cometh by hearing'.

'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' (9:36-38).

We trust the structure given and the elaboration of the three outstanding features will prove all that is necessary to enable the student to make this blessed sign and its testimony, his own.

The Link between the Sixth and Seventh Signs

The Good Shepherd (10:1-42)

While it cannot be disputed that the two signs which occupy chapters 9 and 11 are linked by the discourse of the intervening chapter, it may not be so obvious how the blessed revelation of the 'Good Shepherd' follows in any logical sequence the miracle of the healing of the man born blind. That there is *some* connection, a reference to 10:21 will prove, 'Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?' And again, the words with which the chapter opens, seems to suppose some logical connection. 'Verily, verily, I say unto you'.

Coming to the chapter itself, there is another mistaken notion that we do well to record. The first five verses *do not* contain a revelation, they *do not* tell us that Christ is either the Good Shepherd or the Door of the Sheep, these opening verses are definitely called a 'proverb', *paroimia* (10:6). The Authorized Version translates this word 'parable' here, although in 16:25 and 29 this Greek word is consistently translated 'proverb'. This word was used as an heading for the wise sayings of Solomon which, being translated by the Latin *proverbium*, gives us the modern 'proverb'. The *paroimia* is a 'maxim', a trite expression, a common saw, an adage. A proverb has been well explained as 'the wisdom of many in the wit of one', for although none of us may have the wit to frame the proverbs, 'a rolling stone gathers no moss' or 'all is not gold that glitters', we can all see how apt and how true these proverbs are.

The Jews in the time of Christ needed no instruction in the matter of sheep and their care. When the Lord referred to the door, the

The True and False Shepherds (1-18).

The Proverb

- A 1-. The door.
- B -1. The thief and robber.
- C 2-4. The true shepherd. 'His Voice'.
- D 5. The stranger.
- E 6. The proverb, not understood.

The Application

- A 7. The Door. 'I am'.
- B 8-10. Thieves and robbers. 'All that came before'.
- C 11. The Good Shepherd.
- D 12,13. The hireling.
- E 14-18. The doctrine developed.

There is one word which is used in the proverb (10:1-5) which must not be passed over without comment, it is the word translated 'he putteth forth'. The Greek word so translated is *ekballo*, which occurs in 9:34 and 35, where it is translated 'they cast him out'. Man may excommunicate and his intention may be evil, yet as it was in the case of Joseph and his brethren, God may intend that such animosity shall be overruled for ultimate good. The blind man had been 'cast out' by man, but he learned to see that he had been 'put forth' by the Good Shepherd, and it is a lesson which we may all learn with profit.

The application and expansion of the proverbial references to the sheep and the fold occupy verses 7-18, verses 7-13 developing the proverb itself and verses 14-18 following it with a doctrinal expansion. The proverb said 'He that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep', but in the application this feature is carried further, for there Christ Himself is set forth both as the 'Door' and the 'Good Shepherd'. It has been the generally accepted interpretation that the 'porter' represents John the Baptist, but this does not tally with Christ's own claim 'I am the Door'. Beside, what does the Lord mean when He says 'All that ever came before Me are thieves and robbers'? Moses 'came before' Christ, was he a thief or robber, Isaiah and the glorious company of the Prophets 'came before' Christ, must they also be thus denominated?

After the advent of Christ, there were false Christs, and their number is yet to be augmented, but there is no record of the rise of false Christs 'before' Christ's coming. Who then were the ones that filled the role of thieves and robbers? We go back to the proverb, and the fact that it is directly connected with the preceding chapter. At the close of the ninth chapter, the Pharisees are addressed and shown to be blind. They were blind leaders of the blind. If we go back into the chapter preceding the healing of the man born blind, we shall hear some of them called the children of the Devil, who himself was a murderer from the beginning.

The comparison and the contrast in chapter 10 is between the Good Shepherd Who gave His life for the sheep, and the hireling shepherds who fed themselves and neglected their charge. The Scribes and the Pharisees did not enter the door, they rejected the Christ, they proved themselves thieves and robbers.

Dr. George Adam Smith when in Syria describes his conversation with a Shepherd. Perceiving that the rough stone-walled sheep-fold had an opening, but no visible door, Dr. Smith asked the Syrian Shepherd concerning this apparent omission. 'I am the door' was the immediate reply, for the shepherd slept in the doorway and guarded his sheep with his life. There is therefore no confusion in the figures used, when the Lord claimed to be both Door and Shepherd.

Near the desk where this book is being written, we have a much prized photograph of Dr. Bullinger, and beneath the photograph are two small panels, both in the Doctor's handwriting. One reads:

'Yours affy. E. W. Bullinger'.

The other reads:

'John 10:14,15. His and His Father's knowledge (*Introversion*).

X **h** 14- I am the good Shepherd
I -14- And know My sheep
k -14- And am known of mine.
k 15- As the Father knoweth Me
I -15- Even so know I the Father
h -15- And I lay down My life for the sheep'.

The reader may be interested to know that this structure of 10:14,15 was the last portion actually written for *The Companion Bible* by Dr. Bullinger, before he laid down the pen and fell asleep to await the day of Christ.

'The Good Shepherd .. lays down His life for the sheep' - that is what the opening and closing members of this section teach, and while it deals with the profound mystery of the death of the Son of God, nevertheless, it is immediately understandable. But verses 14 and 15 do not teach the truth so simply. Between the two statements that make up this complete picture of the Ideal Shepherd, come four corresponding members, each one dealing with 'knowledge' and this knowledge is not limited to the Shepherd or to the sheep. We see a strange and wondrous commingling* of knowledge, Christ knows His sheep. His sheep know Him - so far, a straightforward statement - beautiful, wonderful but understandable. This is not all, however. As the Father knows the Son, even so knows He the Father, this too, taken by itself must command the assent of every redeemed child of grace. The mystery creeps into the passage when we take all four references together. The mutual knowledge that exists between Shepherd and sheep is likened to the mutual knowledge that exists between the Father and the Son!

This wondrous teaching, insisting upon a comparison of the knowledge, love and unity that characterizes the redeemed, with the knowledge, love and unity that exists between the Father and the Son, is found in several other passages in this Gospel. Let us set these passages out so that we may feel their combined weight.

* Commingling = mixing or causing to unite.

Knowledge. 'I ... know My sheep, and am known of Mine. As the Father knoweth Me, even so know I the Father' (10:14,15).

Love. 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' (15:9,10).

Unity. 'Holy Father, keep through Thine Own Name those Whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, as we are'.

'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 they may be one, even as we are one. I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect (perfected) in One ... hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me' (17:11,21-23).

We do not intend doing anything more with these wondrous passages, except to allow something of their majesty and mystery to sink into the mind, and to challenge in the light of such a revelation that interpretation of John's Gospel which writes across it the word 'Jewish'.

We come back for a moment to 10:14,15. We observe that the verb *ginosko* 'to know' occurs in this chapter seven times (in the Received Text), the first occurrence, in the sixth verse, being translated 'understand'. These seven occurrences may be visualized thus:

Ginosko

- A 6. The proverb not understood by the Jews.
- B 14 The Good Shepherd. 'I know My Sheep'.
- C 14,15.
 - a Known of Mine. The Sheep.
 - b The Father knoweth Me. The Father.
 - a I know the Father. The Shepherd.
- B 27 The Shepherd. 'My Sheep ... I know them'.
- A 38 Union of Father and Son, not know because of unbelief.

The Other Sheep

The perfect voluntariness of the Lord's vicarious death (10:16-18)

Before entering into the question as to whether the 'sheep' of Scripture refer only to Israel or ever to the church, it will be necessary to adjust the translation of the Authorized Version in one important particular. In verse 16 the Authorized Version uses the word 'fold' twice, where the Greek original uses two different words.

Aule is correctly rendered 'fold' but *poimne* should be translated 'flock'. *Poimne* is cognate with *poimen* 'shepherd', but *aule* refers rather to the enclosure, the 'fold', and if used of 'men' instead of 'sheep' is translated in this same gospel 'palace' (18:15), while the verbal form *aulizomai* is translated 'to lodge' (Matt. 21:17) or 'to abide' (Luke 21:37).

'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 *flock*, and one shepherd' (10:16).

'Other sheep'. The fact that the Lord could refer to 'other sheep' presupposes the existence and the recognition of some who already answered to that name.

Much may be said for the beauty and simple dignity of 'The order for Morning Prayer' to be used daily throughout the year, according to the *Book of Common Prayer*, but no one who desires to obey the principle of 'Right Division' can fail to see the bias that must ensue by the continual asseveration* by Gentile believers today, that 'We are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand' (Psa. 95:7).

When Christ sent out His disciples, to preach the gospel of the kingdom, He differentiated between Israel and the Gentiles, saying:

'Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel' (Matt. 10:5,6).

Or, again, when answering the prayer of the Syro-phenician woman, the Saviour said:

* Asseveration = a solemn statement.

‘I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel’ (Matt. 15:24).

Peter was commissioned to feed the Lord’s sheep, and he addresses his epistles to the dispersed of Israel, not to the Gentile churches.

While this would be commonly accepted doctrine among the Lord’s hearers, He indicates that there were others who while certainly not of ‘this FOLD’ were destined to make up ‘one FLOCK’. As these ‘other sheep’ were not of the fold of Israel and as this revelation is found in that gospel which has the world as its sphere, the period of Israel’s rejection as its period, and was written for non-Jewish readers, these other sheep must be made up of Gentile believers.

Members of the Church of the Mystery are neither called sheep, nor will they ever be brought into a union with the ‘fold’ of Israel to form one ‘flock’. The ministry of John’s Gospel is, however, at work today in a wider circle than that covered by the dispensation of the mystery, and many a Gentile believer, who has neither attained to the standing of ‘Romans’, nor received the calling of ‘Ephesians’, will find himself one of a fold which Israel would not recognize, even as there are others from among the Gentiles who will be gathered out of the highways and byways, to sit down as guests at the marriage supper of the Lamb, though this honour was originally extended to Israel only (Matt. 22:1-14).

The earlier references in this chapter to the ‘hireling shepherd’ are an echo of more than one Old Testament denunciation of similar characters. For example, in Isaiah 56:10,11 Israel’s leaders are likened to watchmen that are blind, dumb dogs that cannot bark, and shepherds that cannot understand (it is said here that they could not, 10:6), and it is in this very passage we find a hint of the truth set forth in 10:16.

‘The Lord God which gathereth the outcasts of Israel saith, Yet will I gather others to him, beside those that are gathered unto him’ (Isa. 56:8).

Again, the reader will remember that the Lord had called these hireling shepherds ‘thieves and robbers’, and when cleansing the temple of the money changers He said:

‘It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves’ (Matt. 21:13).

It is therefore suggestive to find in Isaiah 56:7, the prophecy: 'Mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people'.

On either side of 10:16 with its revelation concerning the other sheep, the Lord said:

'I lay down My life' (10:15).

'Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again' (10:17).

This most vital doctrine is expanded:

'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' (10:18).

The primary meaning of *tithemi* translated in verse 11 'to lay down' is 'to place' and it occurs eighteen times in this Gospel. It is rendered 'to set forth' as good wine (2:10), 'to put' as Pilate did, the title on the cross (19:19), 'to lay aside' as garments (13:4), 'to lay' as one would a body in the tomb (11:34; 19:41,42; 20:2,13,15), and 'ordain' as were the apostles (15:16). This leaves eight occurrences where the subject is the laying down of one's life (10:11,15,17,18; 13:37,38; 15:13). Of these references, two, namely 13:37,38, refer to Peter's expressed willingness to lay down his life for the Saviour's sake, and one, namely 15:13, gives us that blessed passage:

'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends'.

The large-hearted offer of Peter (13:37) and the comment of the Lord (15:13), enable us to understand quite clearly what is intended by the Good Shepherd laying down His life for the sheep.

It is the custom of many preachers and commentators to compare John 15:13 with Paul's statement in Romans 5:6. This however is a comparison that merits the poet's epithet, 'odious', for the theme of the two passages are quite distinct as a study of the contexts will reveal.

No one can believe the Gospel of grace, and fail to realize the centrality of the cross. No one can preach the Gospel as Paul preached it, who does not preach 'Jesus Christ and Him crucified'. No one can hope to deal effectually with the 'old man' who has not learned the mighty secret involved in the words of Romans 6, 'crucified with'

Christ. No reader of *The Berean Expositor* or other of our publications needs any protestations of doctrinal soundness or of loyalty from us, yet we believe that the words of John 10:15-17 reveal that the cross is not in view. We are liable, unless we are fully aware of the implications of these verses, to grossly misrepresent the Lord and the true place of the cross. The way that some stress the crucifixion would almost lead one to believe that had there been no Judas, no Caiaphas, no Pilate, no fanatical Jews, there would have been no sacrifice for sin! This however is a monstrous perversion of the truth, and the words:

I lay down My life of Myself, no man taketh it from Me,
are a blessed and salutary corrective.

When the Saviour became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, that obedience proves that the cross was the will of the Father for Him. What we must do is to learn to distinguish that Divine purpose which ordained and undertook the expiation of sin, and the Divine foreknowledge of human hatred and folly that compassed the death of the Messiah by the shameful death of the cross. Let us see whether we cannot find light upon this twofold aspect of the will of God by examining one or two passages of Scripture.

First of all, let us gladly admit, that nothing that formed a part of the blessed offering for our sins, could possibly be a matter of 'if' and 'peradventure'. Let the apostle Peter speak:

'Of a truth against Thy Holy child Jesus, Whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done' (Acts 4:27,28).

Nothing could be more definite. The fourfold enmity of Herod, Pilate, Israel and Gentile but accomplished 'whatsoever' had been determined, and inasmuch as the crucifixion was the culmination of their combined animosity, it must be considered by a superficial thinker that to quote these two verses was sufficient to settle the question we have raised - and for ever. Truth, however, on such weighty matters, cannot be so easily disposed of.

We must see the subject as a whole, and must consider all that is said, for truth out of proportion or truth seen partially may lead to the

most serious of errors. Over against the inspired statement of the fourth chapter of Acts, we must place the equally inspired statement of Corinthians:

‘But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory’ (1 Cor. 2:7,8).

Herod and Pilate are among ‘the princes of this world’. Had they known this hidden wisdom they most certainly would not have crucified the Lord of glory. Yet this hidden wisdom ‘ordained before’ (*prohorizo*) the ages, cannot be divorced from what the Lord ‘determined before’ (*prohorizo*) to be done (Acts 4:28).

If we insist, however, that there is no distinction to be drawn between that which God positively ordained and what He permissively foresaw, we shall make these two passages of Scripture teach that the Purpose of God ordained the crucifixion which Herod and Pilate carried out, yet we shall have to hold the contradictory thought that had Herod and Pilate known the purpose of God, they would not have carried it out, which, of course is absurd, and shows that we have missed our way somewhere. Reasoning may not take us very far in such a theme, but reason suggests to faith that there is a Divine explanation if we seek it. Possibly it will be found in the following:

‘Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain’ (Acts 2:23).

Here we must note that ‘wicked hands’ brought about the crucifixion of Christ. Had Herod and Pilate fulfilled the positive counsel of God, their hands might have been called ‘obedient hands’ or ‘priestly hands’, but certainly not ‘wicked hands’. Here it looks as though there is a difference to be observed between the counsel of God considered in itself, and that which included what Divine foreknowledge foresaw would be done by wicked men. When we read in the tenth of Hebrews, ‘a body hast Thou prepared Me ... Lo I come to do Thy will’, or in the ninth of Luke, ‘when the time was come that He should be received up, He stedfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem’, we cannot conceive of any necessity for wicked hands, betrayal or hatred to ensure the fulfilment of the Divine purpose. In

chapter 8 of John's gospel, the Saviour had said of those who sought to kill Him:

'Ye are of your father the Devil ... He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth' (8:44).

How then could the crucifixion accomplished by the 'wicked hands' of 'the princes of this world', who were in league with 'the Devil' who was both 'murderer' and 'liar', be the accomplishment of the Divine counsel? The cross was something added to the offering of Christ, added because of enmity, and overruled to accomplish the very reconciliation of enemies, but we must beware of so stressing the cross and the crucifixion, that it appears that Christ was an unwilling victim, that He *had* to be betrayed, He *had* to be nailed to the cross, in order that the atonement for sin should be made sure. This is categorically denied in the words: 'No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself'. Here once again we meet apparently opposite statements, 'No man' took the life of the Lord, but 'Wicked hands' crucified and slew Him.

It was the *intention* of Herod, Pilate, the Gentiles and Israel to slay the Lord, but the astonishment of the Centurion upon finding the Lord dead within so short a time is an evidence that the sacrificial death that procured our Redemption was accomplished during the hours of supernatural darkness, when man was shut out, and none were present but the Son, Who through the Eternal Spirit, *offered Himself* without spot to God. The commandment which the Son so willingly obeyed was the 'authority' (*exousia*) which enabled Him both to lay that spotless life down, and to take it again on the third day.

No wonder, with such words of mystery, love and grace that there should be a division among the Jews. Some said 'He hath a demon and is mad'. Others said: 'These are not the words of Him that hath a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?' Let us therefore, while we say with a full heart: 'God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ', ever remember to exalt the willing love that enabled the Saviour as He contemplated the laying down of His life in His sacrificial death for sin to say:

'No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself'.

'I and My Father are One' (10:30)

The reader will remember that the traditional ceremony which concluded the Feast of Tabernacles, was used by the Lord to give point to His teaching and His claims (John 7), and it is very likely some similar reason is discoverable for the statement of the twenty-second verse of the tenth chapter, concerning the feast of dedication. This feast originated in a deliverance effected under the Maccabees, and in the traditional miracle that made the oil which was barely sufficient to light the lamps of the temple for one day, to last eight days. The reader will find particulars of the feast in 1 Maccabees 4:52, Josephus 'The Antiquities of the Jews' xii. 7.7, and in the comments of Maimonides and the Rabbins, the most pertinent, of which will be found in the writings of Dr. John Lightfoot. Time presses however, and we do not write for the curious, and as our information on this matter largely rests upon tradition, we leave it for more solid ground.

The structure of John 10 has been given on page 297, and falls into two pairs of corresponding members, alternating the main theme of the 'Shepherd' with the subsidiary one of consequent division. We have considered the first pair 10:1-21, we must now consider the second 10:22-42.

In the opening section of the tenth chapter the Lord uses a 'proverb' in order to convey His teaching. This same word is found in 16:29 where the contrasting words 'to speak plainly' enable us to see that in 10:24 the demand 'tell us plainly' looks back to the 'proverb' of verse 6, and so appears in the corresponding member of the structure. The Lord's reply to the demand for plain speaking is:

'I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me' (10:25).

John does not record any utterance of the Lord that would fulfil this statement. The Saviour spoke 'plainly' to the woman of Samaria (4:26) and to the man who had been born blind (9:37), but in the majority of cases those who were foremost in demanding a 'plain answer' were the first to cry 'blasphemy'. To such the Lord pointed rather to the testimony of the miracles that He wrought, than to any positive utterance. If any ordinary man adopted this attitude he would lay himself open to criticism and censure, but the Lord 'knew what was in man', and so could act accordingly. He did not speak to these Jews 'plainly' because as He said:

‘But ye believe not, because ye are not of My sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me’ (10:26,27).

These Jews manifest the spirit which prompted their inquiry for, instead of pondering the teaching of His words, they fasten upon one clause as a means of accomplishing their own hateful desires. He continued, speaking of His sheep, saying that no man shall ‘pluck them’ either out of ‘My hand’ or out of ‘MY Father’s hand’ (10:28,29). He moreover said that the Father which gave these sheep to Him was ‘greater’, as well as claiming that He and His Father were ‘One’ (10:28,29).

If no one could pluck the sheep out of the Saviour’s hand any more than one could pluck them out of the Father’s hand, then of necessity in that particular, the words are true. ‘I and My Father are One’ (10:30).

We give place to none in our belief and our testimony to the essential Deity of Christ, but we believe harm can be done and the cause of truth hindered by forcing this glorious doctrine on to passages of Scripture that were not written to teach it.

It is extremely improbable, before such a company of unbelieving Jews, to Whom He would not even speak plainly concerning His Messianic Office, that He would nevertheless enter into the higher and more wonderful doctrine of His Godhead. Had this been His intention, then the argument which He immediately adduced from the book of the Psalms is either insufficient or it proves too much.

‘Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If He called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken; say ye of Him, Whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?’ (10:34-36).

Men were called ‘gods’ by the Scriptures that cannot be broken. It cannot therefore be blasphemy for Him Who was sanctified and sent by the Father and attested by such mighty evidences, to call Himself ‘the Son of God’.

The Psalm referred to here as 'your law' and 'Scripture' is Psalm 82. It has but 8 verses, and in order to follow the argument we will give the Psalm in full:

'God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods.

How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked? Selah.

Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy.

Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked.

They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course.

I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High.

But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.

Arise, O God, judge the earth: for Thou shalt inherit all nations'.

The word 'mighty' in verse 1 is *El* 'God'. 'God (*Elohim*) standeth in the congregation of God (*El*)'. The word translated 'congregation' usually refers to Israel, 'Thy congregation' (Psa. 74:2), but it is not true to say, as does Hengstenberg, '*Edah* never signifies an assembly or a college, but always a community, a congregation'. The earth opened and swallowed up Dathan, and covered the company (*edah*) of Abiram. And a fire was kindled in their company (*edah*); the flame burned up the wicked' (Psa. 106:17,18).

The reference to the 'princes' who 'fell' in Psalm 82, includes the tragedy of Numbers 16. There we read of 'princes of the *assembly*' (2), 'all his *company*' (5), 'Korah and all his *company*' (6), 'thou and all thy *company*' (11,16).

The above passages are sufficient to show that the idea of a special company of Judges is in view in Psalm 82. 'God the Supreme Judge stands in the congregation of these judges, to whom the title "gods" was given'.

The title 'gods' is as old as the law of Moses. The word translated 'judges' in Exodus 21:6 and 22:8,9, is the word *Elohim* 'gods' and is translated 'gods' in the twenty-eighth verse. 'Thou shalt not revile the

gods, nor curse the ruler of thy people'. These 'gods' utterly failed in their high office, as Psalm 82 makes plain:

'I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High.

'But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes'.

If such unrighteous men could be called both 'gods' and 'children' of the Most High, because to them the word of God came, and a high office had been given, how could Christ be chargeable with blasphemy, when He called Himself the Son of God, He Whose every word and deed reflected the mind and purpose of the Father Who had sent Him?

While therefore, the passage in chapter 10 may not be used as a proof text concerning the essential Deity of Christ, we have gained a clearer conception of the Oneness that existed between Him that Sent, and Him Who was Sent, and for this we give thanks.

Before leaving this passage, let us return to the question put by the Jews: 'If Thou be the Christ, tell us plainly' (10:24). What is the answer of the Lord? If we expect a downright reply 'I am the Christ' we shall be disappointed, but if we follow the method adopted by the Lord, we may end in thankful praise. He had told them, but His word had not been believed (10:25). He therefore appeals to two witnesses: the Works which He did in the Father's Name, and the Testimony of the Written Word.

'The works which I do in My Father's Name, they bear witness of Me' (10:25).

'Is it not written in your law ... the Scripture cannot be broken' (10:34,35).

The very point at issue was attested by the works which He did 'My Father worketh hitherto and I work' (5:17). This claim was interpreted by the Jews as a claim to equality with God (5:18) which the Saviour proceeded to enlarge upon (5:19-23). This we have already considered. The matter is before us once again in chapter 10:

'If I do not the works of My Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not Me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, *that the Father is in Me, and I in Him*' (37,38).

The earlier chapter, which is devoted to this discussion, ended on the witness of Scripture. 'If ye believe not his (Moses') writings, how shall ye believe My words?' (5:47). This present chapter, while giving an important place to the Scripture which cannot be broken, stresses the works. The Saviour is favourably compared with John the Baptist in this particular:

'And many resorted unto Him, and said, John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this Man were true. And many believed on Him there' (10:41,42).

Here the word translated 'miracle' is the characteristic word of the Gospel 'sign', and we know from the testimony of this gospel itself that the mighty works, which John calls 'signs' were actually recorded with the object of leading to the conviction that 'Jesus is the Christ the Son of God', and as a result of such conviction, that those who believe might receive life through His name (20:30,31).

Thus through all the 'signs' and the interlinking narrative runs one great all embracing purpose, Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, the Father is in Him, and He is in the Father. He was in the beginning with God, He was God, He was made flesh, to those who believe He gives the right to become the children of God. This is the glorious motive that runs through the harmony of this blessed record.

To recognize and believe this testimony was a mark of the sheep. Those who did not believe were but making it manifest that they were not of His sheep (10:26,27). We may not be able to look into the Book of Life to see whose names are written there, but we have infallible evidences:

'Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. For our gospel came not unto you in word only ... ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe' (1 Thess. 1:4,5; 2:13).

CHAPTER 10

The Seventh Sign

The Raising of Lazarus (11:1-46)

The Structure and the Introduction

The reader is already aware of the fact that there are eight signs recorded by John, and that they form an integral part of the structure of this Gospel. The Gospel falls into four main divisions.

The Prologue (1:1-18).

The External Witness (1:19 to 12:50).

The Witness to His Own (13 to 18).

The Finished Work (19 to 21).

Seven of the signs which John records fall within the section denominated 'The External Witness', and it is therefore not without great significance that the seventh and climax sign of this great section should be that of the raising of the dead, and should contain the tremendous claim 'I am the resurrection and the life'.

While it may be only too true that Greek philosophic thought had left the high standards set by Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, yet, the Stoic and the Epicurean represented the highest flight of the wisdom of this world, in Paul's day, even so, it is recorded that the solemn session on Mars Hill, heard the apostle's defence without interruption until he spoke of the resurrection:

'And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter' (Acts 17:32).

Greek wisdom, Roman power, Jewish prejudice alike presented this attitude to the subject of the resurrection. Before the Sanhedrin, the apostle exclaimed:

'Of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question ... for the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection' (Acts 23:6,8).

To the Roman power, the accusation against Paul resolved itself into:

‘certain questions ... of their own superstition, and of one Jesus, which was dead, Whom Paul affirmed to be alive’ (Acts 25:19).

To Agrippa, Paul said:

‘Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?’ (Acts 26:8),

and upon reaching the point in his defence where he witnessed that Christ must suffer ‘and that He should be the first that should rise from the dead’ the apostle’s most glorious belief is accounted by the Roman Festus as ‘madness’ (Acts 26:23,24).

The most superficial acquaintance with the gospel, the doctrine, and the hope of Paul, reveals the Resurrection of Christ to be the keystone of the structure. Already the Saviour has claimed an equality with the Father in this matter of the raising of the dead (5:17-30), a subject that arose out of the healing of the impotent man. Here another ‘impotent’ man, Lazarus, is before us and he, for the glory of God is allowed not only to be sick, but also to die, in order that the claim of the Lord might be vindicated by factual evidence. With this seventh sign, all signs cease until after the resurrection of the Lord Himself. This therefore is a climax, and in some measure will gather up into itself much that has been demonstrated piece-meal in the earlier signs.

He manifested forth ‘His glory’ when He turned the water into wine in the first sign. His glory is most signally set forth in the seventh sign. The nobleman’s son ‘was about to die’ and the Lord demonstrated His power by arresting the fever, ‘thy son liveth’ is the thrice repeated note in this second sign. The raising of Lazarus however comes under another category. The Nobleman’s son was ‘at the point of death’, but Lazarus was dead and buried four days.

The third sign brings before us an ‘impotent’ *astheneo* man (5:7) though this impotence which had lasted ‘thirty and eight years’ had not proved fatal. Lazarus however was ‘sick’ *astheneo* (11:1,2,3,6), and this sickness though ‘not unto death’ as viewed from the standpoint of the Lord and His purposes, was indeed fatal, so far as man could perceive.

The sequel to the fourth and fifth signs is the teaching given by the Lord on Himself as ‘The Bread of Life’, with its comment:

'This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, *and not die* ... if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever' (6:50,51),

words to be given a fuller exposition in 11:25,26.

In the sixth sign we meet the doctrine that is more fully wrought out in the case of Lazarus, namely, that 'blindness' or even death itself, can be, and is sometimes definitely permitted, for the manifestation of the works of God, or for His special glory. Thus does the seventh sign gather up into itself all that has gone before.

The prophetic pledge of the Marriage of Cana, demands the resurrection of the dead - and so do all the intervening experiences set forth in the second to the sixth signs - if the blessings given and foreshadowed are ever to be enjoyed.

Coming to the passage before us, we observe that the structure is as follows:

when 'the Word was made flesh' and the glory that was then seen was 'the glory as of the Only begotten of the Father' (1:14), ending with a threefold reference to the glory which the Son had with the Father 'before the world was', when He was loved 'before the foundation of the world'.

Closely associated with this wondrous glory was the idemonstration of the power that raised Lazarus from the dead, even as in connection with the resurrection of the Lord Himself, He is said to have been raised 'by the glory of the Father' (Rom. 6:4). Of the resurrection of the believer it is written, 'it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory' (1 Cor. 15:43).

The opening and closing members of the structure *The Seventh Sign* (11:1-46), opposite, deal with this 'glory' and speak of (a) purpose and (b) method.

Purpose. 'This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby' (11:4).

'Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?' (11:40).

Method. 'I go, that I may awake him out of sleep' (11:11). 'He cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth' (11:43).

'Awaking out of sleep' is the Lord's own way of speaking of the resurrection. Let us eschew the language of tradition, which turns death into life, and peoples Hades or Paradise with unclothed spirits, and let us adhere to the language of inspired truth.

'Our friend Lazarus sleepeth ... plainly, Lazarus is dead' (11:11,14).

In 9:3-5 we have the following sequence:

- (1) This man's blindness is not because of sin, but in order that the works of God might be manifest in him.
- (2) I must work the works of Him that sent Me while it is day.
- (3) As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

So, in John 11:4,9 we have a similar sequence:

- (1) The sickness of Lazarus was not unto death, that is, it did not merely have death but the glory of God as its goal.

- (2) Are there not twelve hours in the day?
- (3) If any man walk in the day he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world.

No man could lay hand upon Christ until His hour had come when He should 'finish the work' given Him to do, and the servant like his Lord, may in his turn confidently go forward, until he too can say 'I have finished my course' (2 Tim. 4:7).

This apparently strange interpolation is therefore an integral part of this 'resurrection sign'. It touches one of the most sensitive spots in human frailty, a subject which exercised the wisdom of Solomon and which is expressed in the book of Ecclesiastes.* If, however, one has come to believe in God Who raises the dead, if the Saviour in Resurrection power is 'Lord both of the dead and living' so long as that man is in the centre of the Divine Will and accomplishing the service of the Lord, that man can no more be stopped or effectually hindered, than the Jews could stop the Lord until 'His hour' had come. And when a believer has fulfilled the purpose of his being, when his work is done, when he can exultingly say 'finished', then the world may do what it will, that man has triumphed, and triumphed because of the 'power of His resurrection'.

The disciples having now discerned the meaning of 'sleep', and had drawn near to Bethany and had found that Lazarus had been 'in the grave four days already', and had understood at last the words, 'I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe' (11:15).

The Resurrection and the Life

'The Christ, the Son of God' (11:17-39)

The Evidence of Reality. The double reference to the 'four days' (see the structure on page 318) is evidently intentional and must not be passed over lightly. The reader needs no reminder that of the Lord it is written repeatedly that He lay in the grave 'three days' and that He 'saw no corruption', but of Lazarus it is not only stated that he lay in the grave four days, but it is implied that he did see corruption. The

* See the booklet *Ecclesiastes* by the same author and publisher.

use of these two sets of days is entirely in harmony with Jewish traditional opinion.

‘If one look upon a dead man, within three days after his death, he may know him; but, after three days, his visage is changed’ (Maim. in *Gerushin*).

We read further, in *Massecheth Semacoth*:

‘They go to the sepulchre, and visit the dead for three days and after the three days weeping are past, the four days lamentation began, because all hope had vanished’.

The ‘four days’ therefore provided complete evidence both to the disciples and to the Jews of the nature of the miracle wrought in their midst.

In the structure, we have put as a subheading to the two references to the ‘four days’ the words ‘symbolic period’. This demands some explanation. If the introduction of the thirty-eight years of the impotent man into the record (5:5) is not merely an accidental agreement with the actual years of the wandering of Israel in the wilderness (see *Companion Bible*, Appendix 50, vii (2)) but an intentional parallel, then the ‘four days’ of raising of Lazarus may very well represent the 4,000 years of Israel’s impotence and death that cover the period from Sinai to the approaching day of Israel’s restoration, particularly if compared with the ‘two days’ of Hosea 6:2.

Claim and Confession. We now approach the central section, the glorious theme of Resurrection and Life, without which, hope is a mockery, faith is vain, and life emptied of meaning. The fact that both Martha and Mary utter similar words ‘Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died’ (11:21,32), throws a vivid light upon those anxious days immediately preceding the death of their brother. If only He would come! if only He were here! Yet love stayed away and permitted four days weeping and sorrow. Martha appears to have expressed something of the hope that fluctuated in her breast, by adding: ‘But I know, that even now, whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee’ (11:22).

Did Martha really mean all that is implied by these words ‘even now’ and ‘whatsoever’? The Saviour put her to the immediate test, ‘Thy brother shall rise again’. Would she follow the lead of her own

heart's admission and believe that the Lord intended her faith to seize upon the full implication of the Lord's answer? Her reply, 'I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection *at the last day*', does not reveal what was most evidently uppermost in mind and heart when she said 'even now'. She was, however, in the gracious presence of the One Who did not quench the smoking flax, but Who rather, poured in more oil, and so, without a word of rebuke, the Saviour proceeded to utter words which in the mouth of any mere son of Adam, would be not only blasphemous, but ridiculous,

'I AM THE RESURRECTION, AND THE LIFE' (25).

This is the climax to the series of claims put forward by the Lord in the first half of this Gospel. It is common knowledge that the 'I Am's' of John's Gospel form a distinctive feature. If we count every separate occurrence we shall have a long list, but the four claims to be the 'Bread' of life in the sixth chapter, may be grouped together so far as this examination is concerned, and so we find that the references arrange themselves as follows:

- THE MESSIAH. 'I ... am He' (4:26).
Bread. 'I am the bread of life' (6:35,41,48,51).
Light. 'I am the light of the world' (8:12).
 DEITY. 'Before Abraham was, I am' (8:58).
Door. 'I am the door' (10:7,9).
Shepherd. 'I am the good Shepherd' (10:11,14).
 LIFE. 'I am the resurrection, and the life' (11:25).

There is a wondrous advance in this series of self revelations. To the Samaritan woman the Saviour revealed that He was the long expected Messiah. To the opposing Jews, he made the claim that sounded in their ears as blasphemy, namely the claim that before Abraham 'came into being', 'I am', the Name of the Deity. Then lastly, we have Deity in the form of the Messiah, the embodiment of resurrection power as the source and spring of life, One Who could both 'weep' and yet conquer death. We have so long associated 'resurrection' with 'life from the dead' that it may appear to some that the added words 'and the life' are redundant. We have only to turn back to 5:29 however to discover that there is not only a resurrection 'of life' but a resurrection also 'of judgment', which evidently are to be distinguished.

We found also upon examining 5:19-29, that there was not only a physical and future resurrection, 'the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice' (28), but a spiritual and present resurrection:

'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' (25).

We can now supplement this precious knowledge by one more feature, 'He that believeth in Me, *though he were dead*, yet shall he live'. This is the future physical resurrection of 5:28, but the Lord adds:

'And whosoever IS LIVING and believing in Me shall never die' (11:26) (literal translation).

Here, spiritual and present quickening is not in view, but the fact, revealed and expanded in 1 Thessalonians 4 and 1 Corinthians 15, that there will be some, the living, at the coming of the Lord, who shall not

‘sleep’ but be ‘alive and remain’, and so pass to glory without death, being ‘changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye’.

This stupendous revelation and claim of the Lord to Martha, is again used to encourage the faith that the Saviour perceived to exist in her, however feeble it may have been. ‘Believest thou this?’ Now her reply is full, it goes beyond a mere affirmation, it goes to the very heart of the testimony of this Gospel itself.

‘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’ (11:26,27).

Note, she did not say Yea Lord, I believe that Thou art the Resurrection and the Life, she did not say Yea Lord, I believe all that Thou hast said concerning the *resurrection* of the dead, and concerning the life of the living at Thy coming. She said more, for an examination of her confession and a comparison with the expressed purpose of John’s Gospel itself will reveal that Martha had reached the zenith of all embracive faith.

Let us test this affirmation by reference to one or two passages of Scripture. First, we cannot omit the classic confession of the Gospels, that of Peter:

‘Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God’ (Matt. 16:16).

Like the confession of Martha, this confession of Peter comes at a crisis in the record. We have demonstrated in other of our writings that the first half of Matthew’s Gospel ends at chapter 16:20, just as the raising of Lazarus is the last sign given in John’s Gospel before the close of the first half of the record. That this confession is fundamental the Lord makes evident by the fact that upon that Rock Christ will build His church. That this confession involves and implies victory over death and the grave His own added words prove, ‘And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it’ (Matt. 16:18), a victory blessedly anticipated when Lazarus responded to the Saviour’s call.

Returning to the Gospel of John itself, we find that it leads up to Martha’s confession in the close of the first half of the gospel, and enforces the purpose with which are recorded the whole set of signs namely:

‘That ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name’ (20:31).

It is evident from these parallel passages that ‘life’ in John’s testimony is synonymous with ‘life from the dead’, and so brings us back to the glorious revelation, ‘I am the Resurrection, and the Life’.

Concluding Features (28-57)

While the zenith of the seventh sign is reached at the revelation of verse 25, ‘I am the Resurrection, and the Life’, there are one or two features which are found in the closing section of the passage that are of sufficient importance and interest to justify further study. Perhaps no single chapter in the Scripture sets forth the Divine and the human as they meet in ‘The Christ, the Son of God’ so plainly as is found in this eleventh chapter.

‘I am the Resurrection, and the Life’. The Divine.

‘Jesus wept’. The Human.

Had John’s Gospel been a literary invention, such a revelation of intense humanity in the proximity of such Divine claims would have been intolerable. Seeing, however, that this is a revelation of the heart of God, such close association of sovereign power and tender sympathy is the hall mark of inspiration and truth. Indeed, the believer, taught by grace could well argue, that had there never been the necessity to record the words ‘Jesus wept’, there would never have been the possibility of recording the claim ‘I am the Resurrection, and the Life’, for Divine as this claim is and must be, it involved suffering and shame, ignominy and rejection, the anguish of Gethsemane, the forsaking at Calvary. ‘Resurrection and Life’ have no meaning if used of the unconditional and absolute Godhead, they can only have meaning if Almighty Love condescends to the utter weakness of sinful man’s estate, that by its own self-sacrifice, sinful men may be brought back to life and to God.

The comment of the Jewish sympathisers with Mary and Martha, is more to the point than any amount of speculation, ‘Behold how He loved him!’ (11:36). This in its turn illuminates the opening section of this incident. The Saviour heard that his friend Lazarus was sick:

‘When He had heard therefore that he was sick, He abode two days still in the same place where He was’ (11:6).

He loved Martha and her sister, He loved Lazarus, and He purposely refrained from hurrying to their relief. Yet He wept! Most certainly therefore there was no lack of heart-felt sympathy with that mourning household; the glory of God and its paramount demands are not to be separated in the heart of the Saviour from intense love and deepest sympathy - a lesson never learned too well, and sometimes never fully learned in life's testing pilgrimage.

The apostle Paul, writing to the Hebrews, knew something of this Divine blending of Majestic Deity and sympathetic humanity in the Person of the Lord.

'Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth' (1:10).

'We see Jesus, Who was made a little lower than the angels' (2:9).

'A great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God' (4:14).

'We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin' (4:15).

There is another very human note struck in the record of verses 33 and 38 of John 11:

'He groaned in the spirit'.

'Therefore again groaning in Himself'.

The Revised Version places in the margin:

'OR, was moved with indignation in the spirit'.

'OR, being moved with indignation in Himself'.

Every translator knows that the original meaning of *embrimaomai*, which is rendered 'groan' by the Authorized Version, is literally 'to snort' as a horse, but practically every translator has felt diffident about introducing such a thought into the passage. While such diffidence is perfectly understandable, it does not seem fitting.

The Septuagint uses the word to translate the Hebrew *zaam* in Lamentations 2:6, a word which means 'indignation', and this entirely influenced the Revisers. To the Jews, however, the attribution to the Deity of 'snorting' like a horse would be no more incongruous than

that of 'roaring' like a lion. It is the Lord Himself, and not one of Job's friends Who said:

'Hast thou given the horse strength? hast thou clothed his neck with thunder?

Canst thou make him afraid as a grasshopper? the glory of his nostrils is terrible.

He paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength: he goeth on to meet the armed men.

He mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted; neither turneth he back from the sword.

The quiver rattleth against him, the glittering spear and the shield.

He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage: neither believeth he that it is the sound of the trumpet.

He saith among the trumpets, Ha, ha; and he smelleth the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains, and the shouting' (Job 39:19-25).

The 'snorting' of this horse would indicate his impatience for the battle, 'he smelleth the battle afar off'.

With this scriptural background, no one need adopt such renderings as have been offered, like 'chafe' or 'be perturbed', or 'be indignant', the classical use of the word can be retained with advantage.

In the two passages which contain this word *embrimaomai* there is a specific reference to the grave where Lazarus lay. The Saviour 'wept' as in loving sympathy He shared the grief of those who mourned their loved one, but as He turned to the actual grave itself, with its dreadful evidence of the work of the destroyer, the Lord not only 'wept' but, like the war horse He scented the battle with him that had the power of death afar off, and anticipated the day of His triumph when not Lazarus only, but all that are in their graves shall come forth. And so, 'snorting like a war horse whose neck is clothed with thunder, who mocks at fear, and who saith among the trumpets, Ha, ha!', the Saviour cried with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come forth', and the grave gave up its dead. We must now pass to yet another related theme:

'And Jesus lifted up His eyes, and said, Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me. 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' (11:41-43).

It will be remembered that in a similar context (5:17-31), where the raising of the dead is in view, the Lord claimed that He worked with the Father, as He is at pains to demonstrate here.

The division of opinion that followed the raising of Lazarus, sent some to the Pharisees who 'informed' them of 'what things Jesus had done'. Did we not know by personal and humiliating experience something of the capabilities of the human heart, it would be inconceivable that any reasonable creature should take counsel to 'put to death' One that they knew had actually 'raised the dead' in their very midst. Yet such is the astounding fact. We do not tarry, however, over this evidence of the folly of evil, but go on to consider one more feature connected with this sign.

The Prophecy of Caiaphas (49-52). This rather peculiar prophecy may be considered under the following headings:

The light it throws upon the question of Inspiration.

The special purport of the words 'being the high priest that same year'.

The nature of the prophecy.

It may well be that a complete understanding of the nature of Divine Inspiration is not within the power of man to comprehend, but one or two outstanding features are evident to all. Inspiration does not depend upon the prophet himself, although it is delightful to trace the way in which God has used, and not suppressed, the individuality of each chosen instrument. If it be objected, that God could not, however, take up the human mind, and use it even as a man uses a tool for his work, then two cases are at hand to meet the objection. Balaam who was hired by Balak to curse Israel, knew an unwilling inspiration that he could not resist 'the word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak' (Num. 22:38).

The words of Caiaphas, so far as he personally was concerned, were the expression of expediency and policy, but were nevertheless prophetic utterances that reach to the heart of Christian doctrine 'that one man should die for the people'.

It is not sufficient to read: 'And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest ... he prophesied'. There were many high priests who held office during the years that had intervened since Malachi, 'the seal of the prophets', as the Rabbins called him, but there is no record that any of these 'high priests' prophesied by reason of their office. The complete phrase is 'being high priest THAT YEAR', a phrase expressed once again in 18:13,14, where there is a reference back to the eleventh chapter. 'That year' was the crisis of human history, the most critical hour of Israel's testing, and the very crux of the Ages. 'That year' saw the death, resurrection, ascension and present session of the Son of God, a 'Priest for ever', since when no man has or can hold the sacred office. The high priesthood of Israel expired in prophesying of the 'one sacrifice for sins for ever' offered by Him Who 'sat down' at the right hand of God.

Strangely enough, what the Sanhedrin dreaded came to pass, in spite of all their treachery and desire to avoid it. Their 'place and nation' were lost to the Romans. The betrayal of Christ but hastened that dread day, nevertheless, by wicked hands, they that crucified the Lord of glory, were the unconscious and unwilling instruments in bringing to pass that offering which was 'Not for that nation only, but that also He should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad' (11:52), a passage that should be read with 10:15,16.

CHAPTER 11

The Link between the Seventh and Eighth Signs (11:47 to 20:31)

Between the seventh and eighth signs rolls such an ocean of truth, is interposed such a wealth of grace, such a ministry of peace, such depth and such height, that human language must ever fail to set it forth in any measure of its fulness. Yet Scripture has been written for our learning, and even though we approach this second part of the Gospel as we would approach holy ground, we have long since learned that reverential fear is not in opposition to the most painstaking research, indeed we are blessedly conscious that worship may often be more sincere as one sits at the desk examining a concordance, than when one may be in the assembly of the saints using a Prayer Book.

The seventh sign has led us to the zenith of all doctrine, the resurrection of the dead, and the chapters that intervene between the raising of Lazarus and the ascension of his Redeemer must now occupy our wondering attention.

If the reader will consult the structure of the book as a whole (pages 20,21), he will observe that this section is the largest of all the links that unite the eight signs together as one argument. The first link (2:13 to 4:42) gives us the first occurrence of those key words 'My meat ... to finish His work', and in conformity with the balance of truth, this last great link (11:47 to 20:31) introduces the final and most glorious occurrence of these words 'finish the work', 'I have finished the work' and 'It is finished'.

We shall find upon examination that the twofold thread, reception and rejection, love and hate, run through this section as they do the earlier ones. Before we can intelligently enter upon a study of this portion, or attempt to understand its details, some attempt must be made to obtain a view of the passage as a whole. Yet who is there that can hope to reduce such a passage to a few headings without well nigh reaching despair. With full consciousness of the magnitude of the survey and a consciousness of much failure, we do nevertheless present the following outline with all confidence, because it is based upon what is *actually written*. We only wish the reader could experience the joy that can alone be the portion of the discoverer, as the fragrant references to the spikenard of Mary and the myrrh and aloes of Nicodemus, fall into their appointed place. This, however,

may not be the portion of the reader, but he can at least appreciate the perfect completeness of the Word that these structures indicate.

John 11:47 to 20:31

A 11:47-57. **a** The counsel of Caiaphas. Prophecy.
BETRAYAL. **b** 'If any man knew where He were ... shew it ...
take Him'.

B 12:1-19. **c** Martha and Mary. 1 lb. of spikenard. 'My
SPIKENARD. burying'.

d Hosanna. Blessed. King of Israel.

C 12:20-50. **e** The hour is come that Son of Man
THE HOUR. glorified.

f Signifying what death He should
die (33).

D 13-16. 'His Own'. If I go away I will come again.

I GO, I COME.

C 17-18:1. **e** The hour is come; glorify Thy Son.

THE HOUR. **f** Signifying what death He should
die.

A 18. **b** Judas ... knew the place ... took Jesus.
BETRAYAL. **a** The counsel of Caiaphas. Fulfilment.

B 19. **d** Hail King of the Jews. Crucify Him.

RRH and **c** Joseph and Nicodemus. 100 lb. of myrrh

ES. and aloes. 'As the manner of the Jews is to bury'.

D 20. 'My Brethren'.

I ASCEND.

If the section opens with betrayal, it is closely followed by the anointing; if prophecies concerning His death, and statements showing 'what death He should die' meet us next, it is also accompanied by a recognition that the hour had come, not merely that the Son of Man should be 'crucified' but 'glorified'. As the Gospel opens with a reference to 'His own' who received Him not, so here we have, at the opening of the second part, 'His own' whom He loved unto the end. It is utterly impossible to find suitable words to place at the head of such chapters as 13 to 16. We have used the promise 'I go, I come', because it is required by the corresponding message 'I ascend', but no

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reader is bound by such attempts. The riches of these passages await us, the structure but points the way. Nevertheless, the reader would be well advised to track out each subdivision with the Opened Word beside him, to see 'whether these things are so', for nothing can compensate for the loss of individual and personal apprehension of the truth. Among other things, the reader will observe that this 'hour' that has come, is related to the Passover. The 'Lamb of God' is about to be offered, and when the offering is accomplished the Paschal law is observed. 'A bone of Him shall not be broken' (John 19:36; Exod. 12:46).

We have already touched upon the counsel and prophecy of Caiaphas and the structure throws this into prominence by definitely reminding us of it in the corresponding section. There remains the general reference to the betrayal to be considered, with which chapter 11 ends.

'Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that, if any man knew where He were, he should shew it, that they might take Him' (11:57).

More than one give 'commandments' in this Gospel. Before ever the Pharisees and Priests uttered their commandment, there had been one that came from above.

'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' (10:17,18).

The 'commandment' of the Pharisees could have had no effect apart from this 'commandment' of the Father. If the commandment of the Pharisees was 'death', the commandment of the Father, said the Lord, is 'life everlasting' (12:50). Again, if the commandment of the Pharisees was one of hatred, the 'new commandment' which the Saviour gave in that time of dreadful night, was that of 'love' (13:34).

There had been several abortive attempts 'to take' the Lord. After the healing of the impotent man, His enemies 'sought to take Him: but no man laid hands on Him, because His hour was not yet come' (7:30).

The Pharisees and Priests sent officers 'to take' Him (7:32) and among those who were divided because of His teaching there were some who 'would have taken Him' but no man laid hands on Him, and the officers confessed that 'Never man spake like this man' (7:46).

Again after the healing of the man who was born blind, 'They sought again to take Him: but He escaped out of their hand' (10:39). And so the method adopted was that of base betrayal and the reference shows its dreadful success. Yet we must keep in mind the great words of 10:17,18, and remember that no one could take Him until His hour had come.

'The Anointing at Bethany' (12:1-11)

It is a relief to step out of the atmosphere of treachery and betrayal if only for a passing moment, and to step into the atmosphere of devotion and love, with which the opening section of the twelfth chapter is redolent.

'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' (12:3).

That odour not only filled the house at Bethany, its fragrance is discernible in the chapters that follow until, in chapter 17, we stand as it were before the very altar of incense itself. There are four records of some such acts of devotion, one, recorded in the seventh of Luke, is most certainly distinct from the other three, but opinions differ among commentators, regarding the remainder. Those who hold that the anointing recorded in Matthew 26 and Mark 14 refers to a separate occasion from that recorded in John 12, draw attention to a series of statements, which, it is alleged, render it impossible that these anointings should be one and the same.

The Time. John 12 says that this anointing took place 'six days before the Passover', whereas Matthew 26 says that it was 'two days before the Passover'.

Place. John says simply 'at Bethany', Matthew says 'in the house of Simon the leper', 'in Bethany'.

Material. John speaks of 'a pound of ointment', whereas Matthew speaks of 'an alabaster box'.

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The Anointing. John says 'His feet', Matthew says 'His head'.
John uses the word 'anointed' whereas Matthew uses the word 'poured'.

The attitude of the disciples. John records the words of Judas, whereas Matthew records the words of the disciples.

It is of course quite within the bounds of possibility that there were two such anointings within a few days of each other, at which similar things were said and done, even as there may have been two different 'temptations in the wilderness' (for the records of Matthew and Luke differ) or two different herds of swine that ran down to the sea and were choked, but to many, there is an air of unreality about such suggestions, and the objections tabulated above do not seem valid.

It is most obvious that the Gospels, while they give us 'nothing but the Truth' cannot give us 'the whole truth' as to details as 21:25 admits. Each writer had before him a purpose - whether Matthew who wrote concerning the King for the Hebrew reader, Luke who had the Gentile in mind and so goes back to Adam, or John whose Gospel of 'life' is presented to the world - and each selects and arranges his material with that purpose in view. Consequently many apparent differences become reconciled, as we believe those tabulated above may be. For instance, the time difficulty is one largely of our own making. While Matthew 26:2 most certainly says: 'Ye know that after two days is the Feast of the Passover' and John 12 says that the anointing took place 'six days before the Passover', the actual chronicle of the anointing in Matthew 26:6 gives no date, but merely says: 'Now when Jesus was in Bethany', whether before or after the date mentioned in verse 2 being unstated, and it is no new thing for Matthew to transpose the order of events for his own purposes (see the 'Temptation' in Matthew and in Luke).

Again while both records place the anointing in 'Bethany', it is in Matthew's Gospel only that we discover *what house* in Bethany was used for the feast. The strict literalist who would keep John's record distinct would have to admit that the feast recorded in chapter 12 was not arranged *in a house at all!* If, however, there were two men in the little town of Bethany who had come under the healing touch of the Lord - *Simon the Leper, and Lazarus* - it would be most natural that in one house or the other the feast should be spread, and the suggestion is

that while Mary and Martha arranged the feast, Simon gave it house-room.

John tells us the weight of the ointment, but omits any reference to the vessel that contained it. Matthew on the other hand makes pointed reference to the alabaster jar that held the precious spikenard. These are not necessarily two separate events, the records may be complementary. The ointment must have been contained in some vessel, whether mentioned or not. If one writer speaks of the actual 'anointing' the other says how it was done, by 'pouring' and the marginal note in Mark 14:3 shows that one of the meanings of 'spikenard' is 'liquid nard' which would demand a vessel to contain it, and would have to be poured. One writer, John, speaks of the Lord's 'feet', the other, Matthew, speaks of His 'head', but both may have been anointed in turn. So also the fact that John picks out the actual objection of Judas, whereas Matthew records the indignation of the rest of the apostles who agreed with him. Of itself the question is not worth the discussion, but anything that lowers or calls in question the veracity of the Scriptures is a serious matter and justifies the time spent upon its consideration.

Coming to the supper and the anointing as recorded in the fourth gospel, we are impressed as we read it by the devotion that is there set forth. Just exactly what the 'pound' represents in modern weight we do not know. How 'precious' the spikenard was we cannot compute in terms of cash. It was 'very costly' (12:3), it was 'very precious' (Matt. 26:7, Mark 14:3), and to enforce the fact each Evangelist uses a separate word. John uses *polutimos*, Mark uses *poluteles*, Matthew uses *barutimos*. *Polutimos* is composed of 'much' and 'price', *poluteles*, 'much' and 'expense', and *barutimos* betrays the Hebrew in Matthew and his reader, for it speaks of wealth in terms of 'weight' following the idiom of Genesis 13:2, as we read, 'And Abram was *heavy* in cattle, in silver and in gold', an idiom perpetuated by the apostle, who was a Hebrew of the Hebrews, in the phrase 'the weight of glory'.

The spices brought by Nicodemus were brought by a man of great wealth, if tradition be reliable; they weighed one hundred pounds instead of one pound, but no statement is made as to their preciousness or their costliness. It is evident that the costliness of the gift of Mary, was computed by Him Who once sat over against the treasury and

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affirmed that the widow's mite outweighed the total gifts of all that day.

Worship must be for ever far removed from nice calculating of so much and no more. Worship is associated with the pouring out of the heart, of treasure, of time, of life itself. If the disciples sank so low as to call this outpouring 'waste', the Lord's commendation shows its estimate in His eyes:

'Let her alone: against the day of My burying hath she kept this' (12:7).

'Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her' (Matt. 26:13).

The burial was His, the memorial hers! Three women named 'Mary' are associated with similar acts. Mary of Bethany was early with her gift; Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Salome, brought sweet spices (Mark 16:1,2), but they came too late; and it is not accidental that 'Mary' and 'myrrh' are both derived from the same Hebrew word.

We must now pass on to other things, but the perfume of Mary's spikenard will follow us through the intervening chapters until, in John 17 it mingles with the incense of that high priestly chapter where the work is done, and the Lord prepares Himself for the great offering and His subsequent session at the right hand on high.

The Triumphal Ride into Jerusalem (12:12-19)

The words of the Lord, commending the devotion of Mary, 'Against the day of My burying' (12:7), contain a thought which if kept in mind will help us to appreciate the reason why John inserted the remaining incidents that make up this twelfth chapter of his Gospel.

The Anointing (1-8) anticipated His burial.

The Hosannas (12-19) anticipated His second coming.

The Greeks (20-23) anticipated His wider sphere after the cross.

The Grain of Wheat (24) anticipated His death and resurrection.

The Cross (31-34) anticipated the judgment of this world and of its prince.

The Blindness (40) anticipated Acts 28.

The Testimony (44-50) summarizes the Message of John's Gospel and anticipates 20:31.

We have already given some attention to the anointing at Bethany, and so we pass on to the other subdivisions of this closing chapter. What a change is discovered in the attitude of the people within a few days!

John 12	Contrast	John 19
Hosanna.		Crucify Him.
King of Israel.		King of the Jews.
Behold Thy King cometh.		Behold your King.

This, however, is but part of the testimony. The Scripture looks beyond the rejection, the cross, and the grave, and the anticipatory character of this passage can be seen when it is read with the nineteenth chapter of another testimony of this same writer, namely that of the Book of the Revelation.

John 12	Anticipation	Revelation 19
Hosanna (13).		Alleluia (1).
Salvation omitted (15).		Salvation included (1).
Much people (12).		A great multitude (6).
Blessed is the King of Israel (13).	The Lord omnipotent reigneth (6).	
The Ass's colt (15).	The White Horse (11).	
No Crown.	Many crowns (12).	
The people met Him (18).	The armies of heaven followed Him (14).	

The prophecy which was fulfilled by the Lord's entry into Jerusalem to the Hosannas of the crowd and the symbols of victory (i.e. the palms) is found in Zechariah 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'.

It is a mistake to read this prophecy as of the Second Advent. It was 'fulfilled' when the Lord rode into Jerusalem (Matt. 21:4), and

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after the Lord was glorified the disciples remembered that 'These things were written of Him, and that they (i.e., the people) had done these things unto Him' (12:16). The movement among the people, the acclamation 'Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord', the literal fulfilment regarding 'the ass's colt' were enough to quicken the interest, and direct the heart of any who were not quite dead to saving faith. But alas, 'they knew not the day of their visitation' or as verses 39,40 reveal 'they could not believe' because of the spiritual conditions indicated by chapter 6 of Isaiah.

The reader may appreciate a word on the expression, 'the ass, and the colt the foal of an ass'. Some writers have seized upon the apparent incongruity of the Lord sitting upon two animals at the same time, to lower the value of the testimony of the Scriptures. We need however have no fear, the Scripture can well look after itself.

In the first instance, an ass would not readily leave its colt, and it would be most natural that they should both travel together. Then, not knowing which of the two animals the Lord would choose, they laid garments on them both, and finally, the apparent difficulty exists only in the minds of those who read Eastern customs, expressed in Eastern idiom, through modern Western spectacles. The narrative, which is set out at length in Matthew 21, is epitomized in John 12:14, 'And Jesus, when He had found a *young ass*, sat thereon'. Here we have not the word *onos* 'ass' but the diminutive *onarion* a little ass. This, in its turn is said to fulfil the statement of Zechariah 9:9.

The Hebrew idiom 'an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass' must be read in the light of Psalm 8:4, 'What is *Man* ... and the *Son of Man* ...', where no one attempts to read into the expression two men. The Lord used 'the colt', but the dam also accompanied the young ass, and so provided for the superficial reader a 'problem' where none actually existed.

'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' (12:16).

'When Jesus was glorified'. This is a recurring thought in John's Gospel that demands attention. In two references *doxazo* is translated 'to honour' (8:54).

- A 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*'.
- B 8:54. 'If *I glorify* Myself, My glory is nothing: it is My Father that *glorifieth* Me; of Whom ye say, that He is your God'.
- C 11:4. 'This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the *Son of God might be glorified thereby*'.
- A 12:16. '*When Jesus was glorified*, then remembered they that these things were written of Him'.
- C 12:23. 'The hour is come, that the Son of Man should be *glorified*'.
- B 12:28. 'Father *glorify* Thy Name ... I have both *glorified* it, and will *glorify* it again'.

Confining ourselves for the present, to the first great division of the Gospel (1:19 to 12:50) we find the use of the verb *doxazo* 'glorify' is shown in the preceding structure.

It will be seen by comparing 7:39 with 12:16, that the 'bringing all things to remembrance', which is the promised work of the Spirit of Truth (14:26), is definitely implied in 12:16. The glorifying of 'The Son of God' (11:4) as He stood by the tomb of Lazarus and declared Himself to be 'The Resurrection, and the Life', finds its sequel and necessary complement in the glorifying of 'the Son of Man' when as 'the corn of wheat' He fell into the ground, died, and in the miracle of resurrection brought forth much fruit. In the second half of John's Gospel, the verb *doxazo* occurs fourteen times, but the consideration of this testimony will be better undertaken after that great section has, in measure, been examined.

The comment of the Pharisees, 'Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold the world is gone after Him' (12:19), is illustrated by the incident that follows.

The Coming of the Greeks (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

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Philip tell Jesus. And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of Man should be glorified' (20-23).

There is a marked correspondence between the opening (1:19) and the close (12:50) of the first great division of John's gospel.

A 1:44-46. Andrew and Philip of Bethsaida.
We have found Him.
Come and see.

B 1:47. An Israelite indeed.

C 2:4. Mine hour is not yet come.

* * *

A 12:21,22. Andrew and Philip of Bethsaida.
We would see Jesus.
They tell Jesus.

B 12:20. Certain Greeks among them.

C 12:23. The hour is come.

Nathanael was an 'Israelite' but in chapter 12, we find 'certain Greeks' come to the feast to worship. Who, and what are these 'Greeks'? The Authorized Version adopted the terms 'Greek' and 'Grecian' to distinguish between 'a Gentile born in Greece' (*Hellen*), and 'A Greek speaking Jew' (*Hellenist*), even as we differentiate between 'a man of Kent' and a 'Kentish' man, although of course the choice of terms is somewhat arbitrary, as 'Grecian' in everyday speech or literature refers to that which truly pertains to Greece or the Greeks.

The only other occurrence of 'Greek' (*Hellen*), in John's Gospel is translated 'Gentile' (7:35). So also in Romans we have the two phrases, 'The Jew first, and also to the Greek' (1:16), 'The Jew first, and also of the Gentile' (2:9), yet in the original the words used are the same. Where Greek speaking Jews are intended, the New Testament uses the word *Hellenistes* instead of *Hellen* (Acts 6:1; 9:29, and 11:20 in the Received Text).

It is therefore perfectly in accord with the purpose and character of John's gospel that he should be the only one of the four evangelists to introduce the 'Greek' at all, and to introduce him actually as the ministry of Christ draws to its goal.

While the 'feasts' are mentioned by John many times, and on some occasions are called 'the feast of the Jews', and while there are several references to going up to keep the feast, it is reserved for 'the Greeks' to come up to the feast 'to worship'; and while Nathanael at the beginning of the Gospel and Thomas at the close fall down before the Lord in veneration, the actual act of worship is accredited to one Jew only, the man who had been born blind, one who had been cast out of the synagogue, when he found 'the Son of God'. There are many characters that pass before us in John's account, with whom the question of 'worship' might naturally be associated. We might expect Nathanael the 'Israelite indeed', or Nicodemus the 'Master of Israel', or Caiaphas, to have discussed the question of 'worship', but it is not so.

There is only one discussion and one revelation concerning the nature of true worship in John's Gospel, and that was with a poor sinful, ignorant woman of Samaria who learned that 'God is Spirit' and neither the mountain of Jerusalem nor the mountain of Samaria were of any real account in spiritual worship.

One comment on the coming of the Greeks is suggestive:

'These men from the West at the end of the life of Jesus, set forth the same as the Magi from the East at its beginning - but they come to the *cross* of the King, as those to His *cradle*'.

Both Philip and Andrew are Greek names and it is possible that these men were more accessible than the more Judaic members of the apostolic band.

The simple, yet comprehensive request, 'Sir, we would see Jesus', has caught the sympathetic imagination of most readers. What did this request to 'see' actually mean? 'To see' in our own tongue has many shades of meaning, so that a blind man bereft of ordinary vision may be said to 'see' something, which a less intelligent person with normal vision failed to perceive.

Eidon means 'to see' in the ordinary meaning of the term 'Come see a Man', 'Except ye see signs and wonders', 'Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails', 'Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed'. It is, however, more often used to imply 'perception' and consequently is translated 'to know' fifty times in these first twelve chapters.

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There seems to be a designed contrast instituted between these 'Greeks' and the 'people of the Jews'.

'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' (12:9).

'And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast ... saying, Sir, we would *see Jesus*' (12:20,21)

The reply of the Saviour shows that He recognized in this approach and request that a crisis had arrived. Before the death of the cross, His ministry had been Divinely limited;

'I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be *accomplished!*' (Luke 12:50).

This word 'accomplished' is *teleo*, the self-same word that is found in the glorious climax of John's Gospel towards which the Saviour looked both in Luke 12:50 and in John 19:28,30, when He cried 'It *is finished*'. There is no warrant to believe that an interview was granted to these Greeks, the hour for that had not yet come, but their request indicated that the hour had come wherein the breaking down of all barriers, the rending of the veil, the opening of the way into the presence of the Lord without regard to 'this mountain' or 'Jerusalem' was near.

The Jew by reason of covenant and promise, by reason of birth and circumcision was of a people 'near unto the Lord', whatever may have been said of his spiritual condition. The Greek by reason of native alienation and uncircumcision was of necessity 'far off', and therefore does the Lord turn away from them, that He may the better and the sooner open the way into the presence of the Father for them and for all such.

'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' (12:24).

This symbolism of life out of death which is so strikingly set forth by the natural process in the case of the grain of wheat, is used by the apostle Paul in his great resurrection chapter.

‘That which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him, and to every seed his own body’ (1 Cor. 15:36-38).

Great care must be taken however in the use of these arguments. In this chapter Paul is dealing with the problem ‘How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?’ (1 Cor.15:35). If we transport his argument into the Gospel of John, we might destroy the very truth of the resurrection of the Lord. We must remember Paul is dealing with those who see ‘corruption’, whereas the Saviour ‘saw no corruption’. In Corinthians it is truth to assert that the resurrection body will not be the selfsame fabric that was laid in the grave, whereas it is the very essence of the faith to believe that the self-same body of the Saviour that bore our sins and bore the marks of the nails, was actually raised from the grave.

The purpose of the simile of the twelfth of John is to emphasize that apart from His death and resurrection the deepest desire of either Jew or Greek must for ever fail of realization, but if the Lord fulfilled the supreme work which He came to do, out of that death and burial should be reaped such an harvest as the world has never yet seen or the mind ever conceived. And so, although the Saviour knew full well ‘what death He should die’ (12:33) He does not speak in terms of betrayal, of mockery, of ignominy, of forsaking, of crucifixion; He rather looks upon it as the hour when He, the Son of Man should be ‘glorified’.

There is one other point that must not be missed. The Greeks came and said ‘We would SEE’. In contrast, the people of Israel are described toward the close of John 12 in the language of Isaiah 6 as being so ‘blind’ and ‘hard’ ‘that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them’ (12:40).

This anticipation of the dispensational crisis of Acts 28 is discussed on page 353. Let us be thankful that the request of the Greeks has at length been abundantly answered, and access, yea ‘boldness of access’, is now ours in and through Christ.

The Prince of this World (12:25-36)

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The twelfth chapter of John contains, as we have seen, seven great anticipations of future glory. We have examined four of these, and the remaining three now await us. They have this in common, that they deal with Judgment.

The Judgment of this world and its prince (12:27-36).

The Judgment of Israel and their rejection (12:37-41).

The Judgment by the word in the last day (12:42-50).

Before we consider what is implied by the judgment of this world and the casting out of its prince, we must examine what led up to it. Before we can truly follow the argument of verses 25-36 we must be in possession of two facts.

The Greek word *psuche* is translated in the Authorized Version sometimes 'life' and sometimes 'soul', and this on occasions in related passages. While it might be too sweeping a statement to say that the word *psuche* should never be translated 'life', yet it is safe to say that in the majority of cases 'soul' is the only English equivalent. This is the first fact.

The second is, that some knowledge of the teaching of the sixteenth of Matthew is necessary to the understanding of the development of the Lord's argument from the 'corn of wheat' through the successive links to the conclusion.

The passage in Matthew 16 that bears upon John 12:25-36 is as follows, the translation differs however from that of the Authorized Version in that the word *psuche* is rendered consistently 'soul'.

'Then said Jesus unto His disciples, If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whosoever will save his soul shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his soul for My sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul' (Matt. 16:24-26 author's translation).

As a sequel to the figure of the corn of wheat, the Lord continued:

'He that loveth his soul shall lose it; and he that hateth his soul in this world shall keep it unto life eternal ... Now is My soul troubled ...' (12:25,27).

Just as the servant, in his lowly degree found that true discipleship meant 'self denial', 'a cross' and 'tasting death', so the Master, in His superlative degree experienced trouble of soul by reason of His obedience even unto death.

We must read John 12:27,28 carefully if we would not misunderstand the Lord. He most certainly did not debate with Himself as to whether He would ask to be exempted from the cross, and the suggestion given in the margin of *The Companion Bible* seems to give the only fitting rendering:

'And what shall I say?, &c. Supply the *Ellipses* that follow, thus: (Shall I say) "Father, save Me from this hour?" (No!) It is for this cause I am come to this hour. (I will say) "Father, glorify Thy Name".'

We are definitely told that the answer from heaven came not for the Saviour's sake, but for the sake of those who stood by, a statement that would not have been true if our Lord had really entertained the slightest doubt as to the path that He chose and was to follow.

We must now pass to the pronouncement of judgment on this world and on its prince. The world had reached its '*krisis*'. 'Now is the *krisis* of this world'. It had been visited from on high but, like Israel, it knew not the day of its visitation. Our Saviour said of 'this world' in this same Gospel: 'My kingdom *is not of this world*' (18:36), which is the best comment on the suggestion put forward by some that 'The prince of *this world*' is Christ Himself. The word 'prince' (Greek *archon*) is most certainly used of the Devil.

'Beelzebub the *prince* of the devils' (Matt. 9:34; 12:24, Mark 3:22, Luke 11:15).

'The *prince* of the power of the air' (Eph. 2:2).

Christ is called 'The Prince of the kings of the Earth' in Revelation 1:5, but that is true of the day of the Lord when the kingdoms of *this world* become the kingdoms of the Lord. During the period of Christ's rejection, Satan is the usurping 'prince of this world', and this rulership of the world does not date from the actual rejection of Christ, it was a fact at the very opening of His ministry. At the temptation of Christ, the Devil showed Him all the kingdoms of the habitable world in a moment of time, and said:

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‘All this *power* will I give Thee, and the *glory* of them: FOR THAT IS DELIVERED UNTO ME; and to whomsoever I will I give it’ (Luke 4:6).

Here the Devil claimed ‘the kingdom, the power and the glory’, and his claim was not denied by the Son of God.

There has never been any doubt as to whom the apostle referred when he spoke of ‘the god of this world (age)’ (2 Cor. 4:4); and the twofold title is essential if the two phases of Satanic rule are to be made evident.

‘The *prince* of this world’ (*kosmos*). Secular.

‘The *god* of this age’ (*aion*). Religious.

It was the teaching of the Rabbis that:

‘The prince of this world is the angel, into whose hands the whole world is delivered’ (Sanhedr. Col. 94.1).

‘The wicked angel Samael is the prince of all satans’ and he is called in the Targum of Jonathan ‘the angel of death’. (Compare Heb. 2:14).

Dr. Lightfoot says:

‘The places are infinite, where this name occurs amongst the Rabins, and they account him the prince of the devils’.

While no writer of the New Testament uses Rabbinical teaching either as a foundation, a source, or a buttress; they would not expect to be understood, if the whole of their congregation believed a certain term meant one thing, and they used it *without explanation* to indicate just the opposite. This would be contrary to all recognized obligations of the teacher to the taught, and this is observed by the mercy and righteousness of God throughout the range of Inspired Truth.

The fact that our Lord categorically asserted that His kingdom was not of this world, and that the people who heard Him speak, would understand by the title ‘the prince of this world’ a reference to Satan, we cannot but feel that there must be some ulterior purpose to be served by those who insist that the title in question in its three occurrences, refers to the Saviour Himself.

On thirty-three occasions the synoptic gospels use the word 'cast out' of devils or of unclean spirits. Matthew and Mark use it of the casting out of Satan, in an hypothetical case:

'If Satan cast out Satan' (Matt. 12:26);

'How can Satan cast out Satan?' (Mark 3:23).

John, however, uses no 'if', for the crisis had come and the prince of this world 'shall be cast out'.

Should any raise the objection, that Satan is still at large, and still apparently ruling in the affairs of this world, he should remember that the same objection can be brought against such a passage as that of Hebrews 2:14, and that the principle that supplies the correct answer in one case, supplies it in the other.

Associated with the casting out of the prince of this world, is the death of the cross, the instrument alike of Satan's extreme antagonism, and of his own undoing.

'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' (12:32,33).

We should first of all notice the emphatic pronoun with which the verse commences, and which places Christ, in direct antithesis with the prince of this world as previously mentioned.

Kago ean hupsotho. 'And I, if I be lifted up'.

Secondly we observe that the word *helkuo* 'draw' occurs only in John (five times) and in Acts (once).

'The word translated "draw" ... is always used in the New Testament of *drawing with force*, not merely exercising an attractive influence. John 18:10 uses it of the drawing of a sword; John 21:6-11 of the dragging of a net full of fish; Acts 16:19 of dragging Paul and Silas into the market place; Acts 21:30 of dragging Paul out of the temple; James 2:6 of dragging men before the judgment seats. To substitute the milder idea of "exercising an attractive influence" for the word "drag" would simply create nonsense. Are we to believe then that the Lord Jesus meant to say that by reason of His death and the manner of it, He would forcibly drag all towards Himself? Yes, that is so, but such a way of putting

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it may lead to false conclusions apart from the great safeguard - the context. The Lord had said:

"Now is a crisis (or judgment) of this world, now shall the prince of this world be cast out. AND I (*kago* emphatic, and in strong contrast), if I be lifted up from the earth, will drag all men toward Myself" (12:31,32).

Light upon the Lord's meaning will be found in Luke 11:20-23.

"If I by the finger of God cast out demons (cf. cast out the prince of this world), no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you. When the strong one fully armed guardeth his own court, his goods are in peace, but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him his whole armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils".

By the death of Christ all men are taken by force from the tyranny and bondage of the evil one. Contend as he will, a stronger than he has come upon him, and "through death has destroyed (or rendered powerless) him who has the strength of death, that is the devil" (Quoted from *The Berean Expositor*, Vol. 6, pp. 89,90).

A Warning (Isa. 6:9,10) and a Summary (John 12:44-50)

The twelfth chapter of John, as we have already observed, brings the first great half of the Gospel to a close. With the concluding words (12:42-50) the external testimony of the Lord comes to an end. The multitudes have acclaimed Him, the Greeks have sought Him, His hour has come. Before we reach the great summary of these closing verses we have to consider the place and purpose of the quotations from Isaiah, which constitute the sixth of the series of anticipation. These quotations are from Isaiah 53 and Isaiah 6 and are found in John 12:37-41.

The closing words of the preceding section supply a link with what has gone before, and they are these:

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' (John 12:35,36).

The first and last occurrences of the Greek word *katalambano* in John's Gospel are:

'And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness *comprehended* it not' (1:5).

'Lest darkness *come upon you*' (12:35).

Here, as it were, we are brought by the Evangelist back to where we started. He says in effect,

'If you do not *grasp* or *lay hold on* the light while it is with you, the day will come when the light being withdrawn darkness will *grasp* or *lay hold on you*'.

Once before, when rejection had reached a crisis, we read 'Jesus hid Himself' (8:59), and here at the close of the outer testimony, with the prophetic warning of approaching darkness, He 'did hide Himself', and from that day darkness has descended upon Israel and the Lord has been hid from their eyes.

It is therefore quite in accord with that wonderful fitness which so characterizes all Scripture, that it is John who reminds us of the day that is yet to dawn, when this same darkened and blinded people 'Shall look on Him Whom they pierced' (19:37), a day called 'The day of the Lord' when this same John says:

'Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him' (Rev. 1:7).

These references to darkness, light, rejection and hiding lead to the prophecy which is so intimately associated with the dispensational landmark of Acts 28. First of all Isaiah 53 is quoted:

'Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?' (12:38).

This passage is cited by Paul, in a context of rejection, unbelief and disobedience:

'But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. But I say, Have they not heard?

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Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. But I say, Did not Israel know? ... But to Israel He saith, All day long I have stretched forth My hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people' (Rom. 10:16-21).

The epistle to the Romans is the last epistle written before Paul became the prisoner of the Lord, and the Saviour became 'hid' from the eye of Israel. The other quotation from Isaiah which we also find in the testimony of Paul is quoted by him in Acts 28, where the people of Israel go out into their present period of blindness and the mystery is made known among the Gentiles.

This passage, Isaiah 6:9,10 has often been the subject of our meditations. It lies near the very heart of our peculiar testimony, in that its quotation always marks a crisis, and its last quotation, namely, at Acts 28, stands at the point in time when the dispensation of the 'kingdom of Israel' went into abeyance, and 'the parenthetical dispensation of the mystery' was given to Paul the prisoner of Jesus Christ for us Gentiles.

In the series on the Acts of the Apostles which may be found in *The Berean Expositor*, Volumes 24 to 33^{*}, we have given the dispensational bearing of this passage a fair consideration and we must leave the particular examination of the bearing of Isaiah 6:9,10 upon dispensational truth to this exposition of the Acts where it more clearly belongs, and so, with the following brief presentation of the place occupied by this important dispensational key in the unfolding of truth, we pass on to other matters awaiting us.

Isaiah 6:9,10

- | | | | |
|-----|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| (1) | Uttered by Isaiah. | The Kingdom passing to Babylon. | Daniel the prisoner of the Lord for the Gentiles. |
| (2) | Quoted by Christ in Matthew 13. | The King rejected. | The Mysteries of the Kingdom of heaven. |
| (3) | Quoted by John. | The light rejected. | External witness brought to an end, |

* Or see the book *From Pentecost to Prison* by the same author and publisher.

- (4) Quoted by Paul. Israel rejected. 'Jesus did hide Himself'.
The dispensation of the mystery.
Paul the prisoner of the Lord for us Gentiles.

We cannot leave this reference however, without pausing to read John's inspired comment:

'These things said Esaias, when he saw His glory, and spake of Him' (12:41).

Before Him, the Seraphim veiled their faces, before His glory the temple shook and the house was filled with smoke. His was the voice that spake to Israel, He was the King high and lifted up.

The doctrine of the Deity of Christ is so interwoven in the Scripture that to attempt to remove it, leaves the pages of Holy Writ as desecrated and spoiled, as does the attack of the Higher Critic upon the Divine Inspiration of the Written Word. The 'Jehovah' of Isaiah is the 'Jesus' of John.

'The Word was God' (John 1).

'Before Abraham was I am' (John 8).

'Isaiah ... saw His glory, and spake of Him' (John 12).

While it may defy the attempt of any writer to summarize with any sense of justice or adequacy the testimony of our Lord it has, in fact, been done by the Lord Himself. He was 'the Word', He is set forth in John pre-eminently as 'the Sent One', He reiterated the statement that the doctrine which He gave, and the words which He used were not His Own, but the Father's which sent Him. He declared that the great purpose for which He had been sent, was to lead men to see their need of 'life' and to give 'everlasting life' to all who believe on Him. In the last verse of the twelfth chapter therefore we find the Lord's own summary:

'And I know that His commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto Me, so I speak' (12:50).

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'In the beginning was the WORD' (1:1).

'So I SPEAK' (12:50).

This is the testimony of John's Gospel, wrought out before our eyes in the unfolding of truth that has occupied our hearts in the examination of the intervening chapters. The following analysis may help the reader in his meditations, but it is not to be taken as a literary structure.

A 44,45.

The intimate relationship and oneness of the One Sent, with Him Who Sent Him, is such that whoever believes on Christ, does not merely believe Him, but believes on the One that sent Him. This has a bearing upon the problem of the ages, a problem arising out of the fact that 'no man hath seen God at any time', for, continued Christ, 'He that seeth Me, seeth Him that sent Me'.

B 46-48.

He now takes this figure of 'sight' and its associations with 'believing', and links His words with the figure of 'light', and whereas in the opening of this message He had said 'He that believeth on Me, believeth not on Me, but on Him that sent Me', He now says that He Himself would not judge the unbeliever in the last day. 'He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My words, hath One that judgeth Him', this time however it is not, as above, 'Him that sent Me', but 'The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day'.

A 49.

And so, the Lord returns to the theme with which this section opens. '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'.

B 50.

In the corresponding member, B 46-48, we read: 'Whosoever believeth on Me should not abide in darkness'. 'I came ... not to judge the world, but to save the world' ... 'The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day'.

Now at the conclusion, the Saviour speaks positively. He said: 'I know that His commandment is life everlasting'. No commandment had as yet been given to the disciples. These await us in the second great section of John. The only commandment yet mentioned refers to the sacrificial death and glorious resurrection of the

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Saviour. 'Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life that I might take it again ... This commandment have I received of My Father' (10:17,18).

He Who was 'The Word', Who came to 'declare' Him that is invisible; He Who was the 'Word made flesh' Who came, so that in that body prepared for Him, He might make one sacrifice for sin for ever, He it is Whose word is life eternal, Whose word represents the very heart of the Father that sent Him, to receive which, and to acknowledge which, is the supreme purpose of this gospel, and to reject, cannot but spell condemnation, for whosoever rejects the Saviour's *Words*, rejects His *Work*, and rejects *the Father* that sent Him. Thus ends the outer section of John's Gospel. The Prologue tells of Him Who is 'The Word'. The sequel points to Him Who ever and always could say,

'Even as the Father said unto Me, SO I SPEAK' (12:50).

As we ponder this testimony is there one who does not feel that the words of Peter, found earlier in the same Gospel, express his own heart's feelings:

'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' (6:68,69).

CHAPTER 12

The Lord's Witness to 'His Own' (13:1 to 18:3)

A Foreview and an Approach

With the solemn words of chapter 12:44-50, the witness of the Lord to Israel comes to a close. With the opening of chapter 13, the Saviour turns to 'His own', and ministers to their need and to their encouragement while they are under the shadow of His withdrawal from them. Soon that devoted little band will encounter the hatred of the world, they will, in their new and lonely position, feel that they have been 'orphaned' (14:18 margin). Two outstanding promises are given for their encouragement; the Lord's return 'I will come again' (14:3), and the coming of the Comforter (14:26). The coming of the Spirit of Truth was one side of the disciples' equipment; another and very vital one is set forth in the symbolic washing of the disciples' feet.

When the seven deacons were chosen, as recorded in the sixth of Acts, we read:

'Look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost' (Acts 6:3).

Notice that the qualification 'of honest report' comes before the reference to 'the Holy Ghost'. Consequently, before the Saviour spoke of the coming of the Holy Ghost, 'He took a towel and girded Himself' teaching them the need for personal daily cleansing and for humility of mind in their service and in their relation one to another, in order that the coming of the Holy Ghost upon them might be effective and fruitful. In the opening chapter of the gospel, we read: 'He came unto His own, and His own received Him not' (1:11). Here, in this new section, we read: 'Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end' (13:1).

We must examine the meaning of this phrase 'unto the end' when we have made a survey of the passage as a whole, but we can rejoice immediately and without further examination as we remember how that love included Peter, even though he denied His Lord, and remember that love for His disciples even though it could be written at the time 'Then all His disciples forsook Him'.

In order that the reader may be enabled to visualize the true scope of this section we would direct attention for a moment to a passage with which most are familiar, namely Ephesians 3:1-13. Remember, that in the epistle to the Ephesians, Paul, as a sequel to the revelation given in chapter 2, makes an attempt to turn the subject into prayer, but is temporarily held back by a big parenthesis wherein he explains the distinctiveness of the mystery. The matter may be set out as follows:

- A 2:22. The church a 'habitation of God'.
- B 3:1. FOR THIS CAUSE.
- C 3:1-13. (The Parenthesis).
- B 3:14. FOR THIS CAUSE.
- A 3:15-21. The Prayer. 'Dwell in your hearts by faith'.

The reason why we have made this digression is because the same phenomenon meets us in John, chapters 13 to 17.

In the opening of the thirteenth chapter we have 'the hour come', and 'the betrayal' and we can read straight on to the great prayer of chapter 17. The disciples however were perplexed. There was much to explain, much assurance and comfort to administer, and so we have chapters 14,15 and 16, with their intervening teaching. The reader will discover upon closer study, that practically every feature that has been enlarged upon in these intervening chapters, is expressed in its essence in the great prayer of the seventeenth chapter. Chapters 13 to 17 may therefore be visualized thus:

A 13:1-3. The hour come. The theme commenced.

B 13:4 to 16:33. The Parenthesis wherein the disciples are instructed, encouraged and prepared.

A 17. The hour come. The theme resumed.

Without attempting an exhaustive comparison, let us observe a few outstanding instances where the high revelation of chapter 17 is anticipated and explained in the preceding chapters.

One element, namely, that of time, marks the whole section as one. There cannot, obviously, be two periods distinct from one another when it can be said that the hour for one event 'has come'.

The Time. 'Father, the hour is come ... now I am no more in the world ... and I come to Thee' (17:1,11).

'When Jesus knew that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father' (13:1).

The Purpose. 'Glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee ... And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was' (17:1,5).

'Therefore, when he was gone out (so reverting back to "the hour" of 13:1), Jesus said, Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him' (13:31).

The World. 'I am no more in the world, but these are in the world' (17:11).

'The world seeth Me no more' (14:19).

'I ... am come into the world: again, I leave the world' (16:28).

'Having loved His own which were in the world' (13:1).

The Hatred of the World. 'The world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world' (17:14).

'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' (15:19)

The Cleansing. ‘Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth’ (17:17).

‘Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you’ (15:3)

The Unity. ‘That they may be one, as we are one’ (17:11,22).

‘That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us’ (17:21).

‘My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him’ (14:23).

The Goal. ‘Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am’ (17:24).

‘I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also’ (14:3).

We believe that these seven items will prove to be sufficient to demonstrate the proposition we have put forward. Fuller study will but confirm and expand this suggestion. Before we leave this matter of comparison, between chapter 17 and chapters 13 to 16, there is one other feature that demands consideration, and that *by reason of its absence*. There is no more outstanding feature of chapters 13 to 16 than the promise of the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost. If our beliefs are modelled on the lines laid down by certain teachers or schools, we should place the baptism of the Spirit and the ministry of the Comforter as the most distinctive doctrine of the Church dispensation. Yet although the main teaching finds an echo and a concentration in chapter 17, *there is no reference* throughout that chapter to the Comforter which is the Holy Ghost. To some, such a fact would appear as a calamity, and its importance may be denied, but rightly understood it emphasizes the true position of the witness of the Spirit. In chapter 8 of Romans the Spirit is spoken of as a ‘firstfruits’, a pledge and an anticipation of the glorious harvest of resurrection, and in Ephesians 1:12-14 the Spirit is spoken of as an ‘earnest’, a pledge and foretaste of the glory that shall be revealed and enjoyed upon the redemption of the purchased possession. Consequently to see that the Holy Ghost is a link between the personal presence of the Saviour during the days of His flesh, and His personal presence when He returns for His own, is to see the ministry of the Comforter in a

scriptural light, and instead of looking upon the abiding of the Holy Ghost as an end, it will be seen as a means to an end, and that end the glory that fills chapter 17 of John with its light.

We must now attempt to put before the reader the structure of this great section, but we shall defeat our main object if we do more, in this preliminary survey, than give the barest outline. It will be our joyful task to fill in the details as the study proceeds. The structure of John 13 to 18:3 is given on the next page.

The structure forces upon our attention, three realities.

That whether present or absent, and whatever the conditions may be, the love of Christ for His own, like the love of the Father to Himself, was changeless.

That the hour had come, when He Who came from God, should return, but that He would as surely come again.

That the Lord was about to meet the culmination of Israel's rejection, sharpened and magnified by Satanic power in the betrayal by Judas, finally revealed as 'the son of perdition'.

The Lord's Witness to 'His Own'

- A 13:1-3. **a** The Lord loved His own.
 b The hour was come to depart unto the Father.
 (He was come from God and went to God.)
 c Betrayal by Judas.
- B 13:4 to 15:18. **d** Cleansing with water.
 e Judas (ye are not all clean).
 f The abodes, and the abiding.
 d Now are ye clean through the word.
 e The branch (withered like Judas).
 f Abide in Me, and I in you.
- A 15:19 to 17:12. **a** The world loves its own.
 b The hour is come ... I come to Thee.
 c The son of perdition (Judas lost).
- B 17:13-23. **d** Sanctify through Thy truth.
 e (No reference to Judas now).
 f Perfected into one.
- A 17:23 to 18:3. **a** Thou hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me.
 b Thou hast sent Me.
 c The Betrayal by Judas.

These three features necessitate some explanation of, and provision for, the interval while the disciples are left in a world that would hate them. The provisions are found in the cleansing of the word, and the enduement of the Spirit, their service being particularly that of 'witness' (15:26,27), with the ultimate object that the world may 'believe' and 'know' that the Saviour had been 'sent' (17:21,23) partly attained by the feeble witness of the disciples here on earth, but fully realized when they have been perfected into one, as the above passage from chapter 17 declares.

Here then is the approach prepared for the study of these sacred chapters, passages that have the sweet odour of incense clinging to

them, where worship must ever mingle with study, where holy things are near, where cleansing and sanctifying are uppermost, and glory through suffering the golden thread by which the subject is connected together.

The Specific Purpose of the Lord's Promise

We have demonstrated that chapters 13 to 17 is an organic unity, and that much of the teaching found in the first four of these chapters is expressed with sublime fulness in the fifth. We have seen that the structure emphasizes three great facts and two associated requirements. The facts are:

The unalterable love of the Lord for His own.

The imminence of His departure out of this world to the Father.

The Betrayal by Judas.

The central member, the Lord's departure, is governed, in its bearing upon the disciples, by the two flanking members. The disciples had the assurance that though He was personally absent from them, His love for them remained unchanged, even though the dreadful attack of Satan through Judas unveiled before their eyes the opposing hatred of the world.

During this period of the Lord's absence the two associated requirements are:

Personal sanctification, expressed in terms of washing, either as the washing of the feet, or by the washing of the water of the Word.

The necessity to 'abide' in the Lord and in His love.

This abiding is intimately associated with the Comforter, Whose ministry spans the gulf occasioned by the Lord's absence, and is an earnest of that perfect oneness which will be attained when the believer is 'with' the Lord and 'sees' and 'shares' His glory.

Thousands have drawn inexpressible comfort from the words of chapter 14 and if time lasts thousands more will do so. Nevertheless, it is certain that 14:1 is connected with 13:36-38 though few among those who draw comfort from the former take to themselves the sin and shame of Peter's denial. Again, thousands have taken to themselves the promise:

‘He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you’ (14:26).

Now it may be a blessed truth that, apart from the leading and enlightening of the Holy Spirit, none of us would be able to receive or perceive the truth, but of which of us can it be said:

‘He shall ... bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you’?

What has the Lord ever said ‘to us’ that we could ‘remember’ apart from the Holy Spirit? To the same effect are the words:

‘And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe’ (14:29).

‘But these things (i.e., being put out of synagogue and killed) 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’ (16:4).

While these words had a specific meaning for the disciples, they can only be taken in a very wide and general sense by ourselves. The same is true concerning the special work of the Comforter. The disciples were to bear witness ‘also’, ‘because ye have been with me from the beginning’ (15:27). These words were taken literally by the apostles, as Acts 1:21,22 will show, for the qualification is enforced by the words:

‘Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that He was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of His resurrection’.

There can be no spiritualizing of the Lord’s words of the seventeenth of John and the very literal interpretation of them in the first chapter of Acts reduced the number of persons eligible to fill Judas’ place to two.

To what passage did Peter refer when he stated in Acts 1:16, ‘this Scripture must needs have been fulfilled?’ The margin of our Bible gives Psalm 41:9, and this is the Psalm quoted by the Lord in John 13:18, which He followed up by the words: ‘Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am He’. Peter therefore, as recorded in Acts 1, ‘remembered’ what the Lord had

told him, and so could go forward with certainty in the appointment of Matthias.

Pentecost and its spiritual equipment of the twelve cannot be lifted out of the early chapters of the Acts and applied indiscriminately either to the church of the Gentiles, or to individual believers today, and the close connection between the 'Comforter' of John 14 to 16 and the 'promise of the Father' of the second of Acts, should make us pause before taking this promise to ourselves.

There is no uncertainty or ambiguity about the purpose and office of the *Paraklete* in John. It is not the doctrine of the sanctification by the Spirit that is there expressed or implied, but the fulfilment of a special work to meet a special need. We know no more than any other believer upon this subject, but we do know what these verses teach, and this teaching is binding upon us all. Even though we may have been familiar with the passage for years, let us refresh our minds as to what is there taught regarding the express purpose of the gift of the Comforter, carefully observing the context.

The Saviour assured His disciples that he who believed on Him should do greater works than those which He Himself had done, because He went to His Father (14:12). Moreover He promised that 'whatsoever' they asked the Father in His Name He would do, 'that the Father may be glorified in the Son' a phrase definitely associated with the great prayer of the seventeenth chapter. It is in this context that the Lord says:

'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' (14:16,17).

This Spirit, said the Lord, 'dwelleth with you (present), and shall be in you' (future).

The second reference is found in verse 26 of the fourteenth chapter, where the context speaks of the Lord's betrayal by Judas, and of the fact that He was going away.

'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' (14:26).

The third reference is:

‘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’ (15:26).

The fourth reference is:

‘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’. (16:7,8).

The fifth and last reference flows out of this, and is:

‘I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. 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’ (16:12,13,14).

The title given to the Comforter in these passages is ‘The Spirit of Truth’. His great office is to reveal the glorious fulness of Christ the Son, and those who are the special objects of His care are ‘witnesses’ and their witness fills the record of the Acts of the Apostles. This witness is indeed the Saviour’s expansion of His own words, for we read:

‘Wait for the promise of the Father ... ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth’ (Acts 1:4,8).

Throughout the record of the ministry of the apostles we meet with ‘witness’ or ‘testimony’. Matthias was chosen to be ‘a witness’ (Acts 1:22). The twelve were ‘witnesses’ (Acts 2:32; 3:15; 5:32 and 10:39,41), and this witness is associated with the Holy Ghost, Whom God has given to them that obey Him.

When once the special application of these specific features of these chapters (13 to 16) are perceived we can apply the principles of their precious teaching to ourselves, so far as our circumstances or

needs approximate to the time and occasion which drew forth these words of comfort. We shall thus be saved from attempting to associate these passages of Scripture with the church of the mystery.

If we cannot take Peter's place literally, we may nevertheless often find ourselves perilously near to the self-same denial of our Lord. At such moments, how precious will be the remembrance of love that 'loves to the end', and of the contextual exhortation 'let not your heart be troubled'.

Let us not fear to see Scripture as a whole, and also dispensationally. We cannot lose by accepting the truth, but we can easily be deceived by closing our eyes or, by 'wishful thinking', blunt the edge of inspired testimony.

We have now in measure prepared the way for the more intimate study of these precious revelations, and we must now consider the teaching to be found in the thirteenth chapter.

The Apostle and High Priest (13:1-4)

We have considered the structure of this great section as a whole, we have seen that chapter 17 is the goal, and the previous four chapters are preparatory to its teaching. We have found that these chapters primarily provide for the equipment and encouragement of the disciples to enable them to take up their task with faith and courage, even though their Lord and Master had been betrayed and was about to leave the earth and them for a little while.

We now return to the opening section of chapter 13, and commence our study in fuller detail. On doing so we find ourselves facing a problem that has exercised expositors in all times and has produced a great variety of answers and attempts to solve the question that arises. We refer to the record here of the Supper at which our Lord washed the disciples' feet.

To consider all that is essential in connection with the Lord's Supper and the Passover, the Passover Feast partaken of by the Lord, and His own Sacrifice as the true Passover Lamb, would require so lengthy an examination of the testimony of the four gospels, that it would hold up this exposition unduly. Yet, to deal with the matter cursorily, would be an insult to the Divine Author, and also supply just cause for suspicion on the part of those who oppose our attitude

regarding the Lord's Supper. We therefore put the matter as briefly as possible here. All that we will do at the moment is to put before the reader one or two items found in this chapter, that make it impossible for the supper there recorded to have been 'the Lord's Supper' recorded by the other Evangelists. This Supper cannot be the Passover Supper for:

Verse 1 says it was '*Before* the feast of the Passover'.

Matthew 26:14-16 relates how Judas went to the Chief Priests and covenanted with them to betray the Saviour for thirty pieces of silver, *after which*, arrangements were made for keeping the Passover in the room indicated in verses 17-19.

John 13:29 tells us that some thought that Judas left the supper early in order to 'buy things' needed for the feast, which proves that the supper at which the disciples sat when they thought this, could not have been 'the feast' for which Judas was *about to* provide.

We understand John to be speaking here of the supper given *at Bethany*, described in the previous chapter. There, *a woman* anoints the head of the Lord, here *He* washes the disciples' feet, and it was here in this home where the Saviour had often found an asylum that the precious teaching (of this section) and the holy prayer of chapter 17 were uttered.

We do not pretend to have proved our case, we simply give enough data to satisfy the earnest student that there is something here that at least challenges inquiry, but as we have said already we are more concerned at the moment with the teaching of these chapters than proving exactly *where* and precisely *when* that teaching was uttered.

'Now before the feast of the passover, Jesus knowing 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. And during supper, the devil having already 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 came forth from God, and goeth unto God, riseth from supper' (13:1-4 R.V.).

We have quoted the Revised Version because it follows the inspired wording more closely than does the Authorized Version here. There is no need for the word 'when' in the opening sentence. Dr. Weymouth's version is too wide to be taken as a *translation* but it gives the effect of the original in modern speech:

'Now just before the Feast of the Passover this incident took place. Jesus knew that the hour had come ...'.

It will also be observed that where the Authorized Version reads 'supper being ended', the Revised Version reads 'during supper'. Weymouth's version reads, 'While supper was proceeding' and to this agree most modern commentators.

Ginomai the verb translated in the Authorized Version of verse 2 'ended', means 'to become', and is translated 'to make' (1:3), 'come to pass' (13:19). The usage in Matthew 26:6 best illuminates the intention of John 13:2 '*when Jesus was in Bethany*', where there is the idea of 'process' or 'becoming', not something over and finished.

We must now go back to the beginning of this record, having faced, if not disposed of, the chronological problem for the time being, and ponder the weightier matters that are put before us.

The great act of humility about to be examined, was in the full knowledge of the Lord's Deity. It is a lovely thing for one fellow mortal to stoop to serve another, but here it is the Lord of glory in all the consciousness that 'He came from God and went to God' by Whom this deed is performed.

The word used by John, translated 'to depart', is *metabaino* and is used by him four times.

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| A 5:24. | Is passed from death unto life. |
| B 7:3. | Depart hence, and go into Judaea. |
| B 13:1. | That He should depart out of this world. |
| A 1 John 3:14. | We have passed from death unto life. |

As there are twenty-one Greek words in the New Testament that are translated 'depart', it is evident that a variety of ideas can attach to the word. When Paul contemplated the prospect of 'departing' and being with Christ (Phil. 1:23) he used *analuo*, a word meaning 'to return, to be analysed, to be resolved into constituent elements, or, as in the third of Genesis, to return to the dust'. This is significant, for Paul like all the rest of mankind 'saw corruption' and awaits immortality at the resurrection, whereas the Saviour 'saw no corruption' but after three days 'passed from death' unto the Father, without passing through the *analysis* referred to by Paul (2 Tim. 4:6).

We dwell lovingly on the words 'the finished work of Christ', but many times we mentally see no further than the cross. True, at the cross one great and glorious part of His work was 'finished', but

1 Corinthians 15 makes it abundantly clear that without the subsequent resurrection, salvation would be impossible of realization. Consequently, 'the finished work of Christ' must include the resurrection. This however is not all. Hebrews 3:1 exhorts the reader to 'Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus'. Here we have the full circle of His gracious ministry. As the 'Apostle' or 'The Sent One', we see Him leaving the glory of the Father, taking upon Himself the form of a servant, stooping finally to the lowest humiliation of all, the death of the cross. Then we see Him as the High Priest, rising and ascending up where He was before, with the evidence that His sacrifice had been offered, there to sit at the right hand of the Majesty on High. This complete cycle is found in more places than one in John's Gospel. We have already drawn attention to the many references in this Gospel to Christ as 'The Sent One', we must supplement this by adding the references which reveal Him consciously and intentionally preparing to 'ascend up where He was before'. We have in the chapter before us, the statements:

'His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father' (13:1).

'Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God, and went to God' (13:3).

Much earlier than this we find references to the ascension, for example, as early as the third chapter we read:

'No man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven' (3:13).

We do not pause to discuss the very difficult problems raised by the closing words of this verse, the reader will find them considered in some measure of detail in its place in the orderly exposition of the passage. Here we are but gathering up the references. So we pass on to chapter 6, and hear the challenge:

'What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before?' (6:62).

Again, there is an allusion to the ascension in chapter 7:

'Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto Him that sent Me. Ye shall seek Me, and shall not find Me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come' (7:33,34).

What a contrast this statement is with that in chapter 14:

‘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’ (14:2,3).

This, as we have already seen, is gathered up in all its blessed fulness in the prayer of chapter 17:

‘Now I am no more in the world ... and I come to Thee ... and now come I to Thee ... that they also ... be with Me where I am ... ‘ (17:11,13,24).

This ‘ascension’ is not so much the visible ascension from the Mount of Olives that took place some forty days after the resurrection of the Lord, but the immediate presentation of Himself in the Father’s presence, as soon as the resurrection was accomplished. For this aspect, this most tremendous and important aspect, we are indebted to John’s Gospel.

‘Touch Me not; for I am *not yet* ascended to My Father: but go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God’ (20:17).

A week later, instead of saying ‘touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended’, the same Lord said to Thomas: ‘Reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side’ (20:27). All this is implied in the preface of chapter 13 by the symbolic act of washing the disciples’ feet, for thus that gracious ministry is introduced.

The Spiritual Significance of the Cleansing (13:1-18)

Such is the infirmity of the mind, that both in common speech and in the higher realm of theology and doctrine, symbols have remained untranslated and accepted, instead of being seen as types and shadows of deeper unseen verities. This has happened to the chief symbol of the Christian faith, the Cross, until the spiritually minded turn away from cross and crucifix with abhorrence. It happened in days gone by, when the brazen serpent, wondrous symbol of redeeming grace had to be smashed to pieces and called *Nehushtan* ‘a piece of brass’, to save the people from idolatry (2 Kings 18:4).

When first we read the record that is now before us, our minds are largely filled with the act of washing, but if we patiently and

prayerfully study this record we shall realize that this washing has a 'meaning', and that it was the meaning both of the act itself and the spirit that prompted it that was the prime thought in the mind of the Lord.

Apart from a close and repeated reading of the passage, which the reader should most certainly do for himself, there is no better way of showing the prominence and insistence of this matter of meaning, than by exhibiting the structure. We discover that the washing of the disciples' feet is given its *symbolic meaning*, and its *spiritual teaching*, and that the whole narrative is an alternation of the fact and purpose of the washing, with the idea of 'knowing'. We therefore place before the reader the structure of the passage:

The Washing of the Disciples' Feet (13:1-18)

- A 1-3. *Jesus knew.*
- B 4-6. The *actual washing*. He riseth, He laid aside His garments.
- C 7. What I do thou *knowest not* now, but thou shalt *know* hereafter.
- B 8-10. The *symbolic meaning* of the washing. 'If I wash thee not'.
- A 11. *He knew.*
- B 12- The *actual washing*. He was set down again, and had taken His garments.
- C -12. *Know ye* what I have done to you.
- B 13-16. The *spiritual teaching* of the washing 'If I ... have washed'.
- C 17. If ye *know* these things, happy are ye if ye do them.
- A 18. *I know.*

Three times it says of the Lord that He knew. He knew that His hour was come and that all things were given into His hands; He knew who should betray Him; He knew whom He had chosen. It was not so, however, with the disciples. They did not know the significance of the Lord's act at the time, but they were to know it later. He asked them 'know ye what I have done to you?' and finally, 'If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them'.

Here again we pause to draw attention to the blinding effect of mistaking the outward act for the inward intention. Had the Lord merely thought of the outward act of washing the disciples' feet, He could not have said: 'Know ye what I have done to you?' for they did, and Peter was their spokesman, saying 'Dost Thou wash my feet?' The Lord must have referred to the spiritual significance of the act. To set apart one day a year as a ritual act for the washing of a few beggars' feet, hides from the eyes the perpetual lesson of humility and service behind a stage play of humility in which none are really deceived as to the character of the spectacular act. The new commandment (*mandatum*) degenerates to the ceremony of *Maundy Thursday*, and is, in this country, represented now by the Maundy

pennies, interesting from a collector's point of view, but of little or no spiritual value.

In an Eastern house it was the office of the lowliest servant to wash the feet of the inmates or visitors. When David would celebrate the completeness of the conquest of his foes, he can think of no figure of servitude so strong as that which speaks of this very office, 'Moab is my *washpot*; over Edom will I cast out my shoe' (Psa. 60:8).

In full consciousness of His High Office and Glory, knowing that all things had been given into His hands (so that He was Lord of all) and that He was come from God (so had shared the glory of the Father before time began) and that He went to God (to be glorified with the Father with that glory which He had before the world was), He the Lord of all, rose from the chief place which He naturally occupied at supper and laid aside His garments. The significance of this act, this 'laying aside', may be better perceived if we note that in verse 37 Peter (possibly in a true desire to follow His Lord's example) uses it when he says 'I *will lay down* my life for Thy sake', and this meaning is endorsed by the Lord in the next occurrence of the word:

'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man *lay down* his life for his friends' (15:13).

The association of the above passage with the symbolic act of washing will be better appreciated when we arrive at that chapter in the course of our exposition. The Lord having divested Himself of His outer garments, 'took a towel, and girded Himself', adopting the insignia of the lowliest servant of the house. The lesson which the Lord intended His disciples to learn, and without which Pentecost itself would be empty and vain, is restated for the Church today in the Epistle to the Philippians:

‘Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross’ (2:5-8).

It appears from the record that the Lord washed the feet of several of the disciples in silence, before coming to Peter. As on other occasions, Peter uttered the unspoken thoughts of the rest, ‘Peter saith unto Him, Lord, dost Thou wash my feet?’ The Lord answered, ‘What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter’, but this apparently was lost on Peter, who, pursuing his original thought and feeling said, ‘Thou shalt never wash my feet’.

The word ‘never’ is of course, in English, a contracted form of ‘not ever’ and much the same is found in the original expression used in the New Testament. ‘Not unto the age’ would be the literal rendering, but, as the poet has said, ‘A little learning is a dangerous thing’. In Mark 3:29, where the same term is used, there has been an attempt on the part of some to teach that the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost has no forgiveness unto the ages but that it will be forgiven when the age has run its course. If this be the true interpretation of Mark 3:29, it must also be the true interpretation of John 8:51 where instead of reading, ‘If a man keep My saying, he shall never see death’, we must read that such a believer ‘shall not see death until the age’, *and then he will*. Needless to say those who advocate this doctrine from Mark 3:29 are silent as to the implication of this interpretation in John 8:51. The same may be said of the other references in John 4:14; 10:28; 11:26. To introduce the doctrine of the ‘ages’ into this idiom is to betray truth and abuse language. Peter had no idea of the ages in his mind. He simply declared in the strongest terms he knew that the Lord should never wash his feet. Upon this, the Saviour lifted the act of washing into a higher plane, saying, ‘If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me’ (13:8) and, as quick as a flash, impetuous Peter swung round to the other extreme, saying ‘Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head’.

While we cannot help entering into the revulsion of feeling that caused Peter so completely to contradict himself in the horror of being deprived of a part with the Lord, we must realize that he had

contradicted a fundamental of the faith, which the Lord immediately sets right,

'He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit' (13:10).

We must pause at this solemn yet glorious pronouncement in order that its truth may be fully understood. First, we must bear for a moment, a little note on grammar. The 'perfect tense' of a verb, is generally expressed in English by the use of the auxiliary 'to have'. Many times the perfect tense of the Greek original is veiled in the English translation. For example, instead of reading 'it is written' we should read in many passages 'it hath been written'. The force of this tense can be easily understood whether we have a knowledge of grammar or not. When Pilate said: 'What I have written I have written', the most illiterate among his hearers would know that he meant them to understand that what he had written in the past, remained unalterable and in full force in the present.

In John 13:10 the words translated 'he that is washed' should read 'he that hath been washed', with the implication that this washing, having once been accomplished, remains effective and unaltered by the passing of time. This however only settles one difficulty to create another. For the Lord immediately introduces an exception saying 'save to wash his feet'. Here, however, it is needful to recognize that there are two words used in this passage, both translated 'wash'.

It is not reasonable to expect that we can discover the truth embedded in these references to 'diverse baptisms' if distinctions which would be clear to the Jews are ignored by us. The two words for 'wash' in this passage are *louo* and *nipito*. *Louo* is used of washing the 'body' (Heb. 10:22,23), *nipito* is confined to the washing of the hands, the feet, and the eyes and face (presumably) of the man born blind. The best comment on the distinctive words for washing, will be found in the Septuagint rendering of Leviticus 15:11:

'... and hath not *rinsed* his hands (*nipito*) in water, he shall *wash* his clothes (*pluno*), and *bathe* himself (*louo*) in water'.

'He that hath been bathed', said the Lord, 'needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit'. The Jew, before setting out to partake of a feast, would 'bathe' himself completely. He would, however, be under the necessity of 'washing his feet' to remove the

soil of contact with the road by reason of his journey. The believer, before setting out on the pilgrimage of life which will end in the glory with His Lord, will have been completely bathed, or as Colossians 1:22 restates the truth in doctrinal form:

‘In the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in His sight’.

Contact with the world and its ways, however, will necessitate a daily cleansing, and John, who records *the symbolic* act in his gospel, restates it in *doctrinal* terms in his epistle (1 John 1:7). It is very evident that the words used in 13:10 do not refer to the actual washing by water, but to the spiritual significance of that washing, for the Lord added to what we have already quoted:

‘and ye are clean, but not all. For He knew who should betray Him; therefore said He, Ye are not all clean’ (13:10,11).

Now it is obvious, that had the Lord omitted Judas, from the feet washing, the disciples would have had no doubt as to the person of the betrayer, but it is evident that no such distinction was made. If the feet of Judas were washed with the rest it is equally obvious that no amount of ceremonial washing, even though performed by the Lord Himself, could have the slightest effect upon the recipient. The inner and spiritual cleansing is the only real washing we can ever know, the question of whether he is or is not baptized or otherwise ceremonially cleansed being entirely a matter of dispensation - one dispensation will be characterized by the presence of ceremonies and ordinances, another will be equally characterized by their absence.

The Covenant of Bread (13:18-30)

The Betrayal

We have seen the significance of ‘washing’, we must now note the close association of ‘humility’ with ministry.

This inner section is primarily the preparation of the apostles for the great work to be inaugurated at Pentecost. They must be clean vessels that are used in the service of the Lord. The Spirit of Truth Who was to come as the Comforter was the ‘Holy’ Spirit, and the believer, however ignorant or lowly, must at least be clean to entertain such a guest.

'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' (13:12-15).

At first reading 'Ye also ought to wash one another's feet', focuses our attention on the actual matter of foot washing; a further and closer reading takes us nearer to the heart of the subject. Few of the readers of these pages have washed the feet of other believers, yet, they feel no qualms of conscience, they do not feel that they have seriously failed in the first lessons of love. The Lord points to the foot washing as an act of lowliness. He introduces it with a reminder that the disciples called Him 'Master and Lord', and institutes the comparison between Himself, the Lord and Master, and themselves the servants. He tells them that He had given them an example, that they should do for one another as He had done for them. The inner lesson is further stressed by the words that follow:

'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' (13:16,17).

When the apostle Paul gave a résumé of his ministry to the elders of the church of Ephesus, he did not call attention at first to his faithfulness, or his zeal, his sufferings or his revelations, the first note struck being his 'humility'.

'Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all *humility of mind*' (Acts 20:18,19).

This 'humility of mind' was not a mere attitude, it expressed itself in humble service, a service that many a teacher far lower in the scale would have felt beneath his dignity to attempt.

'Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me' (Acts 20:34).

This same spirit is uppermost in the instruction given in Galatians 6:1 :

‘Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted’.

When the apostle Paul knew that his hour was come, he too gave earnest instructions to his son in the faith, and among other things said:

‘the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men ... in meekness instructing ...’ (2 Tim. 2:24,25).

On more than one occasion the Saviour had to remind His disciples that true greatness was not to be conceived in the spirit of the world’s tyrannies and oppression.

‘Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many’ (Matt. 20:25-28).

We have already seen from the structure, that verses 1-18 make a complete section, consequently the betrayal of the Lord by Judas forms an integral part.

It will be remembered that the structure of the foot washing threw into prominence the ‘meaning’ that was behind the actual incidents of water, basin and towel, and how the word ‘to know’ punctuated the structure, (page 376). We now turn our attention to the betrayal of Christ. We have very probably wondered at some time or other, just exactly what the Lord intended Judas to understand when He gave him the ‘sop’ or morsel from the table.

If we will but allow the structure to speak we shall see for ourselves that it was forcing Judas to realize that he was breaking the covenant of bread, he was doing something forbidden by the unwritten law of the East. Traveller after traveller has brought back stories of how some robber sheik, who though he would have had no hesitation in slitting a man’s throat for the sake of a small reward, yet has honoured the covenant of bread, protected the traveller who had eaten with him, and gone out of his way to abide by this unwritten custom. Here is the structure, which speaks for itself:

The Betrayal (13:18-30)

- A 18. **a** He that eateth bread with Me. *Covenant of bread.*
 b Heel lifted against Me.
- B 19-25. **c** Jesus, troubled in spirit.
 d One of you shall betray Me.
 c Disciples in doubt.
 d Ask who it should be.
26. **a** He it is, to whom I shall give a sop. *Covenant of bread.*
 b He gave it to Judas Iscariot.
- B 27-29. **c** After the sop Satan entered into him.
 d That thou doest.
 c No man knew for what intent.
 d Some thought ... bag.
- A 30. **a** He then having received the sop. *Covenant of bread.*
 b Went immediately out: and it was night.

It is noteworthy that when Christ quoted Psalm 41 He omitted the words of David, who said of Ahithophel, 'whom I trusted', for it is written, that He knew who should betray Him, even though He had included Judas in the number of His followers.

'He that eateth bread with Me hath lifted up his heel against Me'
 (quoting Psalm 41:9).

David called Ahithophel 'mine own familiar friend', or as the margin indicates 'Heb. *the man of my peace*', as the margin of Obadiah 7 indicates also. This refers to the salutation given by a friend 'peace be with thee', accompanied by the kiss of peace. Judas acted this out to the letter, for in Matthew 26:49 in the very act of betrayal he still kept up the appearance of 'the man of peace' saying, 'Hail, Master; and kissed Him'.

This quotation from the Psalm was given by Christ to confirm the apostles' faith and to direct their action later.

'Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am He' (13:19).

There are two most important lessons to be learned from this utterance, quite apart from the many subsidiary arguments that occur to different readers. The first is that, instead of the approaching betrayal

by Judas shaking the disciples' faith, it should confirm it. Not only was the birth at Bethlehem a fulfilment of the Prophets, but so also was the massacre of the innocents. Not only were the pleasant, the happy, the homely, the gentle events of the Saviour's life spoken before by prophets, but the bitterness of the cross was foreknown, the words of the Psalmist finding their complete fulfilment in the cry, 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?' John, mindful always of the purpose of his record, namely, that those who read should believe that Jesus is the Christ, adduces the betrayal of David by Ahithophel as one of many prophecies which point out the Saviour as the great fulfilment of them all, and which prove that He is the Messiah. Secondly, when the time drew near for the fulfilment of the promise of the Father, and for the vacancy to be filled which had been left by the fall of Judas, Peter, who had shared with the others the ministry of the Lord, declared:

'This Scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus' (Acts 1:16).

The question of the appointment of Matthias lies outside the present exposition, but the reader will find it fully discussed in the articles dealing with the Acts, and in a series of articles entitled 'Apostolic Mistakes' in *The Berean Expositor* (Vols. 6 & 7).

The words of Christ 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray Me' (13:21), was received by the disciples with consternation.

The apostle whom Jesus loved, commonly supposed to be John himself, was so placed at the supper that he reclined with his head nearest to the Lord 'leaning on Jesus' bosom'. Peter was evidently some little distance away, as has already been indicated by the order of the foot washing, and he 'beckoned' across the heads of the others, and in an inaudible whisper said to John, 'Ask Him'. The answer, which we may read, was for the ear of John only: 'He it is, to whom I shall give a sop'.

All this time, Judas was free to repent. The devil had indeed put it into his heart to betray the Lord, but the act was not yet inevitable. He took the sop, however, and he knew the symbolism of that act. He had eaten bread with the Lord. He was in covenant with Him as friend. And so come the dreadful words, 'And after the sop Satan entered into

him' (13:27). The die was now cast. Judas had passed that line which divides the saved from the lost:

'He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy' (Prov. 29:1).

It had happened to Pharaoh, it was now to happen to Judas. If Judas betrayed his Master, that Master never betrayed him. Judas had accompanied the Lord through His ministry. He had been one of two, when the Lord sent His disciples out in pairs. No sign was given that Judas was 'a devil'. He performed the same miracles as the rest. He spoke with the same authority, he had every encouragement to repent. The disciples even after the revelation that had thrown them into such self-examination, did not suspect Judas. He had the bag, was therefore highly trusted, and they supposed he had gone out to make preparation for the approaching feast. There is something awful about the concluding words of this section:

'He then having received the sop went immediately out: AND IT WAS NIGHT' (13:30).

We shall see the bearing of these words on the next section when we come to examine it, but most readers can feel its dread significance without any comment of ours.

The Essential Meaning of 'Glory' (O.T. usage, 13:31 to 14:31)

The fourteenth chapter opens with such words of comfort that it is quite understandable that it should have come to be considered a jewel, complete in itself. How many sore hearts and hurt minds have been comforted by its message no man can compute. Nevertheless one moment's thought would lead us to see that it cannot be isolated from the rest of the Gospel. There are no chapter divisions in the original, and the avowed object of the writer is given, not at the close of chapters 12 or 13, but at the close of chapter 20, and consequently must include chapter 14 in its scope.

If we ignore for a moment the chapter heading, and the space occupied by the introductory note given in our Authorized Version we shall see the connection in a clearer light:

'I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied Me thrice. Let not your heart be troubled ... ' (13:38; 14:1).

The prophecy and preparation for the betrayal of the Lord has been considered, and the closing words of the record were ominous:

‘He then having received the sop went immediately out: AND IT WAS NIGHT’ (13:30).

The new section, which we shall discover includes chapter 14, commences here, but commences with a restatement of this movement of Judas.

‘Therefore, *when he was gone out*, Jesus said, NOW is the Son of Man glorified’ (13:31).

The reader could step from this verse over to the first verse of chapter 17, and apart from being conscious of a restatement of the theme, he would be able to read straight on, as intervening chapters are in a measure parenthetical, full of precious teaching and indispensable though they be. This connection of theme can be better appreciated if set out thus:

Paranetical Chapters, 14 to 16**John 13**

'Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him' (31,32).

John 17

'Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee ... I have glorified Thee on the earth ... and now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was' (1-5).

The English language is rich in synonyms, and there is an unconscious tendency on the part of any writer or speaker, to avoid the repetition of any one word unless some very important reason demands it. Most readers of John 13:31,32 are conscious of a slight feeling of bafflement as they hear the repetition of the word 'glorify' and by fixing the mind upon this phenomenon, may miss the essential purpose of this repetition.

At some time during the exposition of this section we shall have to challenge the reader's conception of 'glory', and as the two verses just quoted are of such importance it seems that we could not do better than make the attempt here and now, to arrive at a Scriptural meaning of this word 'glory'. The mental image conjured up by the word 'glory' is that of something magnificent, something of dazzling brightness, of overwhelming splendour. The word is used of king and kingdom, of mighty moments in a nation's history, and only by an accommodation of language can the word 'glory' be used of anything low, little or mean.

When we come to the usage of the word in the Authorized Version we find that it translates quite a number of different Hebrew and Greek words which, though adding to our difficulty on the one hand, enables us to realize on the other that the idea embodied in the word 'glory' is not simple but rather very complex. Taking the Old Testament words as they occur in alphabetical order, we find the following:

(1) *Addereth*. 'Their glory is spoiled' (Zech. 11:3). The only other occurrence of this particular word in Zechariah is 13:4, where we read 'neither shall they wear a rough *garment* to deceive'. This word

addereth is generally translated 'mantle' as in the references to 'the mantle of Elijah' (2 Kings 2:8,13,14), and means particularly a robe or mantle that denoted the honourable office of a prophet. *Addereth* is the feminine form of *adar* 'to become honourable' as in Exodus 15:6, 'Thy right hand, O LORD, is become *glorious* in power: Thy right hand, O LORD, hath dashed in pieces the enemy', and as in verse 11 'Who is like Thee, *glorious* in holiness'. Here it is obvious that the 'glory' of the Lord is *His triumph* over Pharaoh, there was, so far as Scripture is concerned, no visible 'glory' in the generally accepted sense of the word. This is an important point which we press upon the reader's attention, as it will recur during our investigation.

(2) *Hadar*. 'Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the LORD, and for the *glory* of His majesty' (Isa. 2:10,19,21). *Hadar* in the first place means to adorn, decorate as in Isaiah 63:1, '*glorious* in His apparel', where it refers to the 'dyed garments' of the mighty conqueror. As clothing is used not merely for covering, protection and warmth, but as insignia of office, this word takes on itself the secondary meaning of 'to honour' as in Lamentations 5:12, Leviticus 19:15. This sense of 'insignia' is probably intended in the expressions 'crowned with glory and *honour*', 'honour and *majesty*', 'the *beauties* of holiness'.

(3) *Hod*. '*Glory* and honour are in His presence' (1 Chron. 16:27).

'Who hast set Thy *glory* above the heavens' (Psa. 8:1).

'He shall bear the *glory*, and shall sit and rule upon His throne; and He shall be a priest upon His throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both' (Zech. 6:13).

Lexicographers are not in agreement as to the original root of this word. We must therefore be content with the testimony of its usage.

(4) *Kabod*. 'Ye shall tell my father of all my *glory*' (Gen. 45:13).

'The *glory* of the LORD abode upon Mount Sinai ... like devouring fire' (Exod. 24:16,17).

'The *glory* of the LORD filled the tabernacle' (Exod. 40:34).

'All the earth shall be filled with the *glory* of the LORD' (Num. 14:21).

This word is the one that is translated 'glory' in the Old Testament more times than any other word, and can be taken as the word that most fully represents the English equivalent.

The primary meaning of *kabod* is 'weight' or 'heaviness' as in 1 Samuel 4:18, and in another form *kabed* means 'the liver' because the liver is the heaviest organ of the body. This Hebrew idea of 'glory' will be found in the language used by that 'Hebrew of Hebrews' the apostle Paul, who speaks of 'the *weight* of glory'.

There are other words which are rendered 'glory' by the Authorized and other versions, but these four give a fairly comprehensive presentation of the intention of the writers. Let us examine what we have seen before passing to the New Testament. We have seen that 'glory' can be a symbolic mantle, the insignia of high position, the 'glory' that attaches to the Prophetic office, or that of the successful leader in battle. Now, velvet and ermine, cloth of gold and scarlet, give an appearance of splendour, yet they have been accepted by man in all ages as an external symbol of an inner and higher worthiness. The beautiful garments of the Priests, robes of 'glory and beauty'; the significant mantle of the Prophet, and the Regalia of the King, are each of them but external representations of the honour, dignity, majesty and worth which is supposed to exist in invisible reality beneath the surface. *Kabod* is the word that will repay the closest study. We have quoted a few of the 196 occurrences of the word in the Hebrew Scriptures as a sample of its import.

Joseph the great type of Christ, seated at the right hand of Pharaoh, bids his brethren tell his father of all his glory which he had in his exaltation in Egypt. If Joseph's brethren had described their brother's robes down to the last stitch, 'all the glory' of Joseph would still have been unsung, had they not gone on to tell of his deeds and the honour that had been put upon him. Moreover, this 'glory' was to a large extent in the nature of a vindication. Early in his life Joseph had had premonitions of the glory that awaited him, but when he told his brethren and even his father, they either hated or rebuked him (Gen. 37).

We press upon the reader's attention this one thought which comes out very strongly in Joseph's case, namely, that of 'vindication'. The

reason for this note will be understood better after we have become acquainted with the root meaning of the word used in the New Testament. This element of 'vindication' appears very strongly in the context of Numbers 14:21, one of the examples of *kabod* cited above. The people of Israel had so far failed that the Lord said:

'I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee (Moses) a greater nation and mightier than they' (Exod. 14:12).

Moses interceded not merely for the people, but for the honour of the Lord Himself, saying 'Then the Egyptians shall hear it ... the nations that have heard the fame of Thee will speak .. '. The Lord harkened to Moses and pardoned as he had pleaded, but, added:

'As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD' (14:21).

When at last the Millennial kingdom is set up on the earth, it will then be true as is written:

'They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea' (Isa. 11:9).

'For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea' (Hab. 2:14).

Here it will be seen that all the blessings of peace and restoration are directly associated with 'the knowledge of the glory of the Lord', which must be something far more radical than mere splendour or magnificence. Adam too at his creation was 'crowned ... with glory and honour' (Psa. 8:5), but there is nothing in the record to indicate any external splendour or magnificence - 'the glory' residing rather in the honour and dignity of being in the image and likeness of God, and exhibited primarily in the 'dominion' given to man over the works of God's hands.

Fuller light however awaits us in the New Testament. We must examine the Greek word translated 'glory' and its root and derivatives together with the occasions where glory is said to be revealed, manifested, sought or realized.

The Essential Meaning of 'Glory' (N.T. usage)

The reader will remember that we are making a pause in our exposition of the Gospel in order that we may acquaint ourselves with the essential meaning of the word 'glory', a word that together with the form 'glorify' is a characteristic feature of chapters 13 to 17. We have done little more than survey the usage of the words translated 'glory' in the Old Testament but have found sufficient to suggest as a tentative inner meaning of the idea of glory, not splendour and magnificence merely, but splendour and magnificence *attributed* and *merited*, accompanied with the feeling that the Divine honour has been *vindicated*, and that, as the Psalmist has said and as Paul has quoted:

'That Thou mightest be *justified* in Thy sayings, and mightest *overcome* when Thou art judged' (Rom. 3:4; cf. Psa. 51:4).

The Greek word for 'glory' is *doxa*, a word with which every reader will be familiar in the combined form 'doxology'. We cannot study the Greek word *doxa* however without taking note of its pedigree and family connections, and therefore we must go back to the root word from which *doxa* is derived, and observe, moreover, the other derivations from that same root which will give further light upon its essential meaning.

The root word from which *doxa* is derived is the verb *dokeo* 'to think'. Here again, if we would be clear at the start we must 'distinguish things that differ', for the English verb 'to think' connotes a variety of mental processes, of which *dokeo* represents but one.

We may think by 'reckoning through' or 'reasoning' *dialogizomai* (Luke 12:17).

We may think by 'pondering' or 'holding in mind' *enthumeomai* (Matt. 1:20).

We may think by 'accounting' or 'esteeming' *hegeomai* (Acts 26:2).

We may think by 'forming a judgment' *krino* (Acts 26:8).

We may think by 'reckoning' or 'reasoning' *logizomai* (Rom. 2:3).

We may think by 'perceiving' *noeo* (Eph. 3:20).

We may think by 'following the custom' *nomizo* (Matt. 5:17).

Also in many other ways, but none of these processes of thought are associated with *dokeo*.

The essential meaning of *dokeo* is 'to seem', and it comes as a shock at first to discover that it may indicate mere 'seeming' as in Galatians 2:6, 'these who seemed to be somewhat', but we must remember that the fact that such a thing as 'vainglory' but enhances the true and genuine thing. So we have *dokeo* giving us the idea of 'reputation', but whether that reputation be valid or mere 'seeming' it is not in the nature of the word itself to decide.

We come closer to the essential meaning of 'glory' when we observe the next derivatives namely, the words *dokimos*, *dokimazo*, *dokimion*, *dokime* and *dokimasia*. Here the element of 'test', 'trial' and consequent 'approval' is uppermost. Let us furnish an example of each word:

'Study to shew thyself *approved* unto God' *dokimos* (2 Tim. 2:15).

'The *trial* of your faith' *dokimion* (1 Pet. 1:7 also Jas. 1:3).

'Ye know the *proof* of him' *dokime* (Phil. 2:22).

'Let a man *examine* himself', '*Prove* all things', 'Though it be *tried* with fire' *dokimazo* (1 Cor. 11:28; 1 Thess. 5:21; 1 Peter 1:7).

Here the idea of assaying, weighing, proving, is uppermost, and the 'glory' that ensues from such sifting and probing will be no more 'seeming' but the very 'glory of God'.

To the above we must add the negative *adokimos* 'disapproved', a word used of one who is 'disqualified' in the race for a crown (1 Cor. 9:27, translated 'castaway'), 'rejected' (Heb. 6:8 as being useless), or 'reprobate' (2 Tim. 3:8, which passage is structurally correspondent with the positive *dokimos* 'approved' of 2 Tim. 2:15).

At the baptism of Christ at the Jordan, and again at the transfiguration, heaven opened and the voice from heaven attested, 'This is My Beloved Son, in Whom I am *well pleased*' (Matt. 3:17; 17:5). Here we have the Divine estimate, first of the sinless years from Bethlehem to baptism, and then of the Divine approval of the public witness which at the time of the transfiguration was nearly finished. In both of these passages the word of approval is *eudokeo*.

All this evidence and much more must be pondered, but unless we are going to make this study lengthy, grammatical and etymological, we must leave this inquiry into the pedigree or family relationship of *doxa* and apply ourselves to the examination of the usage and

association of the word itself, never forgetting, however, in all our study, the element of 'approval by test', i.e., that which 'seemed to be' is proved to be true, that we have found to be the dominant note. We have quoted 1 Peter 1:7 already under the headings 'trial' and 'to try'; let us give the complete passage, and note the very evident connection that is here between this idea of the testing of metals and 'glory':

'That the trial (*dokimion*) of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried (*dokimazo*) with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory (*doxa*) at the appearing of Jesus Christ' (1 Pet. 1:7).

Cremer gives the essential idea of *doxa* as 'the *recognition*, which any one finds, or which belongs to him, *honour, renown*'.

Doxa 'glory' is associated with 'praise' (Phil. 1:11; 1Pet. 1:7) and with 'honour' (1 Tim. 1:17; Heb. 2:7) and with 'blessing or eulogy' (Rev. 5:12). It is opposed to 'dishonour' (2 Cor. 6:8; 1Cor. 11:14). Again quoting Cremer here, 'It (*doxa*) differs from *time* "honour" as recognition does from estimation', and he quotes Romans 3:23, not as it is rendered in the Authorized Version 'come short of the glory of God', but 'they lack recognition on the part of God'.

Regarding those passages where 'glory' is used to indicate the 'appearance' which compels the beholder to stand and acknowledge, Cremer says: 'The expression *he doxa tou theou* "the glory of God" must be explained as "the august contents of God's own entire nature, embracing the aggregate of all His attributes according to their undivided yet revealed fulness"' (Umbreit, quoted by Cremer.)

The *doxa* of God coincides with His self revelation (Exod. 33:22). The 'goodness' that is here associated with 'glory' must not be construed merely as an attribute of God, but as Delitzsch says, 'The fulness of good promised and in store for those who turn to Him'.

Moreover, we must not forget the essentially *redemptive* character of 'glory', something akin to the *shekinah* of the Jewish doctrine, but more completely expressed as 'the fulness'. 'We beheld His glory ... *full* of grace and truth ... And of His *fulness* have all we received' (John 1:14-16). The 'glory of God' is not only the goal to which we press, it is the means also:

‘Like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the *glory* of the Father’ (Rom. 6:4).

‘Who shall be punished ... from the *glory* of His power’ (2 Thess. 1:9).

‘This "glory" of God manifests itself in every redemptive influence experienced by individuals’ (Cremer).

‘Strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power (the power of His *glory*)’ (Col. 1:11).

‘That He would grant you, according to the riches of His *glory*, to be strengthened with might by His spirit in the inner man’ (Eph. 3:16).

Turning from the usage and meaning of *doxa* as found in the New Testament generally, let us look a little more closely at the word as found in John’s gospel where *doxa* occurs nineteen times and *doxazo* ‘glorify’ occurs twenty-three times. When we remember that *doxazo* is used by Paul but thirteen times in all of his fourteen epistles, it will be seen how dominant this idea is with John. The special glory of Christ is revealed by John in the prologue:

‘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’ (1:14).

This special aspect of ‘glory’ we must remember all the way through this wondrous ‘gospel’.

The first mention of His glory, focuses attention upon His presence among men ‘tabernacling’ among them, as ‘the Only begotten of the Father’. The last reference takes us back to the glory which He had with the Father before the world was, which He temporarily laid aside, but which He received again in consequence of the work which He had finished, a glory now, not of isolated unapproachable Deity, but a glory in which all the redeemed may share (Heb. 2:10,11).

‘And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was’.

‘And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one’.

'Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with me where I am; that they may behold My glory ... for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world' (John 17:5,22,24).

Between these first and last statements we have various presentations of glory. We have the manifesting of the glory of Christ at the miracle of Cana (2:11), and the manifesting of the glory of God at the raising of Lazarus (11:40).

Quite a number of references in the intervening chapters are taken up with the difference between receiving 'honour' from men as opposed to receiving 'honour' from God.

'I receive not honour from men'.

'How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another'.

'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' (5:41,44; 7:18).

Turning to the word *doxazo* 'to glorify', we observe that its first occurrence looks away to the seated Christ at the right hand of God, His 'work' finished, and His 'worth' recognized.

'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*' (7:39).

The closing references in the seventeenth chapter, refer to the finished work which He had accomplished and its effects as manifested already in those that believed on Him (1,4,5,10). The last reference of all is that of 21:19 where the Lord indicates by what death Peter should 'glorify' God.

We are painfully conscious that this attempt to set forth something of the inner meaning and intention that lies beneath every reference to the 'glory' of God, must strike the most elementary reader as being very inadequate, and the more advanced student as poor in deed.

We have done what we could in view of the general purpose of this exposition, and if we have robbed the idea of 'glory' of mere 'splendour' and invested it with the idea of 'recognized worth' with the added thought that the acts and ways of God shall at length be 'vindicated', we shall have accomplished the main purpose with which

we embarked upon this investigation. Let us conclude with one passage that looks to that future day when this 'vindication' shall be universally 'recognized'.

'Let nothing be done through strife or *vain glory* ... Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a (the) name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father' (Phil. 2:3,9-11).

The Departure of the Lord (13:33)

After the digression into the meaning of 'glory' that has occupied our attention we return to the exposition of the Gospel, bringing, we trust, a clearer conception of what is intended by these words 'glory' and 'glorify'.

It seems that as soon as Judas went out on his fateful errand, the Saviour announced that the hour had come (13:1-3,31). That hour, from one point of view, was the blackest hour ever known in this creation. It was to see the betrayal, the crucifixion, and the shameful rejection of the very Son of God. We look, however, in vain for such words as 'death', 'shame', 'betrayal', in His words at this point, we are struck by the reiteration of the word 'glorify'. Let us read the passage afresh and then re-read it, exchanging the word 'glorify' for 'vindicate'.

'Now is the Son of Man *glorified*, and God is *glorified* in Him. If God be *glorified* in Him, God shall also *glorify* Him in Himself, and shall straightway *glorify* Him' (31,32).

This statement of the Lord falls into two sections. The first governed by the present 'now', the second by the future 'shall'. The first refers to the approaching death, the finishing of the work which He had come to do, and as we have already observed, there is a marked parallel between the opening and closing parts of this section (chapters 13 to 17), which emphasizes this association of the finishing of His work and the conception intended by the word 'glorify'.

'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 ... 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' (17:1,4,5).

This passage takes us further than the previous one, but both passages alike stress the fact that in His death, Christ was glorified, and that in that death the Father was glorified, and that in the resurrection and the present session at the Father's right hand, the Son and the Father are glorified.

The former carries the subject forward in the form of an argument. 'If God be glorified in Him' introduces the argument, then it continues, 'God shall also glorify Him in Himself'. Commentators are divided as to Whom the words 'in Himself' refer. Alford uncompromisedly refers the words 'in Himself' to the Father, and points to 17:5 in support of this view. This, however, does not support his argument as we shall see later. Bloomfield's note is:

'The disputed question whether *en heauto* should refer to *God* or to *Christ*, is ably determined by Lampe as follows: "If it be referred to God ... If to the Son ... "'.

But this dual reference violates an important canon of interpretation. Every rational writer, when he uses any particular term, must have some one particular meaning in mind, to the exclusion of all other. Lampe's twofold explanation might be described as ingenious, but it certainly does not 'ably determine' anything. We have therefore no option but to exercise the Berean spirit which, while distrusting self, can fully trust the Divine Author of this Gospel to lead into all truth if He so choose, and therefore, as one way of obtaining light on the term 'in Himself', we observe one or two other occurrences.

'While Peter doubted in himself' (Acts 10:17).

'For to make in Himself of twain one new man' (Eph. 2:15).

'He ... hath the witness in himself' (1 John 5:10).

These passages show the normal usage of *en heauto* 'in himself' as used in the New Testament, but they do not contribute much in the way of actual interpretation. The same, however, cannot be said of an earlier passage:

'For as the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself' (5:26).

Just as the Son was given to have 'life' in Himself, so at the resurrection, He was given to be 'glorified' in Himself. This glorifying was to take place 'straightway', and we remember that it was only a matter of days that intervened between this utterance and its fulfilment. This 'glorifying' was one aspect of the finished work of Christ. There were several others, and one that is much stressed in this section of the Gospel is the varying effects the Lord's 'going' had upon the Jews, the disciples and the future church.

Turning from this contemplation of the glory, the Saviour looked at the little company so dependent upon Him, so intensely human, so weak and so changeable, and used for the first and only time, the endearing address 'little children'. Paul also uses this title but once, and that to the believers in Galatia (Gal. 4:19). The remaining occurrences (seven in number) are found in the first epistle of John.

'Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek Me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you' (13:33).

We know, and we shall discover, that there were marked and blessed differences between the disciples and the Jews, but in one particular all were alike.

The 'seeking' cannot refer to a spiritual act, for no seeker will ever be denied. The plain truth which the disciples had to learn, and which we all have to learn, is that, physically, Christ is absent from us. He can only be 'in the midst' by the Spirit, because personally He is now at the right hand of the Father. The 'finding' must be construed in the light of Hebrews 11:5. To the Jews, the Lord had said:

'Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto Him that sent Me. Ye shall seek Me, and shall not find Me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come' (7:33,34).

On the physical plane the disciples would be in the same position as the unbelieving Jews. On the physical plane, but not on the spiritual:

'I go My way, and ye shall seek Me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come' (8:21).

It is evident that the 'seeking' here is not a spiritual act, for the Lord explains Himself in the verses that follow:

'I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins' (8:24).

This is where the disciples blessedly differed from the Jews, for they did indeed 'believe'.

This 'going' of Christ, as we shall see, enters into the structure of this section, and has different effects upon different classes. There are some fourteen passages which use *hupago* 'to go away' and five that use *poreuomai* 'to go or pass on' which should be examined. Omitting the references already mentioned we note that the section which opens with chapter 13 commences with this very theme:

'When Jesus knew that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father ... that He was come from God, and went (*hupago*) to God' (13:1,3).

While at first sight the Lord makes no distinction between the unbelieving Jew and His own (13:33), we find that there is a modification in the reply to Peter's question:

'Whither I go, thou canst not follow Me now; but thou shalt follow me *afterwards*' (13:36).

This gracious promise is amplified in the next reference:

'I go to prepare a place for you ... I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also' (14:2,3).

On more than one occasion the Lord challenges the disciples' understanding regarding His departure: 'And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know' (14:4).

This brings the answer, 'Lord we know not whither Thou goest; and how can we know the way?' (14:5).

Again, in the sixteenth chapter the disciples manifest perplexity concerning the same thing.

'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' (16:16,17).

The Lord exercised great patience with believers, and some of them even after the resurrection, He had to call 'Fools, and slow of heart to believe'.

Coming back to John's record there is surely infinite pathos in the Saviour's words:

'But now I go My way to Him that sent Me; *and none of you asketh Me, Whither goest Thou?*' (16:5).

He longed to see their interest quickened, but the time for their illumination had not yet come. Finally, the Holy Spirit was to convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment (to come):

'Of righteousness, because I go to My Father, and ye see Me no more' (16:10).

Just as the *coming* of Christ proves a touchstone for all men, so His *going* tests and tries the Jews, the world and the disciples. In some things, we have seen that the Jews and the disciples did not differ greatly in their reactions, but there are, blessed be God, some glorious passages where redeeming love has made an eternal difference. Never can the believer be condemned with the world, and even though appearing to manifest much the same attitude as the unbelieving Jews, never could it be said of them 'ye shall die in your sins'. Conversely, it could be said that the barrier that made it equally impossible for Jew or disciple to follow the Lord, was to be removed one day, the Saviour would come again and receive them unto Himself. Meanwhile, the promised Comforter would bridge the gulf caused by His rejection and departure. He would not leave them 'orphans', they should 'see' Him because the Holy Spirit should take of the things of Christ and show them unto them.

This Gospel which makes so much of the fact that Christ was the 'Sent' One, magnifies the blessed importance of the corresponding fact that He returned to Him that sent Him, His work finished.

The New Commandment (13:34)

There are no 'commandments' old or new laid upon the Church of the One Body. The only commandments found in Ephesians, refer either to:

- (1) 'The Law of commandments contained in ordinances' (2:15), which were abolished, and which were inimical to the true unity of the one new man.
- (2) 'The first commandment with promise' (Eph. 6:2), which is brought in to show the high place which obedience to parents occupied in the law of Moses but does not add anything to the doctrine or practice of the Church.

Colossians knows nothing about commandments, except the purely personal one concerning 'Marcus sister's son to Barnabas' (4:10). Timothy himself is enjoined by the apostle 'That thou keep this commandment without spot' (1 Tim. 6:14), and it is necessary to read the several passages in this epistle wherein Paul 'charges' Timothy, to realize what that 'commandment' is. In Titus 1:14 'the commandments of men' are put on the same low level as 'Jewish fables'.

These five passages constitute the total number of occasions in which the apostle spoke of 'commandments' after Acts 28. It would, however, be a false inference to teach or believe that the *substance* of the 'new commandment' of John's Gospel which we are about to study, does not pertain to the Church of the Mystery. This would be missing the reality because for certain well defined reasons, the subject was presented differently. We know already that the new commandment is 'love', love to one another. Is there any fellow member of the Church of the Mystery who would deny that 'love' must be manifest among the members of that company? The believers of the truth of Ephesians, were mainly Gentiles, who had never been under law, consequently, as they had never been under the 'old' commandments, they could not be put under 'new' ones, for as in the case of the 'new' Covenant, this presupposes an 'old' one. It was not so, however, with the disciples who were primarily addressed in this Gospel. They had known the law and its commandments and had heard the Saviour declare that the love of one's neighbour was but second in importance to the love of God (Matt. 22:36-40). This does

not reach the height of the new commandment, but it is a step toward it.

‘Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself’ is not so high an attainment as loving one another ‘as I (Christ) have loved you’.

In those two great Epistles wherein the ‘law’ as a means of life or righteousness is entirely set aside, namely, Romans and Galatians, the apostle makes it clear that ‘love is the fulfilling of the law’.

‘Owe no man anything, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law’ (Rom. 13:8).

‘For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself’ (Gal. 5:14).

This doctrine is as true for the Church of the Mystery as it was for the believer before Acts 28. The ‘new’ commandment of John 13 is but the logical expansion of the words of the Sermon on the Mount:

‘Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies’ (Matt. 5:43,44).

The title ‘commandments’ was understood by the Jews to refer to the Ten Commandments given at Sinai, and there was one thing enjoined respecting these commandments, namely, ‘to keep’ them. Men were not judged by their opinion as to the Mosaic authorship of the five books of the law, they were not rewarded for holding the view that the law of Moses was the finest code of moral laws ever given to men, they were judged entirely on the one principle, that commandments were either ‘kept’ or ‘broken’. So it is with the ‘new’ commandment. The second reference to it is found in John 14:15, where we read ‘If ye love Me, keep My commandments’. There were some commandments which were enjoined upon the apostles which pertained exclusively to themselves, but this new commandment knows no such limitation. Love is not fulfilled by words only, it must issue in deeds:

‘He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me’ (14:21).

Till now, the love of the believer one to another, or the love of the believer to the Lord has exhausted its meaning and found its

expression in this act of keeping the commandment. There is, however, more than this, as the next passage teaches.

'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' (15:10).

These words must for ever stifle the cry of 'legalism' that some over zealous readers of Ephesians may raise against the idea of keeping commandments at all. Indeed, we have but to read Ephesians 5:2 to see that the walk in love, as Christ loves the Church, is but the apostle Paul's way of enjoining the selfsame principle that vivifies obedience to the new commandment. The final word on the subject here is:

'This is My commandment, That ye love one another, *as I have loved you*' (15:12).

So vital is this new commandment in the estimate of John, that we find his first epistle urging it, explaining it, commending it in every chapter except the first. Let us hear John's own comment upon the new commandment:

'And by this we may know that we know Him - if we obey His commands. He who professes to know Him, and yet does not obey His commands, is a liar, and the truth has no place in his heart. But whoever obeys His message, in him love for God has in very deed reached perfection. By this we can know that we are in Him. The man who professes to be continuing in Him is himself also bound to live as He lived. My dearly-loved friends, it is no new command that I am now giving you, but an old command which you have had from the beginning. By the old command I mean the teaching which you have already received. And yet I *am* giving you a new command, for such it really is, so far as both He and you are concerned: because the darkness is now passing away and the light, the true light, is already beginning to shine' (1 John 2:3-8, Weymouth's Version).

There is nothing here about the dispensation of the Mystery, but is there one member of the Body of Christ, who in the searching light of these words can hesitate to believe that nothing less than this attitude of heart and mind can be 'worthy of the vocation wherewith we have been called'? It is possible that the epistle to the Ephesians takes us

one step higher in both doctrine and practice than the Gospel and epistles of John, but if so, then as surely as 'the greater includes the less', so our walk in love should be even more completely 'as He walked'. The newness of this commandment resides not so much in the command 'love one another', for this principle is already found in the law (Lev. 19:18). It's 'newness' lies in the new grounds for its manifestation. Not merely *that* the command is kept, but *why* it is kept.

We have seen from the passages cited above from John's Gospel, as also from the equivalent exhortation of Ephesians 5:2, that the new ground of mutual love is the love that Christ had for His own, a love that loved to the end, a love that shrank not from the greatest sacrifice. This was indeed a 'new' animating principle, beside which, all other motives faded as star-shine fades with the rising of the sun.

The mere exhibition of love toward another does not fulfil the essential condition of this 'new' commandment. This kind of love is as old as mankind.

'For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?' (Matt. 5:46).

The sacrificial element of love is the distinctive character of the new commandment.

'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends' (John 15:13).

'Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren' (1 John 3:16).

Such is the testimony of John.

'Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour' (Eph. 5:1,2).

Such is the testimony of Paul.

CHAPTER 13

The Structure of John 13:31 to 14:31

and

Chapters 15 and 16 briefly considered

It is now time that we considered the passage before us as a whole. We have given some attention to the inner meaning of the words 'glory' and 'glorify' (13:31,32), and the great importance and bearing of the departure of the Saviour 'to Him that sent Him' (7:33). We have seen that the one great commandment which the Lord left His disciples, and by which all men should recognize them as disciples, was the new commandment of love. These subjects are all true and vital of themselves, but they are seen in clearer light by observing their relationship with the discourse as a whole. We have already given the structure of these chapters, and shown that one sub-division covers 13:31 to 14:31. Before we attempt any further exposition it becomes necessary that we should see the expansion of this section so that the Spirit's own emphasis may be observed and followed.

- A 13:31-38.
 - a Judas. Went out.
 - b The glorifying. The Son. God.
 - c I GO. Ye cannot come. As I said unto the Jews. Ye cannot follow Me now. Said to Peter.
- B 14:1. LET NOT YOUR HEART BE TROUBLED.
- C 2-4. Abiding places, *Mone*.
- D 5-10- Questions. The Way. Show the Father.
- C -10-21. Dwelling, *Meno*.
 - d Dwelleth in Me.
 - e Comforter abide with you.
 - d Dwelleth with you.
 - e I will not leave comfortless.
- D 22-23. Question. Manifestation of the Lord.
- C 23-27- Make our abode, *Mone*. The Comforter.
- B -27. LET NOT YOUR HEART BE TROUBLED.
- A 28-31.
 - c I GO. Come again, how I said unto you.
 - b My Father is greater than I.
 - a Prince of this world. Cometh. Let us go hence.

The section opens and closes with the thought of betrayal, first by Judas, and at length by the Prince of this world. In both opening and closing sections, the Saviour said 'I Go', but the consequences will be seen to be somewhat different.

Prominent in the structure are the blessed words 'Let not your heart be troubled', which occur twice. The one other emphatic note is the word 'abide', either as a noun 'many mansions' *mone*, and the 'abode' of the Father and the Son, or as a verb *meno*, where the abiding of the Comforter is the subject.

Let us devote our attention to those words which have ministered, perhaps, more comfort down the centuries than any other of similar nature:

'Let not your heart be troubled'.

The first occurrence flows out of the preceding revelation that the Lord was going whither the disciples could not at the moment follow. Even Peter, with all his enthusiasm was not ready to follow the Lord on this journey, until fuller and deeper experiences both of human frailty and of Divine enabling were his. To have one's heartfelt confession 'I will lay down my life for Thy sake', countered by the lifting of the veil that revealed such tragic frailty, was to say the least, disheartening.

'Wilt thou lay down thy life for My sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied Me thrice. *Let not your heart be troubled*' (13:38; 14:1).

The second occurrence leads back to the departure of the Lord.

'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' (14:27,28).

Let not your heart be troubled at the prospect of being left alone in the world. Let not your heart be troubled at the realization of your utter frailty. Provision, ample and complete has been made to cover all such contingencies, and to assure you a triumphant and glorious

sequel. Such appears to be the setting of this jewel. What of the jewel itself?

Trouble is no stranger to the sons of men, or to the saints of God. One of the earliest utterances of Scripture says that: 'Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward' (Job 5:7), and so various are the guises of this constant companion of man, that over forty different words are translated 'trouble' in the Old and New Testaments.

The peculiar kind of trouble which the disciples suffered as they realized what the Lord's absence might mean to them, is wonderfully expressed in the word chosen, *tarasso*.

Bishop Chandler, commenting upon the mixture of passions which the arrival of the wise men would have had on Herod, his court and on Jerusalem, 'according to their different expectations, hopes and fears' (Matt. 2:3), observes that, 'to include all these there is not any one Greek word more proper and expressive than *tarassomai*'. Let us take the seven occurrences of this word which are found in John's Gospel as an indication of its meaning.

The first occurrence gives the primary meaning of the word. The Septuagint uses the word in Ezekiel 34:18, where it speaks of those who not only drink up the deep water, 'but foul the residue' with their feet.

'An angel went down ... and troubled the water' (5:4).

'When the water is troubled' (5:7).

'When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, He groaned in the spirit, and was troubled' (11:33).

'Now is My soul troubled' (12:27).

'When Jesus had thus said, He was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray Me' (13:21).

'Let not your heart be troubled' (14:1,27).

It will be observed that on three occasions John records that the Saviour was 'troubled'. Yet He says to His disciples, 'Let not your heart be troubled'. The second occurrence of this exhortation adds the words 'neither let it be afraid'.

If the Son of God Himself could be 'troubled' one might say how much more reason had the disciples to be troubled and in fear. His 'trouble', like all that He suffered, was for our sakes. He suffered that those who believe may never suffer as He did. He died that those who believe may never die as He did, He was troubled, that those who believe in Him might never know trouble like He knew. In the first occurrence the great safeguard against 'trouble' is apparently 'faith', in the second the safeguard is 'peace'. The safeguard of 'faith' is supplemented in the next verse by the promise, 'I go to prepare a place for you', and the peace is supplemented by the statement, 'I go unto the Father'.

We are, however, conscious that to use the word 'faith', is to give but a partial summary of that safeguard. The Saviour said, 'Ye believe in God, believe also in Me'. It so happens that *pisteuete* may be the imperative 'believe' or the indicative 'ye believe', and there is a division of opinion among commentators as to the true translation of the Lord's words.

The question before us at the moment, is, did our Lord say 'Ye believe in God, believe also in Me', or did He say 'Believe in God, and believe in Me'?

A long list of names, names of commentators of repute, can be produced who affirm that the imperative must be used in both cases, and an equally long list of equally great commentators can be produced who support the reading of the Authorized Version. The Revised Version reads as does the Authorized, putting the imperative into the margin. If we accept the imperative 'believe in God', we must assume that the disciples had slipped back very far indeed, for the Jew who believed the testimony of the law and the prophets, yet who was in ignorance of the revelation of Christ, would still 'believe God'. The Greek word *kai*, which is translated 'also', loses its emphasis when used with the double imperative, and we get the somewhat tame rendering, 'Believe in God, and believe in Me'. If *kai* is given its emphatic meaning 'also' or 'as well' then we must translate, 'Ye believe in God, believe also in Me'.

If we turn to the subject of prayer, we may obtain an illustration of the change that was now imminent in many matters of faith and practice. The prayer which our Saviour taught his disciples was addressed solely to God the Father. It did not conclude with the

peculiarly Christian ending 'for Jesus Christ's sake'. So, in 16:24 the Lord said:

'Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full'.

Hebrews 6:1 however provides the classic passage on the dispensational use of faith in God:

'Therefore leaving the word of the beginning of Christ (margin), let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God'.

The exhortation is a double one, to leave, and to not lay again. This leaving includes 'faith toward God', which apart from the context would be an outrageous doctrine. It is, however linked with 'baptisms' and 'the laying on of hands' as well as with resurrection and eternal judgment. 'Faith toward God' as found in the sixth of Hebrews is one of the elements, the beginnings. Such a faith may need to be 'left', such a foundation need not be laid afresh, it must be the ground upon which 'faith in the Lord Jesus Christ' can be built.

Look once again at chapter 14 and note the emphasis which the Lord puts upon Himself in the immediate context:

'If it were not so, *I* would have told you. *I* go to prepare a place for you ... *I* will come again, and receive you unto *Myself*; that where *I* am, there ye may be also ... *I* am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by *Me*' (1-6).

As early as chapter 5 the truth had been taught, but the disciples were slow to realize it.

'For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father' (5:22,23).

Faith in 'God' or the exhortation to believe in 'God' is the exception not the rule of the New Testament. The Jews by their very constitution, birth and nature believed 'God', but christianity centres in Christ. For one passage in which 'faith in God' is inculcated in the New Testament we could find fifty that speaks of 'faith in His Name' 'believing on the Lord Jesus Christ' or 'faith in the Son of God'.

At the beginning of the gospel of John, one of the greatest of men and of prophets is asked the question 'Who art thou?' He replied, 'I am a voice' (1:19,23), for it is unthinkable that John the Baptist should have directed attention to, or called for faith in himself. Yet this is precisely what the Lord Jesus did throughout His ministry. The one great object of the gospel is to lead the reader to believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that by believing one might have life through His name.

'If ye believe not that I am He', He said to the Jews, 'ye shall die in your sins'.

'Dost thou believe on the Son of God?' is the supreme question which He put to the man born blind.

John 3:16 teaches that 'God' is the great Giver, but 'whosoever believeth in Him' refers to faith in the Only begotten Son.

'He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God'.

There is no more vital passage in the New Testament than the one written by Paul to Timothy when he said: 'There is One God, and One Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus' (2 Tim. 2:5). Men are still exhorted to 'believe God' or to 'trust God' in talks over the wireless, in sermons preached and printed. To all such, the words of John 14 come with searching, incisive challenge:

'Ye believe in God, believe ALSO in Me'.

The Many 'Mansions' (14:2)

Closely associated with the comforting results of 'believing also' in the Saviour, are added the words, 'In My Father's house are many mansions' (14:2).

There is something about these words and the whole of this chapter that has made it a source of peace and joy to countless numbers of the redeemed of all times, and we must avoid at all cost any appearance of a cold, critical spirit, that cannot enjoy 'a primrose on the river's brink', without immediately feeling the urge to 'botanize'. Yet it is our privilege and responsibility to reverently submit the words of inspiration to the most searching test, and we are encouraged in this

high endeavour by the blessed results that have attended our modest efforts in the past.

We therefore ask, what can the words mean, that tell us that in the Father's 'house' there are many 'mansions'? How can a 'house' ever conceivably have 'mansions' within it? Let us work back through the English to the Greek, and see what we may learn. First of all, let us not forget that since A.D. 1600 many English words have changed their meaning, and there are instances in English literature within the period A.D. 1638 to 1711, where it will be found that the word 'mansion' simply meant any place where one could 'reside'. This more lowly meaning is moreover suggested in the margin of the Revised Version 'abiding places'. The reader who knows Shakespeare may call to mind the passage in *Macbeth*, where the nest built by the 'martlett' or 'swallow' is called 'his loved mansionry'. 'In My Father's house are many abiding places', which though still leaving room for further explanation, removes the apparent incongruity that the idea of 'mansions' produces. What are we to understand by the Father's 'house'? We find the expression, 'Take these things hence; make not My Father's house an house of merchandise' (2:16). Here the Father's 'house' most certainly refers to the Temple that stood at Jerusalem. We know, however, from the testimony of the Lord Himself, that not one stone should be left upon another of that temple, and consequently, *that* particular temple could not have been intended in the second verse of chapter 14. Nevertheless, we cannot escape the fact that these two references must have something in common, used as they are by the same writer in the same Gospel. Upon closer examination, we find that the first word 'house' is *oikos*, while the second word is the translation of *oikia*. These words had slightly different meanings in classical usage, but that difference cannot be substantiated by a canvass of New Testament usage. However, the fact that the Lord used the masculine form in the first and the feminine form in the second may indicate that He intended a difference, that the earthly temple of first occurrence is seen to be the shadow of the heavenly reality of the second occurrence. This we do know, that the Lord was about to return to where He was before, heaven itself, and that the title given to heaven here is expressly chosen to minister comfort to the disciples in their hour of trial.

There are other sources of illumination, however, open to us, which we have not yet explored. There is the structure, there is the use of the

word translated 'mansion' in the LXX, there is the usage of the verb 'to abide' in these very chapters of this Gospel.

Let us first of all put ourselves into possession of what would be common knowledge among the disciples. No Jew worthy of the name and nationality could be ignorant of that thrilling record of their past history, found in the books of the Maccabees, and there, in the first of Maccabees, we find the only occurrence in the Septuagint of the Greek word *mone* 'mansions' or 'abiding places'.

'Thou, O Lord, didst choose this house to be called by Thy Name, and to be a house of prayer and petition for Thy people: be avenged of this man and his host, and let them fall by the sword: remember their blasphemies, and suffer them not to continue any longer (*grant them none abiding, mone*)' (1 Macc. 7:37,38).

None would be ignorant of the incident which we have read, for the victory that ensued, was remembered yearly, on the thirteenth of Adar.

'And they ordained all with a common decree in no case to let that day pass without solemnity, but to celebrate the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which in the Syrian tongue is called Adar, the day before Mardocheus' day' (2 Macc. 15:36).

The reader will perceive the close connection between 1 Maccabees 7:37,38 and John 2:16, so far as the wording is concerned, and will see that the two references in John's Gospel are in measure, both connected with this early historic passage. The dreadful curse which fell upon the blasphemer was expressed in the term 'none abiding', this was blessedly reversed in John. The Lord was about to leave the disciples. Already consternation gripped their hearts, as they learned from His own lips that they entertained a traitor in their midst. Added to this, even Peter with all his zeal, was to deny the Lord, how then could they hope to endure. Would they all become apostates when left alone? No, the Saviour having loved them, would love them unto the end. His departure was but another step in the outworking of that love. He was actually going to prepare a place for them, saying:

'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' (14:3).

This was comfort indeed. Here was a complete and glorious reversal of the only use of *mone*, 'abiding place', which the disciples could remember in their sacred literature.

We turn now to the structure (p. 409) and we find that the whole of the central section is dominated by the word *meno* 'to abide'. Thus:

14:2-4.	Abiding places.	<i>Mone</i> .
	* * * *	
14:10-21.	Dwell.	<i>Meno</i> .
	* * * *	
14:22,23.	Make our abode.	<i>Mone</i> .

The Authorized Version has obscured the relationship of the two words *mone* and *meno*, by translating *mone* in 14:2 'mansions', and in 14:23 'abode', and by translating *meno* in 14:10 'dwell', 14:16 'abide', 14:17 'dwell' and 14:25 'being present'. This relationship is further obscured by the renderings in 15:11 and 16 where we read 'remain'. All are good translations, it is the variety that misleads. Let us, even though we sacrifice the English, replace in every instance the words 'abode' and 'abide' for the two words *mone* and *meno*. The moment we do this, we lose all sense of incongruity that the word 'mansions' leaves with us; we realize rather that this first occurrence is but to prepare us for the fuller unfolding that awaits us in the chapters that follow.

There are sixteen occurrences of *meno* 'abide' in chapters 14 to 16 and two occurrences of *mone* 'abode'. With the exception of 14:10,17 'dwell', 14:25 'being present', 15:9 'continue' and 15:11,16 'remain', all the remaining occurrences of *meno* are translated 'abide' in the Authorized Version, so that the English reader can, with the above note, discover the sense.

The complete parallel is naturally the one other occurrence of *mone*, which finds a corresponding place in the structure:

'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' (14:23).

It is a joy to think that here we have the equivalent in John's gospel of that precious passage in the eighth chapter of Romans which assures us that nothing:

'shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord' (Rom. 8:39).

The Place Prepared (14:2,3)

We must now supplement what we have already learnt concerning the meaning of the 'many mansions' by considering the added comment given in John 14:2,3, 'If it were not so I would have told you'. Some ancient MSS read 'that' after this sentence, making the passage, 'If it were not so, should I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?' Whichever reading we adopt, the sense and the argument remain the same. The Lord's words not only provided a very real foundation upon which the disturbed minds of the disciples could rest, but they provide a principle that can be widely applied by all believers, concerning a multitude of perplexing questions.

How many believers have tortured themselves with the problem 'shall we recognize our loved ones in glory?' We cannot but suppose the problem is a real one, although we must confess that such a thought would never have entered our mind. The sheer fact that 'heaven' was likened to 'home' with the Father, seems to include all that 'Father' and 'home' stand for, and a home where the family fail to recognize one another is inconceivable while God remains both 'Father' and 'Love'. However, should any be found still burdened with this problem, can they not draw assurance and comfort from the words of Christ, expressed as a principle governing all His revelation of truth,

'If it were not so, I would have told you?'

It would not be profitable to make a list of the problems, fears and foibles of Christian perplexity, doubt and unbelief, but we commend the Saviour's words to all such, believing they contain a principle that we may continually apply throughout the days of our pilgrimage.

'I go to prepare a place for you'. This is the last of several passages in the gospels which speak of either a place, position or inheritance having been 'prepared'.

‘To sit on My right hand, and on My left, is not Mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of My Father’ (Matt. 20:23).

‘Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world’ (Matt. 25:34).

‘Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels’ (Matt. 25:41).

‘He shall go before Him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children ... to make ready a people prepared for the Lord’ (Luke 1:17).

The theme is pursued in the epistles; 1 Corinthians 2:9 speaks of ‘the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him’ and Hebrews 11:16 speaks of God having prepared for the overcomer a city, while the Revelation speaks of the heavenly Jerusalem descending out of heaven ‘prepared as a bride adorned for her husband’ (21:2). If we examine the occurrences and usage of *hetoimazo* and *hetoimos* we shall find quite a number of passages where the translation is ‘ready’ or ‘make ready’

‘I have *prepared* My dinner’. ‘All things are *ready*’ (Matt. 22:4).

‘They that were *ready* went in’ (Matt. 25:10).

‘His wife *hath made* herself *ready*’; ‘*Prepared* as a bride’ (Rev. 19:7; 21:2).

Possibly the passage that bears most upon John 14:2,3, is that of Luke 22:33,34:

‘And he said unto Him, Lord, *I am ready* to go with Thee, both into prison, and to death. And He said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest Me’.

These words are very similar to those which usher in the blessed consolation of the fourteenth chapter, for in 13:37,38 Peter having asked why he cannot follow the Lord ‘now’, is told that ‘the cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied Me thrice’.

Into the chronology of these passages and the bearing of the time upon the subject we do not here enter, it is sufficient for our purpose to know that on a similar occasion to that recorded in the thirteenth chapter, Peter had expressed his *readiness* to share both prison and death with the Lord, a willingness of spirit sadly betrayed by a weakness of the flesh, which is followed by an unqualified promise that for all His believing people, the Saviour was going *to make ready* a place for them. To such the words, ‘Let not your heart be troubled’ would come with Divine comfort. This act of ‘going’ to prepare a place, is to be followed by His ‘coming again’. It is evident therefore that the period during which the ascended Christ sits at the Father’s right hand is thus blessedly employed. The coming again is for the purpose of ‘receiving’ the disciples ‘unto Himself’, with the object that ‘where I am’ said the Lord ‘there ye may be also’ (14:3).

While we must maintain that the words ‘I will come again’, refer to the literal and future coming of Christ, we should not lose sight of the fact that this glorious climax of hope has a series of most blessed anticipations, some of which are stated in this same discourse. We need not forfeit or deny the blessed anticipations of the second coming that may be granted to us, simply because we have seen the evil of ‘spiritualizing’ away the literality of prophecy.

‘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’ (14:18,19).

Here the ministry of the ‘other Comforter’ is in view, as verses 16 and 17 make very clear.

Again, answering the disciples’ question as to how is it that He would manifest Himself unto them and not unto the world, the Saviour said:

‘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’ (14:23).

Here is the full experimental anticipation of the glory of verses 2 and 3. *There*, the Lord comes again and receives the believers unto Himself, to enjoy the many ‘abiding places’ prepared in glory. *Here*, the Lord comes into their lives, and anticipates the future ‘abiding places’ by speaking of the coming of the Father and of Himself to make their ‘abode’ with them.

The reader who has seen the connection that exists between the statement of Ephesians 2:22, where the church is spoken of as an ‘habitation of God’ in spirit, and the prayer that Christ may ‘dwell in your hearts’ by faith (Eph. 3:17) will appreciate the relation of John 14:2,3; and 18,19 and 23.

As we have already seen, the primary interpretation of these precious passages, pertains in the first and fullest instance to the apostles in connection with their ordeal, their equipment, and their future blessed service. It will be remembered that to this self-same company at the self-same time and place, the same Lord Who uttered the words recorded by John also said:

‘Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me; that ye may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel’ (Luke 22:28-30).

We must not so interpret the Father’s house and the many mansions as to erect a difficulty in believing these other equally inspired statements. The fact that John omits such a reference, does not imply either denial or ignorance. He wrote confessedly with a specific purpose (20:31) and admitted that there was an overwhelming amount of material from which he made his inspired selection.

Returning to chapter 14 we find that the Saviour makes a challenging statement immediately after the comforting words of verses 2 and 3. ‘And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know’ (4). ‘Ye know’ that I go to My Father’s house, that is the answer to the ‘whither’. Ye know, also ‘the Way’. As the subsequent reply to Thomas reveals, He Himself is ‘the Way’. The verb used by the Lord

when He said 'Ye know' was not the one that indicated a full personal knowledge, but 'implies that the subject has simply come within the knowing sphere of perception, or circle of vision ... in profane Greek it denotes mediate knowledge, e.g. from hearsay'.

In contrast with this 'mediate knowledge' is the word *ginosko* used in verse 7, 'If ye had *known* Me, ye should *have known* My Father also: and from henceforth ye *know* Him', a word that comes seven times over in the great prayer of chapter 17, from which glorious passage, *eido*, the word used in the fourth verse here, is absent.

'Whither I go, ye know', the Lord seems to say has come before you many times and you have a general perception of its reality. 'The way ye know' for you have already realized and confessed 'To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life' (6:68).

This matter however was crucial. If the apostles were to stand fast and hold fast, they must 'know' without the shadow of doubt or confusion the answer to this 'whither' and this 'way'. It is equally vital to our own faith, comfort and hope, that we too are in no doubt as to the answer to these questions. Let us therefore use what we have now learned as a preparation for the question, 'How can we know the way?' which the Saviour so blessedly answered as recorded in verse 6.

'Where', 'Whence' and 'Whither' (14:4)

'Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know'

The words of comfort 'I go to prepare a place for you ... that where I am, there ye may be also', which have been before us are followed by the statement 'and whither I go ye know, and the way ye know' (14:4).

If we are at all acquainted with the teaching of John's Gospel, we shall be aware, as we read these words, that we have met them or similar phrases before. There is something wistful in the words:

'But now I go My way to Him that sent Me; *and none of you asketh Me, Whither goest Thou?*' (16:5).

With this passage in mind we may perhaps be able to detect in John 14:5 something of a similar nature, a challenge to the disciples' knowledge, faith and appreciation. Much of the teaching of this section turns upon the fact, with its many implications, that the Saviour was about to leave them. It is looked at from the Divine and from the

human point of view. It involves the death and resurrection of Christ and the coming of the Paraclete. Other Gospels force us to consider 'Who' the Son of Man is, this Gospel of John is also concerned with where He dwelt, where He now dwells and that there His people shall yet dwell with Him. We must therefore collect the references that bear upon this theme, before we shall be in a position to follow the argument clearly. Matthew, the Gospel of the King, opens with the question 'Where is He that is born King of the Jews?' (2:2), and the answer 'Bethlehem', is in entire harmony with this Gospel of the King. John uses the word 'where' in the inquiry of the disciples, 'Where dwellest Thou ... they came and saw where He dwelt' (1:38,39), and the reading of the Revised Version here, 'Where *abidest* Thou?' provides another link with chapter 14.

After this initial question, we find the word on the lips of unbelieving Jews, then used by partly convinced disciples, and at length gloriously asserted by Christ Himself. For the present purpose we make no distinction between *hopou* and *pou* (the two Greek words translated 'where'), as to attempt it, would burden our study without adding to our understanding.

We have seen the disciples' question in John 1:38,39. We next meet the word 'where' in the Saviour's challenging words of the sixth chapter.

'What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before?' (62).

There is much truth enclosed in the short compass of this verse.

It touches the Person of Christ. 'The Son of Man ... where He was before'.

It speaks of the mode of going, 'Ascension'.

It came as a corrective and a challenge to the growing opposition of the Jews.

Again as opposition manifested itself, the question is put forward and answered in the same breath:

'Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ? Howbeit we know this man *whence He is*' (7:26,27).

Here we must pause to observe a contributing feature in this great argument. 'Where' Christ was going, we have seen is 'where' He was before. Consequently, to know 'whence' He had come would have led the inquirer to see 'where' He must return. We shall therefore keep track of the occasions where *pothen* 'whence' appears in the passages we are considering. Answering the comment given above the Lord said:

'Ye both know Me, and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of Myself, but He that sent Me is true, Whom ye know not' (John 7:28).

This knowledge is apparently contradicted later for He said:

'I know whence I came, and whither I go; and ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go' (8:14),

and the reason for this ignorance is stated, 'Ye judge after the flesh' (15); so John 7:28 must be read in the light of verse 41, 'Shall Christ come out of Galilee?'. They had got no further than the position of the disciples at the first 'Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph' (1:45).

The battle raged around the claim the Saviour had made that 'God was His Father, making Himself equal with God' (5:18). It is clear therefore that a knowledge of 'whence' He came, provides the answer as to 'whither' He was going. Continuing the discussion in chapter 7, we read:

'Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto Him that sent Me. 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? 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?' (7:33-36).

Following the argument of 8:14, in like manner, we find a parallel to 7:33-36,

'I go My way, and ye shall seek Me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come. Then said the Jews, Will He kill Himself? because He saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come' (8:21,22).

Earlier the Lord had revealed the reason of their blindness by referring to 'the flesh', now He takes another step in the presentation of the truth saying:

'Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world' (8:23).

In the inner section to His own, the Saviour repeats the statement:

'Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek Me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you ... Simon Peter said unto Him, Lord, whither goest Thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow Me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards' (13:33,36).

And so we arrive, with all this conflict associated with these words, to John 14:4, 'whither I go ye know and the way ye know'. Before concluding this survey with the remaining references in chapters 14 to 17, we look back to the debate that followed the opening of the eyes of the man born blind, and even there this 'whence' and this 'whither' meet us. Never did men condemn themselves more effectually than did the Pharisees when they said:

'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' (9:29,30).

It is evident that much turns upon the knowledge of 'whence' the Saviour came, and as we have seen, to know and acknowledge the truth of the 'whence' leads on to the recognition of the truth of the 'whither'. John 16:5 provides one more reference, as we have seen already.

'None of you asketh Me, Whither goest Thou?' and then the whole mighty truth is found in the last reference:

'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' (17:24).

It is therefore a question full of meaning that underlies the words, 'And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know'. Whether Thomas was

slower of apprehension than the others, whether Peter had understood the Lord's meaning (13:37), or whether he but spoke the unexpressed problem of them all, we cannot tell, but we are glad that Thomas did make it necessary for a further and fuller revelation, especially upon the question of the 'way'.

'Thomas saith unto Him, Lord, we know not whither Thou goest; and how can we know the way?' (14:5).

To this came the blessed answer:

'Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me' (14:6).

The apprehension and troubled condition of the apostles as they contemplated the departure of the Saviour, is met by a twofold promise 'I will come again' (14:3); 'I will come to you' (14:18). The first passage referring to the yet future second coming, the second passage to the representative ministry of the Holy Spirit, and both the future personal return and the intervening abiding of the Spirit are included in the third reference:

'Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you' (14:28).

The promise of the Comforter given in verse 16 is first of a number that recur through chapters 15 and 16, and some features of this ministry will appear more clearly as those chapters are reviewed. For the moment we note that the word 'Comforter' is the Greek word *parakletos* 'paraclete', used four times of the Holy Spirit (14:16,26; 15:26; 16:7), and once of the Saviour, where it is translated 'Advocate' (1 John 2:1). This double use of the title is suggested in Romans where the intercession of the Spirit (8:27) is balanced by the intercession of the risen and ascended Saviour (8:34). This interrelation is seen in the fact that the disciples were not going to be left 'orphans', for the Saviour said, 'I will come to you'.

'Comfortless' (14:18) while it looks to the gracious ministry of the 'Comforter', nevertheless speaks of a fatherless condition, as the one other occasion shows (Jas. 1:27). The disciples were not to be left 'fatherless' because 'the Son' was leaving them, for in His place 'the Spirit' was to be sent by the Father. It may be beyond our ability to comprehend the nature of the Godhead, but here is something that

reveals a most intimate interrelation between the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost that should give us pause before we begin to criticize, explain or deny. All that is revealed is addressed to our faith, but all may not be demonstrable to our understanding at present. The words 'I will come' (14:18) do not refer, as they do in verse 3 to the second coming, they refer to the intervening ministry of the Holy Spirit. So, in Ephesians 2:17, the words 'and *came* and preached peace' cannot refer to the personal ministry of the Saviour, for nowhere is there any record of such an announcement made by Him after His resurrection, and Alford says: 'We find the key to the expression in John 14:18'. The work of the Paraclete is given fuller exposition in chapters 15 and 16, and we defer further comment until those chapters are before us.

We leave this chapter of comfort and encouragement and promise of illumination therefore, and pass on to those that speak of cleansing, equipment and preparation, until at last we reach the seventeenth chapter, which of a truth could bear the injunction:

'Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground' (Exod. 3:5).

The Vine and the Branches (15:1-18)

The closing verse of chapter 14 contains two elements of truth that are expanded in chapter 15, namely: The love of the Son to the Father, and the association of this love with a commandment.

'But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave Me commandment, even so I do' (14:31).

'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' (15:10).

When considering 13:34, we dealt with the New Commandment, and will not take the subject further now, but will consider the way in which the Saviour illustrated and enforced this commandment, and learn some of the lessons intended. The chapter opens with the statement 'I am the true Vine, and My Father is the husbandman', and supplements this opening statement in verse 5 saying, 'I am the Vine, ye are the branches'.

John speaks of the 'true light', 'true worshippers', 'true bread', the 'true vine' and the 'true God'. The antithesis of the word 'true' in

these passages is not so much the idea of falsity as it is of type and shadow. The manna was real, yet, as the Lord commented, the fathers who ate it in the wilderness are dead. It was the Father Who gave the 'true' bread from heaven when He gave His Son. The manna was a type or shadow of Himself.

The vine in Old Testament typology represents Israel. 'Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt' (Psa. 80:8). 'My well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill ... the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel ... He looked for judgment, but behold oppression ...' (Isa. 5:1-7). Israel signally failed to fulfil the glorious purpose of their calling, but in this as in all else Christ is the answer and the fulfilment. He is the 'true' vine, of which failing Israel was but the shadow. The husbandman of Isaiah 5 who cried 'What could have been done more to My vineyard, that I have not done in it?' now tends the 'true' vine, and the united testimony of the Scripture is that He was 'well-pleased', and 'well-pleasing' is associated with 'fruitfulness' in Colossians 1:10 and Romans 15:26,28.

The structure of the passage before us, reduced to its simplest terms, is as follows:

John 15:1-17

- A 1-9. THE VINE AND THE BRANCHES.
 - B a Abiding in the Vine.
 - b Fruit - Ask and it shall be done.
 - c Disciples.
- A 10-17. THE LORD AND HIS CHOSEN.
 - B a Abiding in His Love.
 - b Fruit - Ask and He will give.
 - c Friends.

A little care in comparing these two sections will show that the theme of John 15:1-17 is one. The illustration of the Vine and the branches finds its realization in the Lord and His chosen. Most important is the fact that in both sections the conception of fruitfulness leads on to answered prayer, and lastly those who are likened to branches that abide, are called 'disciples', while those chosen ones who abide are called 'friends'. With this demonstration of the unity of

the passage before us, let us turn our attention to the way in which the lesson is impressed.

The word used in the fifteenth chapter for 'branch' occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It is *klema*, and is used in the LXX of the vine (Ezek. 17:6,7). The word is derived from *klao* 'to break', and suggests the frailty of the branches. It is proverbial that the vine unless it bear fruit is useless for much else.

'Shall wood be taken thereof to do any work? or will men take a pin of it to hang any vessel thereon? ... Behold, when it was whole, it was meet for no work: how much less shall it be meet yet for any work, when the fire hath devoured it, and it is burned?' (Ezek. 15:3-5).

The disciples would be familiar with this reference to the vine in Ezekiel and would see at once the point of the Lord's insistence upon 'fruit' or failure.

The Husbandman's attention is next described in a threefold way. First, the treatment of a branch that beareth not fruit 'He taketh (it) away' (John 15:2). Does this word translated 'to take away' mean 'excision'? Does it mean that the unfruitful branch is cut out by the Husbandman? *The Companion Bible* note here reads:

'Taket away = raiseth. Gr. *airo*. Occ. 102 times, and translated more than forty times, take up, lift up, etc. Take away is a secondary meaning. See the Lexicons'.

We turn to a Greek Lexicon to 'see' and find the following headings in Parkhurst.

Airo from the Heb. *Ur*,* to raise up.

The general meaning is to *lift, raise or take up*.

To lift up, as the hand to heaven (Rev. 10:5).

To lift or take up (Mark 6:29).

To make to doubt, Applied to the mind to suspend, keep in suspense (John 10:24).

To take up, on one, as a yoke (Matt. 11:29).

To take up, as a cross (Matt. 16:24).

To bear or carry, as a burden (Matt. 4:6).

To remove, take away (Matt. 22:13).

To bear, and so take away or remove (John 1:29).

To receive, take (Matt. 20:14).

To loose a ship, namely, from the shore (Acts 27:13).

To lift up or raise the voice (Luke 17:13).

It will be seen that the idea is not necessarily that the husbandman cuts away the unfruitful branch, it rather suggests patient care, raising the branch, training it, lifting it into the air and sunshine, so that He can say at the end 'what could have been done more?' (Isa. 5:4). This attitude, too, is in the spirit of Isaiah 42:3, 'A bruised reed shall He not break'. Secondly, the husbandman, moreover, gives attention to those branches that do bear fruit, 'and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit'.

Kathairo is an early form of *katharizo*, and means, 'to cleanse from filth: as e.g., grain, by winnowing (2 Sam. 4:6); a tree, by pruning (John 15:2); sin, by atonement or expiation (Heb. 10:2)' (Dr. Bullinger *Lexicon and Concordance*).

The spiritual interpretation of this 'pruning' or 'purging' is supplied by the Lord Himself:

'Now ye are clean (*katharos*) through the word which I have spoken unto you' (15:3).

* The quotation of Parkhurst here does not necessarily mean that we endorse this derivation of the Greek word. In this for the moment we are not concerned.

The word translated 'now' is better translated 'already' as in John 3:18; 11:17; 19:33, and as *katharos* occurs nowhere else in this Gospel other than 13:10,11, it is most evident that chapter 15 must be read in the light of that previous passage. There we learned that there was a cleansing which was once and for ever finished, a cleansing that was continuous and experimental, and a cleansing in which one at least of those who sat with the Lord (Judas) had no share. So in the figure of the vine and the branches: the fact that the husbandman did not cut away the unfruitful branch is parallel with the fact that every believer is once and for ever clean; the fact that even a fruitful branch was pruned or purged is parallel with the subsequent washing of the disciples' feet, cleansed though they were once for all and the further fact that Judas was not reckoned among those thus cleansed is set forth in figure:

'If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a (*the*) branch, and is withered' (15:6).

'The branch' here looks especially to Judas, and the reader may find help in this matter if he will turn to the structure of John 13:1 to 18:3 set out on page 364, where we have the reference to Judas running right through this section. To facilitate our study we set out the corresponding passages thus:

- | | | | |
|---|----------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| B | 13:4 to 15:18. | d | Cleansing with water. |
| | | e | Judas (ye are not all clean). |
| | | f | The abodes, and the abiding. |
| | | d | Now are ye clean through the word. |
| | | e | The branch (withered - like Judas). |
| | | f | Abide in Me, and I in you. |

The raising of the drooping branches, and the pruning or the purging of those already fruitful is the work of the husbandman. There is, however one supreme condition that antedates all else, and is comparable with the fact stated in the sixteenth verse 'I have chosen you'. That condition is 'abiding'.

'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 ... Severed (*choris*) from Me, ye can do nothing ... If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a (the) branch' (15:4-6).

The spiritual meaning that is uppermost in the Saviour's mind is next expressed:

'If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you' (15:7).

These words and this lesson find their complete correspondence and amplification:

'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 (abide): that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My name, He may give it you' (15:16).

At first it may seem strange to lead up through this figure of fruitfulness to that of answered prayer, but if we will but consider the conditions of answered prayer we shall perceive the relevancy of the figure.

'Ask, and it shall be given you', said the Saviour in the Sermon on the Mount, and taken in its context it is blessedly true. If however a Christian today shall honestly confess that he has sometimes 'asked' but the thing asked for was not 'given' it is no failure on the part of Matthew 7:7, for the one addressed in that passage was indeed a very 'fruitful' believer. By the time any believer could legitimately take to himself the spiritual characteristic of the fifth and sixth chapters of Matthew he would have reached the position where answered prayer was a normal experience. In John 16:24 there is a condition which if truly fulfilled must lead to answered prayer:

'Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full'.

This is most evidently a continuance of the fifteenth chapter for there, in connection with the same subject, we read 'that your joy might be full' (15:11). Again, in 1 John 5:14 we read:

'And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us'.

On the other hand we have the testimony of James that many a prayer remains unanswered:

'Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts' (4:3).

So, in John 15 the fruitful believer, the one who abides in Christ, abides in His love, loves both the Lord Himself and obeys the new commandment 'That ye love one another, as I have loved you', this believer has reached the spiritual condition where answered prayer will be a normal experience, so closely will he walk with God. These believers are given two titles 'So shall ye be My disciples', 'I have called you friends'. Those to whom the Lord originally spoke the words had been called disciples long since (2:11,17). It is not so much the thought that these believers were to be called 'disciples' but that they had proved themselves such, even as the Lord said earlier:

'If ye continue (abide *meno*) in My Word, then are ye My disciples indeed (*alethos* "truly")' (8:31).

'Friends' is, however, a new name for the disciples. They would know the high estimate in which this title must be held, for was it not written of Abraham 'He was called the Friend of God'. Concerning Abraham His 'Friend' God said, 'Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?' (Gen. 18:17), so the Lord now said to His disciples, 'I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you' (15:15). Moreover, Abraham, we must remember, 'obeyed' the commandment of the Lord, so said the Saviour, 'Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you'.

Such characteristics are those which can be likened to the abiding branch, the branch that is pruned and cleansed, the branch that produces 'fruit', 'more fruit', 'much fruit' and 'fruit that abides'. It is associated with great and all-comprehending love, and the one thus characterised so walks with God that whatever he asks, he receives. This passage is one further illustration and emphasis upon the keyword of this whole inner section, the 'abiding' of the believer in His Lord and in His love.

The Threefold Witness of the Holy Spirit (John 16)

The parable of the Vine and the branches, has emphasized the vital relation that must exist between the Lord and His people if they are to be fruitful in their lives. The interpretation of the parable makes it clear that this vital union is expressed in 'love', love both to the Lord Himself, and of one to another. In a world of righteousness such a picture of unity would bring nothing but approbation, but alas, in a world as at present constituted the reverse is the case.

‘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’ (15:17,18).

The world is not said to hate the believer because that believer may occasionally fall from his high standing, or that he may at times be chargeable with some form of dissembling or hypocrisy, it is charged with hatred simply because it hates Christ Himself and all His ways:

‘I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you’ (15:19).

Hatred thus induced is blind, prejudiced, ignorant:

‘All these things will they do unto you for My name’s sake, because they know not Him that sent Me’ (15:21).

This hatred though the product of ignorance, is nevertheless culpable:

‘If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke (or pretext) for their sin’ (15:22).

This is not all however. The Lord not only spoke as no man ever spoke, but His words were confirmed by works such as no man ever wrought:

‘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’ (15:24).

The reader will doubtless call to mind the parallel argument of Hebrews 1:1-4 and 2:1-4 of which space will not permit the citation here, but the passage nevertheless should be read in conjunction with our Lord’s words.

There are some, who profess an ability to distinguish between the simple teaching of ‘Jesus’ and the incredible ‘accretion’ of the ‘miracles’. The passage we have before us reveals the intimate association of the Lord’s teaching with His confirmatory miracles, and the whole structure of the Gospel of John is dependent upon the eight ‘signs’ which he has selected out of many to establish the truth that ‘Jesus is the Christ’ (20:30,31).

The appeal of the Saviour to believe for the 'very works' sake' and the utter impossibility of leaving an intelligible story when the miracles and their associated teaching are removed from the Gospels, are a sufficient answer to those who profess to 'believe the simple teaching of Jesus' while denying the presence of the supernatural.

The so-called Scientific or Philosophical objection to miracle is seen in its true light when thus submitted to the Saviour's own exposure. He affirmed, both before and after referring to the miracles He wrought, that those who thus rejected their testimony were moved by hatred (15:23,24), and added to this already heavy indictment the words 'they hated Me without a cause' (15:25).

Following the teaching of this chapter we find the Lord breaking into the fuller exposition of the world's insensate hate by the promise of the coming Comforter, 'even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me' (15:26). As a direct result of the coming of the Comforter, the disciples were to be equipped with spiritual power, and to them the Lord said, 'And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning' (15:27). Then follows in 16:1-3 a foreshadowing of the form which the hatred of the world took as is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. The appointment of Matthias (1:21,22) is entirely in line with the conditions given in John 15:27, and we shall find upon examination that the witness of the Spirit that is now to engage our attention, will be best interpreted in the light of the subsequent witness of the apostles, as recorded in the early chapters of the Acts.

John 16:8-15

- A 8- When He (the Comforter) is come.
- B -8. He will reprove the world of sin
righteousness
judgment.
- C 9-11. ME.
- D 12. Many things to say which ye cannot bear now.
- A 13- When He the Spirit of Truth is come
- B -13. He will guide you into all truth
what He hears, He will speak
things to come.

C 14- ME.

D -14,15. He shall take of Mine, and show it unto you.

Before seeking the explanation of this important passage in its outworking as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, it will be necessary to acquaint ourselves with the meaning of the word translated 'reprove' in verse 8. That word is *elengchein*, Alford's comment is:

'It is difficult to give in one word the deep meaning: "*convince*" approaches perhaps the nearest to it, but does not express the double sense of *elengchein*, which is manifestly here intended - of a *convincing* unto salvation, and of a *convicting* unto condemnation'.

Parkhurst's Greek Lexicon contains the following note:

'To *convince* and to *convict* seem to differ, when applied to a fault, only thus, that the individual is *himself convinced of his fault*, but is *convicted of it in the judgment of others*, the fault being equally proved in each case'.

This distinction is to be found in John's Gospel itself, although the Translators have reversed the usage of the words suggested above:

'Being convicted (or with Parkhurst "convinced") by their own conscience'.

'Which of you convinceth (or with Parkhurst "convicteth") Me of sin?' (8:9,46).

If we have assumed, as many have, that the conviction of the world of sin was mainly condemnatory, it may be well to remember another passage where *elengcho* is used, namely 'As many as I love, I *rebuke*' (Rev. 3:19).

The twofold convincing and convicting of the world that is in the mind of Christ is particular rather than general. The world at large can only be convicted of the sin of not believing the Son of God if they have heard of Him, for 'How shall they believe in Him of Whom they have not heard?' asks the apostle in Romans 10:14, yet according to Romans 2:12 some of such may have nevertheless 'sinned'. From the special point of view of John's Gospel, everything focuses upon 'believing that Jesus is the Christ' (20:31). 'He that believeth not is condemned already' (3:18) although many other sins than that of not

believing (3:16) may involve the sinner in condemnation. Here too, as though the testimony of 16:8 were already in mind, we meet the word *elengcho*:

‘For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov’d (*elengcho*)’ (3:20).

Condemnation therefore falls not simply because of unbelief, but because unbelief is an index of the evil nature behind it. This principle if true, would also shed light upon the nature of faith, for it would also be an index to the quickened longings that have been awakened in the sinner’s heart. We shall find other passages in this Gospel that view sin from this particular angle:

‘If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins’ (8:24).

‘If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth’ (9:41).

‘If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin’ (15:22).

‘If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin’ (15:24).

We must therefore read the words of 16:9 in the light of this growing testimony.

‘He will reprove (convince) the world of sin ... because they believe not on Me’ (16:8,9).

The second clause in this witness of the Spirit is concerning righteousness:

‘Of righteousness, because I go to My Father, and ye see Me no more’ (16:10).

We must beware of the temptation to read into the Scriptures, that which is the subject of other dispensations. So far as John’s Gospel is concerned, all that it has to say about ‘righteousness’ is exhausted in these two verses. If we turn to the epistle to the Romans we shall find in its sixteen chapters thirty-six occurrences of the word *dikaiosune* ‘righteousness’, and had the words ‘Convict ... of righteousness’ been found in that epistle, it would have been impossible to avoid reference to the great doctrine of justification by faith. John, however, says nothing of this doctrine, neither do the first twelve chapters of the Acts

of the Apostles, where the 'testimony of those who had been with Him from the beginning' is given. Justification by faith finds its first exposition in the witness of Paul as recorded in the thirteenth chapter of Acts and this blessed doctrine is fundamental to the gospel of Christ, as Romans 1:16,17 will show. Let us turn to the early chapters of the Acts, just to see whether this witness of John 16:8-15 finds any place in its record.

Immediately after the coming of the Spirit of Truth on the day of Pentecost, Peter is found making this announcement:

'Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs ... ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up ... Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, Whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ' (Acts 2:22-36).

Now observe the 'convincing' of the Spirit:

'Now when they heard this, they were *pricked in their heart*' and this led to the cry 'What shall we do?' (Acts 2:37).

The next testimony of the apostles, introducing 'righteousness', is the righteousness of Him, Who went to the Father, and was seen no more:

'Ye denied the Holy One and the Just (*Dikaios*) ... and killed the Prince of Life ... I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers ... Repent ye therefore, and be converted' (Acts 3:14-19).

So far the work of the Spirit has been that of 'convincing', with the salvation of some as the result. We now have two further testimonies, which result rather in 'conviction' and we ask the reader's attention to the change of expression used to indicate this awful result. Instead of being 'pricked in their hearts' they are said to be 'cut to the heart' and instead of crying out 'what shall we do?' they plot against the apostle's life.

'The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, Whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses of these things; and so is also the

Holy Ghost, Whom God hath given to them that obey Him' (Acts 5:30-32).

This time the *elengchos* of the Spirit denotes 'conviction'.

'When they heard that, they were cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them' (Acts 5:33).

Again, after Stephen had testified saying:

'Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye ... they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One (*Dikaios*); of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers ... when they heard these things, they were *cut to the heart* ... and they stoned Stephen' (Acts 7:51-59).

Had Israel accepted their Messiah He would not have 'gone to the Father' as He did consequent upon their rejection.

The third feature of the Spirit's witness is that of judgment. In an earlier reference the Lord had said:

'Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out' (John 12:31).

In the Gospels we read of 'the prince of the devils' (Matt. 9:34; Mark 3:22) and in Luke we read of Satan casting out Satan. This title Prince (Gk. *Archon*) is used of Satan in Matthew, Mark and in Ephesians 2:2, and is not used of Christ until in Resurrection glory, the kingdoms of 'this world' become the kingdom of our God and of His Christ, where He is called for the first time 'the Prince of the Kings of the earth'. Over against this title of 'Prince of this world' is that used in Acts 3:15 and 5:31 which is *archegos*, a word occurring elsewhere only in Hebrews 2:10 'Captain' and 12:2 'Author', in both cases associated with present suffering and future glory. The Lord's kingdom was not of this world, the princes of this world crucified the Lord in ignorance, and not until the Day of the Lord do the kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of the Lord. Yet in the miracles that 'cast out' devils, there was an anticipation of the world to come, when Satan himself shall be cast out. And in the exaltation of Christ as the Prince of life, is found the judgment of this world and its prince.

It has been suggested that in this three-fold witness of the Spirit we have three separate developments of truth.

- (1) Of Sin. The immediate reaction of Israel.
- (2) Of Righteousness. Paul's great doctrine of Justification.
- (3) Of Judgment. The Book of the Revelation.

We return to John 16 for just a passing word concerning the second part of the work of the Comforter. He was to guide the apostles into 'all truth' and if at the close of the Lord's earthly ministry He could say 'I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now', it is evident that we must look for such teaching in the Scriptures written after the day of Pentecost, and these are either the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles or the Revelation.

In the Acts we get a great emphasis upon the sin of not believing in the Lord. In the epistles of Paul we discover what 'righteousness' means, and learn of its association with the resurrection and exaltation of Christ, and in the Revelation we most certainly read of the casting out of Satan and the judgment of the world. Faith therefore obeys the injunction to:

'Leave the word of the beginning of Christ, and to go on unto perfection' (Heb. 6:1 Author's translation).

One concluding point. The Holy Spirit does not speak 'of' or 'from' Himself. He receives and takes of the things of Christ, and shows them unto His believing people. 'He shall glorify Me' said the Saviour. We do not attempt to judge those meetings and publications that glorify the work of the Holy Spirit. We believe that the Spirit's work is most evident where He is in the background and where Christ is exalted. His office is to take of the things of Christ and show them unto us. Following this revelation of the coming of the Comforter, there is a record of the perplexity of the disciples concerning the Lord's words 'a little while' which we have considered earlier, and the last sentence of the chapter, standing as it were on the threshold of the sanctuary of the seventeenth chapter are the words of triumph 'Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world'.

With these words, therefore, we prepare ourselves to enter into the holiest of all as the Son of God communes with the Father when His hour had come.

CHAPTER 14

'Put off thy shoes from off thy feet'

The Structure of Chapter 17 as a whole and an outline study of the opening section (1-5)

It so happened that two studies were being prepared at the same time, the present series on John's gospel and a series on the Prophecy of Isaiah, and the great chapters, John 17 and Isaiah 53 were reached simultaneously. Both have intimately to do with the Saviour, His inmost thought and His finished work, and as we approached either of these great passages we seemed to hear a voice saying:

'Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground' (Exod. 3:5).

In one sense 'all scripture' is 'holy' (Rom. 1:2) and 'sacred' (2 Tim. 3:15) and it is not in any disparagement of the whole Word of God, that we speak of some portions as being peculiarly sacred to the believer.

In this seventeenth chapter we are permitted, like Peter, James and John in the garden of Gethsemane, to stand by while the Son of God enters into communion with the Father. We may, and we must for the truth's sake examine the language used, we must spare no pains that will enable us to arrive at the true meaning of these words, yet we may be pardoned for hesitating to speak of grammar with such glory before us, or of attempting to exhibit the structure in the atmosphere of such sanctity.

We have already shown that the teaching of chapters 13 to 16 is gathered up in the seventeenth, and it can be demonstrated that much of the Prologue (1:1-18) is enshrined in this chapter too. The Prologue takes us back to 'the beginning', when the Word was 'with God'. Chapter 17 speaks of 'before the world was' and 'before the foundation of the world'. The Prologue speaks of creation and incarnation, grace and glory, but it is left to this chapter to speak of unutterable love. The Prologue tells us that when the Word became flesh and dwelt (tabernacled) among us, we beheld His glory; the Prayer of John 17, is that the believer may be made one with the Father and with the Son and behold and share His glory and His love.

A peculiar feature of those Scriptures that foreshadow the goal of the ages, is the way in which the number seven predominates. The seven days of creation, the jubile, the seventy weeks of Daniel 9 will come to mind immediately. We are indebted to the patient researches of R. McCormack as set forth in his book, 'Seven in Scripture', for the following features of this chapter:

'On dividing it into the shortest complete sentences which the laws of grammar will allow, it is found to contain 7 paragraphs or sections, each section containing 7 sentences. The number of *words* in each section is a multiple of 7; the number of *letters* in each section is a multiple of 7; the totals in the whole chapter being 490 words (70 x 7) and 2,079 letters (77 x 27 or 3³).

The structure opposite does not pretend to be exhaustive, it but indicates the general disposition of the main theme which falls into a sevenfold subdivided Introversion.

'These words spake Jesus, and lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come' (17:1).

'These words spake Jesus'. We must not limit 'these words' to the close of chapter 16, although the last few verses will necessarily have an important bearing, but rather must we understand an inclusive reference to the whole discourse which commences in 13:31. Upon the departure of Judas, from the midst, there immediately follow the words: 'Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him', and these words are most definitely taken up again in the opening verses of chapter 17, while, in the initial statement, 'The hour is come' we are taken back to the opening words of chapter 13, where we read 'Jesus knew that His hour was come'.

<p>A 24-26. GLORY BEFORE FOUNDATION OF WORLD.</p>	<p>u Father. v Behold Glory given Me. w Love. Before F. of World. u Righteous Father. v Known Thou hast sent Me. w Love. In them.</p>
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Wherever and in whatever circumstance they were spoken, any words uttered by the Son of God would necessarily be weighty, and command from His believing people a reverent hearing. How much more so when uttered in the circumstances indicated. It cannot be, therefore, but that the opening words of Christ as recorded here, must be of supreme importance, 'Father, the hour is come'. That fateful hour has never been really out of sight throughout the record of John's Gospel. We discover that it was vividly present before the mind of the Lord, even at the time of His first public miracle; to that 'hour' He referred His mother, as He referred His own life and activities:

'Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come'
(2:4).

Not only did our Lord consciously regulate His ministry in view of that 'hour', but His adversaries as well as His friends were powerless to act contrary to it.

'No man laid hands on Him, because His hour was not yet come'
(7:30; see also 8:20).

Here are three negative references. The hour had not yet come. In 13:1, 16:32 and 17:1 we have the three corresponding positive references 'the hour was come', 'the hour cometh', 'the hour is come'; and midway between these two groups comes the heart searching passage of 12:23-27.

Chapter 12 brings the first half of John's Gospel to a close. The coming of the Greeks and their desire to 'see Jesus' seems to have been a crisis in the Lord's experiences. From that instant, 'the hour' was imminent:

'What shall I say? (shall I say) Father, save Me from this hour? (No) but for this cause came I unto this hour. (I will say) Father, glorify Thy Name'.

Not only did the Lord speak of His 'hour', He used also the word *kairos*, season. There was a distinct time element in the gospel which the Lord preached:

'The time (*kairos*) is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel' (Mark 1:15).

The Saviour used this word when He said to His brethren, 'My time is not yet come ... My time is not yet full come' (7:6,8). The fact that both to His mother and later to His brethren He set aside all human persuasion and steadfastly awaited the 'season' and the 'hour' appointed by the Father, is a lesson that we must not lightly pass over. It is this same word *kairos* that the apostle Paul used when he said: '*In due time* Christ died for the ungodly' (Rom. 5:6).

The central lesson that we learn from the trial of Habakkuk's faith is connected with this fact of appointed time:

'The vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry' (Hab. 2:3).

It was in the 'fulness of the time' (*chronos*) that Christ was born (Gal. 4:4). It will be in the 'fulness of the seasons' (*kairos*) that He will fulfil His great work of complete restoration (Eph. 1:10).

'To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven' (Eccles. 3:1).

Every child of God can confidently look up to the Father and say 'My times are in Thy hand' (Psa. 31:15), and when we realize that Psalm 31:5, supplied the Saviour with His dying utterance, 'Into Thine hand I commit my spirit' (see Luke 23:46) we shall perceive how fully He understood the purport of the times and the seasons which the Father kept in His own power.

The reader has probably already noticed that instead of using particular instances like 'birth', 'opening of public ministry', 'sacrificial death', the record of John's Gospel focuses attention upon the ultimate object of it all. The glorifying of the Father by the Son, and the glorifying of the Son by the Father. Where we meet with the 'hour' for the first time, we also meet with the statement that then and there He 'manifested forth His *glory*' (2:11). We have already cited the references in the twelfth chapter, 'The hour is come that the Son of

Man should be *glorified*, 'Father glorify Thy name', but to these we should add, 'these things said Esaias, when He saw His glory, and spake of Him' (12:41). We must link John 13:1 with verses 31 and 32:

'When Jesus knew that His hour was come ... Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him' (John 13:1,31,32).

So we come back and complete the statement:

'Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee' (17:1).

What is this glorifying of the Son by the Father, or of the Father by the Son? We have already gathered something as to its implications, and if we will give heed to the remaining verses of this opening section we shall discover a more particular explanation. This opening section, as the structure (p. 447) indicates, occupies the first five verses of the chapter. The passages develop in a series of associated statements, the one leading on to the other, and may be appreciated better if set out before the eye. For the sake of comparison we repeat the opening reference:

'The hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee' (17:1).

How is this to be accomplished, and what does it involve? 'According as', 'the causal connection expressed by *kathos* is this, that the glorification, *the end*, must correspond to the *beginning*, to the sending, the preparation, and *office* of the Son' (Lucke).

'As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him' (17:2).

How are we to understand this gift of 'eternal life'?

'This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the Only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou hast sent' (17:3).

The next verse expands the thought of Christ as 'sent':

'I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do' (17:4).

Here it is plain that the Son glorified the Father by finishing the work that He was sent to do, and that this work included very particularly the gift of eternal life to all that had been given to the Son. The prayer, however, includes not only the glorifying of the Father by the Son, but the glorifying of the Son by the Father. So, the passage continues: 'And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine Own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was'. This must therefore include the Resurrection and Ascension, and by connecting back again with the first verse, we learn that He who glorified the Father on the earth, by finishing the work given Him to do, will, in Resurrection glory, still further glorify the Father, by the full and complete performance of all that yet remains to be done before God can be 'all in all'.

Something of what is in view will come before us when we consider verses 21-24, where 'the glory which Thou gavest Me', says the Son, 'I have given them' with the wondrous object 'that they may be one, even as We are One'.

The Gift and Purpose of Eternal Life (17:1-5)

The first verse contains a statement 'the hour is come', a prayer 'glorify Thy Son', and a sequence 'that Thy Son also may glorify Thee'. That the import of these words may evidently be discovered in the verse that follows, is suggested by the use of the particle *kathos* 'as', with which verse 2 commences.

Alford draws attention to the comment of Stier, and refers to the use of *kathos* in Romans 1:28 and 1Corinthians 1:6, where it is not only the *type* but the *ground* of these consequences:

'Even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over ...' (Rom. 1:28).

'In everything ye are enriched ... even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you' (1 Cor. 1:5,6).

That most critical 'hour' which had come, was to see the glorifying of the Father by the Son in harmony with the exercise of an authority which had been given to Him, an authority extending to 'all flesh', in order that eternal life might be given to all those who had been given to the Son by the Father. We are dealing with high and holy themes,

the Will of the Father, the Work of His Son, and the Blessing of the redeemed.

‘As Thou hast given Him’. Let us observe the way in which this verb ‘to give’ is used in this seventeenth chapter. There are four passages where we read that Christ gave something to His people: ‘That He should give eternal life’ (17:2); ‘I have given unto them the words’ (17:8); ‘I have given them Thy word’ (17:14); ‘The glory ... I have given them’ (17:22). Here we have eternal life and glory, and also the word and the words of God given to the disciples. The remainder of the references are all concerned with that which the Father gave the Son.

Let us now give further consideration to the opening statement of verse 2:

‘As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him’ (17:2).

Here we have *universal* authority, but *limited* blessing. Let us ponder these weighty words. Of the several words translated ‘power’ in the English New Testament, two are of chief importance. These are *dunamis* and *exousia*. *Dunamis* will be recognised as the parent of such English words as dynamic, dynamite and the like, and the root idea of *dunamis* is ‘capability’. It is used as synonym for ‘miracle’ in the phrase ‘mighty works’, found so many times in the Gospels, and in general is well translated by the English word power. *Exousia* is the other word translated ‘power’ in the English New Testament. This word is derived from *exesti* ‘lawful or free’, and so contains the idea of liberty, right or authority. Cremer says:

‘As *exesti* denies the presence of an hindrance, it may be used either of the capacity or the right to do a certain action’.

It is this word *exousia*, indicating ‘right’ or ‘authority’ and not *dunamis* sheer ‘power’, that is used in John 17:2. ‘He taught them as one having *authority*’ (Matt. 7:29). ‘I am a man under *authority*’ (Matt. 8:9). ‘By what *authority* doest Thou these things?’ (Matt. 21:23). ‘All *power* is given unto Me’ (Matt. 28:18). This is the word that is used in reference to earthly magistrates, ‘the *powers* that be’ (Rom. 13:1).

Not only did the Saviour speak as one having 'authority', but this authority extended to His 'power' on earth to forgive sins (Matt. 9:6); His 'authority' over unclean spirits (Mark 1:27), and sickness (Mark 3:15).

Confining ourselves to the Gospel of John we have the following occurrences and usage of *exousia* in relation to the Son of God:

'To them gave He *power* (right or authority) to become the sons (children) of God' (1:12).

'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' (5:26,27).

'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' (10:17,18).

'As Thou hast given Him *power* over all flesh' (17:2).

We learn from other passages that Satan had an 'authority' from which the redeemed are delivered (Acts 26:18; Col. 1:13), and that there are 'authorities' antagonistic to the Church (Eph. 6:12). Moreover, at the time of the end, the Dragon will give his throne and his great authority to the Beast (Rev. 13:2), but that 'authorities and powers' are even now subject to Christ (1 Pet. 3:22; Col. 2:10; Eph. 1:21), and that ultimately a loud voice will be heard proclaiming:

'Now is come salvation, and strength, and the Kingdom of our God, and the power (AUTHORITY) of His Christ' (Rev. 12:10).

Christ therefore has 'all authority in heaven and in earth', and this authority extends beyond the limits of mankind and includes all other authority and power whether angelic or Satanic. In John 17 the Saviour limits the extent of this authority to 'all flesh', this refers to man, apart from any distinction of race or creed. It moreover contemplates man in his natural weakness, 'all flesh is grass' (Isa. 40:6), but whatever the many associations may be that are called to mind by the term 'all flesh', whether they be the extreme breadth of that authority that embraces every son of Adam, whether it considers the utter helplessness of the 'flesh' when dealing with things of the

Spirit, or whether it visualizes the opposition of those who may be characterized as 'flesh', all are under the authority of the Son of God.

The reader will remember the parable of 'The Hid Treasure' in Matthew 13. The man who found a treasure hidden in a field bought the field in order to obtain possession of the treasure in it. If we allow the principle of interpretation that says 'The field is the world' to obtain in John 17:2, we shall perceive that the authority exercised by Christ over 'all flesh' was in order that He may give eternal life to the elect, those who had been 'given' Him by the Father. 'God so loved the world', that is the 'field', that is 'all flesh', that whosoever believeth in the Son should have everlasting life. That is the teaching of this second verse, that is the 'treasure' for the sake of which the whole field was bought. Herein we have the synthesis of two apparently contradictory sets of passages found in John's Gospel. In the tenth chapter, where the figure of the sheep is used, the Lord declared:

'My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all' (10:29).

There were some standing by and listening to His words of whom He said:

'Ye believe not, because ye are not of My sheep' (10:26).

Again, after chiding the multitude with believing not, Christ said:

'All that the Father giveth Me shall come unto Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out' (6:37).

This line of truth is further amplified in verse 39, where we read:

'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'.

To this the Saviour refers when He said:

'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' (17:12).

Many passages of Scripture that appear on the surface to teach Universal Salvation will be found to fall into line with John 17:2. Authority over 'all flesh' was given to the Son, in order that He should

give eternal life to as many as the Father had given Him. What is 'life eternal?' We might set out the usage of the word translated 'eternal' and show that it referred to the Ages yet to come, but we are here chiefly concerned with the actual unfolding of the truth as it is discovered in our chapter itself. Verse 3 takes up this question and supplies an answer, which, while it leaves the question of 'eternal' untouched, goes far deeper into the truth and reveals the purpose for which this stupendous gift of eternal life is made:

'And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou hast sent' (17:3).

The word 'that' is a maid of all work in the English language and represents a variety of grammatical meanings. In the matter of translation 'that' stands for no less than twenty-five Greek words in the Authorized Version of the New Testament, besides where it occurs over a thousand times to indicate the case of a noun. We cannot of course make so great a digression here that would suffice to give examples of this variety, we merely mention the fact in order that the reader may be prepared to give careful consideration to the import of the word as it occurs in John 17:3.

In 17:3 the word used is *hina*, a conjunction which emphasizes purpose or design. This can be seen by noting its usage in the opening verses:

'Glorify Thy Son *in order that* Thy Son also may glorify Thee'.

'As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, *in order that* He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him'.

'And this is life eternal, *in order that* they might know Thee'.

If we so translated 'And this is life eternal that they may know Thee', the natural interpretation will be that eternal life is the *result* of knowing God, but it is evident that some other word than *hina* should be found in the original. The fact that *hina* has been used, indicates that Eternal life is given with an object, namely that those who receive it might know the only true God and Jesus Christ Whom He had sent. Later in this chapter we have a similar passage:

'I in them, and Thou in Me, *in order that* they may be made perfect in one; and *in order that* the world may know that Thou hast sent Me' (17:23).

Here, there is no need for a lengthy argument to prove that the perfect unity of the believer with the Lord and with one another leads the world to know that Christ's claim as being Sent by the Father is true.

In spite therefore of the strangeness of the rendering, we must be honest in our dealing with the Word of God, and see here one of the objects with which Age-enduring Life is granted to the believer. During the ages to come, those who receive this priceless gift will be largely occupied with 'knowing' that the Father is the Only True God, and with 'knowing' Jesus Christ Whom He sent. Nor is this the only passage that looks forward to the future as a period of attaining this blessed knowledge. In Israel's case it is expressed in such passages as:

'They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea' (Isa. 11:9).

'For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea' (Hab. 2:14).

'And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD' (Jer. 31:34).

This knowledge which is especially associated with the life of the ages, is 'that they might know Thee *the Only true God*, and *Jesus Christ*, Whom Thou has sent'. God is called 'the only *True* God' (John 17:3), 'the only *Wise* God' (Rom. 16:27, 1Tim. 1:17, Jude 25), 'The blessed and only *potentate*' (1 Tim. 6:15), 'The only Lord God' (Jude 4), and it is said of Him that He 'only hath *immortality*' (1 Tim. 6:16), He only is 'Holy' (Rev. 15:4). God is called 'the living and true God' in contrast with idols (1 Thess. 1:9); and again in the first epistle of John:

'This is the true God, and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen' (1 John 5:20,21).

Here it will be observed 'eternal life' is associated with 'the true God' and knowing 'Him that is true', being 'in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ'. *This One* concludes the apostle, 'This God' Who sent His Son Jesus Christ, 'This is the true God' and to know and

believe *This One* and this fact, 'This is eternal life'. The words 'true' *alethinos* and 'truth' *aletheia* often mean 'antitypical'.

For example the 'grace and truth' that came by Jesus Christ, is contrasted with the law that held but a shadow of good things to come (1:17). The 'true' bread (6:32) is contrasted with the typical manna, which though given from heaven, gave not eternal life. So in Hebrews, the 'true' tabernacle and the figure of the 'true' refer to the type and antitype. The presence of idolatry, in close proximity with the reference to the true God in 1Thessalonians 1:9 and 1John 5:20,21 shows that there is also the insistence upon the Reality of the God revealed through Christ, as contrasted with all false gods.

The gospel preached by the apostle Paul is called by him 'the gospel of God' (Rom. 1:1), but he is careful to continue 'concerning His Son' (Rom. 1:3), and his next reference to the gospel is in verse 9, where he calls it 'the gospel of His Son', and in verse 16 it is the gospel of *Christ* that is the power of *God* unto salvation. The basis of our justification is 'the righteousness of God' (Rom. 1:17; 3:21,22), but this is explained as 'the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ'. For the sinner to meet the righteousness of God apart from Christ would be to meet judgment. The believer enjoys the peace of *God*, but it is 'through our Lord Jesus Christ' (Rom. 5:1); he has been saved by the salvation of *God* but it is Christ Who is the Saviour (Luke 2:11; Phil. 3:20; Tit. 2:10,13). The Mediatorial office of Christ is the vital link that alone binds the seeking sinner to the throne of God, He is the Way, He is the Door, and He is such to the exclusion of any other way, or any other door. To have learned this lesson is the lesson of the ages, the lesson which will be increasingly learned when eternal life is conferred and enjoyed. It is the supreme purpose of the opening verses of our chapter, as it is the intense desire of the closing verses of John's first epistle. God reconciled the believer to Himself - true -but how? 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself' and just as that reconciliation implied that the sins of those reconciled could no longer be imputed to them, Scripture reveals that they were indeed imputed to Him Who knew no sin, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

To speak of 'God', to pray to 'God', to seek forgiveness of 'God' apart from the mediation of His Son Jesus Christ, is not to speak of or to pray to 'The only True God'. Once under the dispensation of law this was all that man could do. But 'we know that the Son of God is

come'. He declares that 'no man cometh unto the Father' but by Himself. He said to His disciples, 'Ye believe in God, believe also in Me', and 'Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name: Ask'.

The True God is He to whom we are reconciled through Christ, to us He is the True God as contrasted with type and shadow, and He is the True God as opposed to every species of idolatry. Eternal life is a boon of itself. The glories and blessings, the privileges and joys associated with it surpass our present powers of thought, but here is one great fundamental and all-embracing outcome of this priceless gift, a knowledge which begins even now in our present weakness and insufficiency, but which is to be the crown and goal of that life which is life indeed.

The Manifested Name (17:6-8)

In the structure, section 'B 6-8' is denominated 'The Word and the Words'. 'They have kept Thy *word*'; 'I have given unto them the *words* which Thou gavest Me'. This solemn moment in our Lord's Mediatorial work was a moment when He passed in review before the Father what He had done. If His servants are to account themselves 'stewards' and to remember that it is required in stewards that a man be found 'faithful' how true must not this be of Christ 'The Faithful and True'. Let us, with bowed head and in reverence listen as He recounts the deeds of His Stewardship on our account to Him that sent Him.

'I *have* glorified Thee on the earth'; 'I *have* finished the work which Thou gavest Me'; 'I *have* manifested Thy Name'; 'I *have* given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me'; 'As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so *have* I also sent them into the world'; 'I *sanctify* Myself'; 'Pray I ... for them also which shall believe on Me ... that they all may be one'; 'The glory ... I *have* given them'; 'I *have* declared unto them Thy name' (17:4-8,18-26).

We are able to provide a slightly fuller outline of verses 6-8, than we were able to do when considering the structure as a whole, and in order that we may have the benefit of its guidance during our study we will give it here.

- A 6- a I have manifested Thy Name.
- b The men Thou gavest Me.

- B -6,7. They have kept.
 They have known.
 Thou hast given Me.
- A 8- **a** I have given them the words.
 b Which Thou gavest Me.
- B -8. They have received.
 They have known surely.
 They have believed ... sent Me.

Can we not see from this correspondence, that it would not be far from the truth to affirm, that the supreme office of all Scripture, was the manifesting of the Name of God? the name being a symbol, the Scriptures the explanation and application of that symbol so far as the limitations of our present conditions allow.

Here it will be seen is an alternation of revelation with subsequent reception and assurance. The revelation is expressed in two ways, the manifestation of the Name and the gift of the words given to Him. This twofold revelation we must now examine, especially as it occupies so prominent a place in the Saviour's estimation, and because of the results that accrue to its acceptance.

The verb *phaneroo* 'to manifest' is found twelve times in the Gospels. Three occurrences are found in Matthew, the remaining nine in John's Gospel. The word also occurs nine times in the first epistle of John. There is only one other book in the New Testament where such a number of occurrences are to be found and this is in 2 Corinthians. In the rest of the New Testament one, two, three or at most four occurrences in any one book is all that is found. That Gospel which opens with the name and office of 'The Word' must be, if the remainder of the book be true to this initial doctrine, a gospel of manifestation. As 'The Word made flesh' He 'declared' God. By His miracles 'the works of God' were made manifest (9:3); and throughout His ministry, whether by word or deed, He manifested the Father's name.

He was the only begotten of the Father (1:14) and was in the bosom of the Father (1:18). He came in His Father's name, and by the Father He was sealed (5:43; 6:27). He claimed to have been taught of the Father, and that He always enjoyed the presence of the Father (8:28,29). He claimed to have a knowledge of the Father, even as the Father knew Him (10:15). In the second half of the Gospel the

oneness of the Son with the Father, and the consequent manifestation of the glorious fulness of the Father's character, is more evident:

'If ye had known ME, ye should have known MY FATHER also: and from henceforth ye KNOW Him, and have SEEN Him'. 'He that hath SEEN ME hath SEEN THE FATHER; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?' (14:7,9).

In John 14-16, we do not meet 'the Name' associated with the Father, the expression 'My Name' occurs in those chapters eight times and always refers to Christ. In chapter 17 however, 'the Name' is never associated with the Son, but in four passages it is used with reference to the Father:

- A 6. 'I have *manifested* Thy Name'.
- B 11. '*Keep* through Thine own Name'.
- B 12. 'I *kept* them in Thy Name'.
- A 26. 'I have *declared* unto them Thy name'.

In the manifesting of the Name 'Father', Christ the Son has revealed the one word which represents All Fulness. If we think of the many and glorious titles that are employed to reveal the character and attributes of God we perceive that all, whether Elohim or Jehovah, whether Creator or El Shaddai, all find their fullest expression and realization in the New Testament title 'The Father'. If, moreover, we remember that Christ used the words 'My Father' when speaking of His own relationship, and taught the disciples to say 'Our Father' when speaking of their relationship, His Own glorious distinctiveness, and their own intimate fellowship become more clearly perceived, and are fully covered by the complete title 'The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ'. All doctrine is summed up in the title 'Father'. It expresses the goal of the ages, as no other title can. The title King, or Priest, or Creator have their connotations, but they are limited, the goal of the ages is when the Son delivers up the kingdom to God, EVEN THE FATHER (1 Cor. 15:24). All doctrine that pertains to our salvation is summed up in the title Father. Every theory of the atonement must stand or fall by the standard of 1 John 4:14, 'The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world'.

The gracious 'power' or 'authority' which enables believers to become 'sons (Greek - children) of God' (John 1:12), the grace that

must be presupposed before any sinner can look up to heaven and cry 'Abba Father' (Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6), the access which leads us to the Father (Eph. 2:18), the unity of the Spirit that concludes with the words 'One God and Father of all' (Eph. 4:6), these and many such like passages show how fully this title includes and crowns all doctrine. In the matter of prayer, the one cry 'Father' includes every petition and covers every need. It is most gloriously true, that foremost in the work which the Son accomplished was the manifestation of His Father's Name.

We have in modern times lost something of the significance of a Name. We may quote Shakespeare out of context, and think we express a profound philosophy when we say 'What's in a name?' but even a superficial acquaintance with Shakespeare's works would correct so false an idea.

'They that know Thy name will put their trust in Thee' (Psa. 9:10).

'The name of the God of Jacob defend thee' (Psa. 20:1).

'In the name of our God we will set up our banners ... we will remember the name of the LORD our God' (Psa. 20:5,7).

'He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake' (Psa. 23:3).

'The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe' (Prov. 18:10).

Such is the testimony of Scripture, and the number of references is great. A name correctly given is the sum of all attributes. The name of God revealed in its fulness in Christ as the Father, is the sum of all revealed truth. Like the apostles of old but with more meaning than they may have at the time intended we can say, 'Shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us'.

In this seventeenth chapter of John two qualifying words are used with the title 'Father'. We find in verse 11 'Holy Father', and in verse 25 'Righteous Father'. Earlier we have the titles 'Heavenly Father' and 'Our Father which art in heaven', and in Matthew 11:25 the added title 'O Father, Lord of heaven and earth'. In the epistles we have the titles 'Father of mercies', 'Father of glory', 'Father of spirits', and 'Father of lights' (2 Cor. 1:3; Eph. 1:17; Heb. 12:9, and Jas. 1:17). Each of these titles receive fuller meaning by being read with their context.

We meet the title 'Heavenly Father' for the first time in Matthew 6, and in a context where the natural anxiety of the believer concerning the necessities of life is completely covered by the fact that his heavenly Father Who feeds even the fowls of the air, knows most fully his every need.

The second epistle to the Corinthians is an epistle of distress, and suffering, even of ignominy and shame (1:5-10; 4:8-11; 6:4-10; 11:23-33). In an epistle which is coloured throughout with such overwhelming grief, such pressure that it led to the despair even of life itself (1:8), we meet the titles the 'Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort' (1:3). So will the contextual teaching illumine each and every other reference given to open up the treasury of the title 'Father'.

The structure of the section we are examining, places in correspondence with 'the manifestation of the name', 'the giving of the words', 'For I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me'. It is necessary to distinguish the two Greek words translated 'word' and 'words'. *Logos* is found in verses 6,14,17 and 20. 'They have kept Thy word', 'I have given them Thy word', 'Thy word is truth', 'Their word'. In the verse under consideration, however, the Greek word translated 'words' is *rhema*. *Rhema* refers to a saying, speech or discourse as a whole, and whereas *logos* is found in John's Gospel some forty times, *rhema* occurs twelve times.

In several passages *logos* and *rhema* are in juxtaposition or close relationship:

'This is an hard saying (*logos*) ... the words (*rhema*) that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life' (6:60,63).

'Why do ye not understand My speech? even because ye cannot hear My word' (*logos*) ... 'He that is of God heareth God's words' (*rhema*) (8:43,47).

'He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My words (*rhema*), hath One that judgeth him: the word (*logos*) that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day' (12:48).

It is exceedingly difficult, without great elaboration or many examples, to make the difference between *logos* and *rhema* clear, but one suggestion from Cremer may be sufficient for our purpose. He says of *rhema* it 'denotes the word as the expressed will, while *logos* denotes the expressed thought. Though the two often coincide,

especially in biblical Greek, the distinction never wholly disappears, namely that *logos* and *rhema* are distinguishable as *counsel* and *will*.

Perhaps we could say that the *logos* is the complete 'account', whereas the *rhema* is the repeated 'opening' and 'exposition' of that account. Both Christ and the Scriptures are the once given and completed 'Word' (*logos*), but the subsequent preaching and teaching of that Word ever since is the *rhema*. The *logos* is in a sense the wholesale side of truth, the *rhema* the retail. This attempt is obviously poor, and open to many objections. The only way to sense the distinction between the two words is by constant application and consideration of many references. This, however, the reader must do for himself.

If we will read the twelve passages in John's Gospel where *rhema* is used and mentally substitute 'expressed will' where the translation reads 'words', some advance may be made in appreciating the peculiar point of each passage. If a man cannot hear God's expressed *thought* (8:43) he is not likely to hear God's expressed *will* (8:47). He that rejected the expressed *will* of God as taught by Christ, would be judged by the expressed *thought* of God spoken by Him, and manifested by His life. So in John 17:6 we can read 'I have manifested Thy Name unto the men which Thou gavest Me ... and they have kept Thine expressed *thought*', while in 17:8, we can read: 'For I have given unto them the expressed *will* which Thou gavest Me'.

Let us now look at the connecting consequences of this attitude to the Word in the words of God.

'Now they have known that all things whatsoever Thou hast given Me are of Thee' (17:7).

A superficial reading of this statement leads to a misconception. It requires no revelation to know that whatever is given by one person to another must come from that one person. Here, however the Saviour speaks of what He knew all the time, but which the disciples were but beginning to recognize. This consciousness is manifested in John 16:30,31 and is referred to here. A paraphrase of the verse expresses the meaning of the Lord:

'Now at last they recognize what I knew from the beginning that those things which I have wrought and taught at Thy command all came from Thee'.

Verse 7 does not stand alone, verse 8 is an expansion of its teaching.

‘For I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me’.

Here is a concrete instance of one of the things ‘whatsoever Thou hast given 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’ (17:8).

Here is the consequent recognition that ‘whatsoever Thou hast given Me are of Thee’.

This is but the beginning of a wondrous claim. In verse 10 it takes a mighty sweep, but this must be considered in due course. The two features of this section that stand out most seem to be:

- (1) The first thing enumerated by the Saviour when looking back over His life’s work ‘I have manifested Thy name’.
- (2) One of the most important means of thus manifesting the Father’s name is found in the Word spoken by the Lord and since written by inspiration. ‘I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me’.

For ourselves we may take to heart this lesson, that if the Saviour Himself gave to His disciples the words that were given Him to pass on, how much more is it necessary that we should keep close to the Word that has been entrusted to our stewardship. A good example of this spirit is:

‘I delivered unto you first of all *that which I also received*, how that Christ died for our sins *according to the Scriptures*’ (1 Cor. 15:3).

The Prayer for Unity (17:9-11)

The Exclusive Character of the Prayer

The first statement made by the Lord when reviewing His stewardship before the Father was ‘I have manifested Thy Name unto the men which Thou gavest Me’. Now the prayer of the Lord is that His people should be kept through that Name (17:11). Before,

however, we can proceed with our exposition one important alteration made by the Revisers must be noted and weighed.

'Holy Father, keep through Thine own Name those whom Thou hast given Me' (A.V.).

'Holy Father, keep them in Thy Name which Thou hast given Me' (R.V.).

It will be seen that the latter reading introduces a new and wonderful thought that it is in the Name which the Father has given to the Son that His people are kept.

There is a preponderance of evidence that this new reading is the most ancient and best attested, and therefore we accept this as the true text without burdening our pages with references to Greek MSS. It may be of service to remind the reader, that one of the Resolutions adopted by the Convocation of Canterbury reads:

'To make or retain no change in the text on the second final revision by each company, except *two thirds* of those present approve the same'.

The reader may be further assured by noting the comment in *The Companion Bible*:

'*Whom*. All the texts read "which", referring to "name": i.e. "Keep them through Thy name which Thou hast given Me". Cp. Exod. 23:21, Isa. 9:6, Phil. 2:9,10, Rev. 19:12'.

Adopting therefore, as we must, the Revised Version, another most illuminating parallel comes to light. In verse 22, we read:

'And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one'.

A glance at the structure of chapter 17, given on page 447, shows that verses 9-11 are in structural correspondence with verses 21-23, and that both sections are under the denomination 'One'. We now see further and fuller reason for this parallel.

'Holy Father, keep them in Thy name which Thou hast given Me,*
that they may be one, even as we are' (17:11 R.V.).

* Perfect tense in both cases and should be translated alike.

‘The glory which Thou hast given Me* I have given unto them; *that they may be one, even as we are one*’ (17:22 R.V.).

In the first instance, the prayer of the Lord is ‘not for the world’ but for that little company of believers which had been given Him out of the world. In the second instance, the prayer enlarges to include those that should afterwards believe, and finally embraces the world that may believe that the Father had sent Him. In the first instance it is the Name that had been given, in the second instance it is the Glory that has been given. The ‘Oneness’ of both sections is the same: ‘That they may be one, as we are’ (17:11); ‘That they may be one, even as we are one’ (17:22). After the second reference, when all believers are envisaged and the world itself at last made to believe, then the unity sought and prayed for is more fully expressed:

‘I in them, and Thou in Me, that *they may have been perfected into One*’ (17:23 author’s translation).

This is a wondrous theme. It enshrines the innermost feature of the purpose of the Ages. It gives another aspect to the goal foretold in 1 Corinthians 15:28. It will, moreover, illuminate the problem that has arisen in thinking minds, as to why God being all-sufficient, created the world at all. These tremendous subjects will come better in their proper place. Having drawn attention to the need for revising the Authorized Version in verse 11, we must now return to verses 9-11, and consider them in orderly exposition.

‘I pray for them’ (verse 9). The word used for prayer here is *erotao* and Dr. Bullinger gives this note in his Lexicon:

‘To interrogate, to ask, implying *familiarity, if not equality; hence, never used of our prayers to God, while it is used of Christ’s prayers to the Father (John 14:16; 16:26; 17:9,15,20)*’.

It will moreover be remembered, that while the Lord taught His disciples to say ‘Our Father’, He Himself never thus associated Himself with them in prayer. He never uses the words ‘Our Father’. As a case in point note the extreme care in the choice of terms in John 20:17:

‘I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God’.

He could not have said: 'I ascend to our Father and our God' because of His Own glorious Mediatorial office which involved the great mystery of godliness 'God was manifest in the flesh'.

As a further expansion of the peculiar character of the Lord's attitude in prayer, let us note 17:24, 'Father I will'. What mortal, however sanctified, would dare to enter the Divine Presence with the words 'I will' upon his lips or in his heart?

'I pray not for the world'. The Westminster Confession cites verse 9 as a proof text for the Calvinistic doctrine 'that the atonement of Christ, and subsequent blessings are made for the elect only'. Stewart in his *Westminster Confession Tested*, opposing this view, says at this place:

'Observe 1st - *Prima facie*, the thing would be monstrous. Could Christ pray for His murderers, even when on the cross, and yet fail to pray for the world? ... could He weep over Judea's sons and daughters, who were nigh to destruction and say: "I would have gathered you under my everlasting wings had you heard My entreaties" and yet not pray for them? Could the Scriptures enjoin on all men the duty of prayer; and could all good men in all ages have prayed for the world, and yet Christ Himself refuse? ... In verse 20 "Neither pray I for these alone (showing that in the foregoing part, He did pray for them *alone*), but for them also, who shall believe on Me through their word ..."

2nd - To understand the Saviour's prayer, we must take notice of its gradation. He begins first to pray for Himself (verses 1-5); then, from verses 16-19, He prays for His disciples; in verses 20,21, His prayer extends to believers; and, in verses 21-23, it opens out to embrace the world'.

Calvin explained verse 9 as referring to the elect, but when he came to verse 20, he became blessedly inconsistent saying:

'He now gives a wider range to His prayer, *which, hitherto, had included the apostles alone*'.

We shall get nearer to the Saviour's intention, and rid the passage from this horrible Calvinistic incubus^{*}, if we read 'I am not *now*

* Incubus = anything which weighs heavily, as upon the mind.

praying for the world' with the implied thought, 'but I shall pray for the world in due course'.

The reader will, we trust, remember that in our exposition of John 13 to 16 we drew attention, and that repeatedly, to the fact that much in those chapters that has been taken as of the Church at large, was primarily promised to and spoken of, the apostles, and that only in a secondary and very wide sense could these chapters be made to apply to believers in general.

The fact that we must face is that here in chapter 17, as in 13 to 16, the training, the preservation, the equipping and the unity of 'The Twelve' is paramount. Others will believe, but it will be 'through their word' (17:20).

If so much hung upon so slender a thread, is it any wonder that the Lord gave such close and unremitting attention to the frail instruments He had chosen for so gigantic a task? It was because the Lord had *not forgotten* subsequent ages and generations, that chapters 13 to 17 are so exclusively directed to the little handful of disciples gathered around Him. A legend has it, that upon the Ascension, an angel asked the Lord, what plans He had made for the continuance and expansion of the great work on earth. The Lord replied, 'I have chosen twelve men'. But said the angel, 'suppose they should fail, what other plans hast Thou made?' 'I have no other', answered the Lord, and the truth of this strange legend permeates these sacred chapters of John's Gospel.

'I pray ... for them which Thou hast given Me; for they are Thine' (17:9).

He had 'called' them (Matt. 4:21), He had 'chosen' them (Luke 6:13; Acts 1:2), He had 'ordained' them (John 15:16), He had ensured their enduement from on High (14:16-18; 16:7-15), but this call, this choice, this ordination of the twelve was entirely in harmony with the prior fact that they were the Father's gift to Him and to His service. Having said 'for they are Thine', the Saviour, in blessed abandonment continued, 'and all Mine are Thine' - and so must every saved sinner acknowledge - but these lowly words are followed by a claim that none other than the Son of God could utter. 'And Thine are Mine, and', continued the Lord, 'I am glorified in them'. So the Saviour prepares our hearts and minds to appreciate something of His glorious meaning when He prayed 'that they may be one, as We are'; such oneness

knows no distinction between 'Mine' and 'Thine' an aspect of Christian unity little appreciated or understood.

Having prepared the way we will now examine the great purpose of the Saviour's prayer trusting that the preparation of mind and heart that should result from the examination of the passage so far conducted, will remain with the reader and accompany him, as we continue the study.

The Keeping Power of 'The Name' and the Unity (17:11)

We have seen, from verse 9 that the Saviour's first thought and prayer at this great crisis was for the apostles, the little nucleus, the tiny seed that should eventually lead the world itself to 'believe' and to 'know' that He indeed was the 'Sent One' (17:21,23).

We now take up our study of these words of portent and promise, at the eleventh verse.

'And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to Thee' (17:11).

In what way could the Lord say, 'I am not in the world'? He had yet before Him the agony of Gethsemane, the ignominy of trial, crucifixion and death, and yet, before these closing hours of suffering were endured, He could say 'I am not in the world'. The difficulty is one of our own creating, because we have allowed the conception 'space' to overshadow that of 'character' when thinking of the term 'world'.

True, in some cases, the word is synonymous with creation (Rom. 1:20), but in most cases the word has a moral connotation, and especially is this so in John's Gospel.

'The world' that knew Him not (1:10), whose 'sin' He came to take away (1:29), 'the world' that God so loved (3:16), and of which Christ came to be the Saviour (4:42), the world whose prince had nothing in Him (14:30), and which the Lord had overcome (16:33), this 'world' cannot be the earth with its teeming manifestations of Creative power and wisdom, it refers to the world in a moral sense, and particularly in its alienation from God. This 'world' has its 'course' or 'age' and it was therefore possible to be 'in the world' and yet not 'of it' (17:14 and 16). The inner section of this Gospel which opens with chapter 13,

stresses the fact that 'the hour had come' and moreover, so confident was the Saviour that He would finish the work which the Father had given Him to do, He could say, before Calvary had been reached, 'I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do' (17:4). Such an attitude of mind is not commendable in a mortal man. He is warned against the folly of boasting when he puts his armour on, as though he were in the position of him who putteth it off. He is counselled to avoid thinking that he standeth, in case he should fall. With the Saviour such contingencies had no place. It were more easy to conceive that the sun should fail to shine tomorrow, than that He, the Holy One could be turned aside from His blessed purpose and fail. He was no longer in the world - but His disciples were, 'these are in the world'. He had prepared them earlier to expect the hatred of the world (15:18) and is to repeat the warning:

'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' (17:14,15).

'And now come I to Thee'. This is the uppermost thought in the Saviour's testimony. With it chapter 13 opens, 'He was come from God, and went to God'. With it He had silenced His critics.

'What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before?' (6:62).

With this same glorious consummation of His work in view, He had silenced Nicodemus' doubts and problems (3:13) and, finally, it was the blessed fact of the Ascension that was the first message that the Risen Christ sent to His Own: 'Say ... I ascend ... ' (20:17).

The reader will remember that we called attention to the Revised Version reading of the remaining portion of verse 11:

'Holy Father, keep them in Thy name which Thou hast given Me' (17:11 R.V.)

Before we search the Scriptures for light upon this 'Name' which was given to Christ, and by which the disciples were to be kept, let us gather from the experiences of Israel a foreshadowing of this great truth.

The record of the Lord's dealings with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, as also His dealings with Moses and Israel reveals the constant mediation of angels. Thus, the law was received by the disposition of angels (Acts 7:53), and disobedience, and transgression of the word spoken by angels was severe (Heb. 2:2). At times the angelic Mediator is given divine titles, but this feature is not left unexplained:

'Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way ... My name is in him' (Exod. 23:20,21).

The prophet Isaiah referring to this provision says:

'The Angel of His presence saved them' (Isa. 63:9).

There are some who speak of the Archangel Michael as of Christ Himself. This we repudiate as bad doctrine and mischievous teaching. During the dispensations prior to grace, Angels mediated between God and men, but since the advent of the Saviour He alone fulfils and glorifies the sacred office. The point, however, in connection with the Angel of His presence, is that he 'kept' Israel, and exercised supreme authority because, said God, 'My Name is in him'; a foreshadowing of the 'keeping' and the 'Name given' in the seventeenth of John. Jude 1 translates the word 'keep' by 'preserve' as does 1 Thessalonians 5:23. In John 17:15 the Lord prays that His disciples shall be 'kept from' the evil that is in the world.

This keeping is found 'in the Name' which the Father had given to the Saviour. For Israel, this 'given' name is *Jehovah-tsidkenu*, 'The Lord our Righteousness'.

'Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is His name whereby He shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS' (Jer. 23:5,6).

When we turn to Jeremiah 33:15,16, we meet with a repetition of this promise, but the wording is slightly different:

'And this is the name wherewith *she* shall be called'.

In Jeremiah 23, we have the words 'call Him' and the use of the accusative, in chapter 33 we have the words 'call her' or, perhaps

better still, 'proclaim to her', and here the dative is used. It will be seen that the same Name that is given to Israel's Messiah in that day, will be given to the people of the Messiah - Israel. So in John 17, the Name given to the Saviour, in some way belongs to His own, so that perfect oneness is the result.

We do not know the Name that is referred to here. In Revelation we read 'His Name is called the Word of God' (19:13), and consequently the Apocalypse is linked with the Gospel of John, where the title is introduced (1:1). In Revelation 19 however there is another name mentioned, 'And He had a name written, that no man knew, but He Himself' (19:12). Now just as we discovered in Jeremiah that the name *Jehovah-tsidkenu* 'The Lord our Righteousness' was the name both of the Messiah and of His people, so, by comparing (Rev. 19:12 with Rev. 2:17) we come to the conclusion that the same principle operates in the second and heavenly sphere.

'I ... will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it'.

Here in Revelation, Christ appears as the King Priest, as here also, His redeemed people enter into that destined calling 'kings and priests unto God' (Rev. 1:6). What of the third sphere, the superheavens, the sphere associated with the Mystery and the Church *which is His Body*? Philippians provides the parallel so far as the Name given to Christ is concerned:

'Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a (the) Name which is above every name' (2:9).

A superficial reading of verse 10 suggests that this name is after all the one we have known so long and so well, namely 'Jesus'. Had this been the intention of the apostle, he would have shown how this lowly name had now been exalted. What he rather says is, that *He Who once bore* the name Jesus, a name given at His birth and associated with His sojourn on earth, has now been given 'The name which is above every name' and that 'in the name of Jesus', in this new name now given to Him Who is called Jesus, every knee shall bow. There is a partial unveiling of the name thus conferred by the statement that follows, that every tongue shall confess Him as Lord, but this does not take us far enough to satisfy the fulness of the passage. We do know that it has pleased the Father that in Him 'all the fulness' should dwell, and we do know that the Church which is His Body is called 'The Fulness of Him

that filleth all in all', but further into this sacred secret we cannot penetrate. All we know is that once again in this highest of all spheres, the same principle operates as we have found operating in Jeremiah 23 and John 17. We shall as surely share His Name as we shall share His Glory, and by so much we shall be 'one'. Further than this we cannot go. More than this we do not seek to know. Less than this were unbelief. We can confidently, gladly and expectantly leave the unveiling of this last and most glorious manifestation of Redeeming Love to its fit time, the day of the manifestation with Him in glory.

'That they may be one, as we are' (17:11). The revelation of this aspect of God's purpose reaches its zenith in this chapter, but there have been suggestions made in earlier chapters that indicate that this great unity was in mind:

'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 (*one flock*), and one Shepherd' (10:16).

'I and My Father are One' (10:30).

'He prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that also He should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad' (11:51,52).

When we pass from the external testimony to the Lord's own instruction of the twelve, the character and marvel of the unity that is before the Lord and His people is revealed. The first intimation is found in the fourteenth chapter:

'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' (14:19,20).

Two necessary lessons may be learned from this statement, and should be taken to heart.

(1) This most intimate unity is essentially associated with resurrection life. 'Because I live, ye shall live also'.

(2) The way in which this most intimate unity will be accomplished, without destroying individuality we cannot know until 'that day'. All attempts to resolve the mystery must end in failure, for as regards the conditions of the Risen Life, we know little or nothing.

If we can believe, but we cannot explain, the trinity in unity that is expressed by the words, 'I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you', we can as certainly believe the fuller revelation of the trinity in unity of the Godhead, without being under any necessity either to explain its mode or to justify its possibility. Whatever philosophic objections lie against the one tri-unity as surely lie against the other.

Let us now look back over this verse, and see what it has taught us. The point of view taken by the Lord is that of his Ascension - so far as He was concerned He was 'no more in the world'. The disciples, however, were not yet raised to share His glory, they were still 'in the world'. The Saviour therefore prays 'Holy Father keep them' and this keeping is *by means of* the Name given Him - evidence and token of His triumph and glory, and His 'keeping' is *with a view to* the attainment of the goal of redemption 'that they may be one'. Not merely, as indicated in John 10:16 'one flock', or as prophesied in John 11:52, but rather that wondrous unity indicated by the Lord, when He said 'I and My Father are one' (10:30), for the Lord does not hesitate to expand the words 'that they may be one' by the added explanatory clause '*as we are*'. This is indeed holy ground. Not one step must we take beyond that which is written, but on the other hand this is revealed to faith, it is expected of us that we believe this testimony of the Most High, and to deny, or to draw back, is just as evil in the sight of God as to presume.

More has to be seen and said upon this subject, but that will come in its right place when we are dealing with John 17:21-23. The fourteenth chapter reveals that this oneness is in resurrection life, John 17 has revealed that this oneness is connected with the all-covering Name. We are yet to see that this oneness is connected with the all-embracing glory of the Lord (17:22), a glory that will take us not only forward into the blessed future, but cast our minds back to 'before the world was' (17:5).

Kept in the Name, and from the Evil (17:12-16)

'These are in the world ... keep them' (17:11). These words are the burden of the section now to be considered (17:12-16), and although other matters are introduced, 'keep them' is still His chief concern. This insistence must therefore be important, and we do well to keep before us the innate antagonism of the 'world' and the need for, and guarantee of, the 'keeping' power of the Saviour's name.

so rendered in the Revised Version. *Phulakizo* is translated 'to imprison' (Acts 22:19); *phulax* is a 'keeper' (Acts 12:6); and *phulasso* is associated with prison (Acts 28:16). It has, however, other associations such as 'guarding' a trust committed (2 Tim. 1:14); 'saving' those in extreme danger (2 Pet. 2:5), and occurs in the glorious doxology of Jude, 'Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling'.

The words of 2 Thessalonians 3:3, 'keep from evil' make one return to John 17:15, and as the word *phylactery* is derived from the same root, and the superstitious imagined that these possessed some charm that would guard the wearer 'from evil' there may be just a glance at this well-known fact in this prayer.

The defection and betrayal of Judas in no way alters the fact that the Lord had kept His disciples. In John 18:9 we read:

'That the saying might be fulfilled, which He spake, Of them which Thou gavest me have I lost none'.

Judas, when he betrayed His Lord, betrayed himself. From the first, the Lord knew the character of this man whom he had chosen.

'Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?' (6:70).

His awful name 'The son of perdition' points forward to the Day of the Lord, when the Man of Sin shall appear and antichristian apostasy fill the earth. Of those given to Him, the Saviour lost none. Peter had well nigh gone, but, said the Lord, 'I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not' (Luke 22:32). Thomas came near to the darkness of unbelief, but the Lord graciously revealed Himself, and Thomas acknowledged Him as 'My Lord and my God'. No, He keeps and He guards all that the Father has given to Him. They shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of His hand.

In verse 14, the Lord makes the fourth reference to 'the word'. He had already said, 'They have kept Thy Word' (17:6); 'I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me' (17:8); 'That the Scripture might be fulfilled' (17:12); and now He says, 'I have given them Thy word' (17:14). On either side of this reference to the Word will be found 'joy' and 'hate'.

'These things I speak in the world, that they might have My joy fulfilled in themselves' (17:13).

'I have given them Thy Word; and the world hath hated them'
(17:14).

Here are two diametrically opposite effects springing from the same cause,

'I speak', result 'joy'; 'Thy Word', result 'hate'.

The shadow of Judas falls across these six chapters. A reference back to the structure of these chapters as a whole will make this plain (p. 364). Yet even though Judas has been mentioned in the twelfth verse and his betrayal seen in its dreadful anti-christian character as 'the son of perdition', the very next verse speaks of 'joy'. The Lord's joy was independent of external circumstances, even betrayal could not sully the joy that found its deepest sources in the fulfilment of the Divine will. This fulfilment He now bequeaths to His own who were left to continue the fight in the world.

There are four personal possessions mentioned in these chapters that are bestowed or shared with the disciples. 'My peace', 'My love', 'My joy', and 'My glory' (14:27; 15:9,11; 17:13,24).

John the Baptist could experience this unselfish fulfilment of joy as he saw the goal of his mission attained (3:29), but this joy he could not share or bestow. Here, in the seventeenth chapter, we learn that the Lord's joy may be fulfilled in His people and shared by them.

Side by side with His joy, the disciple must be prepared for hatred from the world, and particularly the hatred that is stirred up in connection with God's Word. We may have a deep desire to reach out to the great outside world that knows not God. We may plan and pray that we may have a message for 'the man in the street', we shall fail, and rightly so, if we forget that the world hates the Word, and do not therefore shape our message accordingly. Nevertheless, even though the world hates the Word and those who bear its testimony, the world is the subject of the Lord's prayer (17:21 and 23), but it will be observed that in both of these references it is the marvellous oneness of the Lord and His people that appears to be instrumental in the world's conviction and conversion. Consequently, even though hatred be their portion the Lord says:

'I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil' (17:15).

Hence the strong insistence on the keeping power of God that is found in the near context. The section before us concludes with the words: 'They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world' (17:16).

Kathos 'as' or 'even as' occurs eight times in this chapter, seven of them have a bearing upon this likeness between the believer and his Lord:

'Keep ... that they may be one, *as* we are' (11).

'They are not ... *even as* I am not of the world' (14,16).

'As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them' (18).

'As Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee' (21).

'That they may be one, *even as* we are one' (22).

'One; and that the world may know ... hast loved them, *as* Thou hast loved Me' (23).

Here, both negatively and positively the disciple is as his Lord. The words are easy to read, and the statements are plain, yet surely it surpasseth knowledge to grasp that by Redeeming grace, the sinner thus saved can be esteemed 'even as' the Saviour; not of the world, even as He is not; loved, even as He is loved; sent, even as He was sent, and, as united with the Father, as His beloved Son is united to Him! If these things are so, who would turn aside because of the world's hate?

'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' (15:18,19).

All this hatred arises out of the fact that the world does not know, said Christ, 'Him that sent Me', and according to this seventeenth chapter this hatred will not cease until the conviction of the world takes place upon seeing the glorious oneness of the people of God.

Here, therefore, march side by side unspeakable love and unspeakable hate. The cleavage is brought about by 'Christ and the Scriptures' and both the love and the hate will be experienced by those who are associated with heaven's Message and Mediator.

‘Washed’ and ‘sent’ come very near the same truth as seen already in the tenth and seventeenth chapters. *The Companion Bible* on John 17:19 says:

‘I sanctify Myself = I dedicate or consecrate Myself. This shows the meaning of sanctify; not making holy as to moral character, but setting apart for God’.

The following comment by Godet is suggestive:

‘The holy is not opposed to the impure, but merely to the natural. To sanctify is to consecrate to a religious use anything pertaining to common life. Thus in Exodus 29:1 (Septuagint) where the priests are said, "to be hallowed to minister, in the priest's office" the word translated "hallow" is the same as this, which is here rendered "sanctify"’.

The close association of ‘oneness’ with sanctification is well exhibited in the second of Hebrews, only there, in harmony with the import of that epistle, sanctification is not linked with service as here, but with suffering, sonship and glory. It will nevertheless be of help to see the outline of Hebrews 2:11-18.

‘All of One’

- A 11. Oneness in sanctification.
- B 14. Oneness in nature. He partook.
- C 14,15. Oneness in death and deliverance.
- B 17. Oneness in nature. He was made like.
- A 18. Oneness in temptation.

‘The perfecting of the captain can only bear upon the many sons, if they are united in some way. Verse 11 says they are, both Sanctifier and sanctified being all of one. Whatever therefore happens to the captain is communicated to the host’ (*The Berean Expositor*, Vol. 11, p. 60).

This sanctifying of those sent into the world, must be like the sanctifying of Him Whom the Father sent into the world. ‘As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world’.

Sanctification is accomplished by different means, according as it refers to the sanctification of a believing sinner saved by grace, the sanctification of such a believer to service, or the ultimate completeness of the saved believer, 'sanctify wholly' in spirit and soul and body, having been preserved blameless unto the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ is made unto us ... sanctification and redemption (1 Cor. 1:30).

Christ sanctified with His own blood, suffered without the gate (Heb. 13:12).

Sanctification is associated with cleansing and service (2 Tim. 2:21).

Sanctification is associated with the cleansing power of the Word (Eph. 5:26).

Sanctification in the Old Testament type was in one instance a foreshadowing of purging of the conscience from dead works to serve the living God (Heb. 9:14).

Sanctification is by the Holy Ghost (1 Pet. 1:2; 2 Thess. 2:13; Rom. 15:16).

Sanctification moreover, is used of the complete spirit and soul and body, preserved 'blameless' unto the coming of the Lord (1 Thess. 5:23).

In John 17 sanctification is 'through the truth'. There are some who understand this to mean 'true sanctification' or as the Authorized Version margin reads 'truly sanctified', but even though that be included, the first meaning of the 'truth' here must be as explained in the same verse, 'Thy Word is truth'. The Word and the words had been given to them, the Scriptures were being fulfilled before their very eyes, they were being effectually consecrated, hallowed, set apart in love by that self-same truth that separated the world from them in hate.

In what way did the Saviour 'sanctify Himself' and how did this sanctifying of Himself lead to the sanctifying of the disciples through the truth? Commentators seem particularly shy of this passage, treating it much as the Priest and the Levite did the man who fell among thieves on the way to Jericho. Where eminent teachers have failed, we may not fully succeed, but at least we can humbly seek an

explanation of the passage. In the first place we are already well on the way to an understanding because we (negatively) are already assured that no utterance of the Scriptures can possibly be without meaning, and (positively) we are certain that our Lord intended very specifically to help His disciples and that they would not have been helped unless His meaning had been plainly perceived. In the second place we can help ourselves by observing just what the Lord did *not* say. He did not say 'the Father hath sanctified and sent Me, now I sanctify and send you', although such a statement would have been the truth. What He did say was that He sanctified 'Himself', that this self-sanctification was 'for their sakes' with the object that 'they also might be sanctified by the truth'. It is evident, therefore, that our Lord's self-sanctification had a definite bearing upon the disciples, and that in a specific way. It was to enable them also to be sanctified by the truth. This self-sanctification of the Lord was not for His own sake, it was 'for their sakes'. Sanctification in the believer is both initial and progressive; the progressive side of sanctification being expressed in such words as:

'Let us cleanse ourselves ... perfecting holiness in the fear of God' (2 Cor. 7:1).

The Lord from His birth was 'holy' (Luke 1:35); throughout His earthly course He was 'holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners' (Heb. 7:26); 'He was not of the world'. Yet, He 'touched' a leper; He had compassion on a woman taken in the act of adultery; He ate with publicans and sinners; He accepted the grateful anointing of a woman that was a sinner; in all this He demonstrated that His sanctification, or as it means when applied to service, His 'consecration' did not cause Him to withdraw from contact with fallen man, but rather preserved Him in His spotless purity, even while coming into contact with the vilest of sinners. All this would have a bearing upon the disciples. They could not hope to achieve success in their ministry if they did not keep themselves 'unspotted from the world', but conversely, they could not hope to achieve success if they withdrew themselves as Pharisees and hermits from a spotted world. Consequently the Lord already had prayed 'I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil'. This 'keeping from evil' is but another way of 'sanctifying' and both are accomplished through the instrumentality of the 'Truth'. Now we have already learned that the 'Word' is truth.

But here comes a point worthy of constant remembrance and repetition. There is no magic in the Scriptures as such. No man is saved by the Scriptures. He is made 'wise unto salvation' by them, but the salvation is 'through faith in Christ Jesus' (2 Tim. 3:15). The Bible without Christ, is a book simply and nothing more. It discovers its glorious power by the ever-recurring presence of Christ concerning Whom it always, as ever, speaks. Consequently the Scriptures could have no real sanctifying effect upon the disciples apart from Christ. First, this sanctification is based upon the efficacy of His once offered sacrifice which fills 'the volume of the Book' (Heb. 10), and secondly it is encouraged by the blessed example and interpretation of God's will and intention that He Himself has provided. For example, when He washed His disciples' feet He said to Peter: 'What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter' (13:7), indicating that there was much more in this act than appeared on the surface.

We have already referred to the marginal reading of the Authorized Version of verse 19, where for 'sanctified through the truth' reads 'truly sanctified' and it must be admitted that in such expression as 'grace and truth' i.e., 'true or real grace as distinct from the grace of type or shadow under the law', 'the true bread' and 'the true vine', this use of 'truth' is justified. It may be that there still remains much to be done in the elucidation of the Lord's words, both in verse 19 and throughout the record, but we hope we have contributed something towards an understanding of His meaning, and an appreciation of the way in which He himself and His great work, infuses life and power into the Word which always and ever speaks of Him.

The world will ultimately 'believe' and 'know' but the instrument that accomplishes this blessed conversion is not here said to be the 'Gospel', even though other Scriptures testify to its efficacy; it is not said to be the 'Word' but it is the manifest Oneness of the believer and the Lord that accomplishes this mighty task. It is but an extension of the principle we have already indicated as underlying the teaching of John 17:19.

Made Perfect into One (17:21-23)

Both the word 'perfect' and the expression 'into one' (R.V.) indicate a goal. The sense of accomplishment runs through this chapter. 'Father the hour is come'; 'power over all flesh'; 'I have glorified Thee on the earth'; 'I have finished the work'. Redemption in

its initial stage is no longer in sight. It is the fruit and goal of that finished work that is now uppermost, and that goal is expressed in terms of the most wonderful unity. 'That they all may be one'. Two factors are revealed as instruments in the accomplishment of this great object, 'Glory' and 'Love'.

'The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one' (17:22).

The effect and presence of love is gathered from two passages in this chapter and the parallel teaching of the first Epistle. 'Thou ... hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me' (17:23) and 'the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them' (17:26).

- | | | |
|-----------|----------|---|
| C 21-23. | a | That they all may be one. |
| | b | As Thou, Me, I, Thee, One in Us. |
| | c | That the world may believe ... sent. |
| MADE | d | Glory given Me ... given them. |
| PERFECT | b | As We, I, them, Thou, Me. |
| INTO ONE. | a | That they may be made perfect into one. |
| | c | That the world may know ... sent. |
| | d | Loved them, as loved Me. |

Let us follow the Lord's prayer here and, with worship in our hearts, learn the purpose of our creation, redemption and glory.

'Neither pray I for these alone'. This oneness therefore extended beyond the apostolic company, it belonged to 'them also which shall believe on Me through their word', but it was a oneness in which faith and the Word were the connecting links. We have a foreshadowing of the unity which is yet to be attained, in the oneness of 'heart and soul' that characterized the believers after Pentecost (Acts 4:32), and just as the perfect oneness that existed between the Father, and Him Whom He had sent, so that Christ could say 'All Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine' (17:10), so in their degree and measure could the members of the early church see a similar manifestation, for it is written:

'Neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common' (Acts 4:32).

This blessed condition was soon attacked and spoiled, but it was an earnest of what must surely come.

'As Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us' (17:21).

There is no idea of absorbing the human into the Divine nature, the Lord Jesus Christ never lost His individuality in His oneness with the Father. The Father that sent Him, is never confused with Him that He sent. The word 'one in us' must have a meaning that leaves 'Thou', 'Me' and 'I' untouched.

All attempts to provide an illustration on such a subject are fraught with danger but, recognizing the limitations that beset us, can we not learn something from the following idea.

A man could not affirm that he was 'in England', if he spoke a foreign tongue, used foreign currency, was served by a foreign postal service, and was under a foreign system of government. If a man, though residing in England persisted by his own choice, to speak a foreign tongue, to read foreign newspapers, to dine at foreign restaurants, to avoid as far as was possible the manners and customs of the English, should we not be right if we said, 'Though he is in England, England is not in him', and should we not have used a figure of speech and really meant 'The love of England is not in him?' The illustration is full of faults and cannot be carried far, but it may be of service in preparing us for the truth before us.

Had we kept to our original intention when embarking on the exposition of John's Gospel, we should have continually brought back each unfolding section to the light of the Prologue (1:1-18), but the amount of study and preparation such an idea necessitates, together with the amount that must be written in exposition of the whole apart from that one particular point of view, caused us to set this idea aside.

We have now reached a point where some comparison with the Prologue will be forced upon us, for we have only to turn to the first chapter and to the first epistle to come face to face with the following:

'No man hath seen God at any time'.

This is a quotation from John 1:18, it is also a quotation from 1 John 4:12, we can only be sure which it is by quoting the sequel:

'No man hath seen God at
the only begotten Son, which is in
the bosom of the Father, He
hath declared Him' (John 1:18).

any time

If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us' (1 John 4:12).

In the first quotation, the Son dwells in the bosom of the Father, and so 'declares' Him. In the second quotation, our love to one another 'declares' that God dwells in us. It is this intertwining of love, manifestation and indwelling that constitutes 'perfected love' and 'perfected oneness'. This intertwining is the secret of the oneness between the Father, the Son and the sanctified. 'I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in (into) one' (17:23).

The oneness that existed between the Father and the Son is a theme intimately associated with John's Gospel. We meet it in the beginning of the prologue before 'The Word' was made flesh. We meet it at the close when as 'The Only Begotten Son' He is said to be 'in the bosom of the Father'. This glorious One moreover becomes one with us, inasmuch as it is written 'The word was made flesh'. So in the fourteenth chapter, we have the memorable utterance:

'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' (14:9-11).

It is evident from this passage that the words 'I am in the Father and the Father in Me' must be interpreted, not to the confusion of the Persons but by identity of 'words' and 'works', and this is carried one step further in the succeeding verse, where the Saviour anticipated the oneness of the seventeenth chapter, saying:

'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 (the) Father' (14:12).

The full apprehension of this oneness may not be possible until 'that day' even as the full attainment of perfect oneness cannot be possible until 'the glory' dawns, and this is taught in the near context of the passage cited above: 'At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you' (14:20).

Here for the first time the believer is included, the teaching pointing on and reaching its climax in the words of John 17 'that they also may be one in us', 'that they may be made perfect into one'.

Every step in the pathway of faith is accompanied by a 'gift' from heaven, without which redemption, pilgrimage and ultimate glory must remain empty terms.

'God so loved the world that He gave', living water and bread from heaven are 'given'; eternal life is 'given', the Spirit of Truth was 'given', His peace is 'given', and so as a necessary preface to perfect oneness we read 'The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them' (17:22).

There is a glory pertaining to Christ which belonged to Him before the world was. There is a glory that was given to Christ as a consequence of His finished work. This glory may be shared, for it is marked with the blood of atonement; and this glory is the last fashioning stroke before 'perfect oneness' is attained.

We must now give some attention to the word that marks this unity with special distinction, the word 'perfect'.

Teleioo 'be made perfect' comes from a root that means 'the end', in the sense of finishing our course, or attaining a goal. It is used in John's Gospel five times. Three references speak of 'finishing' a work or works (4:34; 5:36; 17:4), and one speaks of 'fulfilling' the Scriptures (19:28). It is in the first epistle however, that the word is used in a context that will repay study as we think of the section that is before us.

The four occurrences of 'perfecting' in the first epistle are connected with one subject, namely 'love' and we shall learn by their examination that this is implicit in John 17.

'He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth His Word, in him verily is *the love of God perfected*: hereby know we that we are IN HIM' (1 John 2:4,5).

Perfect love proves that the believer 'knows' God, and it also demonstrates that which may baffle all our powers to define, it demonstrates in deeds, that we are 'in Him'. The words 'word', 'truth', 'keep', 'in Him', are here also.

We have already cited 1John 4:12 but it is so important we must cite it again.

‘No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth IN US, and His love is *perfected* in us’.

Here ‘dwelling in’ and ‘perfecting’ are nearly synonymous. Perfecting makes real, makes manifest, takes to the legitimate end, makes the invisible, visible.

Another verse calls for attention:

‘Hereby know we that we dwell IN HIM, and He IN US, because He hath given us of His spirit’ (1 John 4:13).

This is saying with inspired fulness, what we attempted when using the illustration of the man who though ‘in England’ physically, evidently had not ‘the spirit of’ or ‘the love of’ England in him. The reader will appreciate that just as the unity manifested in the Church at Pentecost foreshadowed the glorious goal of the ages, so does ‘the unity of the Spirit’ which characterizes the Church of the Mystery. He will moreover, need no lengthy warning against all attempts to foist into John 17:21-23 the particular ‘unities’ either of the Bride with the Bridegroom, or of the Head and the Body. John 17 like 1 Corinthians 15:28 looks beyond all such dispensational revelations and thinks in ultimate terms. Moreover, just as the world will believe and will know that Jesus Christ is the Sent One as a direct outcome of the oneness manifested by the believer, so here in 1John 4:9,10,14, the stress is laid upon the fact that ‘The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world’.

We have not yet exhausted 1John. There is more light to be received on the meaning of the terms ‘in God’ and God ‘in us’.

‘Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth IN him, and he IN God’ (1 John 4:15);

and it will be remembered that the revealed purpose of John’s Gospel is to lead to the belief that ‘Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God’ (20:31). We get nearer to the heart of the matter with verse 16:

‘God is love; and he that dwelleth IN love dwelleth IN God, and God IN him’ (1 John 4:16).

To dwell in love, is to dwell in God, and it is impossible for the believer to dwell in love, unless God, Who is love, dwells in him. And so we arrive at the perfecting of love:

'In this is love perfected with us, in order that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as He is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear' (1 John 4:17,18 Author's translation).

The goal of the ages, like their inception, is explained and explainable only in the fact that God is love. May we be permitted to quote, what has already been stated by us earlier, in the attempt to open up the prologue of John's Gospel?

'If we endeavour to think of God as He is, we are attempting the impossible. "No man hath seen God at any time". Both John and Paul reveal the fact that God in His essence is "invisible"; He is "spirit" and no man has seen His "shape" or heard His "voice". Yet this same God is revealed as essentially "love", and we know that He "created" heaven and earth, and finally man in His own image. It is clear that He purposed to reveal Himself and being love, He must inevitably reveal this love in revealing Himself. He therefore takes the step which involves self-limitation. He, the Invisible One, becomes visible; so that Paul can speak of the "Image of the invisible God". He whose voice no man has ever heard, becomes audible; and we further read that He Who cannot be approached (1 Tim. 6:16) has been "handled" by men and women like ourselves (1 John 1:1,2).'

If we ask why God Who is self-sufficient should create an external world, and burden Himself with the demands of Providence and deeper still of Redemption, we have the answer 'God is love'.

'Is it not self evident that for love to abide alone, with none but self to love, with no opportunity to express itself in giving, to say nothing of sacrificing, is in the very nature of things impossible?' (The Berean Expositor, Vol. 28, p. 176).

The Consummation (17:24-26)

In the beginning God was 'All'. At the end, when creation and redemption have accomplished their purpose God will be 'All', but in a richer, fuller sense. He will then be 'All in all'. It is the pursuit of

this great goal that finds its expression in the words 'perfected into one' that occupied our attention in considering the previous verses, but the reference to 'love' that was before us (17:23), finds an echo in verse 26 and so comes before us again. The concluding and seventh section occupies verses 24-26, and the structure is as follows:

A 24-26. GLORY. u Father.
BEFORE THE v Behold.
FOUNDATION OF w Love. Before foundation of the world.
THE WORLD u Righteous Father.
 v These have known Thou has sent Me.
 w Love in them and I in them.

In this prayer the Saviour makes three requests of the Father:

'And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was' (17:5).

'Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me (which Thou hast given Me), that they may be one, as we are' (17:11 author's translation).

'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' (17:24).

It is impossible to read these passages together, without seeing one or two very obvious yet important facts.

- (1) The central petition focuses attention on the 'oneness' which has occupied us already.
- (2) The glory is related to a time 'before the world was' but 'love' is related to a period 'before the foundation of the world'. Inasmuch as the word foundation *katabole* 'overthrow' looks back to Genesis 1:2, we observe that 'love' is linked with sin, judgment and the purpose of redemption.
- (3) The connective 'for' in verse 24, shows that the glory that had been given, arose out of and was a manifest evidence of the love that had existed from all time.

'Before the foundation of the world' is a theme that has received considerable attention in *The Berean Expositor*, by reason of the fact that it is found in the epistle to the Ephesians in connection with the church of the present dispensation. 'According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love' (Eph. 1:4). We have given scriptural reasons (in *The Berean Expositor* Vol. 36, 1951-52) for

translating this phrase 'before the overthrow of the world', namely before the cataclysm of Genesis 1:2.

We must assume therefore that what has been set forth elsewhere, that the period designated 'before the foundation of the world' looks back to that undefined interval between the primal creation of Genesis 1:1, where the fall took place of that bright spirit, now known as Satan, and also of the angels that fell with him; and in which the Church of the Mystery was chosen to occupy the super-heavenly sphere, and when the Saviour was foreordained as a Lamb without blemish and without spot (1 Pet. 1:19,20).

The two references to the glory of the Son of God may, possibly, be understood if examined in the light of the first of Hebrews. He Who was the brightness of the glory of God, the express image of His Person, the upholder of all things, must most assuredly have been 'better than the angels', yet Hebrews 1:3,4 which reveals His transcendent greatness, not only tells us that He was made so much better than the angels but that He Who had been appointed 'Heir of all things', had by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. The solution of the apparent difficulty lies in the fact that the Saviour, for our sakes, laid aside the glory that He had by right, and received it back as a reward by reason of His victory over sin and death. In the first phase of His glory, He stood alone, none might share it with Him, but in the second phase, that glory, like all that went before, included the believer, therefore the glorifying of the Son, consequent upon the finishing of His work (17:1), the glorifying of Him with the glory that He had before the world was (17:5), and the glory which the believer will share (17:22) and behold (17:24), link the beginning with the end, from the glory of that time when God was 'All', with that blessed future when He shall be 'All in all'.

In chapter 10 the Saviour said, 'Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again' (10:17), and this in direct connection with the 'one flock' and 'one Shepherd' of verse 16. This love had been His 'before the foundation of the world' for it was then, and not simply after His birth in Bethlehem, that He entered into that covenant of love to redeem man and accomplish the blessed purpose of the ages.

The Saviour prays in 17:24 for two things, namely, that those who had been given to Him should be 'with Him', and that they should 'behold His glory'.

'With Me where I am'. The only other occurrence in John 17 of this particular word that is translated 'with' is in verse 12, 'While I was with them in the world, I kept them', and we can well believe that when they are at last with Him in the world to come He will keep them for ever. *Meta*, the word translated 'with' means proximity or association, and is used in John's Gospel of the presence of Christ on earth with His disciples and of the presence of the Father with Christ (16:32). The opening chapter of this great subdivision, uses the word in the Lord's reply to Peter: 'If I wash thee not, thou hast no part *with Me*' (13:8), and here at the end of this subdivision we have the prayer, that all such may be *with Him*.

It was this promise and prospect of a blessed resumption of personal association with Christ, that formed the basis of His words of comfort in chapter 14.

'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*' (14:2,3).

The prepared place is in the Father's house, that is where the Lord will receive a prepared people for Himself. 'That *where I am*, there ye may be also'; 'Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be *with Me where I am*'.

'What and if ye shall see (behold) the Son of Man ascend up *where He was before*' (6:62), or 'He should depart out of this world unto the Father', or 'He was come from God, and went to God' (13:1,3) show that the prepared place is in heaven. These apostles and all like them have a heavenly calling. This beholding of the glory of the One they had loved (17:24), the One they had despaired of seeing any more, the One that they had seen led away to crucifixion and death, was the joyous restoration of hope and the pledge of life. This 'beholding' is in marked contrast with the period of sadness which is reiterated in the sixteenth chapter, where the same Greek word is used:

'And ye *see Me* no more' (16:10).

'A little while, and ye shall not *see Me*' (16:16,17,19).

The beholding of the glory of Christ will not only be the sign that days of parting and sorrow are over, but the very beholding of that glory will have a transfiguring effect upon the believer.

John himself says: 'When He shall appear, we shall be like Him; *for we shall see Him as He is*' (1 John 3:2).

David knew the transforming power of this sight, for he said: 'As for me, *I will behold Thy face* in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness' (Psa. 17:15).

Paul taught the same lesson: 'But we all, with open (unveiled) face *beholding* as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image' (2 Cor. 3:18).

This beholding was 'as in a glass' yet the transfiguring effect is seen, what therefore will be the glorious effect when the believer sees Him 'as He is'!

Immediately following the reference to 'the glory' come the words: 'For thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world'. What do these words reveal by their association with the Redeemer's final glory? The particle 'for' is the translation of *hoti* 'because' which sometimes indicates the *sign* not the cause. So in this case, when the believer at last gazes upon the glory that was given to the Son as the Redeemer, and which glory He shares with all His own (17:22), then they will behold at length, realized and unfolded, the whole purpose of the ages, originated as it was in love and finding its fullest expression in the eternal glory and oneness of God Who is Himself love, with His people, the object and recipients of His love.

We have seen that love was the solution of the problem that arises out of the words, 'dwelling in God', and here love rises to its full height, 'Thou ... hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me'; 'Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world'; 'That the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them'.

We now come to the concluding words of this great chapter of prayer. The chapter being divided as we have seen into seven sections.

- A Glory. Before the world was.
- B The Word and the Words.
- C One.

- D Kept. Keep.
- B Thy Word is truth.
- C One.
- A Glory. Before the foundation of the world.

It is also punctuated by the name 'Father'. 'Father, the hour is come'; 'O Father, glorify Thou Me'; 'Holy Father, keep through Thine own name'; 'One; as Thou, Father, art in Me'; 'Father, I will that they ... be with Me'; 'O Righteous Father ... I have known Thee'.

The title 'Holy Father' governs verses 11-24, which include the references to Sanctification. The title 'Righteous Father' governs the end. The end towards which the Saviour had directed His thought, as well as the beginning, when He had been set apart for the office of Redeemer, speak of God's Righteousness. 'Holiness' and 'Righteousness' looked at by themselves have something terrifying about them. Linked as they are here with the title 'Father' they become the ground of all assurance, and 'Love' will at length be seen as the synthesis of them both.

Three things are said of the Saviour here concerning knowing the Father.

- (1) The world hath not known Thee,
- (2) I have known Thee,
- (3) These have known that Thou hast sent Me.

We were expecting the third to read 'These have known Thee', but the change is salutary. How can we ever know God? How can we ever know the Father? How, indeed, if not through the Mediation of His Son?

This chapter opens with the thought, 'And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the Only true God' - and that is not all, for the concluding clause is, 'And Jesus Christ, Whom Thou has sent'.

Seven times does this word *ginosko* 'to know' come in this chapter (3,7,8,23,25), and really sums up much that has been already taught.

'If ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also: and from henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him' (14:7).

These words as we know led on to the great revelation 'He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father'.

The hatred of the disciples by the world, is attributed to this lack of knowledge,

'And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known *the Father, nor Me*' (16:3).

This solemn note is struck in the prologue 'the world *knew Him not*' (1:10), but chapter 17 contains the blessed sequel 'that the world *may know* that Thou hast sent Me' (17:23). What tragic results there have been from this lack of knowledge! What blessings will flow when this knowledge covers the earth!

'The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the (living) waters cover the (dead) sea' (Hab. 2:14).

In the day of Israel's restoration 'they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them' (Jer. 31:34).

Such is the scriptural estimate of true knowledge, that the ultimate glory of the Restored, the Reconciled and the Redeemed even as Eternal Life itself, is summed up in the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ Whom He hath sent.

We observed earlier in our study that when the Saviour would bring all His stewardship before the Father, the first thing He enumerated was, 'I have manifested Thy Name' (17:6). Here at the end He returns to this theme, 'And I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it' (17:26).

The word translated 'declared' is *gnorizo* 'made known' and occurs but once again in John's Gospel. 'All things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you' (15:15). These 'all things' that constituted the Saviour's message and mission were implicit in the Father's name. Redeeming love, hope of glory, gift of life are all therein. When the Lord said, 'and will declare it', He must have looked forward to the Cross, the Sepulchre, the Resurrection, the Ascension, the Coming Again and the final act when He should render up the kingdom to God even the Father, the purpose of the ages gloriously achieved. To make known the Father's name, is to give the

prodigal hope, pledge the answer to every true prayer, to guarantee journeying mercies, and full rejoicing acceptance at the end. 'The only begotten Son, Which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him'. This declaration of the Father's name, leads to the indwelling of His love, and the indwelling of His Son. 'That the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them'.

We approached this chapter with hesitancy. It is the holy of holies of the four gospels. We look back over our efforts with a consciousness of clumsy handling and of poor appreciation. We can only cry with another frail and erring servant, 'Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee', and leave the work and its witness in the hands of Him Who though so Mighty breaks not the bruised reed, nor quenches the smoking flax. Take these honest though feeble efforts, dear reader, back with you into the Sanctuary of God; use them simply as a means to an end; and however feebly they contribute to a deeper personal acquaintance with the Lord here revealed, the love here manifested, and the oneness so intensely desired, then our efforts will have been honoured indeed.

CHAPTER 15

**Death, Burial, Resurrection
(18:4 to 20:31)****The Trial before Caiaphas**

When Peter speaks of Christ as the Lamb, he adds, that He was 'without blemish and without spot' (1 Pet. 1:19) for no offering made to the Lord was acceptable if it had the slightest imperfection (Lev. 22:19-25). Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us, and consequently it is of the highest importance that He should be without blemish. It is because this is so vital to our salvation, that the record of the trial of Jesus Christ should be examined with care. He Who bears our sin must Himself be without sin, He the Just One alone can suffer for the unjust to bring us to God. This section of the Gospel before us falls into three parts thus:

John 18:4 to 19:30.	Events culminating in	DEATH.
John 19:31-42.	Incidents associated with	BURIAL.
John 20:1-31.	Consequences of His	RESURRECTION.

The events that led up to His death, include His trial before Caiaphas and before Pilate, and seeing that the death of Christ lies at the foundation of all our hopes, it is evident that the trial of the Saviour, and charges laid against Him and the question of His innocence, assume, for us, perhaps the most momentous question that we shall ever be called upon to consider. If He be not 'without blemish' He cannot be the Lamb of God, and if He be not the Lamb of God, we are yet in our sins. As we follow the proceedings of Hebrew and Roman law it will matter to us supremely whether the findings of His judges were true or false. It therefore behoves us to use every means to fit us for this great examination. The first of the three parts indicated above, is subdivided as follows:

- A 18:4-11. Betrayal and Arrest.
- B 18:12-27. Trial before Annas and Caiaphas.
- B 18:28 to 19:16. Trial before Pilate.
- A 19:17-30. Crucifixion and Death.

In *The Berean Expositor*, Vol. 21, pages 121-125, we printed an invitation sent out by the chairman of the Organization Committee for the Re-assembling of the Great Sanhedrin:

‘To review the jurisdiction, judgments, and decrees of the Sanhedrin acting at Jerusalem during the power and domination of Rome, and especially to consider and review the life and trial of Jesus of Nazareth’.

This startling proposition made in 1931 reveals how deeply the question of the legality of that trial is penetrating the modern Jewish conscience. Others, before and since 1931, have been exercised. Over sixty years ago Mr. Taylor-Innes approached the subject from a purely legal point of view, and a brief summary of his findings was given in *John O’London’s Weekly*, Vol. 20, by the Right Honourable Lord Shaw of Dunfermline, K.C., D.L., LL.D. Another writer (Frank Morison) in 1930, in a penetrating examination of the story of the resurrection has several pointed passages that bear upon the trial of Christ, in the book entitled *Who Moved the Stone?* and behind all such writings and examinations on the subject since A.D. 1650 there is the voluminous work of Dr. John Lightfoot, whose researches into the Talmudic writings and interpretations have made every subsequent writer on the subject his debtor.

A pointed summary of the outstanding features of the trial of Christ both under the Hebrew and under the Roman law has been given by D. M. Panton, and we cannot do better than give an extract here.

‘The Sanhedrin, a court regularly constituted of Israel’s shrewdest and most judicial minds, was a tribunal not unworthy of the nation which, alone among all nations, possessed the Law of Jehovah. Yet the amazing trial of Jesus was thick with illegalities. (1) Our Lord was arrested and tried *at night*: which, on a capital charge, was illegal. (2) The trial was conducted, not in the Hall of Purchase, where the Sanhedrin was regularly convened, but in the private house of the High Priest. This, if not actually unlawful, was highly irregular: it obviously savored of conspiracy (Mark 14:1,2).

(3) The Prisoner was pronounced guilty on the day of the trial: whereas, according to the law of the Sanhedrin, although a prisoner might be acquitted on the same day, he could never be condemned. (4) The Sanhedrin, in appealing to Pilate, dropt the charge of blasphemy, and substituted the charge of treason (Luke 22:2): quashing their own proceedings, they carried an appeal to a higher court on a new and unsubstantiated charge. The trial was thick with illegalities.

But these are technicalities: although establishing a grave presumption against the equity of the Sanhedrin, they are not fatal; it is conceivable that, in spite of technicalities violated, substantial justice might yet be done to a prisoner. We turn therefore to the Trial. Two charges were brought against Christ: the first sedition, the second blasphemy. The charge of sedition was based on an alleged statement threatening the destruction of the Temple. Apart from the fact that Christ never said *He* would destroy the Temple, but, "*Destroy* this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John 2:19); apart from the fact that it was the *re-establishment* of a destroyed Temple that He promised, a beneficial act that could hardly be made into a criminal charge; apart also from the fact that the sole reference was to His own body, not to the Temple at all (John 2:21); one crucial fact, so far as the trial is concerned, emerged. The evidence was so conflicting, so obviously suborned, that the charge was quietly dropt: that is, *on a point of palpable fact the prosecution breaks down* (Mark 14:56,59). Caiaphas now adjures Christ to assert His Sonship of God: which He does. On this answer of Jesus Caiaphas formulates the charge of blasphemy. Two gross illegalities, invalidating the whole trial, are now committed. (1) Everything, on such a charge, obviously turns on who the Prisoner is: *yet the Court never examines the point at all*. If Jesus was the Son of God, it was no blasphemy to say so: if He was not, it was. *The action of the Sanhedrin would make it impossible for the Messiah ever to come at all without being liable to immediate arrest and destruction for blasphemy*. (2) The Law of Moses expressly forbad condemnation, on a capital charge, on the evidence of less than *two* witnesses (Deut. 17:6): *Jesus was condemned to death on none*. He was then spit upon and smitten (Matt. 26:67). So, hundreds of years before, Isaiah said, "*by oppression and judgment He was taken away*" (Isa. 53:8): Micah

also, "They shall smite the *Judge of Israel* with a rod upon the cheek" (Mic. 5:1).

The Roman Law has been the foundation of the soundest jurisprudence of the world: yet here again the air is thick with illegalities. *Not one of the essentials of Roman law was observed in the trial of Jesus.* There was no notice of the trial; no definition of the charge; no invoking of the law whose breach was alleged; no examination of witnesses; no hearing of counsel; no proof of a criminal act; no sentence formally pronounced. Still more amazing, *the judge actually acquits the Prisoner whom he delivers to execution.* *Three times* Pilate pronounces the Prisoner "not guilty" (Luke 23:4,15,22), yet each time re-tries Him: whereas under Roman law a prisoner might not be tried twice for the same offence. *Three times* Pilate pronounces the Prisoner "not guilty": yet over the cross, as the law required, Pilate wrote the charge, and he wrote - treason. *Three times* Pilate pronounces the Prisoner "not guilty": yet he orders his soldiers to execute the sentence of "guilty". "Jesus of Nazareth", says a member of the New York Bar, "was not condemned; he was lynched. The martyrdom of Golgotha was not a miscarriage of justice: it was murder"‘.

Over against the prejudice and illegal practices manifest at this trial, we should place the extreme humanity and endeavour for fairness that the Hebrew law contains.

The Mishna, speaking of the execution of a condemned person by stoning says, that this execution must take place *at a distance* apart from the place of judgment.

‘In the meantime an officer is to stand at the door of the court with a handkerchief in his hand, another, mounted on horseback, follows the procession so far, but halts at the furthest point where he can see the man with the handkerchief. And if any one offers to prove that the condemned man is innocent, he at the door waves the handkerchief and the horseman instantly gallops after the condemned and recalls him for his defence’.

Again, here is the oath of Hebrew jurisprudence in a trial for life:

‘Forget not, O witness that ... in this trial for life, if thou sinnest, *the blood of the accused* and the blood of his seed to the end of time shall be imputed unto thee ... if any witness shall destroy one

soul out of Israel, he is held by the Scripture to be as if he had destroyed the world’.

How solemn, how pointed, therefore were those words ‘His blood be on us, and on our children’ (Matt. 27:25). It must be understood that it was the witnesses who were the accusers:

‘Their deposition was the beginning of every proceeding, and until it was publicly given against a man he was held to be in the judgment of the law not merely innocent but unaccused’ (Taylor-Innes).

At length witnesses were found who testified that the Lord had said that He was able to destroy the temple and to build it again in three days (Matt. 26:61), and it will be remembered that this was levelled against Him as He hung on the cross (Matt. 27:40). We know how distorted this piece of evidence was (John 2:19) but in their desperation this was seized upon:

‘Consider the situation. The witnesses agreed not with each other. No count of capital import could therefore by law emerge. It is manifest that Caiaphas and the tribunal were conscious of this, and that it was for this cause that he overleaped the legal barrier by a final act of illegality. Caiaphas took to questioning the accused; and contrary to Hebrew law, he founded upon the accused’s own answers, and there and then formulated a charge himself - a charge importing death ... by law, the prisoner stood free; the entire proceeding suffered arrest; trial was impossible ... Caiaphas had himself declared that it was expedient that one man should die for the people’.

‘The embarrassment of the position was more than some of the inflamed auditors could abide. They chid the accused for such an answer, and in the presence of a Court of Justice struck Him on the face. To this obloquy and assault He replied with a second appeal to fairness and legality in trial’ (Shaw).

It is evident that in the estimate of those who had apprehended Christ that something must be done, and done quickly. The reader may wonder why it was that Christ, Who knew the legal proceeding, and knew that it was an illegal thing to base a conviction upon a statement made by the accused himself, should volunteer an answer, an answer which provided Caiaphas and his confederates with a charge of

blasphemy? The answer is that Caiaphas abusing his place of privilege 'applied to Christ the most solemn form of oath known to the Hebrew constitution, the famous Oath of the Testimony. "I adjure thee by the living God"' (Matt. 26:63). To this, Christ, as a pious and law-abiding Jew, had no alternative but to answer.

'If' (says the Mishna) 'one shall say, I adjure you by the Almighty, by Sabaoth, by the Gracious and Merciful, by the Long-suffering, by the Compassionate, or by any of the Divine titles, behold they are bound to answer' (Frank Morison).

The High Priest rent his clothes, the so-called trial ended with the declaration that there was no need for further witnesses. So far we have endeavoured to piece together the trial before the Jewish authorities. We see that it was illegally conducted, and all the humane provisions of the Hebrew law flouted. The one concern before the Sanhedrin was to obtain the verdict 'guilty' upon some capital offence, and then hope by working on the fears of the Roman Governor to get their prisoner executed before the common people swung back to their regard for this Healer and Prophet in their midst. The governing word throughout is that twice repeated word of Caiaphas *expediency*, not righteousness, not mercy, not common fairness, not faithfulness, even to tradition, but *expediency*. We leave it to the reader to peruse the passage before us, there is nothing in it that demands exposition. We must now take up the story where the trial is transferred from the Sanhedrin to the Roman Governor Pontius Pilate, and if we are guided at all by the relative space allotted and amount of detail given, it is this trial that John perceived to be the more important of the two, so far as his purpose was concerned. We shall not, however, understand Pilate's action if we do not know the background provided by this dark night of fear, cruelty and mockery of justice.

The Trial before Pontius Pilate (18:28 to 19:16)

The reader will keep well in mind the serious issues that are before us. If Jesus Christ is on trial, if He Who was proclaimed the Lamb of God

is under examination, if He Who is set forth as having died 'the Just for the unjust that He might bring us to God' is being subjected to scrutiny, then until the verdict is announced, our all, both for time and for eternity is in the balance. What is the answer to His challenge

‘which of you convinceth (convicteth) Me of sin?’ The illegal examination of Christ before Annas and Caiaphas and the search for some basis for the pronouncement of death has been before us. Contrary to the whole tenor of Hebrew law, the accused has been condemned for blasphemy upon His own unexamined utterance, all further witness has been declared unnecessary, and the prisoner hurried to Pilate with the one object of getting the death sentence put into immediate effect. It appears that this charge of blasphemy, which would leave the Roman Governor unmoved, must be twisted to appear like sedition and high treason and Caiaphas was astute enough to see in the Messianic claim of ‘kingship’ a lever to move the Roman authority to do the will of the Jewish rulers. That this hope was well based John 11:47-53 makes plain.

‘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’.

‘C -sar might be indifferent to the somewhat eccentric utterances of an itinerant preacher. He could not be indifferent to a claimant for a throne. In the hush of the court, as the solemn words of affirmation fell from the Prisoner’s lips, certain other words were probably already forming in the mind of Caiaphas "If thou lettest this man go, thou art not C -sar’s friend"’ (Frank Morison).

The news brought by Judas late at night and so near to the feast presented the Rulers with a problem. Could they by any possible means, fair or foul, so arrange and so manage the trial before the Sanhedrin and secure the assent of the Roman Governor, that the death penalty could be put into effect before the feast? We have seen their effort to obtain witnesses, and the final plunge taken by Caiaphas, the charge of blasphemy, the cessation of the trial and the hurried assembly before Pilate. Everything so far points to the idea that Pilate’s sanction was a pre-arranged thing.

‘Whatever else, therefore, had to be done, some considerable part of those three hours must have been occupied in hurried consultations, swift passings to and fro between the executive sitting in the High Priest’s house, and those indispensable leaders of Jewish thought upon whom they must rely for ratification in the Sanhedrin. All this is written plainly between the lines of the narrative. But was there something else? Personally, I think there was.

Whatever interpretation we put upon the circumstances leading up to the arrest of Christ it seems to me certain that, before the fatal word was given to the arrest party to proceed to Gethsemane, *some communications must have taken place between the Jewish leaders and Pontius Pilate*. ('Who moved the stone?' Frank Morison).

It is contrary to all expectation and against all that we know of the character of Pilate to believe that he would permit a capital trial to be rudely thrust upon his notice early on the morning of a Jewish feast, when it was the policy of all governors, whatever their private character to avoid any act that would fan the spark of fanaticism into flame and cause those riots and scenes that were frowned upon by the Roman government. Any knowledge of the working both of Roman and Jewish law seems to make some understanding, secretly arrived at, imperative. The passage before us (18:28), opens with the leading of the prisoner into the hall of judgment 'and it was early'. These Jewish rulers who had not scrupled to encompass the death of the Son of God, were scrupulous as to ceremonial defilement, and in order that they may not be prevented from eating the passover, they themselves did not enter the judgment hall. Such is religion! The opening words of Pilate seem to have taken the Rulers by surprise. All they wanted was a licence to execute their prisoner. Now Pilate seems bent upon a thorough investigation, 'What accusation bring ye against this man?' (28:29). Perplexity, fear and fury, combined with a knowledge that Caiaphas and Pilate had already come to an understanding emboldened their somewhat insolent reply. 'If He were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered Him up unto thee' (18:30). The Jewish rulers still retained the right to stone a man to death, as may be seen in the seventh of Acts, but they feared the people. Moreover, there was a purpose being worked out in all this enmity and miscarriage of justice that they knew not of:

'That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which He spake, signifying what death He should die' (18:32).

When C -sar Augustus sent out the decree that all the world should be taxed, he little knew that he was implementing the fulfilment of an obscure Hebrew prophecy (Luke 2:1; Matt. 2:4-6), so Caiaphas and Pilate working for their own ends knew not that they were helping forward 'by wicked hands' the fulfilment of further prophecy (Acts 2:23). If the surmise be true, that Caiaphas had obtained the tacit agreement of Pilate to expedite the death sentence upon Jesus of

Nazareth, the whole attitude of Pilate as recorded in John 18 and 19 seems to point to a reversal of that decision - throughout the trial he seems to be actuated by a desire to set the prisoner free. What appears on the surface as the vacillation of a man shaken and moved by low motives can also be construed as honest effort to deliver the prisoner from the hand of His enemies. Three times Pilate announced the innocence of his Prisoner, the sending to Herod, the suggested substitution of Barabbas, the scourging of Christ, the washing of the hands, though not the result of pure and unmixed motives, nevertheless had the liberation of the prisoner in mind. One thing, and one thing only turned the tide, the cry, 'Thou art not C -sar's friend'. We cannot but believe that the insistent note sent by his wife to Pilate, influenced him tremendously. Irreligious and worldly as he may have been, Pontius Pilate would nevertheless entertain many of the superstitions of his day, and we read, that while he was sitting on the judgment seat a letter was sent to him from his wife which read, 'Have thou nothing to do with that just Man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of Him' (Matt. 27:19). When the accusation is lodged against the Lord, with Pilate, we hear nothing about destroying or building the temple, neither do we hear anything of His affirmation to be 'the Christ, the Son of the Blessed' until the trial had gone far on its way. Caiaphas reconstructed the Messianic claim, and forced into prominence the title KING, knowing full well that Pilate could not tolerate for a moment a rival to the Roman Emperor, and so while each evangelist presents his own peculiar record of this trial of the Saviour, the question of His claim to be a King is found in them all. Luke tells us that when the multitude led the Saviour unto Pilate they began to accuse Him saying: 'We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to C -sar, saying that He Himself is Christ a KING' (Luke 23:2). The other evangelists lead us to infer that before ever Pilate had come forth early that morning to sit upon the judgment seat, he had been informed that the charge against the Prisoner was His claim to kingship. It is evident too that our Lord knew this for instead of giving a direct answer to the question, 'Art Thou the King of the Jews?' He said, 'Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of Me?' (John 18:34). We may not at first sight understand what difference it would make to our Lord's reply. If Pilate, as Roman Governor, without bias and coercion and in the exercise of his office inquired whether Jesus of Nazareth was aiming at a usurpation of the royal rights and prerogatives of the Roman Emperor, involving as it

would and must, battle, insurrection and a rupture of the peace, then our Saviour's answer would be NO. If, however, His enemies had construed His claim to be the long-promised Messiah into a claim of kingship, then His answer must be YES.

'Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered Thee unto me: what hast Thou done?' (18:35).

As a consequence, the Saviour while maintaining His rightful kingship, makes it plain to Pilate that such claim did not come within his jurisdiction.

'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' (18:36).

The Authorized Version in verse 37 reads, 'Art thou a king then?' It is more in line with the original to suggest a note of surprise in Pilate's voice, a dawning of light, as he said, 'Thou art a king then?' Again the Saviour with unruffled calm and with patient intent replied:

'Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Everyone that is of the truth heareth My voice' (18:37).

When Pilate heard these solemn words, coupled with the pleading of his wife and his own superstitious fears, he looked at this strange yet awe-inspiring prisoner and said, 'What is truth?' In that despairing question was concentrated the sense of futility that had come over all philosophic thought and religious quest. 'What is truth?' Every sect, every creed, every school of thought, all protested that their particular tenet, nostrum, speculation was truth - and here, standing before him was One who claimed to be born not only a king, but whose domain was truth. How near Pontius Pilate was to the kingdom that moment we may not know, but he was assuredly nearer than those priests and scribes who had in their possession the very Scriptures that condemned them. Without apparently awaiting a reply, Pilate went over again to the Jews and said, 'I find in Him no fault at all', but knowing that for envy the rulers had delivered Christ to him (Matt. 27:18) he clutched at the chance of palliation offered by an annual custom. It had been a custom of some long standing, to release some prisoner at the Passover, and so Pilate stepped forward with the proposition, 'Will ye

therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews?' His offer was met by a yell, 'Not this man, but Barabbas'. Throughout the gospel of John, we find this phenomenon. Christ is presented in one of His many offices, or some doctrine is put forward which concerns His person or work, and immediately there is a division among the people. Here at the judgment seat of Pilate, it is the people of Israel that are on trial, not their gracious prisoner, 'Not this man, but Barabbas'. What a choice, prophetic of the day when Israel will accept anti-Christ having rejected and crucified the Christ of God.

Pilate made a further appeal to the multitude by scourging the Saviour and subjecting Him to the mockery of the soldiers, saying 'Behold the Man'. This further attempt was met by the terrible cry, 'Crucify Him, crucify Him' and again Pilate publicly proclaimed the innocence of his prisoner.

'The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God' (19:7).

The reader will remember how many times John has led up to this confession, John the Baptist bare this record (1:34), Nathaniel (1:49), Peter (6:69), the man born blind (9:35-38), Martha (11:27), and His own statements such as those of 10:36 and 11:4. Now Pilate himself must be included in the number who, if he did not fully acknowledge the title, manifested exceeding perturbation and inquiry:

'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' (19:8,9).

We are assured that had Pilate's question indicated the true inquiry of a seeking soul, our gracious Saviour would have there and then revealed Himself even to a Roman Governor who was trying Him for His life. The Saviour's silence was a test for Pilate, and he again remembered his own dignity as Judge and Ruler, and replied, 'Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?' (19:10). Again Pilate is struck with the dignified and superhuman reply of this wan and tortured prisoner. 'And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release Him'. It was then that the Jews played upon Pilate's fears and Pilate discovered his own evil life coming up before him, putting out the spark that the presence of Christ had kindled. Let us not forget, as we judge this faltering man, that Peter afterwards said to the people of

Israel concerning Christ: 'Whom ye delivered up, and denied Him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go' (Acts 3:13), as indeed our Saviour had already said, 'He that delivered Me unto thee hath the greater sin'.

'If thou let this man go, thou art not C -sar's friend' (19:12).

The last thing that Pilate could wish would be an accusation laid against him before C -sar by the Jews, and so once again taking his seat he said, 'Behold your king', in reply to which Israel to their shame and degradation put themselves outside the pale, saying 'We have no king but C -sar'. The end had come. Pilate had publicly announced that this prisoner was innocent on all charges laid against Him. He had been impressed by his interviews with Him, and had been doubly impressed by his wife's urgent appeal. He knew that 'for envy' Christ had been delivered to him, but previous sin, weakened both his sense of justice and his authority:

'For of a truth against Thy holy child Jesus, Whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together' (Acts 4:27).

And so the tragic story ends. 'Then delivered he Him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led Him away'.

'Behold the Man'. 'Behold your king', said Pilate.

'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world', said the forerunner, John the Baptist.

The Lamb of God had been submitted to the most rigorous examination. 'I find no fault in Him' was the verdict of Pilate, Pilate's wife and Herod. It was confessedly the inner conviction of Caiaphas for the illegality of the trial would not have been necessary had there been the slightest fault in Him. It is the foundation of our hopes that 'He Who knew no sin, was made sin for us', and in the consciousness of His moral victory, we go forward in our study knowing that even the cross with all its shame became, by transfiguring grace, the symbol of love's greatest triumph.

The Problem of time, as it concerns the Passover

Where the Gospels end, the Epistles begin. The chapters of John which are now before us provide the historic basis upon which, under

the inspiration of God, the apostles were guided to build their great doctrine of Redemption. To attempt even a résumé of Paul's doctrine of identification, wherein the believer is reckoned to have been crucified with Christ, to have died with Him, to have been buried with Him, and to have been raised together with Him, would exceed both the bounds of the space available and the limits set by the Gospel we are studying. While it may be true that the subsequent revelation of redeeming grace is even more wonderful than the historic record contained in the closing chapters of this Gospel, it is nevertheless a truth which must be kept firmly in mind, namely, that Christianity is an historic faith, that if one historic item could be successfully challenged, the doctrinal edifice would be shaken. So true is this, that we may never have realized the sublime audacity that incorporated into the Creed, the name of Pontius Pilate! so intimately is historic fact intertwined with doctrinal truth. This being so, any problems relating to time and place that pertain to the last days of the Saviour's life on earth, should not be allowed to cast their shadow over the record, but should be honestly faced and a solution sought. In this particular we think of the conflicting attempts that have been made by Commentators to explain the apparent divergent statements of the Evangelists concerning the times recorded of the crucifixion. In the Gospel of Mark we read:

‘And it was the *third* hour, and they crucified Him’ (15:25)

To this we may add the record of Matthew:

‘Now from the *sixth* hour there was darkness over all the land unto the *ninth* hour. And about the *ninth* hour Jesus cried with a loud voice ... when He had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost’ (27:45,46,50).

Here all is straightforward, third, sixth and ninth hours following in due sequence. When we turn to the account given by John we meet a problem:

‘And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the *sixth* hour ... then delivered he Him therefore unto them to be crucified’ (19:14-16).

Now according to Matthew and Mark, from the sixth hour unto the ninth hour, darkness supervened, the crucifixion had already taken place, and at the close of the ninth hour the Saviour died. What therefore can we make of the statement of John, that at the sixth hour Pilate handed the Lord over to his enemies? *The Companion Bible*, Appendix 165, says, ‘The sixth hour of John 19:14 was our midnight’. It is evident as we study the gospel records, that the Jews were in a most violent hurry to get the execution over before the Sabbath, yet if John 19:14 is midnight, then we have an interval of NINE HOURS, that is, from midnight unto nine the next morning, between the handing over of Christ by Pilate to the crucifixion. In the light of the extreme and apprehensive HASTE that marks the whole course of this illegal trial, with its horror of possible pollution on the approaching Sabbath, such an explanation is self refuted. We will not load our pages with the devices adopted by commentators in their attempt to solve this problem, yet a few instances may be useful if only to act as warnings against such practices. One version has cut the Gordian knot by adopting the note (the third hour) made by the editor of the Siniaticus MSS. Scrivener in his book, ‘Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament’ places this reading under the heading that reads, ‘The copyist may be tempted to forsake his higher function for that of a reviewer or critical corrector’ and such a principle, if once accepted, would play such havoc with the originals as to render the title ‘translator’ a misnomer. Calvin was conscious of the difficulty in this passage and attempts to reconcile the apparent discrepancy by suggesting that the Jews exaggerated the flight of time, saying in effect, ‘it is about noon’, whereas it was much earlier; or Mark, when he says ‘the third hour’ does not mean exactly 9 a.m. but any hour of the quarter before noon. ‘Thus, when the Jews saw that Pilate was

wearing out the time, and that the hour of noon was approaching, John says that they cried out the more vehemently, that the whole day might not pass without something being done'. This is ingenious, certainly, but it nevertheless remains true that it is John who records the time, not the infuriated Jews.

The problem after all is man-made and arises out of an assumption namely that the hours in all the Gospels are according to Hebrew reckoning. That has been the fatal mistake. Today we have a complete Bible, and it is natural but erroneous to assume that in the days of the apostles each reader would have a complete Bible too. This, however, is not true. The 'four gospels' were not written at the same time, neither were they directed to the same readers. Many who read Matthew's Gospel never saw the gospel of John, and *vice versa*, many of John's readers would never have seen Matthew's account. We have already shown that John had the Gentile reader in mind, a reader who needed such common words as 'Rabbi' translated for him. That being so, it is but common sense to believe that whenever John gives a time for any event, he will give it *in terms of Gentile reckoning*. Before the Great War of 1914, many an English reader would have been puzzled to have received a direction to catch 'the 21:15 train from Victoria', for Continental time was scarcely known here. If we see that John uses Gentile time - all is clear and no problem arises. The record starts with John 19:14 at 6 a.m., which is followed by the records of Matthew and Mark, namely at 9 a.m., 12 noon and 3 p.m. The following graph will speak for itself.

TIMES MENTIONED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

The three events in the Gospel according to John where time is mentioned in Roman calculation compared with the times given in the other Gospels of the events in Passover week, as given by Jewish reckoning.

HOURS

ROMAN TIME		JEWISH TIME	
<i>Midnight</i>	12	6	<i>Midnight</i>
	1	7	
	2	8	
	3	9	

	4	10	
	5	11	
'It was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he (Pilate) saith unto the Jews, BEHOLD YOUR KING' (19:14).	6	12	
	7	1	
	8	2	
'They came and saw where He dwelt, and abode with Him that day: for it was about the tenth hour' (1:39).	9	3	'And it was the third hour, and they crucified Him' (Mark 15:25).
	10	4	
	11	5	
	<i>Noon</i> 12	6	From the sixth hour there was darkness ... unto the ninth hour (Matt. 27:45; Mark 15:33; Luke 23:44).
	1	7	
	2	8	
	3	9	
'Jacob's well was there. Jesus ... being wearied with His journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour' (4:6).	4	10	
	5	11	
	6	12	<i>Jewish day begins.</i>

Some writers have not hesitated to blacken the character of the woman of Samaria, in their endeavour to prove that contrary to all custom she came to draw water either at NOON or MIDNIGHT because, say they, her immoral character made it impossible for her to associate with the women who draw water at the usual hour, namely about sunset. There is not a shred of evidence to prove that this woman was any worse than her neighbours, and she is neither rebuked, nor refused an hearing by her neighbours when she said, 'Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?' (4:29,30,39,41).

Another question which the examination of the four Evangelists makes necessary, and which has been answered in more ways than one, is the question of the actual date of the Passover. Most of us, if unprepared, would say from our general knowledge of the subject, the Passover was held on the 14th day of Nisan.

It has been advanced by some that as the day of the Passover was decided each year by the testing of two men, sent of the Sanhedrin to give notice of the first appearance of the new moon, and that the Sanhedrin, to cover any possible error, ordained that two days were to be kept, one called *dies latentis lunae* and the other *dies apparentis lunae*, that this, say they, reconciles the apparent difficulty that we meet, namely, that Christ observed the Passover with His disciples, yet suffered as the true Passover afterwards. 'Before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour was come' (13:1) and later, when the Jews had led him to Pilate, 'they themselves went not into the Judgment Hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the Passover' (18:28).

Let us go back to the beginning and endeavour to piece together this new problem. The original Passover was observed in Egypt, and the record is given in Exodus 12. The law governing the annual memorial feast is found in Leviticus 23, 'Ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening' (Exod. 12:6). 'In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the LORD's Passover. And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the Feast of Unleavened Bread ... in the first day ye shall have an Holy Convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein' (Lev. 23:5-7; see also Num. 28:16,18). Nothing can be clearer than that the Passover was held on the fourteenth of the month, and that the Feast of Unleavened Bread commenced on the fifteenth day of the same month.

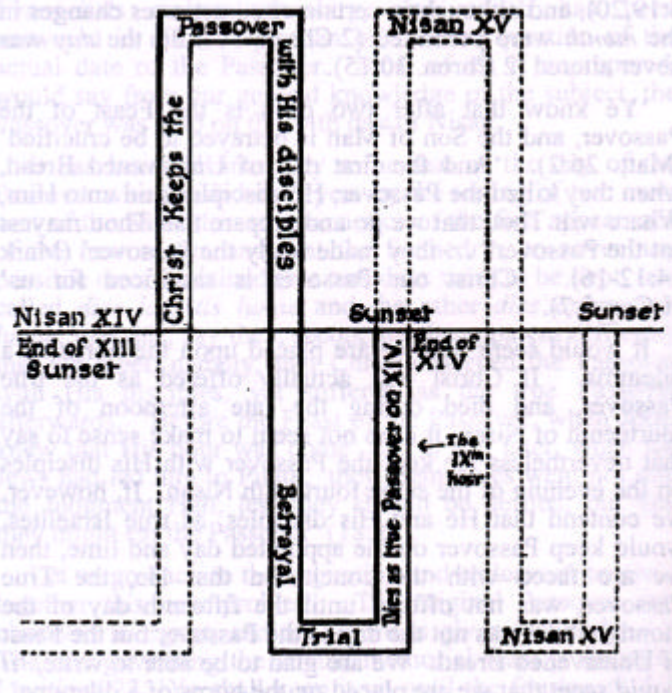
In successive records we find that the Passover was killed on the fourteenth of the month (Josh. 5:10; Ezra 6:19,20), and although in certain circumstances changes in the *month* were permitted (2 Chron. 30:1,2), the *day* was never altered (2 Chron. 30:15).

'Ye know that after two days is the Feast of the Passover, and the Son of Man is betrayed to be crucified' (Matt. 26:2). 'And the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they killed the Passover, His disciples said unto Him, Where wilt Thou that we go and prepare that Thou mayest eat the Passover? ... they made ready the Passover' (Mark 14:12-16). 'Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us' (1 Cor. 5:7).

It would seem that we are placed upon the horns of a dilemma. If Christ was actually offered as the true Passover, and died during the late afternoon of the fourteenth of Nisan, it does not seem to make

sense to say that nevertheless He kept the Passover with His disciples on the evening of the same fourteenth Nisan. If, however, we contend that He and His disciples, as true Israelites, would keep Passover on the appointed day and time, then we are faced with the conclusion that He, the True Passover, was not offered until the fifteenth day of the month, which was not the day of the Passover but the Feast of Unleavened Bread. We are glad to be able to write, '*it would seem* that we are placed on the horns of a dilemma', for the dilemma is of our own making, and the key once more is the observation of the difference between Hebrew and Gentile reckoning of time.

Let us put the Hebrew day into a diagrammatic form:



It is physically impossible in Gentile reckoning for Christ to have died in the afternoon of the fourteenth of the month and to have *previously* had supper with His disciples in the evening of the fourteenth. The case, however, is different when we remember that

‘the EVENING and the MORNING’ is the Divine subdivision of a day, and that the Hebrew day *began* at *sunset* and so its evening was many hours *before* its afternoon.

There is moreover a peculiar phrasing in the Hebrew wording of Exodus 12:6, to which the margin draws attention; ‘kill it in the evening’ should read ‘between the two evenings’.

Here it is made evident to the eye that our Saviour could keep the Passover Himself, yet be offered as the True Passover afterwards, ‘between the two evenings’.

The reader will, we trust, observe that we have not departed a hair’s breadth from what is ‘written’, and while we know that the errors made by those whose findings we cannot accept were made in honest endeavour to interpret the truth, we believe that we can in all modesty claim that the settlement both of the problem of the sixth hour of John 19, and of the Passover, honours God, adheres to His Word and enables us to retain a conscience void of offence.

The Crucifixion (19:17-30)

We felt, as we approached the seventeenth chapter, that our examination of that passage seemed almost an intrusion, and as we now approach that record of unspeakable humiliation, ‘the death of the cross’, we again feel reticent about attempting too rigorous an examination. Yet worship is not contrary to understanding, and the chronicle of this most terrible event is written for our learning. Crucifixion as practised by the Romans was unknown among the Hebrews, the equivalent punishment under the law of Moses was to be ‘hung upon a tree’. In Rabbinical literature after the advent of Christ, the Saviour is referred to as ‘The Hung’. Although crucifixion was common throughout the Roman empire, there are not wanting indications of revulsion among many of the thinking men of the day. Cicero (106-43 B.C.) called it ‘most cruel and disgraceful’, and Ulpian, a Roman Jurist (died A.D. 228), called it ‘the worst possible punishment’. This was the treatment meted out to the Son of God, by Religion (the Jew), Wisdom (the Greek) and by Power (the Roman). Crucifixion was used chiefly as the punishment of slaves, who accordingly were called by the horrid name *furcifer* ‘cross-bearer’. No Roman citizen could be crucified - a fact known by the apostle Paul who realized that His Lord had stooped lower than it was possible for

him to follow. Crucifixion was reserved for such crimes as robbery, piracy, assassination, sedition, treason, desertion from the army, and for a runaway slave. This was the ignominy meted out to the peerless Christ. Truly He was 'numbered with the transgressors'. Long before the death of Christ, crucifixion had become a figure to indicate the suffering of loss and the bearing of a burden, as may be seen in the words of Matthew 16:24, 'take up his cross'. The opening of the section before us sees Christ treated as a common criminal 'bearing His cross' (John 19:17). Matthew who records the extreme exhaustion of Gethsemane, records also the fact that Simon of Cyrene was compelled to bear the cross for Him (27:32), but this is omitted by John. The place of a skull, called in the Hebrew tongue Golgotha, is translated by Luke as *kranion* or 'skull', and it is the Latin equivalent for this that gives us the word Calvary. Tradition and archaeology have held many conflicting theories concerning the true site of Golgotha, but we are more concerned with the awful transaction that took place there, than in establishing its precise topography. On either side of the Divine sufferer were crucified 'two other' (John 19:18). Matthew tells us that they were 'thieves' and Luke says they were 'malefactors' but whether there were two only or as some maintain four who were crucified with Christ that same day does not seem to be of sufficient importance to occupy our time and space. Luke has much more to say regarding the two malefactors than the other evangelists, including the controversial passage, 'Verily I say unto thee today shalt thou be with Me in paradise' (23:43), which we purposely leave unpunctuated. Pilate had fixed over the cross a 'title', the wording being 'Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews', written in Hebrew, Greek and Latin. There are many conflicting views concerning the different wordings of the title and superscription, but the results do not justify the space required. The supposition that Pilate caused the offensive wording of John 19:19 to be removed, runs counter to the tenor of his reply, 'What I have written I have written'.

There is no warrant for the symbolic use of the cross in Christian witness, neither is there any positive proof to show what sort or shape the cross was. The traditional cross is pagan in origin. Again, it matters little what the shape of the cross was, it matters much that we can now preach Jesus Christ and Him crucified. He has indeed been 'lifted up' as He foretold (3:14; 8:28; 12:32,34). The indignities with which the common soldiery treated their august Prisoner were fully in

accord with the practices of the times. Dr. Lardner gives the following account which illuminates the mockery of the Saviour's claims:

'There was one Carabas, a sort of distracted fellow, that in all seasons of the year went naked about the streets. He was somewhat between a madman and a fool, the common jest of boys and other idle people. This wretch they brought into the theatre, and placed him on a lofty seat, that he might be conspicuous to all; then they put a thing made of paper on his head for a crown, the rest of his body they covered with a mat instead of a robe, and for a sceptre one put into his hand a little piece of reed which he had just taken up from the ground. Having thus given him a mimic royal dress, several young fellows, with poles on their shoulders, came and stood on each side of him as his guards. Then there came people toward him, some to pay their homage to him, others to ask justice of him, and some to know his will and pleasure concerning affairs of state; and in the crowd were loud and confused acclamations of Maris, Maris; that being, as they say, the Syriac word for Lord, thereby intimating whom they intended to ridicule by all this mock show; Agrippa being a Syrian'.

The soldiers, having accomplished their awful task, proceeded to divide the garments of the victims among them according to custom. As one of the garments of our Lord was woven without a seam, prudence suggested that instead of spoiling it by dividing it into four parts, that the ownership should be decided by lot. How commonplace this action appears - yet John immediately adds:

'That the Scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted My raiment among them, and for My vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did' (19:24).

The Scripture that was thus fulfilled was Psalm 22, which opens with the cry, 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?' We learn from Matthew and Mark that our Saviour uttered this cry, but John passes this fact over in silence. Matthew, Mark and Luke reveal that Psalm 22:8 was quoted in mockery by the scribes, elders and thieves. Each of the four gospels, however, refer to the parting of the garments and the casting of the lots. Psalm 22:22 is quoted in Hebrews 2:12 of the Risen Christ. The words 'they pierced My hands and My feet' are not actually quoted in the gospels, but the fact of crucifixion is most plainly implied. Again, the words with which

Psalm 22 closes, 'He hath done this', are not actually quoted in John's Gospel, but they are practically the same as the last words of the cross, 'It is finished'. There is every reason to believe that the Saviour repeated the whole Psalm, and that as the dying malefactor saw before his eyes its very fulfilment, he interjected his prayer, 'Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom', when the Saviour arrived at Psalm 22:28, 'The kingdom is the Lord's'. If this be so, it will have been true of this dying thief, even as of all others, that 'faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God'. Was ever such a sermon preached before or since, did ever preacher and doctrine agree together as then! One act of gracious humanity was still left to be discharged. According to Rabbinical law a widow must be supported by the surviving heirs until her portion had been allotted. The Lord's brethren we have already been told did not believe on Him, and it is highly probable that the matter had already been discussed between the Lord and the disciple whom He 'loved'. At the opening of His ministry, with perhaps a little sternness, He had replied to His mother's suggestion, 'Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come' (2:4). Now at the close, His hour having come, and all things accomplished that He had come to do, He lovingly commended His mother to the care of that disciple whom He loved, saying, 'Woman, behold thy son', and to the disciple, 'Behold thy mother', a lasting testimony to the fact that the holiest moments and highest spiritual actions can and do most fully harmonize with the lowliest of affections and simplest and most homely concerns. Everything had by now been accomplished. He had been examined even as the Paschal lambs had been examined and pronounced by His judges innocent. He had nevertheless been 'lifted up' and crucified. He had become the sin-bearer for the sins of the world. Yet there, in one of the Psalms of David, was a series of prophetic utterances all of which with one exception had by then been fulfilled.

'They that hate Me without a cause are more than the hairs of Mine head' (Psa. 69:4).

'The zeal of Thine house hath eaten Me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached Thee are fallen upon Me' (Psa. 69:9).

'Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none. They gave Me also gall for My meat; and in My thirst they gave me vinegar to drink' (Psa. 69:20,21).

Why should the Saviour have been so punctilious over so small an item and so obscure a passage? He had Himself declared that not one jot or tittle of the law should pass unfulfilled, and He would not allow the slightest opportunity to the enemy to disturb the most absolute trust of the least believer. He had been offered drink on several occasions during these agonizing hours, but had refused. On the way to Golgotha, Mark tells us (literally) 'they were offering Him drink, wine mingled with myrrh' (15:23). It is contained in the Rabbinical writings that 'when any one was being led out to execution, they gave them to drink a little frankincense in a cup of wine, that their understanding might be disordered' (Sanhedr. 43:1). This amelioration of His sufferings the Saviour refused. The cup that the Father hath bidden Him to drink, He would drink to the dregs. When they were come to Golgotha 'they gave Him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when He had tasted thereof, He would not drink' (Matt. 27:34). It may be that this bitter drink was offered in mockery, the narcotic wine mingled with myrrh having been untasted. In Luke 23:36, in a context of derision, the soldiers join in the mockery of the dying Saviour 'coming to Him, and offering Him vinegar'. This seems to have been just a piece of rough brutality on the part of the soldiers. The offering of vinegar by means of a sponge referred to in Matthew 27:48, which is immediately followed by the death of Christ, seems to be the same that is before us in John 19:29. Having refused such a drink earlier, He stoops to the last humiliation, fulfils the Scriptures, cries, 'It is finished', bows His head and gave up the ghost. 'It is finished'. What words are these! What a wealth of teaching they contain! What a world of comfort they bring! The Saviour had come on a mission. He is ever set forth in this Gospel as 'The Sent One' and He made it evident that His meat was to do the will of Him that sent Him, 'and to finish his work' (4:34). The great prayer of the seventeenth chapter is offered in the light of this finished work (17:4). This same word *teleioo* is translated 'perfect' in 17:23, as also in Hebrews 2:10 and 5:9. The apostle Paul in his lesser degree was actuated by the same high resolve 'that I might *finish* my course' (Acts 20:24), and was blessed by the grace of continuance, so that he too before he laid down his life for Christ's sake could say 'I have finished my course' (2 Tim. 4:7). All types and shadows that had set forth the one offering for sin had been fulfilled in this death on the cross, the Scriptures concerning Him had been 'fulfilled' (John 19:28), same word as is translated 'finished'. 'He bowed His head'. The crucified generally were so exhausted that

the whole body hung limp and stretched in the extreme. Here it suggests that the Saviour had held His head erect until the last stroke had fallen. His work accomplished He laid down His life even as He had said (10:18). He had been 'betrayed' by Judas (*paradidomi*), he had been 'delivered' by the priests and by Pilate (*paradidomi*), but in the end He 'gave up' (*paradidomi*) His spirit, and voluntarily dying the Just for the unjust, accomplished redemption and made an atonement for the sin of the world, becoming the Saviour of whosoever believeth in Him. Our words are weak. We falter as we write. Human comment seems out of place as we stand at the foot of this cross, and behold such love.

'See from His hands, His head, His feet
Sorrow and love flow mingling down,
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet
Or thorns compose so rich a crown'.

The Burial

The problems of time associated with the Passover, we found were resolved, either by realizing that John would naturally use Gentile time when writing for those unacquainted with Hebrew reckoning, or by recognizing the fact that a Hebrew day always began at sunset, and so would appear to overlap two days according to Gentile reckoning. There still await our attention the references to the 'Preparation' and to the 'Sabbaths' that are found in the record of this eventful period.

The first thing to keep in mind is that Israel not only observed the regular weekly sabbath day, but that there were also certain 'high days', days of 'holy convocation' in which no 'servile work' was done. Of such was the fifteenth day of Nisan, the beginning of the feast of Unleavened Bread (Lev. 23:6-8). The second thing to keep in mind is that every sabbath had its 'preparation day', consequently we must expect to read of two 'preparation days' and find that one refers to the 'high day', the sabbath immediately following the Passover, and that the other refers to the regular weekly sabbath. Let us now see whether the Scriptural record speaks of these two 'sabbaths'.

We know that the day of the crucifixion was a preparation day, for it is written, 'And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew

on' (Luke 23:54). 'It was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath' (Mark 15:42). It was on the preparation of the passover that Pilate handed the Saviour over to the Jews (John 19:14), 'The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day) besought Pilate ... ' (John 19:31).

On this preparation day Joseph of Arimathea begged the body of Jesus from Pilate and placed Him in a new sepulchre, just before the sabbath which was an high day, 15th Nisan, began. The women, Mary Magdalene and Mary the Mother of James, and Salome, saw the tomb and how the body was placed, 'and they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment' (Luke 23:56). Mark, however, says, 'And when the sabbath was past' that these women bought spices (Mark 16:1). The Authorized Version reads 'had bought spices', the Revised Version reads simply 'bought spices'. It seems that here we must find a place for the two sabbaths, and the following arrangement may help us to see just what happened.

14th Nisan	15th Nisan	16th Nisan	17th Nisan
Passover and Preparation.	A High Day. A Sabbath.	Preparation Day.	Weekly Sabbath.
The Lord crucified. Body hastily buried.	No servile work. 'The Sabbath past' (Mark 16:1)	The spices bought and prepared when Sabbath was past.	The women rested on this sabbath day and went to the sepulchre soon after it had passed.
	1st night 1st day (Hebrew day)	2nd night 2nd day (Hebrew day)	3rd night 3rd day (Hebrew day)

It will be seen that the three days and three nights are fully accounted for, the period ending at sunset at the end of the third day.

We must now return to the actual passage that is before us, namely 19:31-42. It was the custom of the Romans, to ensure the death of those who had been crucified, to break their legs before taking them down from the cross (the *crucifragium*), and as the Jews particularly desired that the whole horrid witness to their betrayal should be removed before the sabbath day, the bodies were only permitted to hang upon the crosses a comparatively brief period.

'But when they came to Jesus, and saw that He was dead already, they brake not His legs' (19:33).

We find that Pilate marvelled upon hearing that Jesus was so soon dead, and before giving permission to Joseph of Arimathea to take the body away, called a centurion to make sure (Mark 15:44,45). To make it further evident that our Saviour actually died, and to indicate moreover, the peculiarly solemn nature of His wondrous death:

'One of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came there out blood and water' (19:34).

That John records this fact and that it accords with the main purpose of his gospel is evident by the words that follow:

‘And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe’ (19:35).

The spear thrust of the soldier, and the evidence provided by the blood and water, for ever silenced those heretical assertions of the *Docetae* who denied the reality of our Lord’s humanity and death. Such a spear-thrust accompanied by such a discharge was proof positive of death to the Centurion and to Pilate, and being attested so positively by the evangelist himself, assures us that the death for sin, without which salvation is impossible did indeed take place. There may be, however, more in it than this great fundamental fact. John’s Gospel itself provides us with the assurance that Christ laid down His life of Himself, and that no man took it from Him. This we have considered in detail on page 304. It is evident that crucifixion itself could not account for the apparent suddenness of the death of Christ, for it was usual for the victim to linger for three, four, and as many as nine days, before death intervened. ‘No man taketh it from Me’, must be remembered, as we think of the cross. When man in his envy and malice had done his worst, darkness descended upon the earth, and in that darkness the supreme offering was made. *There*, the Father and the Son were alone, *there* ‘The Lord made to meet on Him, the iniquity of us all’. The same prophetic Psalm which said, ‘In My thirst they gave me vinegar to drink’, also said, ‘Reproach hath broken My heart’ (Psa. 69:20). This must not be dismissed as a figure of speech, for it is a fact, attested by medical evidence that ‘the effect of long continued and intense agony is frequently to produce a secretion of a colourless lymph within the pericardium, amounting in many cases to a very considerable quantity’ (Webster and Wilkinson).

‘A similar effusion in all probability takes place in many chronic diseases where the agony has been long, and is one of the last phenomena of waning life’ (*Encycl. Metrop.*).

Already in Gethsemane, the beloved physician noted the symptoms of the approaching seizure ‘His sweat was (became) as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground’ (Luke 22:44). The night of the betrayal was cold, yet the Saviour’s brow was wet with sweat! He Himself explained the cause, ‘My soul is exceeding sorrowful, *even unto death*’ (Matt. 26:38).

Under agony or conflict ‘the heart acts with great violence, and forces a hot, copious, and in extreme cases, a blood sweat through the

pores of the skin' (W. Stroud, M.D.). All this took place *before* the long night of trial, *before* the brutal scourging, *before* the dreadful crucifixion.

At the end of the three hours darkness came that awful cry, 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?' and 'with the sudden loud cry of One dying, not of exhaustion, but of a broken heart, He dismisses His spirit, as did the High Priest in slaughtering the sacrifice of old: Who through the eternal spirit *offered Himself* without blemish to God' (D. M. Panton).

Dr. W. Stroud has written a treatise upon the death of Christ, and speaking of this death by a 'broken heart' he says: 'Such a rupture is usually attended with immediate death, and with an effusion into the pericardium of the blood circulating through that organ; which when thus extravasated, *although in scarcely any other case*, separates into constituent parts'.

Thus John gives evidence not only that the Saviour most surely died, but that He died under the stroke of God 'no man taking it (His life) from Him'. Later, the spear wounded side was to provide the fullest evidence that unbelief demanded that the Resurrection was indeed a fact (20:24-29).

The evangelist follows up his own asseveration of truth by referring to Old Testament typical teaching. In connection with the fact that contrary to custom the Roman soldiers 'brake not His legs', John says that there was fulfilled the Scripture which said, 'A bone of Him shall not be broken' (19:36, Exod. 12:46), setting Him forth as the true Passover Lamb.

He is careful not to use the word 'fulfil' in connection with the prophecy 'They shall look on Him Whom they pierced' (19:37), for the 'fulfilment' of Zechariah 12:10 awaits the conversion and repentance of Israel in a later day, but it was necessary to its fulfilment that He Who shall yet come, shall have been pierced - thus all, indeed, was finished.

Joseph of Arimath -a is variously described as 'a rich man' (Matt. 27:57), 'an honourable counsellor' (Mark 15:43), 'a good man, and a just' (Luke 23:50), and Nicodemus, 'the master in Israel' who came to Jesus by night, now comes out into the open. Joseph besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus and was granted permission,

Nicodemus came also with a hundred pound weight of myrrh and aloes. A hasty entombment followed in a new sepulchre which was in a garden on the site of the crucifixion.

‘There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews’ preparation day; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand’ (John 19:42).

If our testimony ended here, we should indeed be of all men the most miserable, we do not therefore conclude our study with the burial of a dead Christ, we anticipate our future joy in the exulting cry ‘He is not here, He is risen’.

The Resurrection (20:1-31)

While it is an integral part of the faith, that Christ was buried, faith is void and vain if He rose not from the dead; and so we gladly turn to the dawn of another day, a day of life and victory, a day which is the pledge of a morning without tears, of a day when sorrow and sighing shall have for ever fled away.

Much has been written in the attempt to elucidate the precise meaning of the words translated 'The first day of the week' (20:1). For our present purpose, we feel that the comment in *The Companion Bible* on this verse says all that is necessary.

'The first day of the week = On the first (day) of the Sabbaths (pl.). Gr. *Te mia ton sabbaton*. The word "day" is rightly supplied, as *mia* is feminine, and so must agree with a feminine noun understood, while *sabbaton* is neuter. Luke 24:1 has the same. Matthew reads, "towards dawn on the first (day) of the Sabbaths", and Mark (16:2), "very early on the first (day) of the Sabbaths". The expression is not a Hebraism, and "Sabbaths" should not be rendered "week", as in A.V. and R.V. A reference to Lev. 23:15-17 shows that this "first day" is the first of the days for reckoning the seven Sabbaths to Pentecost. On this day, therefore, the Lord became the firstfruits (vv. 10,11) of God's resurrection harvest (1 Cor. 15:23)'.

The evidences for the Resurrection that John brings forward are reducible to two. (1) The evidence of the empty tomb; (2) The evidence of the Personal Living Reality of the Risen Christ. Mary Magdalene's disconsolate grief is finally crowned by the rapturous recognition of the Lord, *Rabboni*; while Thomas' gloom and scepticism are displaced by the triumphant confession '*My Lord and my God*'. In the prohibition to Mary 'touch Me not ... I ascend', Christ is presented to us as the 'Firstfruits' while the act of breathing upon the disciples and the gift of the Holy Ghost, was a symbolic anticipation of Pentecost.

These features we now assemble before passing on to fuller examination.

The Resurrection (20:1-31)

A *Time* 1-. The first day of the week, early.

- B *Condition*-1. The stone taken away.
- C *Evidence* 2-10. He saw and believed. Linen clothes.
- D *Confession* 11-16. Rabboni.

The sign of First fruits (17).

- A *Time* 19-. The first day of the week-evening.
- B *Condition*-19. The doors shut.
- C *Evidence* 20. He shewed His hands and His side.
- D *Confession* 21. As My Father hath sent Me.

The sign of Pentecost (21-23).

- A *Time* 26- After eight days.
- B *Condition*-26. The doors shut.
- C *Evidence* 27. My hands ... My side.
- D *Confession* 28. My Lord and my God.

Many other signs (30,31).

The first conviction that the Lord had risen is produced in the heart of John by the evidence of the empty tomb and the fact that the linen clothes were left undisturbed. The second conviction that the Lord had risen is produced in the heart of Mary Magdalene by the utterance of her name 'Mary!' The third conviction that the Lord had risen is produced in the hearts of the assembled disciples by the Personal Presence in their midst of the Risen Christ. The fourth conviction that the Lord had risen is produced in the heart of the apostle Thomas by the evidence of the nail prints.

These separate features however have far-reaching associations with the other disciples, with the women, with councillors and Romans, with Priests and with the Temple Guards. Lies and truth are seen in deadly conflict and the truth, yea, life itself, is here at stake. Let us then patiently and prayerfully assemble the evidence, remembering that these are some of the 'signs' written to the end that we might believe.

The Empty Tomb. - When Mary Magdalene reached the sepulchre 'when it was yet dark' the first thing she saw was that the stone had been taken away. Let us survey the record of this stone. After Joseph

of Arimath -a had placed the body of the Saviour 'in his own new tomb ... he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed' (Matt. 27:60).

These stones usually fitted into a slotted descending groove, down which they could be easily rolled, but up which they could only be rolled back with great difficulty and by the use of great strength. Mark tells us that this stone was 'exceeding great' (Mark 16:4 R.V.). As three women considered they were unable to remove this stone themselves, it is evident that it made an effective barrier against any furtive attempt by any one working single-handed to molest the tomb or steal the body. Although the Jewish authorities would have no desire further to raise the ire of Pilate, they were driven to make one more request of him in order to allay their fears. That they were indeed driven is evident from the fact that although they had been so concerned about not polluting the Sabbath or being defiled themselves, yet 'the next day, that followed the day of the preparation' and consequently the Sabbath itself, 'the chief priests and the Pharisees came together to Pilate, Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while He was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night, and steal Him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first' (Matt. 27:62-64).

The Guard and the Seal. - The very fact that the enemies of the truth set a guard to *prevent* the disciples stealing the body of the Lord, provides added confirmation that He did indeed rise from the dead. Pilate brusquely dismisses the deputation saying 'Ye have a watch (guard)'. If the Sanhedrin already had a guard why did they bother Pilate in the matter. The answer must be that the body of those executed by Roman law belonged to the Roman authorities, and to set a guard without Pilate's permission would have exposed the Jews to further trouble. However, Pilate's words gave them the necessary permission, but they must have felt the intended sting in the words 'make it as sure as you can'. The stone was sealed, the watch was set, 'the sepulchre made sure'. After the resurrection, and when the empty tomb could not be denied, the watch explained to the chief priests what had happened. They bribed the watch and promised to persuade the governor should news reach his ears, bidding them circulate the rumour that the disciples had stolen the body while the watch had

slept. The record of Matthew is that the stone was rolled back by an angel of the Lord to the accompaniment of an earthquake (Matt. 28:2). The women came early in the morning, bringing with them the spices they had prepared and finding the stone rolled away 'entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus' (Luke 24:3).

We have, therefore, the evidence before us both of the sealed and shut tomb and of the unsealed and opened tomb. Two insuperable objections, beside many lesser ones, lie against the idea that the disciples either could or did steal the body of the Saviour. Let another, whose work we have already quoted present the difficulty of believing the rumour circulated by the Priests.

'Somehow the rugged fisherman Peter and his brother Andrew, the characteristically doubting Thomas, the reasoned and not too-sensitive tax-gatherer Matthew, the rather dull Philip, intensely loyal but a little slow of apprehension, do not fit easily into the conditions required for an absolutely unshakeable collective hallucination. And if it is not both collective and unshakeable it is of no use to us. The terrors and the persecutions which these men ultimately had to face and did face unflinchingly, do not admit of a half-hearted adhesion secretly honeycombed with doubt. The belief has to be unconditional and of adamant strength to satisfy the conditions ... they brought it to Jerusalem and carried it with unconceivable audacity into the most keenly intellectual centre of Judaea, against the ablest dialecticians of the day, and in face of every impediment which a brilliant and highly organized camarilla could devise. *And they won.* Within twenty years the claim of these Galilean peasants had disrupted the Jewish church and impressed itself upon every town of the Eastern littoral of the Mediterranean from C -sarea to Troas. In less than fifty years it had begun to threaten the peace of the Roman Empire. (*Who moved the Stone?* Frank Morison).

'If the body of Jesus still lay in the tomb where Joseph had deposited it, why did they not say so? A cold and dispassionate statement of the real facts, issued by someone in authority, and publicly exhibited in the Temple precincts, would have been like a douche of water upon the kindling fire of the Christian heresy' (*Ibid*).

As a matter of fact neither the disciples nor the Priests questioned the fact of the open tomb, they simply interpreted its significance according to their attitude to the truth.

The Linen clothes. - The special feature that John brings forward is the evidence provided by the linen clothes. The fact that the linen clothes were undisturbed, ruled out any idea of a hasty robbery. When Lazarus came forth from the grave he was 'bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin', and by the command of the Saviour, 'Loose him, and let him go' (11:44), we gather that there would be some considerable length of material involved. When John saw this evidence 'he saw, and believed' (20:8). This statement is followed by the remark, 'For as yet they knew not the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead'. This is exactly in line with the trend of John's Gospel, for where Matthew would say of any event, 'it then was fulfilled that which was spoken of by the prophet', John resorts to personal evidence. So here, John did not enter that empty tomb with any idea of proving Scripture, he was convinced on the spot, and for the first time, that the Lord had risen.

The spoken name. - Mary Magdalene, apparently did not join with the two disciples in their inspection of the tomb, but stood without weeping. The Saviour uttered but one word, He uttered her name, and she too received unalterable conviction that her Saviour stood before her in living reality.

There have been many explanations put forward to account for the words 'touch Me not'. If the ascension there referred to, was the ascension recorded forty days afterwards in the first of Acts, then the invitation to Thomas to put forth his finger needs explanation also. If, however, we remember that Christ, having fulfilled the type of the Passover, was now about to fulfil the type of the Firstfruits, all is understandable. On the morrow after the sabbath the high priest would be waving the sheaf of the firstfruits before the Lord (Lev. 23:10,11). He, Christ, was the true Firstfruits (1 Cor. 15:23) and as such would present Himself to the Father. The visible ascension of Acts is not intended by the Lord in His word to Mary.

The evidence that convinced the disciples is recorded in verses 19 to 23. Luke supplements the record by describing the natural fear of the disciples that they saw 'a spirit'. The Lord challenges them saying, 'Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself: handle Me, and see;

for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have' (Luke 24:37-39).

The Hands and the Side. - Thomas, however, true to his somewhat pessimistic temperament, was not with them and he declared that he would not be satisfied, saying, 'Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the prints of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe'.

We all know that the challenge was taken up. That eight days after, when Thomas was assembled with the rest of the disciples and conditions were similar, the Lord again stood in the midst. Thomas' conviction was overwhelming and complete, and with his confession John brings his testimony to a focus, 'Thomas answered and said unto Him, My Lord and my God' (20:28).

Those who deny the deity of the Saviour, twist and strain these wondrous words. Some say it was but an ejaculation, comparable to the modern 'Good God!' Such an attempted explanation is but an exhibition of ignorance, for the Jew never used such exclamation, it was foreign to his whole upbringing and teaching. Mary had already used the word 'My Lord' (20:13) and Thomas but carries the conviction to its limits, 'My Lord and my God'. Moreover, the fact that these words were addressed 'unto Him' preclude the idea of an exclamation, as also the absence of any reproof on that score in the reply of the Saviour.

The directions written by Dorothy L. Sayers for her broadcast, 'The Man Born to be King', is worth reading here:

'It is unexpected, but extraordinarily convincing, that the one absolutely unequivocal statement, in the whole Gospel, of the Divinity of Jesus should come from doubting Thomas. It is the only place where the word "God" is used of Him without qualification of any kind, and in the most unambiguous form of words (not merely *theos* but *ho theos mou* with the definite article). And this must be said, not ecstatically, or with a cry of astonishment, but with flat conviction, as one acknowledging irrefragable evidence: "2 x 2 = 4". "That is the sun in the sky", "You are my Lord and my God".'

The words 'Because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed' are not limited to

Thomas, for the other disciples also 'saw and believed'. Throughout the forty days when the Lord appeared to the disciples they 'saw and believed' and these were preparations for that record upon which we now believe though never having seen Him. Peter was an eye-witness 'of His majesty' (2 Pet. 1:16). Peter 'heard' the voice from heaven (2 Pet. 1:18), but he remembered 'a more sure word of prophecy' (2 Pet. 1:19), and so could write to his readers concerning the Lord 'Whom having not seen, ye love; in Whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory' (1 Pet. 1:8).

We do not need external 'proofs' of the resurrection, we all can say 'One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see', yet the unchallenged presence of that empty tomb in Jerusalem, accessible to all at all times, the utter failure of the Priests and Rulers either to produce the stolen body of the Lord, to reveal where the body had been taken, or to discover either by threat or by bribe any one who would give evidence is of itself proof enough. Further, the fact that upon the truth of the risen Christ, this feeble handful of men erected a structure such as could never have been built or have stood had any one of the persecuted builders entertained the slightest suspicion that deception had anywhere been practised. Saul of Tarsus knew too of that empty tomb, he endorsed at the first the lie circulated by the Priests but he was utterly and eternally convinced of the truth by that which he saw and heard on the way to Damascus. 'He saw that if the disciples were not deceivers, they were *right* - right through the whole range and gamut of their claim. He realized why you could not associate a martyrdom so glorious as that of Stephen with a vulgar deception involving connivance with the abduction of a corpse ... the vacancy of the tomb was an historic fact fixed and unalterable' (Frank Morison).

We have gone a little outside the bounds set in our study, but have in no sense touched upon all the features and facts, persons and events that go to make up the complete resurrection story. Like John himself we have to conclude:

'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' (20:30,31).

The Eighth Sign (21:1-14)

The Closing Witness (21:15-25)

As we read the last two verses of the previous chapter, it would be natural to feel that we had come to the end of the narrative. Consequently we may not be surprised to learn that the critics have raised doubts as to the authenticity of the last chapter. So far as we are concerned, the matter has already been settled. The recognition of the structural place of the eight signs, makes this chapter vital to the completion of the correspondence. John, however, is not the only New Testament writer who appears to have a double ending. Philippians has two endings, 'Finally, my brethren' (3:1), and 'Finally, brethren' (4:8), while Romans has no less than three 'Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen' (15:33), 'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen' (16:24), and the doxology (16:25-27).

Immediately before penning the above, the writer wrote a letter, and after signing it added a postscript saying that the letter was attending only to the business side of a question, but that another member of the family would be dealing with 'news'. Yet that P.S. was as much a part of the letter as the opening address or the body of the message. There are several reasons why John should have continued beyond the apparent conclusion.

First. Peter has been set before us in the week just ended, in a bad light. Peter had denied the Lord thrice, even though he had protested his willingness to lay down his life for the Saviour's sake (13:37,38; 18:27). Here in this chapter in the threefold questioning and threefold commission, Peter is restored, and moreover, his willingness to lay down his life for Christ's sake is now not only accepted, but the very method to be employed in accomplishing that willing offering is made known. Further, John tells us the object he had before him as he related the signs which he has recorded, but he knew as well as any man, that the record had not only to be written down for all time, but that its message had to be preached, and consequently, the final chapter rounds off the narrative by introducing seven of the disciples and a suggestion of future service.

The chapter is divided into several portions thus:

Simon Peter and the others 'go fishing' and catch nothing (21:1-3).

At the command of the Lord, they cast the net on the right side of the ship and catch one hundred and fifty-three great fishes.

The Lord meantime providing a meal for them on the shore (21:4-14).

Simon Peter is thrice interrogated by the Lord, and thrice commissioned (21:15-17).

Simon Peter is moreover told by 'what death he should glorify God' and is bidden by the Lord 'Follow Me' (21:18,19).

The reiteration of the name 'Simon Peter' turns our thoughts back to the promise of 1:42. *Cephas*, like *Peter*, meaning a stone.

Peter exhibits once again that impulsiveness which was his characteristic by asking, concerning the disciple whom Jesus loved, 'What shall this man do?' and is told that this was none of his business. 'Follow thou Me' (21:21,22).

John corrects a false interpretation of the Saviour's words, especially as they related to himself (21:23).

He makes once more a most definite statement concerning the truthfulness of his witness (21:24).

And concludes with a recognition of the immense amount of material open to both himself and others, and so brings the gospel to a finish.

Before conducting any fuller examination of the message of this chapter, let us give our attention to the perfect correspondence that exists between the first and eighth signs (2:1-12 and 21:1-14).

A 2:1-12. *The Marriage in Cana.*

- a 1:45-51. *The Background*, Nathanael's diffidence, then full confession.
- b 1. *The Place*, 'Galilee'.
- c 1. *Time*, 'The third day'.
- d 2. *Invitation*, 'Jesus called, and His disciples'.
- e 3. *Failure confessed*, 'They have no wine'.
- f 6. *Numbers*, 'Six waterpots. Two or three firkins'.
- g 7. *Command*, 'Fill the water pots with water'.
- h 7. *Obedience*, 'They filled them'.
- i 7. *Water pots filled*, 'Up to the brim'.
- j 8. *The Servants*, 'The servants bare' (*enenkan*).
- k 11-. *Result*, Glory manifested (*ephanerosen*).

A 21:1-14. *The Draught of Fishes.*

- a** 20:24-29. *The Background*, Thomas' unbelief, then full confession.
- b** 1. *The Place*, 'Galilee'.
- c** 14. *Time*, 'The third time'.
- d** 12. *Invitation*, 'Come and dine'
- e** 3,5. *Failure confessed*, 'Nothing'. 'No meat'.
- f** 8,11. *Numbers*, 200 cubits; 153 fishes.
- g** 6. *Command*, 'Cast nets into water'.
- h** 6. *Obedience*, 'They cast therefore'.
- i** 8,11. *Nets filled*, 'So many'.
- j** 10. *The Disciples*, 'Bring the fish',
(*enenkate*).
- k** 14. *Result*, 'Manifested' (*ephanerothe*).

'I go a fishing' (21:3). As of yore Peter is the spokesman and leader, the others readily agree, 'we also go with thee'. Some have regarded the movement as an act of unbelief, others look upon it as an honest effort to gain a livelihood until the promised baptism of the Spirit sent them on their mission to men. Possibly like most human actions and motives, they were not unmixed, but what we do know is that there was a symbolic meaning in the act and its consequences. 'That night they caught nothing'.

This was a most needful lesson. The Lord had previously and repeatedly taught that He, the Son could do nothing of Himself (5:19), that the flesh profited nothing (6:63), that the night cometh when no man can work (9:4), and that 'without' Him the disciples could do nothing (15:5). Resurrection ground and service in the name of the Risen Christ, has no room for the flesh, or for independent action; it must be learned once and for all that practised and hardy fishermen, men who knew their craft now needed full and unconditional submission to the Lord's command. When however the net was once more cast, the blessing was evident. Here is a lesson for us all. It has been right for us in our new venture of faith to advertise, to plan, to toil, and it may be that we too have had to confess that there have been little results for our pains. Yet we need to be kept with quickened ear and willing hearts, so that even though our best efforts have been apparently so fruitless, if He shall again command, and if He shall but indicate 'the right side of the ship', great will be our rejoicing and blessed the results.

The number 153 has naturally provoked a great deal of speculation and it is not our intention to add to the number of far-fetched explanations. We have read what others have said, from Augustine onward, but cannot feel that it would be unto edification to transcribe their findings to these pages.

There is a most obvious contrast with the miracle of Luke 5:1-11, for there the net break, and the number of fish is unrecorded. Peter, as he saw this miracle was convinced of his own unworthiness, saying 'depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord'. To these astonished fishermen the Lord said 'Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men', and they followed Him.

In John's record there is no such sequel. 'Fishing' is no longer used as a symbol of Ministry, the figure changes for the more familiar one of Shepherd and sheep. Nowhere, outside the Gospels do we meet with the figure of 'fishing' and we should be wise to abandon it also.

When the disciples had dined, and were fully satisfied that they were for the third time in the living Presence of the Lord, Peter is especially addressed. He would probably have already associated the results of the fishing, with the gathering up of the fragments 'that nothing be lost' and the words of the Saviour, 'Of all that He hath given Me I should lose nothing', 'Those that Thou gavest Me I have kept, and none of them is lost'. He could not avoid a shrinking comparison between his own denial with its oaths and curses, and the betrayal of Judas, and he stood in need of some definite recall. It is this that he now receives.

The passage occupies verses 15 to 17, and whereas in the Authorized Version and the Revised Version we read 'Lovest thou Me', and 'Thou knowest that I love Thee', in these verses, the Revised Version says in the margin 'Love, in these places represents two different Greek words'. It is quite easy to say in consequence: 'Then why did not the translators use two different English words?' - the answer being that it is quite a problem to know how to differentiate the two words used, without exaggeration, and without interjecting more than the Saviour intended. Let us indicate these verbal differences.

Agapas Me, 'Lovest thou Me?' *Philo se*, 'I love Thee'. These two words are used in verses 15 and 16. But in verse 17 the Lord drops *agapas* and adopts *philo* thus: *Phileis Me*. 'Lovest thou Me?' *Philo se*, 'I love Thee'. It will be seen that the third time, Christ adopts the

language of Peter, and substitutes *Phileis Me*, for *Agapas Me*. It is evident that we cannot hope to understand the import of this threefold question if we do not realize the distinctiveness of the two words used.

Cremer has given the words a careful examination in his *Biblico-Theological Lexicon*, and has said:

- '(1) The love designated by *agapan* must certainly possess a distinctive element of its own. We shall not go wrong if we define the distinction thus:
Philein denotes love of natural inclination, affection - love, so to say, originally spontaneous, involuntary; *agapan*, on the other hand, love as a direction of the will.
- (2) *Philein* is never used of the love of man towards God (Except in the one instance "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ" 1 Cor. 16:22, which however "proves the rule" for "God" as such is not in view).
- (3) *Agapan*, and never *philein*, is used of love towards our enemies.
- (4) The range of *philein* is wider than that of *agapan*, but *agapan* stands all the higher above *philein* on account of its moral import. It does not in itself exclude affection, but it is always the moral affection of conscious deliberate will which is contained in it, not the natural impulse of immediate feeling'.

When we remember the natural impulsiveness of Peter, his affectionate nature, yet his recent threefold denial of his Lord, we can readily understand why he felt unable to rise to the full moral heights of *agapan*, yet could maintain in spite of all his shortcomings, that his natural affection was beyond question. This the Lord graciously accepts, and by the recognition of Peter's most evident repentance and humility, really indicated that he did at last manifest the true fruit of the spirit, which is love *agape* (Gal. 5:22). This is not the only set of words that demand comparison in this same passage.

'Feed My lambs' *Boske ta arnia mou* (21:15).

'Feed My sheep' *Poimaine ta probata mou* (21:16).

'Feed My sheep' *Boske ta probata mou* (21:17).

Here we have two words translated 'feed', *bosko* and *poimaino*, which need some explanation. The difference between 'lambs' and

'sheep' and the spiritual lesson intended is patent to all and needs no further explication.

First of all we observe that the Lord starts with *boske*, goes on to *poimaine*, and then returns to *boske*. This fact has been used to show that Christ could not have had *progressive* aspects of the pastoral work in mind, otherwise He would not have returned to the word with which He began. This objection, however, is disposed of by asking the question, Do not *sheep* need feeding as well as *lambs*? While *bosko* means simply 'to feed' and is so used everywhere else in the New Testament, *poimaino* is translated 'rule' four times (Matt. 2:6; Rev. 2:27; 12:5; 19:15) and seven times 'feed' and means 'to tend as a shepherd'. It means the 'rod' and 'staff', the leading, the protection, the constant care which the flock needs of the Shepherd over and above the necessity for feeding. It is Peter who later wrote:

'Ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls' (1 Pet. 2:25).

It was the Peter of John 21, who further wrote:

'The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: feed (tend, *poimante*) the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away' (1 Pet. 5:1-4).

In the second epistle, Peter speaks of the death by which he should glorify God, as revealed by Christ in John.

'Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me' (2 Pet. 1:14).

The universal testimony of antiquity is that Peter followed his Lord literally, and was indeed crucified, and this is plainly foreshadowed in John 21:18,19.

The long life of the apostle John is also a matter of historic testimony. Tradition has it that John, at the age of about ninety years, went to Ephesus, where he was pressed by the bishops and Christians of Asia to write what he had heard from the Saviour. This he did, and

we possess the result in the Gospel according to John. According to Epiphanius, John died at Ephesus, in the third year of Trajan, being the 100th year of Our Lord, at the age of ninety-four.

The gospel ends, first with a most solemn asseveration of truth:

‘This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true’ (21:24),

and with an expansion of the thought of John 20:30. There is no need to question the literality of the words ‘even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written’. It is an acknowledged hyperbole, much as we find used in John 12:19. The word translated ‘contain’ *choresai* must not be limited to the reception of mere bulk, it also refers to the capacity of the mind of man and his ability to ‘receive’ (Matt. 19:11,12). The Lord also used this word when He said, ‘My word *hath no place* in you’ (8:37). Enough has been written by the four Evangelists to bring before us both the Person and the Work of the Redeemer, and to multiply these records would have but cumbered the mind.

We rejoice in the complete and sovereign disposal of the material available. We will not waste precious time or spiritual strength in bemoaning that every utterance, and every miracle of our Lord has not been recorded, we would rather praise that gracious consideration which has so kindly and wisely selected from the abundance at His disposal, that which if believed and accepted gives us ‘life through His name’. As we bring this exposition to its close, our minds go back to that wondrous Prologue, (1:1-18), and re-reading it in the light of these twenty-one chapters of wondrous teaching we are constrained to cry afresh:

‘Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable Gift’

(2 Cor. 9:15).

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