

LESSONS FROM THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

THE GLORY GOSPEL

BY MARY M. BODIE

*"God...hath in these last days spoken unto us by His
Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by
whom also He hath made the ages."*

Heb.1:1-2

HIS HANDS AND FEET

WHEN I BECOME WEARY IN TOILING,
OBEYING MY SAVIOR'S COMMANDS,
WHILE SATAN MY WORK IS SPOILING
AND ALL MY EFFORTS WITHSTANDS,
CHRIST SHOWS ME HIS TOIL-WORN HANDS-
HIS WOUNDED HANDS, HIS NAIL-PIERCED HANDS.
MY SAVIOR SHOWS ME HIS HANDS.

WHEN I AM FAINT, YET PURSUING
THE ROADWAY SO LONG THRU THE HEAT,
AND OTHERS MY PACE ARE OUT-DOING
AND I AM PREPARED FOR RETREAT,
CHRIST SHOWS ME HIS BLEEDING FEET-
HIS WOUNDED FEET, HIS NAIL-PIERCED FEET.
MY SAVIOR SHOWS ME HIS FEET.

I CANNOT BE CARELESS, OR SHIRKING
FROM DOING HIS WILL THAT IS MEET.
I MUST NOT DELAY IN THE WORKING
OR FAIL IN THE RACE FOR THE FLEET.
CHRIST SHOWS ME HIS HANDS AND FEET-
HIS TOIL-WORN HANDS, HIS BLEEDING FEET.
HE SHOWS ME HIS HANDS AND FEET.

PREFACE

These unique lessons on the Gospel of John appeared in Grace and Glory as a serial from April 1935 to April 1937. Many people have asked for them in Book form. Therefore, we are hereby granting their requests. The reader will find them rich, racy and instructive, and in full harmony with the Apostle Paul's Gospel, which we esteem so highly. Ponder these living truths and pass them on to others.

The Publishers, 1941

REFERENCES USED IN THIS PUBLICATION

- **American Standard Version** (ASV or AV) is a version of the Bible that was released in 1901. It soon came to have other names, such as the American Revised Version, the American Standard Revision, the American Standard Revised Bible, and the American Standard Edition. By the time its copyright was renewed in 1929, it had come to be known by its present name, the American Standard Version.
- **Diaglott** is a two-language polyglot translation, of the New Testament by Benjamin Wilson, first published in 1864. It is an interlinear translation with the original Greek text and a word-for-word English translation in the left column, and a full English translation in the right column.
- **King James Version** (KJV) references are used throughout this publication unless otherwise noted.
- **Revised Version** (RV) (or English Revised Version) of the Bible is a late 19th-century British revision of the King James Version of 1611. It was the first and remains the only officially authorized and recognized revision of the King James Bible.
- **Wuest:** Kenneth Samuel Wuest (1893–1962) was a noted New Testament Greek (Κοινή) scholar of the mid-20th century...produced his own English translation of the New Testament (the Wuest Expanded Translation – abbreviated WET) based on Nestle's critical text.

Note: Definitions of references pulled from WikipediA, The Free Encyclopedia, January 2013.

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INTRODUCTION

"God...hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He hath made the ages." [Heb.1:1-2]

God's purpose in giving the written Word to man was 3-fold:

- 1st** to reveal Himself to man,
- 2nd** to reveal to man his condition apart from God, and
- 3rd** to reveal to man the way of reconciliation to God.

Therefore, God, man, and redemption are the subjects of the Bible; and, all of these are embodied in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was God, He became man, and He reconciled God and man.

The Old Testament is the example and pattern of heavenly things; especially this may be said of the Tabernacle in the wilderness [Heb.9:23]. It is emphatically the figure of Christ, witnessing of Him in its entirety and every detail. There we view the first dwelling place of God with man, which was ever the desire of His heart. It was His purpose in the creation of man. In Proverbs 8:31, we read that His delights were with the sons of men, when as yet there were none of them.

Later, He walked with Adam in the garden. He visited Abraham in the plains of Mamre. He talked with Moses out of the burning bush. These manifestations of God are known as "**theophanies**."

God never had a permanent abode with men until He brought Israel out of Egypt. Then He commanded Moses saying, "*Let them make me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them*" [Exo.25:8]; giving him the heavenly pattern of His dwelling place. The Gospel of John answers to the Tabernacle in the wilderness.

There are 3 other Records (Gospels) of Jesus. In each of them, He is shown in a different official character:

- **Matthew** paints His portrait in **PURPLE AND SCARLET** where we behold Him as the **KING**; the Lion of the tribe of Judah.
- **Mark** in **DRAB COLORING**, presents Him as the lowly **SERVANT** of Jehovah.
- **Luke** paints in **BLUE AND WHITE**, the holy, heavenly **MAN**; the Last Adam.
- **John's** Gospel is in contrast with, though not in contradiction to, Matthew, Mark, and Luke. The artist dips his brush in **golden oil** and throws upon the canvas the unique Figure of the Son of God from glory. There are whole cycles of time touched upon in this Gospel—dispensations in figure announced, as well as discourses, signs, wonders, events, and experiences which the other Gospels do not mention. Great, unmeasured spaces of Truth were left for John to fill in as He paints his portrait of the soaring **EAGLE** of the air.

John (“*gift*”), the writer of this Gospel, was chosen to depict for us the far greater Gift, the Son of God; the basis and repository of all other gifts. John was the son of **Zebedee** (“*abundant portion*”) and **Salome** (“*peaceable*”), which names are significant as connected with the Gospel which their gift (John) gives us. Bible commentators agree that the Gospel of John was written from Ephesus in the latter part of the first century. It has been said that the Gospels are the heart of all Scripture; surely John’s Gospel is the heart of the Gospels. The beloved Apostle seems bent upon showing us Jesus as the Divine Son. He alone informs us of Him as from the beginning being co-equal with the Father from a past eternity (see Pro.8:23). In John’s Gospel there is no genealogy, no birth, no childhood, no growth, no baptism, no temptation, no Gethsemane; these events, though in keeping with the other Gospels, are not appropriate here. Everything is directed to the end that men “*might believe that Jesus is...the Son of God*” [Joh.20:31]. The whole book is a witness of Him of whom Moses and the prophets wrote. It is indeed a “**Him Book.**”

One of this book’s key words is **witness**; from the Greek words **MARTURIO** and **MARTUREO** (found at least 49 times). In fact the whole of Scripture testifies of the Son of God. He answers to all its types and shadows, even as we said of the Tabernacle in the wilderness, which in its minutest parts (the curtains and coverings, fastenings and furniture, pillars and pins) speak of His glory. This is plainly manifest as we study the Oil Portrait painted by the beloved Apostle John. In each chapter, some part of the pattern materializes; some shadow takes on substance before our eyes. It is truly marvelous to behold the sweet wonder that came down from glory. Here is no “dream walking” but a most glorious reality, bringing heaven and earth together.

Another interesting fact is that the furniture in The Tabernacle was set in the form of a cross.

CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER OUTLINE OF JOHN’S GOSPEL

John 1 — The True Tabernacle	John 12 — The Altar of Incense
John 2 — The Bride and Temple	John 13 — Service in the Tabernacle
John 3 — The Veil and Brazen Altar	John 14 — Service in the World
John 4 — The Perfect Savior	John 15 — Fellowship in Service
John 5 — The Cleansing Laver	John 16 — Fellowship in Suffering
John 6 — The Table and Showbread	John 17 — The High Priest’s Petition
John 7 — The Holy Anointing Oil	John 18 — The Paschal Lamb Examined
John 8 — The Candlestick Set Up	John 19 — The Paschal Lamb Slain
John 9 — The Candlestick Shining	John 20 — Love Conquers Death
John 10 — The Door to the Tabernacle	John 21 — The Shepherd and Shepherds
John 11 — Man Inside the Tabernacle	

CHRONOLOGICAL DATES IN JOHN'S GOSPEL

Fall or Winter 25 A.D.	Jesus Christ's ministry began [Joh.1:29-34]
Spring 26 A.D.	A Passover Feast marked the beginning of the 3 full years [Joh.2:13-23 and 4:45]
27 A.D.	The 2 nd Passover [Joh.5:1]
28 A.D.	The 3 rd Passover [Joh.6:4]
Fall 28 A.D.	The Feast of Tabernacles [Joh.7:2]
Spring 29 A.D.	The 4 th , and last, Passover [Joh.11:55-56 and 12:1]

DIVISIONS IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

The Glory Gospel of John falls easily into 5 divisions:

Div.1, Retrospect and Prophet	John 1-2
Div.2, Revelation of God as Life to the World	John 3-11
Div.3, Revelation of God as Light to the Disciples	John 12-17
Div.4, Revelation of God as Love to All Men	John 18-20
Div.5, Epilogue	John 21

Therefore, as we take up the different portions of the Gospel of John, let us trust our Guide to unveil for us the hidden treasure and show us the beauties and worth of the true Tabernacle (which God pitched and not man)...the Son of God who was made flesh and dwelt among us, that we may with John, "Behold His glory."

DIV. 1 , RETROSPECT AND PROPHET [JOH. 1-2]

THE TRUE TABERNACLE [JOH. 1]

"In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in the darkness and the darkness comprehended it not." [Joh.1:1-5]

John 1 and 2 are a preface to the whole of the book, and, a preface to the entire Bible. The reason for the framing of the ages in God's eternal counsel is here viewed walking around. The former were simply preparatory to the manifestation of the Word made flesh. He (Jesus Christ) who dwelt in the bosom of the Father from a past eternity has come to dwell with men. This is the essence and the wonder of the revelation that John reports. Observe that...

- Even as Genesis 1, John 1 begins with a past eternity and creation.
- As in Genesis 2, John 2 shows us a wedding and later a housecleaning, a putting forth of everything defiling and offensive [Gen.3], corresponding with the last book in the Bible where God's eternal purposes are seen consummated, everything unclean outside [Rev.21:27 and 22:15].

The dazzling gems of Truth that lie hidden beneath the surface in this Gospel have constrained men to exclaim again and again, *"O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out"* [Rom.11:33]. When we consider the Object that is herein displayed, it is no marvel that the revelations are infinite. The Mystery of God, God Himself, the Author and First Cause of all the visible and invisible creation, has come to dwell on earth. We here gaze upon the Shekinah Glory (hidden in the Most Holy Place in the Tabernacle) shining forth in Jesus' face, and we are overcome with the splendor.

A simple yet complete analysis of the contents of the book is found in John 1:1-18. Eternal Life revealed in the Son *"in the beginning"* with God and very God Himself, Creator of all life from the angel to the atom, Seraphim to serpent [Joh.1:1-5]; Eternal Light, the Light of men shining in the darkness, but not comprehended [Joh.1:6-11]; Eternal Love made flesh, dwelling among men and imparting to them of His fullness [Joh.1:12-18]. Found continually in this Gospel are the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit revealed in Jesus Christ as Life, Light, and Love, *"a threefold cord which cannot be broken"* [Ecc.4:12]. It is the key that hangs at the portals and reflects the glory of the Godhead even down to the crown of thorns and the cross of shame.

ADVANCE HERALD

"There was a man sent from God whose name was John. The same came for a witness to bear witness of the light that all men through him might believe. He was not that light but was sent to bear witness of that light, that was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." [Joh.1:6-9]

John (*"gift"*) comes on the scene for the one purpose, to announce the coming of the Greater Gift. He was a marvelous character, unique, austere, pronounced, having an honored place in the Old Testament writings. They were serving the same purpose even as he, witnessing to the promised Messiah, the Seed of the woman, who was ordained to bruise the serpent's head [Gen.3:15]. The Scriptures were pointing in shadow and type to Him who was the One that the Baptist proclaimed, the Substance and Reality of all the figures.

The written Word is not the Living Word. It is not the Light, but a Witness, as John, to the true Light that was coming into the world. The Scriptures were signaling His approach, showing the manner and way of His coming. They made His paths clear and plain, crying in the wilderness, "He is coming. Make way for the Messiah," like as was said by John concerning himself.

In the very first chapter of this Gospel of John, there is a decided suggestion to the 5 books of Moses, as follows:

John 1:1-14 answers to Genesis
John 1:15-28 answers to Exodus
John 1:29-34 answers to Leviticus
John 1:35-42 answers to Numbers
John 1:43-51 answers to Deuteronomy

"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." [Joh.1:14]

The Old Testament declares and was a Voice witnessing of Him, the Center and Circumference of all God's purposes, the Alpha and Omega, Beginning and Ending of all the prophecies and writings of Truth. The characteristic of the real light that is shining, (as seen by John) is not local, but for all men. Like the sun, it cannot simply be held in Judea. John was "A BURNING AND A SHINING LIGHT"; but he was not the full-orbed luminary of the day filling the heavens and the earth with light. This Gospel shows the Light for the world, the latter being one of the prominent

words found here. *"God so loved the world,"* not the Jews only, *"that he gave his Son."* The first rays of the morning sun might touch Zion on the hilltop; but the golden ball of light rises higher and reaches all lands. Christ is for all men. This makes the world responsible to accept or reject the Light. Men cannot be neutral in this matter. The Light finds darkness everywhere which does not yield to the Light. He was in the world that He had created and the world knew Him not. Israel especially, His own people by profession, prepared by centuries of special attention for this very day that was dawning, rejected Him. Yet some received Him. God cannot be defeated. There is always the remnant from among the mass of humanity that accept His grace, receive the Light, and become the sons of God. These are born again, a living work done in them, a work which is absolutely apart from any help from them. It is a birth from heaven *"not of blood,"* the natural birth *"nor of the will of the flesh,"* the person's own will, *"nor the will of men,"* and anyone else's will *"but of God."*

As far as the revelation of Truth is concerned, John's Gospel begins where the other Gospels end. In the book of John, the **cross** is seen as the end of man as regards his righteousness. He is viewed as a hopeless wreck and ruin, as Paul declares in Romans 3:9-18. Therefore, there must not only be a provision made for him, as all the Gospels show, but an actual change made in him, as John teaches. And for this purpose, *"The Word was made flesh and tabernacled among us."* The glory came out from heaven and was seen, *"the glory of the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth"*. The glory was no longer hidden as in the tabernacle in the wilderness; but revealed in fullness. Deity had come to earth to walk around with man and as man.

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

The Law is in contrast with God's grace and His Gift in grace, Christ. It was given through Moses; but grace and truth through Jesus Christ – and only through Him. Grace is not based upon anything that may be found worthy in man, but the opposite. It is shown to him when he has been found without anything in him to call out the mercy of God, when he has been found, not only unworthy, but an enemy. The Law was helpless, because man was beyond help as regards his natural conditions. But thus he was a fit subject for the fullness of grace in Christ. There was an absolute need and Christ was and is sufficient. If there was failure it would be Christ who failed and that we know is impossible. Therefore grace and truth are seen hand in hand. They exist together in Jesus Christ. Truth shows up the need. Grace meets it. They have met together at Calvary and are in fullest harmony at the grave of Christ.

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

Moses could only see the lesser parts of God's grace; but Christ declares the effulgence of His face. He has revealed Him, has shown out what He is; which only the One in the bosom of the Father could declare. He alone knew the Father. He alone can reveal Him.

FIRST PART OF JOHN'S TESTIMONY

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

At this juncture, the last prophet of the Old Testament times is interviewed by representatives of the Sanhedrin. The Jews were in expectation of a change. Some 30 years before, there had been a wave of supernatural signs; rumors of the birth of a King of the Jews. The wise men

from the East declared that they had seen His Star [Mat.3]. The shepherds of the Judean hills affirmed that they had seen the angels and heard their song of His birth [Luk.2]. A few believers knew the time was at hand for Messiah's appearance. There had been no prophecy or open vision for 400 years, no new revelation from God (except what was heard at the birth of John and Jesus [Luk.1-2] when, lo, John was on the scene, trumpeting the news of the coming of the Christ. His message sounded forth in the wilderness; but it was heard in Jerusalem and other places. The people were drawn out to listen and learn of this strange character. John was no hot-house plant, but rather a sturdy oak tree which could not be moved with the rustling of the breezes. He preached repentance as the way of escape from the coming judgments. Many heeded his words and were baptized, acknowledging their sinfulness and need of redemption, thus they were being made ready for Messiah.

The Pharisees were stirred because of the thundering voice of the rugged prophet. They were moved to ascertain his identity and sent priests and Levites to interview him. "*Who art thou?*" is the gist of their questioning. Then follows the testimony of John as to whom he is and what he has come to do. We may divide this portion into 3 parts, namely...

1. John's **Witness** to the committee from Jerusalem [Joh.1:19-28].
2. John's **Further Testimony** to the multitude [Joh.1:29-34].
3. John's **Words** to his disciples [Joh.1:35-36].

1. JOHN'S WITNESS [JOH. 1:19-28]

Furthermore, herein is found a witness to the Baptist's own integrity. He disclaims all honor of being other than he is. He is not Messiah, Elijah, or the other prophet whom they are expecting, probably the One promised like unto Moses, who was Christ [Deu.18:15]. His answers are clear and pointed. He declares that he is a voice, proclaiming the honor and authority of His Lord; therefore, what did it matter who he was? The real Person was on the way. He would soon appear. That deputation from the Pharisees was not impressed. No doubt they imagined the light in his eyes and the exultation in his words simply that of a fanatic. They had misinterpreted the writings of the ages past and here was the audible voice of those oracles which was strange and distant. They recognized no kinship with him; but being strict ritualists, they recognized that according to the canon of law, of which they were the expression, he was out of order.

"And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?" [Joh.1:25]

"*Why baptizest thou then?*" they accuse. It was audacity to impose such baptism upon Israel without orders from the Sanhedrin, or other authority, according to their theology. They refused the ground of Scripture; and questioned his right to put such things over on the people.

But John is not awed by these theologians with their make-believe authority. He has his ordination papers from a higher court. Yes, he baptized, but only with water. "Why make so much of that," he asks, "When there is One standing in their midst unknown and unnoticed by them, so great that he is not worthy to unloose his shoe?" What a tribute to the Master by the only man of whom it is written that he was "*filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb*" [Luk.1:15]. He heard the voice of the mother of the Life-Giver and leaped with joy in the Spirit while yet unborn in the natural [Luk.1:15, 44]. Jesus afterward witnessed of John that he was "*a burning and a shining light*" [Joh.5:35]. "Fire and the Holy Ghost" makes men to be what God ordains, burning, zealous, earnest, living ones, Seraphim and Cherubim.

2. JOHN'S FURTHER TESTIMONY [JOH. 1:29-34]

John had been tested by the temptation to make much of himself and had been found worthy. He was only a voice making way for the Messiah.

"The next day, John seeth Jesus coming unto him and saith, Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me; for He was before me ...And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove and it abode upon him. And I knew him not; but he that sent me to baptize, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining upon him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. I saw and bear record that this is the Son of God." [Joh.1:29-30, 32-34]

The above is the 2nd part of the testimony of the Baptist...It is to the multitude. His witness to the unbelieving priests and Levites *"there standeth One among you whom you know not"* [Joh.1:26] is now rewarded. He gazes upon Him of whom he has spoken. He knew by the Spirit that He was present, now he sees Him. He breaks out with ecstatic joy, *"Behold the Lamb of God."* He is the One I am declaring. He has come. The Lamb of Sacrifice, the Savior of mankind, *"He beareth (taketh) away the sin of the world"*. I told you of Him. He is here; and I, His forerunner, witness for Him. The Spirit resting upon Him is the Sign that He is the One that the Old Testament writings foretold must come, and I beheld the Spirit as a dove coming upon this Man. He has been marked out as the Son of God. These are John's words paraphrased. The broadest foundation upon which anyone may rest is laid. Not Israel, not The Church, not even believers as such are singled out; but men as men, sinners with the consciousness of sin, are given the title here. It is for sinners that the sacrifice was offered. "LOOK AND LIVE" was the essence of John's message to the public. Everyone is welcome and no questions asked. Salvation is free. John pointed men to Jesus. *"I knew Him not,"* he says. I was blind to His glory, even as others; but He was revealed to me and for this sole purpose have I come, to make Him known.

3. JOHN'S WORDS [JOH. 1:35-36]

Now comes the 3rd part of John's testimony to Messiah...he speaks to his disciples and furnishes another proof of his loyalty.

"Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus." [Joh.1:35-37]

Two of his followers left him and went after Jesus. John was not offended. That was as it should be. He was pointing men to Jesus, and they were following Him. He had affirmed that he was not the Messiah, but only His advance agent, even as were the Scriptures which he represented. Two characters are singled out here, Andrew and John, as first to follow the Lamb. They both fill the office of Apostles later; John being the writer of this Gospel. He was able for the great honor; for he was present from the beginning of the earthly ministry of the Son of God. He never questioned His Deity. He had seen Him in action in every conceivable manner and circumstance. John never mentions his own name which is the reason that we conclude that he is one of these disciples.

There is a decided **suggestion of the ages** from the creation of man until the millennium in the exact account of the events of the 6 days detailed in John 1:

1st Day may be assumed [Joh.1:15-18].

2nd Day [Joh.1:19-28].

3rd Day [Joh.1:29-34].

4th Day [Joh.1:35-39].

5th Day [Joh.1:40-42].

6th Day [Joh.1:43-51].

The whole section is a great record of witnessing to the Messiah, the Son of God, the one Object toward which all the believers in all the ages were pointing and looking. It shows the important place of Christian testimony in the Scriptures.

"Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou? He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour."
[Joh.1:38-39]

Jesus sees the 2 disciples following Him (He knows His sheep) and enquires, "*What seek ye?*" He thus made them declare themselves as His disciples. We see this continually in this Gospel. He abhors neutrality. We must be for Him, or we are against Him. He draws His people out to take a stand with Him and for Him. What an honor to abide with Him for the day, even as these two favored ones at that time. They answer His question by asking, "*Rabbi, (Master) where dwellest Thou?*" It was enough. He said, "*Come and see.*"

We are told they obeyed and abode with Him that day "*being the tenth hour.*" This is no haphazard statement. Especially in this case and at this place; every verse is freighted with meaning. Prophetic gleams are shining everywhere. Every step of this ordained Lamb of God upon the shores of time is marked with significance; every circumstance of His life; every certain man, woman, and child and event with which He is connected heralds something coming. Past, present, and future are all covered by the footsteps of the Shekinah Glory from the skies. We are amazed as we follow on and watch Him walk and work. Another day is dawning in the picture—prophetic of another age—signified by these 2 followers of Jesus who find His dwelling place.

"One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone." [Joh.1:40-42]

In the meantime Andrew seeks his brother Simon and reports the glad news, "*We have found the Messiah.*" He brings him to Jesus. This is a record of finding and bringing. Soul-winning is the marked lesson. We find 5 men attaching themselves to the Lamb of God. They are representative men, signifying different groups among the people of God. These all come through the testimony of others. John the Baptist sent 2. Andrew brought Peter. Jesus sought out Phillip, and he in turn tells Nathaniel. All this is most interesting and significant.

Andrew never did a better day's work than when he brought Peter, who later became the leader of the 12 Apostles. At once his name is changed. This incident as recorded in Matthew takes place at a later date; but there it is simply a confirmation of what is given here at the beginning of Peter's discipleship. There are no discrepancies in the inspired Writings. **Simon** ("*the hearer*"), son of **Jonas** ("*a dove*"), becomes **Cephas** or **Peter** ("*a stone*"). In 1 Peter, we are told the full significance of this name. "*To whom coming as unto a Living Stone... ye also as living stones are built up a spiritual house*" [1Pe.2:4-5]. It is thus that we see the heavenly company, the Body of Christ, assuming the full character of the House of God the dwelling place of the Spirit during the present age. In these few disciples gathering around Jesus, we have the further thought of the rejection of the Messiah by the nation of Israel, which is seen from the outset in this Gospel as it is written,

"He came unto his own, but his own received him not, but as many as received Him to them gave he power to become the sons of God" [Joh.1:11].

*"The day following, Jesus would go forth into Galilee and findeth Phillip and saith unto him, follow me."
[Joh.1:43]*

Here is a further stepping of Jesus recorded. Prophecy is hereby signified. **Galilee** ("*Circuit*") refers to the 2nd Coming of Christ. When the circuit has been run, then He will return. He sent word to His disciples to meet Him in Galilee where they saw Him after His resurrection [Mat.28:16-20]. The believing remnant of the end time is represented. Jesus will find (apparently by accident) **Phillip** ("*the lover of the horse*"), who will be longing for His coming. It figures the beginning of the millennium when the White Horse Rider of Revelation 19, will be due. He will come on His racing steed from heaven and then **Nathanael** ("*the given of God*") will come into the picture. It is Phillip who will find "*the given of God*"; for the remnant of those future days will go unto all nations, especially the Jewish nation, and make disciples of them. The Jewish nation is the one figured by Nathaniel. Although Phillip, after his meeting with Jesus, is an enthusiastic and powerful witness, Nathanael is not found easy to convince. "*We have found Him,*" Phillip says. "*Him of whom Moses in the Law and Prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.*" To which Nathaniel answers, "*Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?*" But Jesus shows him that the impossible has happened. A virgin has conceived and born a Son, that "*holy thing*" [Luk.1:35] without spot or blemish, whose boyhood days were spent in that despised little village of Nazareth. Nazareth was of no prestige or renown among the Jews, therefore a most fitting reminder of Him, "*despised and rejected of men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief*" [Isa 53:3]. But men were even as they are today. People are always just people. They expected the Messiah to come from Jerusalem, from Zion, the city of God. But it did not happen so. He was born, lived, and died outside Jerusalem. He came and is always coming from where men least expect Him. Phillip does not attempt to argue the question. "*Come and see,*" he says. Nathanael is persuaded, and Jesus seeing him advancing, says of him: "*Behold an Israelite indeed is whom is no guile.*"

There is great significance in these apparently trivial happenings. Nathaniel is presented by Jesus as an Israelite indeed, a true son of Abraham. He no doubt was in exercise of soul before Phillip found him and it is to this moment that Jesus refers when He says, "*Before Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee*" [Joh.1:48]. Nathaniel is surprised; yea amazed. He cries, "*Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel*" [Joh.1:49]. Oh wonderful revelation! It far exceeds his hopes. But that is not all; for Jesus tells him, he shall see greater things than these, "*Verily, verily I say unto you, Hereafter, ye shall see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man*" [Joh.1:51]. These words identify Nathaniel with the Jewish nation, who will be in great tribulation before the millennium. They will be crying to God, taking shelter under the fig tree, emblem of these ancient people. Jesus will appear to them while they are still in unbelief as to Him being their Messiah, and they will recognize and own His claims immediately. As Son of God, they rejected Him in the religious court; as King of Israel, in Pilate's judgment hall. Therefore, they will acknowledge Him in this 2-fold role when they see Him, and thus come into their own place in His love and favor.

Jesus anticipates that glad day by His double "*Verily, verily*" (found 25 times in this Gospel), and assures of its coming. The Jewish nation, converted to God, will rejoice in His presence under an open heaven. They will behold the Son of David, upon His throne in the glory, attended by the redeemed millions from every nation, kindred, and tongue. They will bask in the sunlight of that glorious scene for the thousand years reign.

Jacob's vision of the ladder [Gen.28:12-13] set up upon the earth, whose top reached to heaven, symbolizes the same scene. He was running away from Esau when he beheld this scene. Jesus appeared above the ladder upon which angels or messengers were ascending and descending.

Nathaniel answers to Jacob who was representative of the nation of Israel, which was not yet in existence. Esau, of whom he was in fear, speaks of the Gentiles of the end time who will be persecuting the Jews when Jesus appears to their help and to destroy their enemies. But these things are all fingerposts pointing to the fulfillment of prophecy. All of these symbols, types, and shadows harmonize and throw upon the screen more vividly and powerfully, the Figure of all figures, the Objective of the ages, the Man of destiny and renown, the Son of God and King of Israel, who will shortly appear and put over His own new deal in His own new way. A change of government is at hand. The Sovereign of the universe will soon appear and take charge.

THE BRIDE AND TEMPLE [JOH.2]

"And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee and the mother of Jesus was there. Both Jesus was called and his disciples to the marriage. And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus said unto him, They have no wine. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come. His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto thee, do it." [Joh.2:1-15]

Herein is recorded an interesting event, a wedding. Fascinating at any stage, it is especially so at this place, and also significant. In our former lesson, we noted that John 2 in connection with John 1 gave us a prophetic introduction to the whole Gospel; and more, a suggestion to the meaning and purpose of the whole of the inspired writings. It corresponds with Genesis 2, where we read of the first wedding and points on forward to Revelation 19 where the last wedding is recorded.

The contrast between the first verses of John 2 and those of John 1 is striking. He who dotted the heavens with glorious glittering globes of light, flinging worlds into space and hanging them on nothing, creating suns and rotating systems of heavenly bodies, the Creator of all things visible and invisible is here viewed as a guest at a wedding. It is instructive to contemplate the condescension evidenced in the stoop of the Son of God from the exalted throne of Deity to the lowly place of humanity.

"A marriage in Cana" carries us back to Eden and to its Divine Institution by the words of Jehovah, "It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make him a help meet for him" [Gen.2:18]. He was created for fellowship, as the fact of language evidences; thereby, he is like unto his Creator. The words "Let us make man after our image" [Gen.1:26] speak of communion. It foreshadowed the union of God with man, as well as the marriage of the Lamb; the great climaxing event and purpose of the ages.

"Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it. When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now." [Joh.2:7-10]

That wedding in Cana would have been dry in more ways than one if Jesus had not been invited. His **presence** brought a blessing even if He did not bring a **present**. As it was, He gave them far more than they expected. He apparently learned from His mother that there was a scarcity of wine, which was a calamity at a Jewish feast; but He was aware of the need. He had come to furnish that wine. It was the reason of His attendance there. Every step of His pathway was ordained of His Father and prophetic of future events.

He gently but firmly let His mother know that He worked on scheduled time. His Father's voice struck the hour; hence He never was ahead or behind the time. His mother was not hurt by His

words. She knew Her Son was a heavenly Man. She said to the servants, "*Whatsoever he saith unto you do it.*" Soon He gave the order for the empty water jars to be filled. The servants obeyed; whereupon He said, "*Draw out now and bear unto the governor of the feast.*" When the governor tasted it, he was satisfied. They were astonished that it was "*the best wine,*" that which was generally given at the beginning of the feast when people were good judges of the quality. For when they were under its influence they could not estimate it's worth a right. But in this case the opposite was done; the best was kept for the end. These words of the governor prove that Jesus gave them real wine not grape juice. The meaning would be lost if such was not so.

A WEDDING ON HIGH

"This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him." [Joh.2:11]

All here is figurative and significant of future facts. It was "*the beginning of miracles,*" we are informed by the historian, which in itself is anticipative of another "beginning." The miraculous millennium will commence with a wedding when the Lamb receives His wife. He will furnish all the wine at the banquet in the heavenlies. His Father, the Governor, will taste of the exhilaration and be ecstatic with delight at the marriage of His Son. His joy will be unbounded as the finishing and furtherance of His plans and purposes are advancing. It will be a gala day in the New Jerusalem.

The **mother of Jesus**, figure of the Old Testament overcomers, the stalwart men of God whose faith gave birth to the nation, as also to Christ, will be there. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses and Aaron, Samuel, David, and Daniel will all be guests at that wedding. There will be a multitude to sit down at the marriage supper of the Lamb, and no scarcity of anything will be found. The provision will be complete. Satisfaction on every line will be manifested. Jesus will then be ready to show Himself in power and glory to the world. The Word made flesh will descend from heaven with His great army and overcome all His enemies [Rev.19-20].

That marriage in Cana anticipated this glorious consummation, as also the change that was even then due in view of Christ's first advent, and pointed on to the greater change that will be manifested when He comes the 2nd Time. The water which was lacking in the 6 firkins of stone, representative of the Old Testament revelation was good but the New Testament revelation, represented by the wine, is better. The refreshment from the one had ceased. The water jars were empty. The symbols failed to satisfy, because the reality was not sensed. The forms of purification in connection with The Law provided no means of blessing to the people; for even the water had been exhausted. But the Son of God on the scene necessarily changes the situation. His presence is full of purpose. He is not there by accident. He has appeared to give life and joy to form and ceremony, reality to religion and ritual, salvation to sacrifice, singing to somberness, to make the symbols of purification actual sanctification in word and in deed.

But the heavenly scene, that glorious banquet, is not all that is figured here. **Israel**, restored and walking with God, will know the wherefore of Jehovah's dealings with them. The veil will fall from their eyes and they will realize and confess that all their religion is hollow formalism and that there is no reality, fervor, or fire in their ceremonies. They will judge their rebellion, self-will, and unbelief, and cry to God for mercy. Oh, what joy shall follow their self-abasement! Words are weak to portray the Divine Intoxication of those happy days. God will again be in covenant relation with Israel, a union that shall never be broken.

The prophets are all in harmony in their predictions concerning those halcyon days. The nation will be born anew and they will indeed drink the best wine, such as no mortal lips have ever tasted. There will be with it no perversion of taste, no evil results, nothing but good. Jesus Christ, the Bridegroom, will drink of this heavenly nectar. The Bride will urge Him on, as we

read, “*Drink, yea drink abundantly, O beloved*” [SSg.5:1] while Judah shall wash his garments in wine and his vesture in the blood of the grape; his eyes shall be red with wine [Gen.49:11-12]. No fear of intemperance then; all will be holiness unto the Lord.

Another word in relation to the outstanding subject of this chapter. In its typical interpretation it takes us down to the consummation of all God’s purposes. It shows us what His first thought was in relation to mankind. Marriage is central in the web of human life. It is the basis of all relationships as instituted by Jehovah. The family (children, father, and mother) has as their foundation the union of the man and the woman. Cities and civilizations depend upon marriage for their continuance; likewise, spiritually. The union of Christ and His Bride is central in the Divine Architect’s design for the universe. All other plans radiate around this important event. Hence, this miracle in Cana, “*the first*,” tells us of Jehovah’s primary ambition, the paramount peak of His desires realized. It declares, in type, the fact that God and man are joined in an eternal embrace, a Divine Fellowship that nothing can sever.

THE CLEANSED TEMPLE

“After this he went down to Capernaum, he and his mother and his brethren and his disciples and they continued there not many days. And the Jews Passover was at hand (the first of the 4 Passovers during His career). Jesus went up to Jerusalem and found in the Temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves and the changers of money sitting. When he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them out of the Temple ... and said unto them, Take these things hence. Make not my Father’s house an house of merchandise. And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.” [Joh.2:12-17]

Herein is an epitome of the great change that is going to take place in all the world when the Son of God, the Lamb foreordained before the foundation of the world to redeem humanity, comes forth after His wedding with power and glory. It is a wonderfully typical forecast. A great multitude of redeemed and glorified humanity, figured by His “*mother, and His brethren and His disciples*,” accompany Him to **Capernaum** (“*city of comfort or consolation*”) which is typical of Canaan. The city of lost opportunities which was cast down to earth, shall regain its place of prestige, and the meaning of its name “*consolation*” will be fulfilled to the uttermost. Afterwards the great feast of the Passover calls Him. It is springtime and house-cleaning is due.

Jesus enters the Temple in Jerusalem and while the feast is in full swing, casts out all the traffickers and merchantmen...The Canaanites. Zechariah features this event as one of those of the millennium [Zec.14:21]. This purging of the Temple is later repeated when Jesus enters the beloved city for the last time before His death when He presents Himself to the Jews as their King [Mat.21:12]. The cleansing in both instances shows Him wielding authority as the destined Ruler of the earth. The ousted traffickers offered no resistance, proving that they were awed by His mien of Divine Right. They feared Him when for a few brief moments He allowed His Deity to be seen. But only for the second was He so: for that was only the type. Later they continued with their buying and selling in the Temple. The same nefarious methods are manifested today in what is called God’s House. Christendom is filled with Canaanites, those who make merchandise of the things of God. The book of Revelation gives us a symbolic summary of the trafficking that is going on at the present time and the judgment which shall surely fall upon the apostate systems, falsely called Christian.

Religious merchants are selling their merchandise of gold, silver, and precious stones. They are trafficking in the most precious things of spiritual life, claiming to deal in heavenly values. Cinnamon, odors, ointments, frankincense, wine, oil, etc., with slaves and souls of men are the things in which they traffic [Rev.18:11-24]. This is no fairy tale, neither imagery, but a true report of a most terrific fact. Christendom will finally culminate in colossal apostasy and God will allow

judgment to come upon her by the hands of those whom she will lift to power. There will be shortly a wholesale cleansing of world affairs when Jesus arises to shake terribly the earth. Then only that will remain which cannot be shaken, that which pertains to the new creation.

"Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But he spake of the temple of his body. When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said." [Joh.2:19-22]

The temple was only cleansed symbolically because the consummation had not yet come. As is plainly evidenced here, the reality awaits the 2nd coming of Christ. The Jews asked Jesus for a sign that He had the authority to which they had in a sense yielded when He whipped them out of His house. His answer was a challenge: *"Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up,"* and it holds a 2-fold significance:

1ST: On the one hand, it referred to His first advent when His body, the Temple of God, should be destroyed by death but in 3 days resurrected; as was fulfilled.

2ND: The second application was to the temple of stone; out of which He had ousted the Jews. That building upon which they doted was doomed to be destroyed (came to pass in 71 A.D.). At a later date, He declared its finish to His disciples (they were showing Him its earthly beauty and grandeur) saying, *"There shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down"* [Mat 24:2].

But the building up of that earthly temple is still in abeyance. It awaits His 2nd Coming for its fulfillment. In this connection, 3 days signify the 3,000 interim years before the temple will be reared again. It need not necessarily be 3 full millenniums, but only a part, even as Christ's body was not cast down 3 full days and nights. Peter declares *"that one day with the Lord is as a thousand years"* [2Pe.3:8].

The Jews saw only the application of these words of Jesus to the building which they loved, and it stirred their anger and scorn. They responded instantly to the challenge with the words, *"Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?"* The ridiculousness of such a statement was all that impressed them. They had not seen any of His miraculous performances yet; but even if they had, they would not have believed in this stupendous undertaking. The fact that He spoke of its casting down, as they understood His words, was an offence to them. They afterwards were used as a witness against Him when He was before the Sanhedrin for trial [Mat.26:61].

The disciples also were impressed with His amazing declaration. The temple was such an object of awe and reverence to the Jewish heart that it was difficult for them to receive His words; but when He was raised from the dead, they saw its fulfillment in His case. *"Then they believed the Scripture"* referring to Christ's resurrection, *"Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt Thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption"* [Psa.16:10]. Peter quoted this witness of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost as proof that the Man that was crucified was the Messiah and that He was risen from the dead as He had said and as was written of Him [Act.2:28]. How marvelous are the inspired writings! How they dovetail and harmonize in every particular.

For 46 years the Jews were occupied in building that stone structure (it was not Solomon's temple that was destroyed at the time of the Babylonian captivity); yet, Jesus' body was raised in 3 days. Man's impotence is here shown in contrast with God's omnipotence. Furthermore, when the due time arrives for the building of the temple, it will probably be built in 3 days. Why

not? Miracles will be happening on every hand in that day; and, nothing is too hard for the Lord. Jesus' body was raised in that short time of 3 days.

"Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man." [Joh.2:23-25]

The memorial that they were celebrating is called the "Jews' Passover" [Joh.2:13]; for that is what it had become. It had ceased to be "the Lord's Passover" [Exo.12:11, 27; Lev.23:5]. People continue to be religious long after the power of Godliness has departed. They will be true to form and ceremony, keeping holy days and staying by their church when all spiritual vigor has waned in their sect and in themselves. However, at times, when the voice of the true prophet is heard or something supernatural and manifestly divine arrests their attention, they are stirred and apparently believe, as at the present instance.

But Jesus was not impressed. He knew that they were not to be trusted. The force of the Greek is "**that they trusted Him; but He did not trust them.**" Why? Because they were interested in what He was doing and not in Him personally; therefore, He had no confidence in their faith. Conditions are very similar at this time. Men, even some real Christians, are more stirred and interested when a revival is on and God is working. When everything is quiet, nothing manifestly doing, they are indifferent and seldom attend the meetings.

God knows such and He does not depend upon what they say when the fire is falling. He is aware that they are the effervescent variety of believers that bubble over for a little while and then are insipid and dead. He wants "stayers"; those who are not moved by dynamics of power but by devotion to His own Person. He trusts Himself and His interests to those who really trust Him. How is it with us? Are we the religious sort of runabouts who are always found at the healing meetings, or revival services, but seldom attend prayer meeting, or Bible study? Is Christ Himself paramount with us or His mighty deeds? Let us enquire. We may be guilty ourselves on this line. Can Jesus trust us or not?

DIV.2, REVELATION OF GOD AS LIFE TO THE WORLD [JOH.3-11]

THE VEIL AND BRAZEN ALTAR [JOH.3]

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

John 3 commences the 2nd division of the Glory Gospel of the Apostle John, which continues down to the close of John 11. **The Man** is herein seen in fellowship, and at the same time in contrast with all other men. He is introduced, isolated, inundated, and finally separated from the majority of men. But at the same time some acknowledge His claim as the Son of God, as is declared in the first part of this division, which we are at present considering. This witness to Him is 3-fold:

- From 3 different sections of Palestine (❶ **Judea**, ❷ **Samaria**, and ❸ **Galilee**) and
- from 3 representative characters (❶ **Nicodemus**, ❷ the **Samaritan woman**, and ❸ the **nobleman from Capernaum**).

Nicodemus was religious and moral, a member of the Sanhedrin, standing for the self-righteous class; the Samaritan woman, the immoral pariah, suggests the irreligious and outcast; the nobleman of Capernaum represents the polished, educated, suave man of the world. All 3 bow at the feet of the Son of God and declare their faith in His Deity. Three avenues of approach to the soul are also herein marked: ❶ Nicodemus through his **mind**; ❷ the Samaritan woman through her **conscience**; and ❸ the nobleman through his **heart**.

THE MUST OF THE NEW BIRTH

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

The interesting narrative at the threshold of the central division of John's Gospel is marvelous in its illumination of God's ways with man. It shows the Divine Oversight to all that is contained herein. There is order and system manifested in its very little detail. Each step which the God-Man takes, each incident in His way, each place and every person found at the appointed site, are all ordained for that very moment. The mighty Creator of all things is again on the scene, once more to manifest His Divine Sovereignty in reconstructing and recreating as He wills. Genesis is being repeated on a spiritual plane. We are told of a new birth.

Nicodemus ("ruler of the populace") is a representative figure. He stands for the Jew. His name is illustrative of his identity in this wise. He is not on the scene by accident. The way of his approach to the Teacher from heaven, under cover of darkness, tells us volumes. It is true that he was apprehensive of the danger from the Jews who had been aroused to anger because of their ousting from the temple [Joh.2:14-15]; hence, he shows caution; but that is not the full significance of that night visit. He is declaring by this fact that the Jew, the outstanding moral man of all times, is living under cover. His sin is hidden. Outwardly he appears to be all that he claims. He is a teacher of others, ruling over them because of his supposed superior sanctity; but God knows the heart. He sees the condition of need in the moral as well as the immoral man. These are both in the same class, alike in nature and character, of the same essence inwardly, as is plainly manifest to Him. Darkness is as light to His gaze. Nothing is covered in His sight: "*but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do*" [Heb.4:13]. Hence, it is to Nicodemus (the Pharisee) that Jesus speaks of the necessity of a new birth. How fitting!

The contrast between Jesus' manner with the ruler of the Jews and the Samaritan woman is striking. To her was the assurance of God's readiness to give if she but requested the living water; while the Pharisee is held off by the abrupt declaration that he must do something which he cannot do. The condition of the heart of each individual addressed determined the different attitudes. The door to the kingdom was closed to Nicodemus, a real seeker, yet open to the woman who was apparently unworthy and indifferent. But God sees not as man sees. The Pharisee, though enquiring, was not yet ready to receive the revelation of grace. He was a doer of religion, teacher of the Mosaic economy, but not really understanding its place or message. He has to be shut up by its demands before he can receive Christ as the Lamb of God. With all his learning he has not yet understood the lost condition of humanity. He is trusting in his own righteousness; therefore he must be stripped of his rags. He must be humbled and brought to the very place of shame where the woman at the well stood, before he can be truly exalted. He must renounce his well-built-up claim upon God, and fall down in nothingness before Him ere he can be lifted up. His fig-leaf covering must be found inadequate.

"Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." [Joh.3:4-6]

Nicodemus is nonplussed. He cannot understand the change in his theology. He had come in all sincerity seeking Jesus for some new revelation, or added condition to fulfill, that would give to him greater complacency, prestige, and assurance of fitness in God's sight. In reality, he wanted to be more pleasing to himself. But Jesus takes him down not only a peg or two but way down (to the dust) by His words, "*Verily, verily I say unto thee, Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.*" Thus the Tabernacle of Witness, God's dwelling-place, is shown as closed to man. **The Veil** of the tabernacle is figured here because it barred the way to God's presence. Even the best, the most moral and religious man, cannot enter there unless God intervenes. Here is an enigma to the Pharisee. He only sees the natural; therefore, he is confounded. He enquires, "How can such a thing take place?" Jesus answers by reiterating that which he had previously affirmed, with some explanations. "*Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God*"; then, He adds, "*That which is born of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*"

He shows the need of the new birth, also that it is a spiritual and not a natural experience. A positive distinction is herein made between the two creations by this first reference to the same. Flesh is always flesh; it cannot even be Spirit, regardless of cultivation or culture. As it is born...so it will be. Likewise is the case in the spiritual birth; it cannot be flesh. What it is born...so it is. No mixture of the two, flesh and Spirit, is allowed by these words of the Teacher, who is admitted by Nicodemus to be "*from God.*" **The flesh** is not a new element of personality as someone has said; but man as fallen. He has become flesh, ruled over by his bodily appetites and inclinations; while the **SPIRIT** expresses the new man (all that he is) as born again. "*Water*" as used here by Jesus, refers to the Word of God which Peter calls "*the incorruptible seed*" [1Pe.1:23]. This in combination with the Spirit of God brings to pass the supernatural new birth.

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

Though not in these same words, Ezekiel spoke of the spiritual birth in his prophecy where he describes the Divine Preparation of Israel for the Kingdom of God: "*Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you. I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh and I will give you a heart of flesh*" [Eze.36:25-26]. The prophet is dwelling upon the product, or result of the new birth, while Jesus dwells upon the birth itself. Nicodemus, though a teacher in Israel, had never understood the significance of Ezekiel's words. It was a marvelous revelation to him, a religious leader, that such a moral person as himself and those of his own race, the Jews, needed a new birth. Furthermore, that they could not effect this change themselves but were dependent upon the Spirit of God, as Jesus' words emphatically proclaimed: "*The wind bloweth where it listeth and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh nor whither it goeth; so is everyone that is born of the Spirit.*" Invisible and uncontrollable as the wind, are the Spirit's operations, and just as real and powerful, showing plainly the effects of His presence.

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

Jesus' bewilderment is great. It is His turn to marvel, that Nicodemus does not know these things. A teacher not understanding his textbook, is an anomaly; but there are many of this character in our day. Many churches have such teachers, claiming to be of God and ignorant of the first principles of salvation. But Jesus knew His Book and His God; He declares as much.

"We speak that we do know and testify that we have seen and ye receive our testimony. If I have told you earthly things and you believe not, how shall you believe if I tell you of heavenly things? And no man hath

ascended up to heaven but He that hath come down from heaven; even the Son of Man which is in heaven."
[Joh.3:11-13]

He was the true witness, the competent witness of the things of which He was speaking. He could speak of the new birth; of its necessity and the manner of its working. The fact of its absolute **Must** had brought Him on the scene. He had come down from heaven to lay the foundation for a spiritual creation. His Father had prepared Him a body in which He could die [Heb.10:5], and thus make way for the new man to come out of death into life. He was the explanation of the why of the veil of the Tabernacle. But it was a heavenly Man; for by the mystery of His nature He was still in heaven. The Divine Human Personality comes out distinctly here; and that is not all. He says that He will ascend up again from whence He came. Earth cannot hold Him long. Heaven is His sphere.

THE MUST OF THE CROSS

"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." [Joh.3:14-15]

Jesus Himself gives us the first mention of the cross, though not in those exact words, but the meaning of the same. Its full character is in view, as being the direct edict of God. Men, by evil hands, may crucify the Son of Man, as they did [Act.2:23]; but that would not allay the wrath of God. It was the "*lifting up*" of Him in Divine Order, the token of wrath endured, that satisfied the justice of God. It had been written, "*He that hangeth upon a tree is accursed of God*" [Deu.21:23]. Now Jesus likens His own hanging on the cross to Moses' lifting up the serpent in the wilderness [Num.21:9]. The lifting up of the serpent was the typical remedy for the serpent's bite to everyone who looked on it in faith. Likewise, with the sinner today one look of faith to the Christ, who was made sin for mankind on the cross, brings salvation from sin. The effects of sin are nullified. God is satisfied and glorified. Satan is defied by the lifting up of Christ "*in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin*" [Rom 8:3]; that is, as being accursed, a sin-offering. Christ put away sin (that which brings condemnation to the sinner); therefore, the believer is justified by faith. The penalty of sin has been borne; for the sinner who believes on Jesus there is no perdition, no eternal doom.

Having eternal life goes far beyond the removal of death. It connects with the words of Jesus that pertain to the spiritual birth. Of necessity, the possession of Divine Life implies eternal life. "*That which is born of the Spirit is spirit*"...it is eternal. It has its source in God who had no beginning and can have no end. The death of Christ on the cross is the basis of this priceless gift (eternal life) to men, which is assured to them at the moment they believe on Jesus. God is back of all this marvelous grace, as Jesus goes on to say.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."
[Joh.3:16-18]

Here is the heart of the matter, the moving cause of every blessing to mankind through the cross: **God Loved**. For whom was this love? The Jew? The good? The elect? No. But for the world of wrecked humanity, sinners, and enemies of God; as it was and is, the measure of the love is infinite. It is beyond all estimation or computation. He so loved that He gave His Son, **His Only Son**, that **whosoever**, anywhere or any time, believes shall have eternal life. No conditions are attached to this free offer on God's part. The Gospel is here seen in its vastness and beauty. Grace on God's part was manifested toward man in its fullest extent in the Gift of His Son. To

accept the Son is to have life; but on the other hand to reject Him is fraught with gravest import. It is fatal to even be indifferent to God's Son. No man can be neutral in the matter. Here are the words of the Son. It is believe or perish, judgment or blessing, damnation or life, eternal happiness or eternal woe. There are 2 sides and no middle ground between.

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

The Light has come into the world in the Person of Christ and light makes everything manifest. But that is the rub. Men do not desire manifestation when their deeds are evil. They love darkness and desire to revel in sin and iniquity. The darkness conceals them and their evil doings; therefore, they wish to remain hidden. By turning from the light they are showing that it bears witness to their consciences; they are refusing its witness. The one, who desires the truth, comes to the light and lets it shine upon him and in him and manifests the fact that his deeds are wrought in God. These words of Jesus [Joh.3:1-21] were all spoken to Nicodemus. There is no mention of the end of his night visit.

- His **Desire** for Him is shown in John 3,
- his **Defense** of Him in John 7, and
- his **Devotion** to Him in John 19.

In Christ's night school, he learned that although he was a ruler, he needed a ransom, even as other men. He came to Jesus ignorant of his need; but he went away enlightened. The light had not shown upon him in vain. He found that he was not a subject of the Kingdom of God, because he had not received the certificate of eligibility...the new birth. Later this lack was remedied. He became a follower of Jesus, the King, and a subject of the Kingdom.

THE END OF A GREAT TESTIMONY

"After these things, came Jesus and His disciples into the land of Judea, and there He tarried with them and baptized. And John also was baptizing." [Joh.3:22]

John closed his career even as he began...as a loyal servant. How often there is a change in people. They commence in wholehearted surrender to God but end far otherwise. It is comforting and refreshing to find faithful followers. At the time referred to here, the disciples of John and Jesus were both baptizing which led the Jews to start a controversy. So many people are good at that. They love argument and disputes and are ready to take sides. But John soon silenced the dispute about Jesus and himself. He was no rival of the Son of God. Never had he desired any honor for himself. Again we are impressed with his unselfish service. We might learn much from his example.

"A man can receive nothing except it be given him from above. Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ but that I am sent before him. He that hath the bride is the Bridegroom; but the friend of the Bridegroom which standeth and heareth him rejoiceth greatly because of the Bridegroom's voice. This my joy is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease." [Joh.3:27-30]

Here is the testimony of an overcomer. There is abiding contentment to the one that is satisfied with the will of God. Let things go as they may. Then the peace of God will garrison the citadel and keep the mind and heart. God still rules over all.

John's business was to introduce the Bridegroom. That being done, his work was finished. He had heard His voice therefore his joy was fulfilled. He was going on now. He did not know what lay before him; but he would be satisfied that the Bridegroom was on the scene. The friend

could now depart. What renunciation in his words! What victory over the old creation in the testimony of this man of whom it is written that he was filled with the Spirit from his mother's womb. He laid down the trowel and the spade. His work was done. He had said he was only a voice, proclaiming the coming of the Messiah, and now he declares the triumph of that One, saying, "*He must increase; but I must decrease.*" A noble finish to a noble life!

John's history appears to end disastrously. He was beheaded in prison because of the hatred of an evil woman [Mat.14]. He had very little success as the world judges; but rather the opposite. Men would call him a failure; but according to Bible ethics selfish success is defeat. He magnified Christ. That is the sole purpose for which he was on the scene. He knew it and entered into his work wholeheartedly. He did the will of God and that is victory...that is success. He will reap an abundant reward. No man can do more. He was happy in his appointed ministry and was loyal to God and His Son. May we all covet such devotion to the Person of the Bridegroom and glorify Him at any and all cost. The end of such a man, regardless of what appears, is **Peace**.

"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."
[Joh.3:31-33]

John is still proclaiming the worth of Jesus. He is witnessing of His heavenly character. The 2 creations are in view, as well as the 2 dispensations. Jesus represented one; while John was the figure of the other. The one is heavenly and endures forever; the other is earthly and but a pattern, which gives way to the substance even as John was giving way to Jesus. John insists that Jesus is the expression of the heavenly life and that He speaks of what he hath seen and heard; but that His testimony is not received. But some do acknowledge Him, for he adds, "*He that hath received his testimony, he 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. 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."
[Joh.3:34-36]

Note that **The Word of God** speaks the "*words of God*" and men are responsible to consider them and Him. It is surely too bad for that man that refuses the claims of Jesus Christ. He was the Image of the Invisible God. All that Deity expressed, He manifested. The Spirit was not given to Him in a portion, but the fullness was bestowed upon Him.

"*The Father loveth the Son and hath given all things into His hand*" is further testimony to Him. He is supreme. We cannot value Him too much. His words declare the Father, who is revealed in the Son. As John's last words indicate, faith in Him is an absolute necessity. He that does not acknowledge the Son or "*is not subject to Him*," as some translate, and "*shall not see life but the wrath of God abideth on him*." It is eternal life, as given by the Son, or no life. It is eternal life or eternal wrath. These are the 2 alternatives. God has invested His Son with all honor, power, and authority. He has been manifested to reveal the Father and there is no way of getting that revelation otherwise. It is either Him or death. John sends his disciples to Jesus as the One all sufficient and essential for every man. The Tabernacle in the wilderness, with all its furniture, is answered in every particular in the Person of Christ. He was the dwelling place of Deity upon the earth. In John 3, we view Him as the Antitype of the Veil and the Brazen Altar.

FATHER TIME CONQUERED

AH, NO! THESE CHRISTIANS NE’ER GROW FAINT, NOR OLD,
THEY HAVE THE SMILE OF SAINTS WHOSE HEARTS ARE BOLD.
THEY DO NOT SIT AND SIGH IN IDLE TEARS
BECAUSE THEIR YOUTH IS PAST THESE MANY YEARS.

THEY DO NOT FEAR OLD AGE WITH ITS DEFEAT,
BUT LAUGH IN SCORN AT ALL WHO DARE COMPETE
AND BOAST THAT THEY ARE YOUNG AND IN THEIR PRIME.
THEY COUNT NOT YEARS BY DAYS, HOAR HEADS, NOR TIME.

THEY DO NOT FAINT, OR WEARY GROW AND SAY,
I CANNOT WORK LIKE ON THE YESTERDAY.
THEY DO NOT PATTERN AFTER EARTHLY MOULD,
NOR GRIEVE THAT THEY HAVE COME TO YEARS CALLED “OLD”.

THEY WAIT UPON THE LORD AND STRENGTH RENEW.
MOUNT UP ON WINGS, REFRESHED WITH HEAVEN’S DEW.
THO’ YOUTH HAS GONE — ITS LOVELY LILTING RHYME —
THEY KNOW THAT CHRIST HAS CONQUERED FATHER TIME.

THE PERFECT SAVIOR [JOH.4]

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

Here we have one of the **Must**’s of John. This is the Gospel of the Son of God and declares the absolute necessity of His stoop to earth, and later to the death of the cross. There was no other way to the redemption of humanity. At the outset of the John’s Gospel, men are seen as flesh and needing a new birth. The reports of the previous Gospels have shown man at enmity with God, being tested by the presence of God in their midst. He is found dead Godward. Christ has come as Eternal Life and Light and Love to communicate of Himself to all who will receive.

- He **Must** come and He **Must** be lifted up; for men **Must** be born again.
- The new creation **Must** increase and the old creation **Must** decrease.
- And now we read, He **Must** go through Samaria on His way to Galilee.

The necessity was partly geographic; but predominantly spiritual. Men everywhere need Him and He is for all men. Jew and Gentile; bond and free; black, white, red, and yellow men; all must be born again before they can enter the Kingdom of God. There was another route from Judea to Galilee; but Jesus took the one that led through Samaria, as His Father ordered; for though He was Lord, as John rightly calls Him, yet as Man He obeyed the Father’s voice.

The rumor that He baptized is corrected. The Master does not perform the porter’s task [Joh.4:20]. It is a crisis time for the world. The Creator is present and walking around, doing good in the midst of evil. His presence in Samaria is significant; for in spite of the woman’s claim to “*our father Jacob*,” Samaria is really Gentile, though with a mixture of Jewish blood, which mixture was worse than valueless. Mixed marriages were forbidden by the Mosaic Economy.

Samaria (“*conservative*” or “*watch-height*”), was the name of a portion of the land of the 10 tribes; it is also the name of the capital city. When Rehoboam, son of Solomon became ruler of Israel, he was somewhat undecided as to the course that he should pursue...we would say

as to grace or law. He consulted with the old men and then with the young men, whose advice was diametrically opposed to each other. The one, the elders said, *"If thou wilt be a servant unto this people and serve them and answer them and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants forever"* [1Kg.12:7]. The younger men, who had grown up with him and had no experience of the solemn obligations of a king, advised a different course. They said, *"Thus shalt thou speak to this people ... My father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to thy yoke. My father did chastise you with whips but I will chastise you with scorpions"* [1Kg.12:10-11]. He took counsel of the young men; thus the kingdom was divided, a rupture which was never healed. The 10 tribes seceded. They made Jeroboam king (one who had no legal or natural right whatever), and he built up Samaria and made that city his headquarters; while the 2 tribes, Judah and Benjamin, stayed by Jerusalem and Rehoboam, the Davidic line.

Afterward, because of Israel's departure in heart from God, He allowed Shalmanezzer, king of Assyria, to come up against their cities and take them captive. Then he brought back his people and placed them in Israel's land. Thus, Samaria became a place of a mixed multitude and, while priests and Levites were left among them to teach them of the true and living God, they were not converted but *"made gods of their own and put them in the high places"* [2Kg.17:29]. It was to that field Jesus journeyed and there found more receptive hearts than in Judea or Galilee. A man is not a prophet among his own people, or in his own city.

"Then cometh he to a city of Samaria called Sychar, near to the piece of land that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus at the well. It was about the sixth hour. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat)." [Joh.4:5-8]

Herein is recorded one of the most interesting narratives in the Gospel. It gives us a striking glimpse of the human side of the Son of God: also a superb summary of His manner of dealing with souls. The great underlying principle is that He sought a point of common interest with the woman. He did not blurt out the truth immediately. He led up to the goal gradually. *"He that winneth souls is wise,"* [Pro.11:30]. But He did not always work in this manner. He was led absolutely by the Spirit in His words, ways, and deeds. Each approach was to lead to a successful campaign.

That Samaritan woman of Sychar was chosen as a future messenger to a city and was being prepared by God's present policy. Let all men who refuse woman's ministry, mark this case. Jesus calls and ordains her for service. "Such an unfit messenger," nice people would say. But this is not an exceptional method with Him:

- He took Rahab the harlot out of Jericho.
- He took the beggar from the dung pile to find a seat among the princes.
- The publicans and sinners habitually followed Jesus in His earthly sojourn.

But here was one not following but actually sought out; a weary, jaded, conscious-stricken outcast. She was awakened, saved, and given a new life with new hopes; a new beginning loomed before her tired eyes. Oh how wonderful! How many other souls have been touched and taken out of the hand of Satan through this account; only eternity can tell! Jesus withdraws from the self-righteous legalism of the Pharisee to reach this woman. He comes to sow a new field with the word of Life. He had previously been reaping of John's testimony; but now the Baptist's voice is hushed. He was in prison. His race is run; his ministry is over. He had pointed out the Chief Shepherd and all eyes are now turned toward Him and all expectation from Him...His Father willed it so. All things are summed up in His Beloved Son. Thus He comes to

the well, His back, as it were, toward Jerusalem, and His face toward Galilee, the place where, figuratively at least, He will meet the restored remnant of Israel in the latter days [Mat.28:16-20].

“*The two days*” testimony in Samaria is most suggestive of the present interval of grace, The Church Age, when the mixed multitude, Israel among the Gentiles, come into the picture. All the steps of this “*good man are ordered of the Lord*” [Psa.37:23] and are in harmony with dispensational Truth. Therefore, we find Jesus at **Sychar** (“*purchased*”) which derived its name from the piece of ground purchased from Hamar by Jacob and given to Joseph, who was buried there. But all that he purchased and could give to his best-loved son was a grave (though he meant it otherwise). This place was most suited to speak of another purchase which would not end in sorrow nor death, but carried life and immortality in its giving. Therefore, we are taught that Jacob’s well was an instructive type of Christ’s salvation as well as a contrast thereto.

“Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, how is it that thou being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? (for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans). Jesus answered ... If thou knewest the gift of God and who it is that saith unto thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him and he would have given thee living water. The woman saith unto Him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with and the well is deep; from whence then hast thou this living water? Art thou greater than our father Jacob which gave us the well and drank thereof himself and his children and his cattle? Jesus answered, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again; but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” [Joh.4:9-14]

Here we have 7 stages in the capture of man’s soul:

1. **PREPARATION** [Joh.4:1-6]
2. **APPROACH** [Joh.4:7-14]
3. **ASSAULT** [Joh.4:15-18]
4. **ADVANCE** [Joh.4:19-24]
5. **CAPTURE** [Joh.4:25-26]
6. **CONQUEST** [Joh.4:27-30]
7. **CONSEQUENCES** [Joh.4:31-42]

We have already noted the **PREPARATION** for the storming of the citadel. Now we will mark the **APPROACH**. It is gradual and different from the manner Jesus used in the case of Nicodemus. Nicodemus was overtaken through head-gate, the Samaritan woman through heart-gate. “*Thirst*” and “*water*” are the points of contact. Why did Jesus ask an adulteress for a drink? The natural inference is that He was thirsty; the spiritual reason and answer are that He wanted to give her a drink of living water. He is always on the watch for such people. Observe that there are **2 WELLS** and **a BUCKET** found in this narrative; also **3 GIFTS**. John 4:14 proves this latter statement. Jesus Himself was the **①** gift of God; He asked a **②** gift of the woman...a drink, and lastly He gave her the **③** gift of “*living water*”, namely salvation.

Mark how naturally the conversation opens up between these 2 characters so widely opposed in several ways, but alike in others. **1ST , HE WAS ALONE AND SO WAS SHE**. He, because of His sinless holy character and holy life, was separated from all other men; even those creatures that He had come to save. She too was separated from all others but for another reason. Her sin was the cause of her isolation. She was alone because she was what the world terms **a fallen woman**; but in God’s sight she was no more fallen than those who turned away from her. It is written, “*All have sinned and come short of the glory of God*” [Rom 3:23]. Her sin was more manifest; therefore, those of a moral character and reputation would not associate with her, though in reality and nature they were the same. Jesus understood her lonely, dissatisfied condition. He saw her heart crying out for satisfaction, as she drank of every well of earth to quench her thirst without success. He had come to satisfy that lonely, longing heart. He was lonely too in a world

of people. These 2 met by a well, representative of the foundation of life which He, the Life-Giver, was waiting to bestow.

There was a **2ND POINT OF SIMILARITY** between Jesus and the woman: **THEY WERE BOTH WEARY** but from different causes. He had come a long journey to Samaria (46 miles from Jerusalem) and the Son of God had no modern conveyance such as you and I have, not even an old Model T, or wagon, or horse. What a rebuke to the luxurious manner of living of so many people today. They must have a car to take them to meeting or they will not attend; but Jesus, the Creator of the universe went on foot; Jesus did not even have a donkey on which to ride. We would think that God did not care very much for His Son or He would have provided an easier way for Him to get around. But here we learn that the Father did not save His Son from the hard things of life. Jesus was *"in all points tempted like as we are"* [Heb.4:15]; therefore, He can enter into our sorrows and sympathize with us in our trials and hardships. However, on this occasion He was tired and sat down by the well and behold a woman came to get water. She too was tired; not because she had come far but because of the dreary, burdened life she lived. Disappointment and boredom were written upon her face and Jesus knew how weary she was of life. He had come that way to meet her and lift her burden forever. What a blessed day for her! She had long ago come to the end of the rainbow and it had yielded no pot of gold to her; but here, at last, was the treasure she sought.

The **3RD SIMILAR POINT** in their experience was: **THEY WERE BOTH HUNGRY AND THIRSTY**; but in far different respects. His hunger and thirst were physical. His disciples had gone to buy meat, while he rested and waited for them, which order was all in the will of God. But He was consumed with another hunger also. He was seeking fruit from man, something from the creature that He had made to satisfy His heart of love. But the fig tree as well as all the other trees yielded Him no fruit. They were clothed with leaves (profession), even as Adam and Eve after they had sinned, but nothing more [Mat.11:18-20]. Jesus must die and be raised from the dead before there can be any fruit for the Creator. Only the new creation born from above can yield anything that will satisfy the holy nature of the triune God. Nevertheless Jesus came seeking fruit. The woman was hungry and thirsty also. Only Jesus realized how desperate her need was. He fathomed all the depths of her being which was crying out for satisfaction. She might not have been hungry physically (though probably thirsty for she came to draw water); but her soul was desperately hungry. Here we are shown spiritual strategy. **Thirst** and **Water** are the points of contact. Jesus asks the woman for a drink. He was thirsty; but He knew she was thirsty also. He wanted to give her a drink. It was *"the sixth hour"* (12 noon). The woman came at this time to avoid meeting anyone. The women generally came to get water early in the morning or late at night. She wanted to avoid the crowd and was surprised to find Jesus, a Jew, at the well. All things, time, places, and circumstances are ready for the great denouement.

Notice how the drama proceeds. *"How is it that thou a Jew askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria?"* His reply is enigmatical, *"If thou hadst known,"* He says. Ah, how different things would have been if we had thought and said and done what we would have, if we had known. The woman is interested when Jesus tells her that He has a drink for her; but she is puzzled. She can only understand this in the natural and answers accordingly. *"Thou hast nothing to draw with."* But she was mistaken. He has the infinite resources of God's salvation in store and the infinite resources of His faith to draw upon it. True, the well is deep; no man has yet plumbed the depths of salvation.

Then she attempts a theological discussion; she enquires, *"Art thou greater than our father Jacob?"* Have you a greater well than he to give us? He and his children drank of this well. She was saying, "It was good enough for them and it is good enough for me". We can almost hear the moderns speaking: "My family was Methodists and I will never be anything else," etc. Or, "My mother was a Baptist, or Lutheran, or Catholic," as the case may be, "and she was a good

woman. Her church is my choice,” and other like statements. But Jesus shut the Samaritan woman’s mouth, temporarily at least, by His **Assault**. The moment had come for the raid upon her conscience.

He declares, that the water which she had come to draw did not allay her thirst and that she must come again and again to draw. She was well aware of this fact, but He goes further. He tells her of a supernatural well and water which would satisfy her spiritual thirst. The spiritual thirst was far greater than the physical and it needed no effort on man’s part to get it. He gave it freely to all that thirsted.

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

Ah, now He has her attention. This was some well that He was telling about and she wanted that water. “*Sir, give me this water*,” she cried. Now she is ready for the awakening words. She had admitted her desire for life and satisfaction.

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

“Go” and “come” were the gist of His reply. He was not sending her away, as the sequel proves. When she told Him the truth, “*I have no husband*,” she was admitting her guilt; Jesus lets her know that He knew that and more. He knew the very worst about her. Here is what is so great and glorious. There is nothing hidden from the sight of God and we are glad that it is so. Everything is brought out and shown up in His presence and then it is put away forever. He never tells us about it anymore. Jesus reveals to the woman that He knows that she has had 5 husbands, and the present man with whom she is living is not her husband. By her reply, “*Sir I perceive thou art a prophet*,” she is saying that He has told the truth; but she attempts to dodge the issue. She wants to start an argument; but the sword has found lodgment.

Mark the growth of her realization of the identity of Jesus. First he is “*a Jew*”, then “*Sir*,” afterwards she calls Him a “*Prophet*” and at last He is “*the Christ*.” But at the same time when Jesus gets right down to the matter of her sin, she endeavors to turn the conversation into another channel.

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

Jesus refuses to argue with her about the matter of religion, or any other topic. But He lets her know that there has been a right way and a right place to worship. Thereupon Jesus reveals a secret to her which He has not yet told His Apostles and friends.

“Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye (Samaritans) worship ye know not what: we (Jews) know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” [Joh.4:21-24]

God had for a time been worshiped in outward form and ceremony, but that age was past. A change was due, a new dispensation was dawning, a different manner and place for the manifestation and worship of God in the earth was His purpose, and a fallen woman of despised Samaria gets the first hint of the news. God delights to blow upon the pride and self-righteous presumption of man; therefore, He reveals Himself and His plans to the poor and contrite.

"The woman saith unto him, I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he. And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her?" [Joh.4:25-28]

The citadel is captured and surrenders. The woman is not only convicted but convinced, converted and comforted. The conversation ends; the goal is reached. The woman says, *"I know that Messiah cometh ... when He is come, He will tell us all things."* Jesus answered, *"I that speak unto thee Am He."* The woman had been revealed to her own self, and now the Christ, the Savior of sinners is revealed to her heart. She was thirsty therefore she gets the well of water. That is always the way. It is only the sick that need the physician.

Immediately, *"the disciples came and marveled that He talked with the woman; but no one said, Why talkest Thou?"* Observe that those companions of Jesus did not question Him in the least. Today, they would presumptuously criticize and speak to Him about His action in having a chat with a fallen woman. They would have, no doubt, enquired as to whether He should avoid the appearance of evil and live above reproach? They would ask among themselves, "What did He have in common with such a woman?" Today, many would insist that we live more sanctified than did Jesus. The impudence of some young people on this line is appalling. They have no sense of reverence for age, wisdom, or saintliness. They themselves are the court of appeal. Of what they do not approve, no one else should. "We are the people; wisdom will die with us," is their secret opinion of themselves. They are so wise in their own conceit. But they will learn if they give God a chance at their lives. He will take them by the hand and lead them down into the dim valley of silence where the weeping willows grow. We are assured that He will teach His children and "pluck His own geese," as we have heard said.

A young fellow was giving instruction to an aged farmer about the advantage of holding up his head with the best of the world. He said, "Don't be so humble and let people run over you." The farmer who was as ripe in experience as the wheat which he grew, answered, "Ah, my boy, tis the empty heads which stand up so straight. The full heads bend over with the weight of what is in them."

"The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" [Joh.4:29]

The woman left at once. She forgot her water bucket in the consciousness of the great honor and privilege which was conferred upon her. She was filled with the water of life and could not keep the good news to herself. She had seen and talked with the Messiah. She must tell others. She cannot be bothered about that bucket, or the water which she had come to draw. She has forgotten her natural thirst because of the deeper need of her soul being met. The shame of her guilt has gone. She is no longer a sinner; for the Christ has looked upon her in love and forgiveness. He has made her to live. She is refreshed and comforted with her well of salvation and she wants others to share in her blessing.

Observe that this woman was the first messenger to the white fields of Samaria. Jesus called and ordained her for this service. Those who object to woman's service and think that she should have a man over her would do well to meditate upon this occurrence here. They might learn to leave hands off God-appointed and God-anointed women and let them obey God as they are led in spheres of service. The more we think upon this story the more we are impressed with its varied lessons for us. This woman led a whole city, we might say, to Christ. According to Christ's own words, a woman with a bad reputation, and deservedly so, is used of Him to gather this great host into the Kingdom rather than those nice proper men that were with Him.

There is food for reflection here. If any man hath ears let him hear, “*The meek will He guide in judgment; and the meek will He teach His way*” [Psa.25:9].

“In the meanwhile, His disciples prayed him saying, Master, eat. And he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of. Therefore his disciples said, one to another, hath any man brought him ought to eat? Jesus said, my meat is to do the will of him that sent me and to finish his work.” [Joh.4:31-34]

Jesus had forgotten His natural hunger in the joy of supplying the water of life to the thirsty, fainting soul of the Samaritan woman. She forgot her thirst in the satisfaction she found in her well; and He forgot His thirst in meeting her need. Reciprocity was in evidence. The last point of the outline of John 4 is before us. The **Consequences** of the **Capture** of the soul of the woman are seen in that which follows. She becomes a living witness to others. Her well of salvation is overflowing and the parched soil of other souls is getting the benefit.

In the meantime, the disciples are perplexed that Jesus does not appear hungry. They beseech Him to eat because they are aware how many hours have elapsed since He had taken any food. His answer proved that He was spiritually filled by filling others. Furthermore, even His physical appetite was appeased by His service to the woman. He was more interested in a soul than a supper and would rather do than dine. To obey the will of God was nourishment to Him; to finish His work was food.

“Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.” [Joh.4:35-38]

Jesus speaks to them of the white fields ready for the spiritual harvest; for they too are called to work. The Divine Director has marked out a path and a program for each of those disciples. There is a harvest waiting to be reaped and they are to share with others of like faith who have gone before. There is a result to all our labors, whether we see it or not. Those who come after us may have the joy of reaping what we have sown, even as we may be getting a harvest from others' toil. We are today privileged in a marked degree because of those worthies of faith who have passed on before. Some people of this present age, as well as those of the past, suffered and died for the sake of Jesus and the Truth. The seed which they had sown was watered with their blood. Let us not forget that we today are reaping of their sacrifice.

Likewise is the case of those early disciples. Prophets and faithful Jews labored before them for their love to God and the Scriptures, and they entered into the results thereof. Even though Israel, as a nation, rejects Him, yet the work of spiritual laborers will continue and be rewarded. Jesus assures that sowing the seed will surely bring forth fruit. He sees the great harvest of souls from among the Gentiles during this age and His soul is refreshed and filled with strength and comfort. The fields of Judea may be tardy in showing signs of fruit; but that too shall come in due time. Not one saying of God will return void but will accomplish that whereunto He sends it.

The Samaritans are moved by the words of the messenger and come out of the city to see Jesus. The stream of blessing is flowing. Then 2 days of faithful testimony follow, figurative of the present age. The people beseech the Weller-Forth of Water to stay with them after they see and hear Him. They own Him, not only Israel's Savior, but as “*the Savior of the whole world.*”

“After two days, he departed thence and went into Galilee; for Jesus himself testified that a prophet had no honor in his own country.” [Joh.4:43-44]

Jesus must go on. His mercies and blessings cannot be confined to one place or to one people. After this age of fruitfulness, when the Gentile harvest (the white fields of the world) has been gathered home; Jesus will again show Himself to His ancient people, the Jews, beloved for the Fathers' sake. Previously, we have noted the fact that before His death Jesus promised to meet the believing remnant of His people in Galilee. This promise was fulfilled [Mat.26:32 and Mat.28:10, 20]; but later, it will be fulfilled in a far greater measure. Nevertheless, while the record of His doings were prophetic, it is true that He was more appreciated among strangers than among His own people. The same may be said of His faithful followers today. The world and saints of other places esteem them more highly than their own friends and family. Many preachers are more popular in other pulpits than in their own. This reason is found not infrequently, that their own people come to hear them without enthusiasm, or expectation; hence, do not give them the encouragement they receive from strangers. Often the home people praise the visiting preachers and comment on their sermons which do not compare with those that they receive from their own preachers continually. Yet they never commend their own preacher and many times give their money to the visitors. There is an adage that says, **"IT IS A SHAME TO SUPPORT A STRANGER AND STARVE A SON."** Another says, **"DON'T KILL THE GOOSE THAT LAYS THE GOLDEN EGG."**

"So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman (courtier or ruler), whose son was sick at Capernaum. When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judaea into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come down, and heal his son: for he was at the point of death." [Joh.4:46-47]

This nobleman asked Jesus to come and heal his son who was dying. Here we see a prophetic figure of the remnant of the end time. Ennobled by faith, they will come and beseech God to undertake for the young life that is found in their midst. It will be at the point to die because of the Tribulation that will be stalking over the land. It appears from the type that God will let them pray again and again; but they will not let Him go until finally He is constrained to act for them. Jesus declares that the nobleman *"will not believe except he sees signs and wonders"* [Joh.4:48], but the man refuses to be rebuffed. He cries, *"Sir, come down ere my son dies"* [Joh.4:49]; Jesus is constrained by his importunity.

"Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way. And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told him, saying, Thy son liveth. Then enquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him. So the father knew that it was at the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole house." [Joh.4:50-53]

Jesus says, *"Go thy way, thy son liveth."* The man believes, departs, and finds it is as Jesus had said. Thus the Jews of the latter days will find deliverance from death by the appearance of Jesus; and **Capernaum** (*"city of comfort"*), the city of neglected opportunities, which was brought down to Hades for its rejection of Christ [Mat.11:23], shall come into realization of its true name...a city of comfort. At *"the seventh hour"*, the fever leaves the boy which is truly refreshing in its significance. The fever of unrest and unreality will leave God's ancient people forever when Jesus comes to Cana (*"the purchased"* place). That is, on the basis of His blood, the price of redemption, He will deliver and bless Israel forever.

Cana is marked out emphatically as the city where His first miracle, as well as the second was wrought. The wedding furnished with wine and the youth restored to life point to the sure results of Christ's sojourn on earth. Jesus laid the foundation of all joy, hope, happiness, and fellowship as well as restoration to life; but it will not be in evidence until His second advent. He will then change the shadows to sunshine and show the rainbow through the tears. That will be the 7th age.

"After this, there was a feast of the Jews and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue, Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk; of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had." [Joh.5:1-4]

A number of instances are recorded in John's Gospel where Jesus went up to Jerusalem to a feast. The above is the 2nd instance. He comes upon a pathetic sight at "*the sheep gate*" [RV]. Here Omnipotence meets impotence and there is a change; the crippled man is healed.

We divide John 5 into 3 parts:

1. The **Marvel** [Joh.5:1-9].
2. The **MURMUR** [Joh.5:10-18].
3. The **MESSAGE** [Joh.5:19-37].

John's Gospel about the Son of God is unique in its manner of focusing our attention upon certain men, women, events, circumstances, and things. It also distinguishes Jesus as the Redeemer; not only of the Jews but of the whole world. A watering place is the background of our present lesson. Health resorts are not things only of modern times because, as we learn here, they were also from ancient days. People were always seeking to regain health. It was always the aim of the sick and afflicted to be cured of their troubles. Men prize the well-being of their bodies more than their souls' salvation; Jesus is able for both. As is plainly taught in Scripture, He has made a provision for the full redemption of mankind.

"And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the Sabbath." [Joh.5:5-9]

The impotent man is the illustration set before us. **Bethesda** ("*house of mercy*") appears so suitable in this case. The poor man is truly in need of mercy, but alas, because of his condition the place cannot be to him what the name suggests. He is helpless to move even at the angel's ministration. The remedy is there but he cannot avail himself of its efficacy. "*A feast of the Jews*," is the apparent cause of the visit of Jesus to Jerusalem. We are not told the name of the feast, but we notice it is called the "*feast of the Jews*," which is significant of its hollowness and formality. It was the Passover and marked the beginning of His 2nd year. It reveals the cause of the powerlessness of the remedy for the man's condition. Bethesda with its 5 porches figures The Law at its 2nd giving. Mercy accompanied it, in that the Tabernacle, with its ceremonial service (offerings and priesthood), was part of that Sinaitic economy [Exo.19-40]. Nevertheless, because of the absolute ruin of man, he is shut up to the mercy of God alone.

The porches filled with the sick and afflicted show us the attitude of men toward their condition. They are not as bad as some others, they argue; or, they are doing the best they can to avail themselves of the mercy of God, etc., etc. But there is one man among the hundreds (and that is about the average) who is really unable to do one thing to help himself. He has been in that place for 38 years, vainly seeking to be healed. He cannot step into the pool and no one comes

to his aid. There he lies in the presence of the remedy and yet helpless to get its benefits. But he is the very one that Jesus sees. The desperateness of his case meets the eye of the Savior of men. Nevertheless, observe that he is not put into the pool. No indeed; Jesus Christ Himself is the Healer. He speaks the word of power to the helpless man, and lo, he is put upon his feet. And more, he carries the bed upon which he had been laying those many years. Oh, this is truly wonderful. Jesus simply enquires of the man, “*Wilt thou be made whole?*” He answers affirmatively, but apparently without hope. “*I have no man... to put me into the pool,*” he despairingly cries. He surely is in a woeful plight. But at last there comes a Man, not to put him into the water but to speak the word of power that lifts him out of death into life; to walk and work and win. Men need life to comply with The Law’s demands. There is no use in telling a dead stick to do something; it cannot obey; so it is in the case of this man. He gets life through the word of the Life-Giver, the Son of God. He has come from heaven for that very purpose—to make the dead to live and the lame to leap as the hart. Furthermore, Christ does not help men to keep The Law. He is no crutch for men. He puts new life within them that needs no law. When He speaks they obey.

The first giving of The Law of Moses had no mercy connected with it. The law-giver broke the tables of stone immediately upon coming down from the mount, because Israel had already broken the commands. They were dancing around a golden calf [Exo.32:19]. The Law is like a chain—it is one; therefore, to break 1 command is to break the whole [Jas.2:10]. Even so, the trial is not finished. Israel had shown themselves sinners; but they shall have another chance to prove whether they can better their condition. The majority of people recognize that they are sinners and that God must show mercy; yet, they are loathe giving up and acknowledging that they are without strength and **can do nothing** to help themselves. They will admit that they need forgiveness (God must show mercy) but to surrender all hope of being any better, that is another matter altogether. We will patiently wait in “*the house of mercy,*” day after day hoping to get help; but to own up to our total inability, our bankrupt estate, is going too far. Man’s pride and self-sufficiency unite in a desperate struggle against such a setting aside of his responsibility, as he claims this to be, and such an acknowledgement of complete failure, as this step surely signifies.

It is the amalgamation of law and grace; which the teaching of the different sects, present at this time, proves how difficult it is for man to descend from the lofty height of his good opinion of himself. The 2nd giving of The Law anticipated such a condition and made way for man’s complete breakdown before the judgment of God. Not only is man guilty before Him (the 1st giving of The Law proved this fact), but he is without strength to make amends for the past, or do better in the future. What a blessed day for that impotent man when Jesus came along. We are not even told his name; he expresses the state of all weak people who learn by repeated failure that they are helpless. Jesus found out the worst case in that waiting throng and healed him. The great blessing was not forced upon him. No, he was consulted, though as many at the present hour, he was looking at the pool instead of the physician, trusting to church and ceremony instead of Christ and the cross. The man who desires salvation need wait for no angel or man, but can **Rise, Take, and Walk**. Christ’s commands are ever His enabling.

*“The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the Sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed. He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, **TAKE** up thy bed, and **WALK**. Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk? And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in that place.”*
[Joh.5:10-13]

Now, hear the murmur that follows the miracle and observe the attitude of the people to the good deed. The healed man does not appear to realize who has undertaken for him and the Jews are furious that such a deed should be done on the Sabbath. The legal principle dies hard in the human heart. Regardless of the evident good, they are enraged because the day of rest

has been disturbed. How far from the Truth they are! But do not imagine for a moment that all legalism is dead because the Jews are out of the picture. No, people are people whether Jews or Gentiles. They will still quibble religiously over some little nonessential and miss the great point, the essential things, the weightier matters of love and loyalty. How sad that we are so slow to learn that our brother is under grace as well as ourselves.

The anger of the Jews flames and flares out because of the breaking of the Sabbath, as they interpret the healing of the lame man. But what better day could Jesus have found to perform His gracious deeds? At the same time, we must remember that those legalists believed that they were in the right on the question of the Sabbath and, according to the great canon of Scripture, they were correct. Nevertheless, the whole Law had been broken in every particular. Also, they were ignorant of the real significance of the Sabbath. Jesus Himself was God's great answer to the day of rest. To rest in Him was to keep the Sabbath and to reject Him was to break its decree. But then, as now, many did not understand. They rigidly followed the letter of The Law, while at the same time transgressing in many ways its Divine Essence. The real meaning passed over their heads; and much more, it passed over their hearts.

At the time of Christ's first advent, Israel was only a ruin as to their unity and witness of Jehovah upon the earth. They had failed in every phase. Not only proving themselves ungodly sinners but helpless and undone. Moreover, they were making ready to show themselves enemies of God by rejecting the gift of His Son. For the time being God was through with the nation of Israel; but, He was calling out an election from among them. A new dispensation was dawning. Things were in process of change. Another purpose, a secret hidden in God, was beginning to materialize; but few realized the time on the dial of God's clock. The leaders of the people were blind. They were not aware that the day of their visitation was at hand.

The Pharisees were rigid law-keepers according to the letter; but they themselves were surely breaking its commands continually. They did not know their own hearts, the demands of The Law, or the ruin which was manifest among them. The real inwardness of things was hidden from their eyes. It is the same today. Religious men are standing rigidly for what they think is right as regards their sect, their creed, or even the whole of Scripture. They may understand The Church, dispensational, and prophetic truth and be loyal to the whole Bible; yet, at the same time lack Divine Love. They may believe that they are right in their attitude against what they imagine is the least divergence from the Word of God; and, they may be so as to the letter of the admonition. But, we must ever remember that the unity of The Church is gone. The outward semblance of oneness is a wreck and we are called to walk a most charitable road. Who of us can say we are not failing God anywhere? We may make bold statements and we may mean them absolutely; but God is the Judge.

We are at the crossroads of another dispensation. It is the individual of whom God is expecting something...he is to be an overcomer. God is looking on the heart. He wants Divine Love to energize and control us. It may be possible that, like Israel, we may be most rigid in obeying Scripture in some respects while in others be most lax. The Lord abominates the self-righteousness would stone the woman taken in adultery while passing over covetousness, idolatry, hatred, malice, envy, etc. [Joh.8]. These days, it would be better for us to be found in the seat of the supplicant than in the critic's chair. None of us have anything of which to boast, except the grace of God. If we are found watching when Jesus comes, it will only be on account of His grace. These are testing days for us. We are sure that the one who loves much and criticizes little is the greatest overcomer. Well may we all pray the following prayer:

HOLD ME FAST, O MIGHTY SAVIOR, HOLD ME FAST,
WHILE STORMS AND TEMPEST LASH MY SHIP, HULK, AND MAST.
KEEP ME SAFE THESE NIGHTS OF TERROR—THRU HOURS VAST—
TILL THE DAWN, THAT I MAY HEAR FIRST TRUMPET BLAST,

"But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. 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." [Joh.5:17-18]

Jesus answered the Jews, who sought to slay Him for healing on the Sabbath, in these words. *"My Father worketh hitherto, and I work"*. Regardless of their attitude, He affirms that He works, and will continue to work on man's behalf, until He has lifted him out of the bed of affliction upon which he lies. He takes His place with His Father in His work of redemption and will not stop until man has been brought, not only into his original perfection, but much more, into the perfection of Himself. The legalists are forced to a decision.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of Himself but what He seeth the Father do; for whatsoever He does, the Son doeth likewise." [Joh.5:19]

He does not mince His words, but gives the people a distinct revelation of the glory which belongs to Him. He emphasizes this with *"Verily, verily"* the double affirmative peculiar to John's Gospel and is found herein 25 times¹ and nowhere else in Scripture. It is equivalent to *"Amen and amen."*

Now the message.

"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. Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel." [Joh.5:18-20]

This is truly adding fuel to the fire. Jesus had not only broken the Sabbath; but now He says that God is His Father, making Himself equal with God. This was indeed taking high ground. Such is the glory of the One they were challenging. And He continues making Himself plain in this respect. There can be no mistake whatever about the matter. So perfect is the unity between Jesus and His Father that it is an impossibility for Him to do that which is not in perfect conformity to the Father's will...they are one in essence and purpose. Omnipotence and omniscience are involved in this statement. Jesus is in the place of dependence; nevertheless He knows all things that His Father does and He does likewise. He continues in the same strain, making Himself God. *"For as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will"* [Joh.5:21]. The miracle of the healing of the impotent man startled the Jews; but these words are even more awakening. The Jews acknowledged that the Father raised the dead; which involved absolute power in His hands—power to reverse the Divine Sentence of Death which is the result of sin. This is indeed strong language and leads on to a further revelation regarding the Son.

THE FATHER JUDGES NO ONE

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my Word and believeth on him that sent me, hath eternal life and shall not come into condemnation (judgment), but is passed out of death into life." [Joh.5:24]

¹ John 1:51; 3:3, 5, 11; 5:19, 24-25; 6:26, 32, 47, 53; 8:34, 51, 58; 10:1, 7; 12:24 ; 13:16, 20-21, 38; 14:12; 16:20, 23; 21:18

God has given this important, definite honor to the Son; therefore, men must acknowledge the Son even as the Father. It is surely the unity of the Godhead that He is revealing. The Son of God is the Divine Judge of all, the Lord of life and death. All things are committed unto Him. To hear His words, that is, to believe that He is the Sent One of God, is to be quickened now. It is to come into possession of eternal life; nothing less than this is the gift of God. It is **Eternal Life** or **No Life**. How poor are men's thoughts of God's grace and love! How pusillanimous are all their thoughts of His great salvation! How weak and little is their faith in His words!

Here we are confronted with the double Amen of the Holy Son of God respecting the life which He gives to men when they believe. But the legalists rise up on every hand and declare that His words cannot be taken at their face value. They put an "IF" where He has put an "AMEN." He goes further in His position and says that He that believes is no longer under condemnation. The possession of eternal life brings deliverance from every form or judgment to men as sinners. In fact, the very reception of life is an acquittal from all the guilt of sin. The Judge Himself is speaking. What higher authority can we find? Shall we believe the word of finite man or the Infinite Word of Jehovah? Furthermore, the Judge of the Supreme Court declares that, he that believes has **Passed Out** of the realm of death into life. He dwells no more in the tombs. The fear of death has been taken away. The sting of the serpent, which brought about this condition, has been made void and death is no more an enemy. In fact, the believer dwells in **Life**. Eternal life is his portion and his environment. Who dares reverse the decision of the Judge?

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice."
[Joh.5:25-28]

Life therefore is the first necessity of the soul. There is no middle ground. We are either alive or we are dead. It is resurrection life that we come into by faith. Jesus asserts the power of this life to be in His hands in a double way—spiritual and physical. He is speaking here of Himself as the Incarnate Word and not of His pre-existence with the Father. As a Man, all judgment has been committed unto Him.

It is as a Man, the Man of Bethlehem, the Man of Calvary, that He has been given absolute authority over life and death. He speaks of what shall be, but also of what has already begun, making a distinction between the "hour" of the spiritual awakening and that of the physical. The spiritual awakening had come. All those who hear His Word and believe are already possessors of life. He is the Source of life for men. *"For as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given the Son to have life in Himself."* In the eternal counsel, this ultimatum had been decreed. The Last Adam (Jesus Christ) was to become the Life-Giver of eternal life to a new humanity to whom He would be the Head and Hope. It is not simply eternal because it will never have an end, but much more, because it never had a beginning. It is the very life of God Himself that comes to us who believe through the Son. In us it has a beginning and is resurrection life because we get it by way of Calvary; but that is not why it is eternal life. It is eternal because it is Divine Life, the life of God Himself.

"Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth: they that have done good unto the resurrection of life and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation." [Joh.5:28-29]

In the present portion of John 5, **The Message** [Joh.5:19-47], there are plainly 2 parts:

1. The one is the **witness of Jesus to Himself** [Joh.5:19-30] and

2. the other is **His declaration** of a further **4-fold witness** that He is that which He claims to be [Joh.5:31-47].

First, He speaks of the basis of His authority and then of its extent. He is indeed declaring heavenly things [Joh.3:12]. The **Father and the Son are One** and their power and honor are equal, is the essence of His testimony. Previously, we noted that the Father hath given the Son to have life in Himself and the right (authority) to communicate this eternal life to all that hear His voice. Observe...this is the Son's own testimony to which He adds that He has authority to execute judgment also. The hour is coming when the (physically) dead shall be quickened in their graves by the voice of the Son of Man and shall come forth in resurrection power, even as believers today are quickened (born anew) by the power of His words. They flee from the judgment by finding refuge in Jesus, the Judge. Future final and present judgment is in the hands of Him, for the tender and beautiful reason, "*because He is the Son of Man.*" The One, who came into the limitations of mankind to deliver and save them from judgment by bearing their judgment, is the suitable One to be given the office of Judge. He is worthy of the honor and able for it.

Sinners and the world will be judged by Jesus. All judgment is committed to Him and the overcoming saints of this age shall be with Him in that official place as Paul teaches in 1 Corinthians 6:2, *Know ye not, that the saints shall judge the world?* John, in his wonderful visions of the future, sees some of these saints with Christ on His throne as Judge [Rev.4:6]; Daniel also gives us a description of these mighty ones [Dan.7:9-14]. The judgment of the Son of Man extends over a period of 1,000 years. He begins at the house of God [1Pe.4:7], that is, the works of believers are judged as to whether or not they are worthy of reward [1Co.3:1]. John gazes upon Him in this capacity, walking in the midst of His people [Rev.1:13-18]. Afterward, there is the judgment of the world and of the nations at the beginning of the millennium [Mat.25:31-46]. The devil is cast into hell and there chained for 1,000 years by the Judge [Rev.20:1-4]. At the close of this period of the authority of the Son of Man, the judgment of the Great White Throne begins. This is the judgment of the unbelievers, those who die in their sins. We have no knowledge of the length of time that will be consumed in that judgment; but as eternity will have begun then, time will cut no figure. As Judge, the Son of Man will have authority to cast the devil and all of the wicked of mankind into the lake of fire. "*This is the second death*" [Rev.20:5-15].

"I can of mine own self do nothing; as I hear I judge and my judgment is just, because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me. If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true. There is another that bears witness of me." [Joh.5:30-31]

He is emphasizing again the practical **Oneness** between His Father and Himself, which forbade Him doing anything of an independent will; therefore His judgment is perfect. It is just. It was according as He heard; that is, according to the reality of the fact that **He and His Father are One**. Thus, His Word was indeed far removed from other men's words. But even this was not sufficient, according to the Scriptures there must be a further witness. The testimony of 2 men is true; and though He bore perfect testimony of Himself, yet according to Jewish law, it was not valid; it needed confirmation. He has this further evidence to furnish by bringing John the Baptist on the scene as a witness.

"Ye sent unto John and he hath borne witness of the truth...He was a burning and a shining light and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light." [Joh.5:33-35]

Jesus is reminding the Jews of the Baptist's fiery testimony which roused them to send to him for information as to himself and the Messiah. He bore witness to Christ, and that was not merely a man's witness because John was a prophet, filled with the Spirit of God. His words were inspired and men were, and are, called upon to hear and heed them. He was a bright lamp,

burning and shining. He was not The Light of day, but lighting up the darkness for the time being. The Jews had been glad for the light that he brought to them and rejoiced in its cheer for a season; but it was limited and must give way to the greater Light that was then present. John simply lighted the pathway to Jesus. Yet Jesus had an even greater witness than the Prophet's voice.

"But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me." [Joh.5:36]

Here was an irrefutable witness. The glorious works, miraculous and stupendous, are spoken in language decisive of Him as the Anointed of God. The healing of the impotent man (the sign in this chapter) was a special proof that could not be gainsaid except by the willfully blind. He has given them such testimony of His Divine Claims that they are left without excuse. They were responsible to accept or reject Him as their Messiah. There was no other alternative. Then, the further witness of the Father Himself shuts them up absolutely to believe or apostatize.

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." [Joh.5:37]

His words are scathing. Jesus feels the animosity that is rising up against Him. More and more it is manifest that He is being rejected. It was very plain that they had never heard the Father's voice; for if so, they would have recognized the same tone in the Son's voice. Furthermore, His many manifestations they had never seen or else they would have recognized His form in the Sent One. When men walk in the light of what they know further truth is easy to grasp; and vice versa. They had not acted upon what they had heard, the Word had not been abiding in them; therefore, they cannot receive anything further in the way of Divine Illumination. As the present lesson teaches, it is dangerous to not believe and not walk in The Light. Jesus was aware of the thoughts of their hearts. Unbelief is filling them and they are turning away from the only **ONE** who can bless and help them. But He does not cease until He puts before them the 5th and final witness to Himself and His claims.

"Ye search the Scriptures, because ye think that in them ye will have eternal life, and these are they which bear witness of me—and ye will not come to me that ye might have life." [Joh.5:39-40 RV]

The Scriptures were in their hands but not in their hearts. They boasted of these oracles and were puffed up because they were the custodians of them; yet in reality, they had not been received. They studied the writings of Moses, David, and the Prophets; but alas, their message was never heard. It was hidden from them. It is the same today. The Church makes a great boast of being God's witness upon the earth, but she fails to show forth The Light. She claims to be the repository of the Truth but she does not really possess it. The Jews had the Scriptures but the Scriptures did not have them...they did not move nor control their lives. Maybe they searched them diligently but they did not believe them.

Faith was lacking; therefore, when the very essence of the Old Testament writings, the Substance of the shadows, stood before them they failed to recognize Him though He bore all the lineaments and marks of the expected Messiah. The very life, which the Scriptures unfolded, was in their midst; but their eyes were blinded so that they could not see Him. As Jesus plainly declares, their hearts were not right before God.

"I receive not honour from men. But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you. I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive."
[Joh.5:41-43]

To have the light of the Word and not yield to it is far worse a condition than is that of an ordinary sinner, a child of wrath, as are all men [Eph.2:3]. When men refuse light, they put themselves in the way of receiving the Antichrist. They are on the way to becoming sons of Satan. God will send them "*strong delusion* (signs and wonders), *that they should believe a lie*" because they "*believed not the Truth*" [2Th.2:11-12].

We declare that is a dangerous place to be in—knowing the Scriptures and not obeying them. The Jews rejected their Messiah and King, the Son of God. All these years, with His description in their hands, they have been wanderers upon the face of the earth, fulfilling those writings. In the day which is almost at hand, they shall receive the counterfeit Christ and suffer incredibly thereby, fulfilling more Scripture. The Tribulation will be the retribution. Daniel informs us that "*he* (Antichrist) *shall confirm a covenant with them* (the Jews) *for one week* (7 years)" [Dan.9:27]. The Gentiles also will accept the monster Messiah, the sham of Satan, because they received not the Christ of God. The climaxing of this rejection of God and His Son comes at the moment when the times of the Gentiles have run their course, as also the period of the captivity of Jew. These 2 great purposes of God run concurrently and are now about to be ended. The day of Christ's exaltation is at hand and all men, Jew and Gentile, are called upon to accept Him as their King.

As we read here, and in other Scriptures, we know that they will reject Him; therefore, anguish and sorrow will fall upon the world. Christ will insist on His rights and Satan will resist Him. Men will be forced to take sides. No more can they be neutral. The result will be war to the uttermost between Christ and Antichrist but, God's Man, the Man of Calvary, will win. We sometimes are astonished at the unbelief of men; but Jesus gives us the reason for their attitude toward God and the Truth.

"How can ye believe, which receive honor one of another and seek not the honor that comes from God only?" [Joh.5:44]

When men are occupied with men rather than with God, when worldly honor and reward are more to them than His things, they are in the way of perdition. There is no fear of God before their eyes; therefore, the enemy has it all his own way. They are easy marks for Satan's cunning. It is a solemn thing, but true that all which displaces Christ in men's hearts makes room for the Antichrist. "*If the light that is in thee be darkness how great is that darkness*" [Mat.6:23]; they are doubly darkened.

"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?" [Joh.5:45-47]

The Jews had respect for Moses. He was great in their estimation; but they were ignorant of Him of whom he wrote. If they had believed Moses they would have received the greater than Moses; therefore, he whom they trusted, and in a sense revered, was their accuser. Moses presented Christ. He introduced the Greater Leader than himself; but they did not recognize Him when He appeared. They rejected Him and instead chose Barabbas, a thief and a murderer, thus exposing the state of their heart. They did not believe the Scriptures but they fulfilled them in rejecting Christ. It was so written: "*If ye believe not his* (Moses) *writings, how shall ye believe My words.*" "*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God*" [2Ti.3:16]. The Old Testament and the New Testament stand or fall together.

HE HUMBLLED HIMSELF

THEY BORROWED A STABLE AND A COMMON TABLE
WHEN CHRIST THE LORD CAME DOWN.
THEY BORROWED A SHARE IN THE MANGER BARE
FOR THE BABE OF VAST RENOWN.
YEA, THE THORNY CROWN AND THE CROSS SO BROWN
WERE BORROWED TOO FOR ME AND YOU.

THEY BORROWED AN ASS, THE BEAST OF THE MASS
WHEN THEY FLED FROM HEROD'S FROWN.
THEY BORROWED A COT AND A HOUSE AND LOT
IN AN OLD EGYPTIAN TOWN.
YEA, THE THORNY CROWN AND THE CROSS SO BROWN
WERE BORROWED TOO FOR ME AND YOU.

HE BORROWED THE BREAD AND THE HUNGRY FED;
FOR NAUGHT HAD HE OF HIS OWN.
HE BORROWED THE DISHES AS WELL AS THE FISHES,
AS THEY SAT ON HILL UNKNOWN.
YEA, THE THORNY CROWN AND THE CROSS SO BROWN
WERE BORROWED TOO FOR ME AND YOU.

HE BORROWED THE BOAT AND SOON PUT AFLOAT;
BUT PETER FEARED THEY WOULD DROWN.
HE BORROWED THE POWER THAT VERY HOUR
AND MADE THE WIND SLOW DOWN.
YEA, THE THORNY CROWN AND THE CROSS SO BROWN
WERE BORROWED TOO FOR ME AND YOU.

THEY BORROWED A ROOM ON THE WAY TO THE DOOM,
BUT THAT WAS NOT HIS OWN.
THEY BORROWED THE GRAVE WHICH THE RICH MAN GAVE
WHEN THEY TOOK THE SAVIOR DOWN.
YEA, THE THORNY CROWN AND THE CROSS SO BROWN
WERE BORROWED TOO FOR ME AND YOU.

THE TABLE AND SHOWBREAD [JOH.6]

"After these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is like the sea of Tiberius, and a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased. And Jesus went up into a mountain and there he sat with his disciples." [Joh.6:1-3]

In John 6 we have a most interesting event recorded. It is a pertinent and important happening in the life of Jesus; all 4 Gospel writers report it. It apparently closed His public Galilean ministry. Hereafter He devotes Himself mainly to His disciples and if He visits Galilee it is in hidden guise.

In John 5 we read of His claim of being the **Source** of life which He proved it by healing the helpless man. In John 6 He shows and teaches that He is the **Sustainer** of the life which He gives.

Surveying the whole of this extensive 6th chapter of John, we note 3 divisions:

1. The **Sign** [Joh.6:1-13].
2. The **Ship** [Joh.6:14-25].

3. The **Sermon** [Joh.6:26-71].

1. THE SIGN [JOH.6:1-13]

A great crowd from the city followed Him into the wilderness. We might say it was a picnic where Jesus furnished all the food. He met all the expense of that famous meal. No doubt the people had come out of curiosity, careless about what or when they should dine. It might have been a time of depression, as today, when they had little to eat; otherwise how could 5,000 men be free to spend those hours with Jesus on a hilltop? But they were well paid that day, spiritually and physically. As always, Jesus was compassionate and saved the situation.

Difficult circumstances in our lives are the means of great revelations. They bring God on the scene where He is able to reveal His power and faithfulness; and also they often reveal our unbelief and unfaithfulness. In our present lesson we have both such revelations. Three men and a lad are unveiled for our profit; also Jesus is revealed in a new guise. The great crowd going after Jesus, beyond the sea of Tiberius (name of a Roman emperor), that is Galilee, is significant of this age when the Gentile is dominant over Israel, the identity of Israel being lost among the sea of nations. Another feast of the Passover was nigh at hand and the real Substance of that feast gives us an illustration of its meaning and its results to men.

"When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do. Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little." [Joh.6:5-7]

When Jesus sees the great multitude (a type of The Church gathered out of the present dispensation) which had followed Him, he enquired of Phillip as to how they were to eat. Jesus said this to prove Phillip because *"He knew what He would do."* Every step in His path was ordered of His Father. The multitudes were drawn out into the wilderness by Divine Power. There was to be a miracle performed there that generations to come would read about and marvel. There was nothing haphazard about His going or doing. Every event was marked and came to pass on schedule time.

Phillip calculates that 200 pennyworth of bread (\$35) is not enough. They probably had that amount of money with them but it was far too little. He was looking at the circumstances and difficulties. The mighty Worker in the midst was not visible. Phillip saw the crowd and not the Christ, and he concluded the thing could not be done. The previous miracles of the Master (the water turned into wine and the impotent man healed) were forgotten. Such is man whose breath is in his nostrils. He remembers the trivial things which he should forget and forgets the important and real things which he should remember. Then Andrew enters into the conversation. He has a suggestion but doubts its efficacy. However it is an improvement over Philip's. He puts out a feeler, but fears that it will fail.

"One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him, There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many? And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand." [Joh.6:8-10]

As to his thinking, Andrew is an enterprising fellow; but when it comes to putting the thing over, he quits. He lets someone else act upon his suggestion. He says there is a lad who brought his lunch; maybe he will give it to us, but it only contains 5 barley loaves and 2 small fish. He looks at the littleness and exclaims, *"But what are they among so many?"* The youth with the goods hears of the predicament, and hands over his all into the hands of the Master and the situation clears. The lad who occupies a prominent part at this time represents the Lord Himself. He saw

man's predicament and came to the rescue. He gave His all to save and feed the multitude. He was not daunted at the apparent impossible task of redemption and neither is He at a loss here. It is the impossible which gives Him the opportunity to display His power. He can do much with little things and little people if they will give Him the chance. If we put ourselves into His hands, He will bless and multiply our usefulness. He is the only One who could provide for the thousands of unexpected guests, and yet He will condescend to prepare a meal and feed the individual who will rest and let Him supply the need. He is calling men to His table, telling them to open their mouths wide and He will fill them. The multitude obey His words, they sit down.

"And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would. When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost." [Joh.6:11-12]

Jesus takes the loaves, blesses, and distributes them to the disciples². Here we see only the Divine Hand that really accomplishes all. In tender care, Jehovah provided a great feast for those men. None is lost amid the mass and left hungry. By and by when all are filled, He gives the command to gather up the fragments that nothing be wasted. We would never expect such an announcement from one who could work such a miracle. But this happening is not merely a miracle, but a significant **Sign**.

The Creator Himself is on the scene and He is teaching by His command that there are no useless things in nature. That which appears so, when examined will be found for the preservation or transformation of something else. Furthermore there is a spiritual lesson here which is the great emphatic point. The broken bread multiplied to the feeding of the multitude, gives us a wonderful type of Christ as the Bread come from heaven. As the young Man from God, He had in His possession that which is necessary to give life to men and then sustain the life. He gave His all that all might be saved, and nothing will be wasted of that sacrifice.

2. THE SHIP [JOH.6:14-25]

"Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world. When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone." [Joh.6:14-15]

Christ, the Bread from heaven, is the glorious Subject. We have commented upon the first part (the **Sign**). We will now proceed to the 2nd division of John 6, which is an interruption between the **Sign** and the **Sermon**. The men who had seen the miracle of the 5 loaves and 2 fishes feeding the multitude were astonished but not convicted. They recognized the power in the hands of the Son of Man and admitted, *"This is of a truth that Prophet which should come into the world"* but in reality they accepted Him as a powerful leader but rejected Him who, as a Savior, was able to save them from their sins. They insist on making Him a king and leader of one of those revolts against Roman authority which was popular among them. We believe that Barabbas led one of these revolutionary uprisings, which was apparently the reason that they chose him instead of Christ. They wanted a Messiah who would lead them out of Gentile bondage; but cared nothing for the Savior who could deliver them from sinful satanic slavery. Jesus turns away from such a fleshly reception. He goes up into a mountain alone, representative of this present age, when He has gone up to His Father and is sitting on the mediatory throne. Meanwhile, His disciples go down to the sea and enter into a ship.

² According to many translations, the ministration by the disciple's hands is not found in the Gospel of John.

"And when even was now come, his disciples went down unto the sea, And entered into a ship, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them. And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew." [Joh.6:16-18]

Darkness falling upon them and the sea becoming tempestuous, they are troubled because Christ had not come to them. They are fearful in the storm. We are not promised smooth sailing for our little bark but only a safe landing. Nowhere are we guaranteed a sunny sea for our earthly voyage; rather, a stormy sea is promised us but with His presence. It is better to abide with Him in a tempest than without Him in a calm. But that was a test for those disciples.

"So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship: and they were afraid. But he saith unto them, It is I; be not afraid. Then they willingly received him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went." [Joh.6:19-21]

They could not recognize the Son of Man in this authoritative pose of victory over the sea. His power awed them. His words *"It is I, be not afraid"* calmed their fears. When they received Him into the ship they are immediately at their destination. Another miracle has been performed.

The **SHIP** in which the disciples embark marks them as a type of the Jewish remnant. The disciples were of this character when Jesus left the earth and another of the same character will be waiting for Him when He returns. The Church proper is seen in Peter stepping out of the ship to go to Jesus (that incident is not recorded by John but is in Mat.14:28-29). The fulfillment of promises to Israel is delayed because of their rejection of Jesus; but they are not abrogated. They have temporarily lost their place and blessing as God's witness on earth. The Church has come into this place for the present age; but only as pilgrims and strangers. Her blessings are in a higher, heavenly sphere. How often we are like those first disciples and do not recognize Him when He comes. The lesson of discipline is lost if we doubt the faithfulness of Christ in the trouble or do not see His power over the waves. How often we faint in adversity and cry when we ought to shout. We would see Him sooner, walking on the troubled water, if we rejoiced in the trial. The disciples tried hard to reach the shore but could not get very far until Jesus was in the ship. Then the journey on the stormy sea soon ended even as will our pilgrimage. One of these days, Jesus will come to meet us and we will be forever with Him. Amen!

The **disciples in the ship** are representative of the Jewish remnant of the end time who will be saved during the Great Tribulation. God will come to their help in the darkest hour of the night. Then the following will find a fulfillment.

"The day following when the people, that stood on the other side of the sea, saw that there was no other ship there save that into which his disciples had entered, and that Jesus had not gone with his disciples, into the boat ... they also took shipping and came to Capernaum seeking Jesus. And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither?" [Joh.6:22-25]

They found Him of whom Moses wrote. The multitude entered other ships which came to the scene of the miraculous supply of bread and fish after Jesus and the disciples had left. The people are surprised to find Jesus on the other side of the sea. They knew that He had not entered the ship with the disciples and that ship was the only one there. They are mystified and ask in astonishment, *"When?"* which involves the question "How did he get there?" Because He knew the motive of their hearts, Jesus does not enlighten them but instead rebukes them. They did not seek Him because they saw in Him their Messiah and God but only that they wanted material help. They loved Him for the bread; therefore, loved the bread more than Him.

Mark the double paradox in His next words, one of the great verses of John 6:

"Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed." [Joh.6:27]

They had eaten of the loaves and were filled with the food that perishes after it gives sustainment for the life that passes away. Corruptible food to sustain a corruptible life was all that of which they were in pursuit...and they labored for it. He admonished them to labor for that food which is not corruptible but which abides and ministers to an eternal life. What a contrast! At this juncture, He does not declare that He Himself is the Bread of life. He would prepare them for the revelation by fixing their eyes upon things imperishable and eternal. He seeks to stir in them soul-hunger. He declares that He can furnish this Bread; but observe that He does so as the Son of Man. As Creator He could, by the mere word of His mouth or act of His will, furnish abundantly to meet any requirement of the natural, but the food of eternal life only He as Man could furnish. Therefore, the Son of God must become the Son of Man, enter into the condition of humanity (the Man unique and distinct amid all the sons of men) to become the food of the new man. There is a vast difference between the work of creation with all its display of wisdom and the amazing self-sacrifice of Calvary's cross. One reveals power, the other weakness.

Jesus did not say to work for the life (meat that perishes) but to work for food (meat that endures). We must have life before we can eat. The dead cannot work into life. Jesus must quicken them by His voice, as He has declared, *"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"* [Joh.5:24]. After men have eternal life, they should feed their new life. This necessitates labor in the sense that they were laboring for the natural food. They were going after Him whom they knew could supply that bread. He had it to give; likewise in the spiritual line, He has the food that endures. He who had given them the one (appointed and accredited of God), with the seal of the Spirit (after His baptism by John), was to give them the other. He was the sealed and certified Bread, the incorruptible food of an incorruptible life. If they would seek after this Bread, as they did for the natural bread, they would indeed be enriched as every earnest seeking soul has found.

3. THE "SIGNIFICANT" SERMON [JOH.6:26-71]

With John 6:26, we begin the study of the 3rd part of this long chapter. The **Sign** and the **Ship** make way for the **Sermon**. What matchless words; what gems of truth are found in its contents! Jesus had fed the multitude with the multiplied bread and fishes which the little lad had brought for his lunch and the people were moved in a mighty way through the miracle. They were interested and curious; but it was simply in the natural. They were not convicted of their spiritual poverty but only of their material need; Jesus is well aware of this fact. After the miraculous feast He immediately disappears, hiding Himself from the careless crowd; but they follow and find Him on the other side of the sea. They are surprised and cannot understand how He arrived there, enquiring of Him to explain the mystery. But He does not satisfy their idle curiosity; instead, He declares that they are following Him simply for the loaves and fishes. Their soul was not stirred. He declares that material things sway them.

Then He proceeds with His sermon, which is in 2 parts:

1. In John 6:26-40, Jesus addresses the crowd; and
2. in John 6:41-59, Jesus addresses the Jews.

1. JESUS ADDRESSES THE CROWD [JOH.6:26-40]

"Jesus answered them and said, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed."
[Joh.6:26-27]

The real essence of John 6:26-27 is that *"man shall not live by bread alone."* It is true that man needs natural food; but that is not enough. Victuals are necessary but vision is also necessary; man is a spirit and soul as well as a body. He needs bread but He also needs God.

The crowd was running after Him because He had fed them on the bread and fishes; but they do not realize that He also has spiritual food to give them. The multitude is a figure of the nation of Israel at the beginning of the millennium who will be seeking Christ. In John 6:15-21, the 7 years of Tribulation are symbolically seen, especially the 3½ years of dire trouble upon the Jews are in view. All the symbolic figures of the chapter, the lad, the fish, the bread, and the manna speak of the Son of God come down to earth to feed humanity. A fish was known and used among the primitive Christians as symbolic of Jesus more than any other figure. Fish are the most prolific of all creatures, therefore symbolize Jesus in resurrection, coming forth out of the waters of judgment to give life to the world.

In the following part of the chapter, the **Sermon**, Jesus is seeking to awaken in the people a hunger for eternal realities. But they do not understand and attempt to evade the issue. They say, *"What shall we do to work the works of God?"* Men are permeated with the thought that they must do something to obtain spiritual values. They judge God and His salvation by themselves and earthly things. All through the ages they have been asking what they must do to inherit eternal life and always God has given the answer, *"Only believe."* Here before their very eyes is the God-Man, the One on whom they are to believe. He has life to give them and Bread from heaven to feed the life, but they cannot realize their good fortune, or the day of their visitation. The Sweet Wonder from on high is their Guest; but their eyes are closed to His charms. They are blind.

"Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent."
[Joh.6:29]

John's Gospel is that of the **"Sent One"**, but the people do not accept Him. They say to Him, *"What sign showest thou then that we may see and believe thee? What dost thou work?"* [Joh.6:30]. Thus they openly take the place of unbelievers, suggesting that there has not been enough evidence to prove His claims. The miraculous meal was not sufficient. They point to Moses and the manna, saying, *"He gave them bread from heaven to eat"* [Joh.6:31]; in their estimation that was a much greater **SIGN** than the meal on the hillside. Then they are brought face to face with that upon which all now depends. With His characteristic *"Verily, verily,"* He says,

"Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the Bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven and giveth life to the world." [Joh.6:32-33]

Eternal life is found in the true Bread from heaven, which is Christ Himself. Faith in Him would make them partakers of this precious gift. Here was the sufficient supply for all their need. All He wanted was a welcome. He had come from heaven to give life; not only to the nation Israel but to the world. There was bread enough and to spare, but not in the *"far-off country"* of unbelief, but in the house of faith, as the prodigal found [Luk.15].

"Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread." [Joh.6:34]

The response appears all that one can desire. They are hungry. Like the woman of Samaria, they ask for the Gift which He has to give; yet the cases are entirely different. She was truly thirsty and needy, spiritually. These were not. He who “*knew all men and needed not that any should testify of man*” [Joh.2:25] was not deceived. Nevertheless He does not let the opportunity to witness pass away unused, nor does He treat the moment lightly. It is a solemn moment for them.

“And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.” [Joh.6:35]

Here we learn that coming to Christ and believing on Him are synonymous. They point to reliance upon a Person, in whom one is to find all satisfaction. He had spoken in similar terms to the unnamed woman at the well [Joh.4]; but here the language is more definite as to the necessity of faith. But the people are not ready. They only feign faith. The sight of bread will feed no one. It must be appropriated. He says, “*But I said unto you, that ye also have seen me and believe not*” [Joh.6:36]. They would analyze the bread but not eat it; therefore, we infer that they were not spiritually hungry. There was not the least fragment of faith in the multitude. Then He gives them a broadside by emphasizing God’s sovereignty.

“All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.” [Joh.6:37-39]

He puts all the responsibility for man’s salvation upon His Father. There is hope in God alone, and more, there is certainty that, regardless of all the opposition of the human heart, Christ shall lose naught which the Father gives to Him. And so assured is Jesus, that He adds, “*Him that cometh unto me shall in no wise be cast out.*” To reject the gift which His Father gives would be an impossibility because His will is in perfect harmony with the Father’s will. He came down from heaven for no other purpose than to obey that will of the Father which included the redemption of mankind by His death upon the cross. The love in Christ’s heart is also the love of the Father’s heart. There is absolute conformity in essence of life and essence of purpose between the Father and the Son. God is love and therefore all the activity manifested in the matter of man’s salvation is the result of the will of God being carried out. Resurrection must be in evidence for the full display of that will. As is implied by these words, eternal life is born out of death, “*This is the will of Him that sent me that everyone that seeth the Son and believeth on Him may have everlasting life and I will raise him up at the last day.*”

2. JESUS ADDRESSES THE JEWS [JOH.6:41-59]

“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?” [Joh.6:41-42]

But the Jews murmured at the greatness of His claim. They are looking upon Him in the natural; viewing His likeness to sinful flesh, hence they are not impressed. To them He is simply Joseph’s son. They are acquainted (or so they think) with His father and mother, therefore how can He say He has come from heaven? Jesus replies by again emphasizing the sovereignty of God.

“Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father.” [Joh.6:43-46]

Except the Father draw him no man can come to the Son in faith, and such a one as comes He *"will raise him up at the last day."* There is no doubt of the meaning of His words. He dares, in the face of their opposition, to declare that their unbelief is because the Father has not drawn them. He explains that this is the result of Divine Enlightenment, as the Prophets had spoken of the people being taught of God. Therefore, everyone who had heard from the Father and learned of Him came to Him; yet, no one had seen the Father but Himself, who was of Him and sent by Him. It was a revelation from the Father to know the Son and vice versa. It was only through the Son that the Father was known.

Jesus grows bolder in His declarations as He discerns their increasing unbelief. Instead of putting on the soft pedal, using wisdom in His words, He grows more challenging. He gives them the Truth straight out from the shoulder. He is not daunted or discouraged by their faces. He knows who He is and for what reason He is on the scene. He is the Son of God and is showing men the Father and they are responsible to accept Him. To refuse His claims, which have been substantiated by Divine Credentials, men must turn their back on the light and walk in their own shadows. The Truth is unwelcome to such and God must pursue them and make them realize their desperate need of Jesus. They must find the Father in the Son. It is in Him, the Bread from heaven, that eternal life is found. The one who eats of Him will **LIVE FOREVER**. The Son has come to restore that which was lost. The estrangement which came with sin and its consequent death has been bridged by the One who is both God and Man. He has brought them together in His own Person and the fellowship is established and endures forever in the case of everyone who believes. There is no room for an argument in these positive statements of the Divine Messenger. He is giving the words of the Father to men and they are responsible to receive them without any **IF's** or **AND's**.

Listen to how the Teacher now proceeds to show that the manna could not and did not express all that He could and was about to give to man.

"Verily, verily (Amen and Amen), he that believeth on me hath everlasting life. I am that bread of life."
[Joh.6:47-48]

The fathers of Israel ate manna every day in the wilderness, but they died. It had no power to give or preserve life beyond the grave. The Bread of God is far more than the manna and now assumes a sacrificial character.

"I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If a man eat of this bread He shall live forever; for the bread that I will give is my flesh which I will give for the life of the world. The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" [Joh.6:51-52]

Immediately, there is a clamor; greater than ever is the evident unbelief. The Jews contended with one another on the subject. We are assured that there was some noise, for even unto this day the Jews are given to question and argument. But at this time no one among them could silence the significance of these words. They are not spiritually hungry and Jesus does not explain. He continues His positive statements regarding Himself. He insists the more upon the truth with another of His strong affirmations:

"Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life and I will raise Him up at the last day." [Joh.6:53-54]

This is the 3rd instance that He speaks of the resurrection of believers at the end of the days; but only at this place is it in connection with death.

Appropriating faith is herein pictured by the eating and drinking of Christ's flesh and blood. But it was like unto the waving of a red flag in the face of an infuriated bull. Drinking of blood and

eating of raw flesh is an abomination to a Jew. It was forbidden by the Mosaic Economy [Lev.17]. The people were not to eat of any of the sacrifices unless the blood had been poured out. Now, this man tells them they must eat His flesh and drink His blood. This was too much. They strove among themselves over His words. They inquire, "*How can this man give us his flesh to eat?*" [Joh.6:52]. They argue that it is a physical impossibility and, even if it was possible, they would not eat His flesh nor drink His blood.

Jesus positively declares that we have no life except we eat His flesh, and on the other hand the inference is just as positive that if we have eaten we have eternal life.

"For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me and I in Him. As the living Father hath sent me and I live by the Father so he that eateth me even He shall live by me." [Joh.6:55-57]

Jesus affirms...it is eternal life or no life. Who are you that dare deny His words? Remember when you do so, that you are taking issue with the Son of Man and calling Him a liar. Moreover, He is speaking of eternal life in the one that believes (eats). Otherwise it would be akin to saying "If you eat you still have no life in you." That would be a foolish and insane statement, not consistent with the speech of the Son of God.

Christ's flesh was given for the life of the world and herein the flesh is apart from the blood, because He is emphasizing the sacrificial death of atonement. According to Law, the blood was carefully poured out upon the ground: "*for it is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul*" [Lev.17:11]. The flesh was then eaten in fellowship with the altar. In John 6, we have the peace offering aspect of the cross, where the Father is viewed with the offerer eating the roast lamb which had been sacrificed. The blood that was shed represented the accomplished work of atonement, as only death could satisfy the judgment of God; while the flesh pointed to the victim who had died, the antitype of whom was the holy Son of God. The drinking of the blood characterizes Christianity in contrast with the age of types and shadows which preceded.

The work of Christ upon the cross is now known and appropriated by faith and its effect is manifest. Believers are brought into fellowship with God; not only typically, but actually. Death has made way for life and the sustenance of life, even as is symbolized in the feast of the multiplied bread and fishes. Appropriating faith is vividly pictured in the words of Jesus, as to eating His flesh and drinking His blood. The Lord's Supper has kept continually before us His death upon the cross. It is a memorial service of Him. Christ has gone out of the world by death to bring man to God, and we having entered into that fellowship, await His coming—to be with Him forever.

Jesus continues His marvelous unfolding of the truth of identification of the believer with Himself.

"As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever." [Joh.6:57-58]

His flesh is truly food and His blood is drink in a spiritual sense. We partake of this wondrous food by faith and Christ's very life is thus assimilated and becomes a part of ourselves even as our natural food becomes a part of us. But contrary to the natural, we are assimilating the food; the food is not being assimilated into us. Thus, we abide in Him by eating Him and more and more we are conscious of the fact that He abides in us.

Jesus compares this union with His disciples to His own human life as a Man in fellowship with the Father. As sent by Him, He lived by reason of Him, even as we live by His life. His Father was the explanation of His life, its thoughts and purposes were all bound up in Him. In like

manner, we live by Christ and as Christ, abiding forever in His life and love and the fellowship of His grace. But with many of His disciples of that day, this was a “*hard saying*”—and it is today; “*who can hear it?*” they said [Joh.6:60]. Such a fellowship necessitates too absolute a consecration to God, too strenuous a life of sacrifice and surrender. The Jews were thinking of the earthly Kingdom for which their hearts were longing. They did not want to hear of heavenly things. Spiritual realities were counted as nothing compared with material shadows. To eat and drink of His death, whatever that might mean, had no attraction for them. It did not appear as the fulfillment of their carnal desires. They wanted no more of that sort of doctrine.

“When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.” [Joh.6:61-66]

“Doth this offend you?” Then He declares that He has greater things to say, “*What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before?*” As to that which He had been saying, the flesh could profit them nothing. His words were spirit and life, when quickened by the Spirit of God; otherwise they were of no avail. To receive His words there must be faith on their part or the Spirit would not act. Here Jesus spoke with the consciousness that ever was present with Him, that some did not believe, as He had declared, that He would go to heaven again. He realized, as none other could, the terrible results of unbelief to them and to all men. It leads to apostasy and eternal night when light has been rejected. Hence, the following strong words of warning, “*Therefore I said unto you, that no man can come unto me except it were given him of my Father.*” He again puts the responsibility upon the Father as to man’s salvation, and insists upon the sovereignty of God, refusing to allow that men can save themselves. This was adding insult to injury. Men like to imagine that they can save themselves, or at least help some in the matter; therefore those were not palatable words, and we read, “*From that time, many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him*” [Joh.6:66].

“Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve.” [Joh.6:67-71]

But Jesus was prepared for rejection. By the Spirit, He knew all things that should befall Him; but such a wholesale falling away as was evident must have surprised Him somewhat because he asks the 12 disciples, “*Will you also go away?*” Simon Peter, spokesman as always, answers for all, “*Lord to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.*” How this affirmation of faith must have cheered the heart of that lonely Man. It was a sad blow to see the crowd melt away. We have had somewhat similar experiences when people to whom we have done good, bringing them the words of life and blessing, have gone off and fellowshiped no more with us. Many a time our heart has been near to breaking; therefore, we have a faint understanding of what the great Captain and Forerunner of our faith suffered. Peter’s testimony must have comforted His lacerated heart. There was no other to whom they could go; for He spoke words of eternal life. Carnal men might reject them but they had heard the call of the Father to follow the holy One of God.

Peter continues, saying, “*We believe and are sure that Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.*” Faith is growing in the hearts of the true disciples, but so is unbelief in others. The one develops even

as the other; for as the light shone amidst the darkness, the darkness gathered strength to oppose the light. No doubt it was the defection of the professed disciples, so many leaving Christ at that time, which caused doubt to arise in the heart of Judas. He began to waver in his allegiance to Jesus and conceives the malignant scheme of betraying Him. Jesus' closing words here prove that Satan is doing his work in the traitor, "*Have not I chosen you twelve and one of you is a devil?*" The added blow is that Jesus cannot even depend upon all of the 12; one of them is false to Him.

"He spoke of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon; for he it was who should betray Him, being one of the twelve." [Joh.6:70-71]

And so John 6, which began with a picnic and plenty, ends in perplexity and pining. Jesus did not trim His message to suit the multitude, as so many of His ministers have done, hence the crowd dwindled. He saw some of those who had apparently been going on with Him stumbling at His teaching. He repeated and emphasized the Truth instead of apologizing for it. He knew the difficulty was not a question of their heads but of their hearts. Christ was looking for loyalty not lukewarmness. Friends who are only true while the trough is full are not of much force. Such will forget all the kindness of the past for some little apparent failure of the present. The strength of an assembly does not consist in the greatness of its numbers. As we have witnessed several times, many a revival has broken forth after some people left and the remaining people were few.

Again, we call attention to the fact that John's Gospel shines with dazzling light showing forth the past of the **Just One** from glory. The beauty and reality of the Tabernacle in the wilderness with its beautiful golden furniture is seen walking around upon the earth. In John 6 we behold the **Bread** and Table of the Holy Place as He feeds the multitude and speaks the message of the Bread from heaven; the Life and the Sustainer of the life.

A SONG OF LOVE

SO SWEET A SONG ONE DAY I HEARD,
THAT ALL MY HEART WITH RAPTURE STIRRED.
IT WAS SO SWEET; IT RANG SO CLEAR,
I LISTENED CLOSE, ENTRANCED TO HEAR.
THE THEME WAS OLD, YET EVER NEW,
E'EN AS THE LIGHT AND HEAVEN'S DEW.

IT WAS A SONG OF LOVE SO RARE —
THE SON OF GOD SOUGHT BRIDE MOST FAIR.
AND STOOPED TO EARTH IN FLESH OF MAN,
THE AWFUL GULF OF SIN TO SPAN
AND SET A CAPTIVE MAIDEN FREE
TO GRACE HIS THRONE, HIS OWN TO BE.

OH, NEVER WAS THERE SON SO SWEET —
A SONG OF SONGS — DIVINE, COMPLETE.
ITS HARMONY SETS HEART AFLAME
AND BIDS ALL TONGUES THE WORTH PROCLAIM
OH HIM, WHO STOOPED ALL THINGS TO DARE,
THAT HE MIGHT WIN HIS LOVE SO FAIR.

John 7 may be divided into 3 sections:

1. The **APPROACH** [Joh.7:1-13] or Before the Feast,
2. The **APPEAL** [Joh.7:14-39] or During the Feast, and
3. The **APPRAISEMENT** [Joh.7:40-52] or After the Feast.

CRIES OF JESUS IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

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| 1. John 7:28 — A Cry of Astonishment that the people who hear Him expounding the Scriptures in the temple do not respond to His Person and teaching and accept their Messiah. They claim to know Him and yet, reject Him. | 2. John 7:37 — A Cry of Invitation on the last day of the great feast of Tabernacles. Jesus views the multitude gathered at Jerusalem who are about to leave for their homes and He cries to them to come to Him and get the early and latter rain—the rivers of water promised in Joel 2:22, and Isaiah 44:1. But they refuse the tender compassionate Savior who would comfort and bless to the uttermost. |
| 3. John 7:38 — A CRY OF BESEECHMENT . He is earnestly entreating the people to believe Him; for thus they will believe on the Father who sent Him. But His words are in vain, though He puts before them the grave responsibility of refusing the Light that is before their eyes. He gives His own verdict upon His own Person and the dreadful alternative of rejecting His words. These shall judge them at the last days. They are His Father's words; therefore to reject them is to reject the Father and the Son. Such is His ultimatum though clothed in tender pleading tones, " <i>And if any man hear my words and believe not, I judge him not; for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.</i> " | 4. John 11:43 — A CRY OF AUTHORITY at the grave of Lazarus. The loud peal reaches the confines of Hades where the spirit of Lazarus is resting and brings him up to again enter his body. Tremendous is the authority Jesus wields over death and the grave, marvelous the power He displays! Yet for all this He is still rejected by the multitude. |
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"After these things Jesus walked in Galilee; for he would not walk in Jewry because the Jews sought to kill him. Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand." [Joh.7:1-2]

John's Gospel gives us a biographical sketch of the Son of God tabernacling in flesh and blood upon the earth. It is a continued story as we learn from these few words "*after these things*" found so frequently therein. The Jews' feast of the Passover was the special occasion emphasized in John 6, which brought Jesus to Jerusalem, while in our present portion it is the Feast of Tabernacles. That was the middle of the 3rd year of Christ's ministry. In both instances, these events are called the "*Jews' feast*," which in itself is significant, teaching us that they were no longer for the glory of God but for the boast of men.

Much of the significance of the glorious facts of the Old Testament was seen passing away in their fulfillment in Jesus Christ. The Jews' eyes were blinded to the meaning of the feasts which

they were so religiously observing. The reality of these set times, the substance of which they were the shadow, was walking around in their midst, but they did not recognize Him. How darkened to Divine Things is the natural man! He can hug a religious picture to his heart while letting go the essence of it. Satan surely has blinded men's eyes. God must give the revelation or no man understands.

The lesson here answers to the previous one as water does to bread. They both are absolutely necessary to the maintenance of life in the natural realm; likewise in the spiritual. The prophet Isaiah declares that he that walks righteously and speaks uprightly, he shall dwell on high and his "*bread shall be given him and his waters shall be sure*" [Isa 33:15-16]. Christ and the Holy Spirit are herein figured. As evidenced in these 2 chapters, life and the Communicator of Life are connected. The Holy Spirit answers to the holy anointing oil in The Tabernacle.

All the teaching centers around the Feast of Tabernacles, which was held in celebration of Israel's entrance into the land of Canaan and the consequent rest for the people of Israel. But that was only typical. As Paul declares, the real rest had not yet come. "*If Jesus (or Joshua, to whom it refers) had given them rest then would he not afterward have spoken of another day*" [Heb.4:8]. That is, the Spirit in David, who came on the scene centuries after Israel's rest of Canaan, says, "*Today if you will hear his voice harden not your hearts*" [Heb.4:7]. Here now in the Person of Jesus, the antitype of Israel's Canaan-rest was manifested; but the people were rejecting their blessing and the Blessor.

"For there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world. For neither did his brethren believe in him. Then Jesus said unto them, My time is not yet come: but your time is always ready. The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil. Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come. When he had said these words unto them, he abode still in Galilee. But when his brethren were gone up, then went he also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret. Then the Jews sought him at the feast, and said, Where is he?" [Joh.7:4-11]

Jesus goes up to Jerusalem in secret, substituting the Feast of Pentecost for the Feast of Tabernacles. The, Feast of Pentecost refers to His 1st Advent and the Feast of Tabernacles refers to His 2nd Advent. Pentecost resulted from the cross and is of far higher character than the Feast of Tabernacles can show. The one is individual; while the other is of nation-wide value. The first makes way for the second. In other words, Christ must come and die ere the Spirit will be sent down to men, and Israel and the world find peace and rest in deliverance from sin. Pentecost must fully come before the joy of the Feast of Tabernacles can ever be realized.

The Holy Spirit came in answer to Christ's ascension to the right hand of His Father [Act.2]. The nation of Israel rejected Him as they had their Messiah; therefore, they are wanderers upon the face of the earth. The Holy Spirit then began the present purpose of this age—taking out of the Gentiles a people for the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. When the number of this people is complete and the body perfected in the heavenlies, then the Feast of Tabernacles (which speaks of their inheritance) will be realized by the nation of Israel. They will accept Jesus at His second coming and enter into rest and blessing.

The teaching here centers on the meaning of the feast. Jesus going up in secret is significant in more ways than one. His brethren, after the flesh, are not in harmony with His attitude. Those nearest the Light are blind to its rays. They too are seeing things according to the flesh and want a Messiah after their own heart. Jesus is too holy and humble for them; a solitary figure in a hostile world. He abides alone in His unique Manhood. The time is not come for His showing to Israel in the manner of their desires. He must be received as the Sacrificial Lamb by Israel

before they can enjoy their inheritance; they are not yet ready for this denouement. Jesus is not even a welcome guest in their midst; nevertheless, they are looking for Him.

"And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him: for some said, He is a good man: others said, Nay; but he deceiveth the people. Howbeit no man spake openly of him for fear of the Jews." [Joh.7:12-13]

Jesus was an attractive personality, a distinctive character; positive in every detail of His being. People were conscious of His proximity. They knew when He was around—He left an impression. People were always speaking of Him; the few for Him, the many against Him. Some said He is a "*good man*" while others declared, that He "*deceiveth the people*." Opinion is always divided about Him; men cannot be neutral in their attitude toward this Man. The leading question in every generation is, "*What think ye of Christ?*" [Mat.22:42]. Eternal issues depend upon our acceptance or rejection of Him. He is good and will not deceive, for deceivers are not good. The controversy waxed strong; however no man came out openly in His defense for fear of the religious rulers of the people. Religion if it is not of God is devilish.

"Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught. And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned? Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me." [Joh.7:14-16]

During the feast (the 2nd division of the chapter) Jesus shows Himself. He enters into the Temple and without an invitation begins to teach. His knowledge amazes even His enemies. They cannot understand how He acquired His learning because He had not been to any of the rabbinical schools or universities of theology or in fact to any sort of school. The Jews were even as people today. Certain wrong ideas are apparently immortal. Here is one of them: "to be of reputation religiously you must be graduated from a theological school." Some great leaders have risen above such stigma (such as Spurgeon, Moody, Peter, and John; and before them, the Master Himself); but compared to the many, these are only the few. Education is good to have but not at the expense of the power of the Holy Ghost. As has been proved, He will use the man of learning but He can also use the one without any culture or learning whatsoever. As the ignorant but fervent evangelist once told the learned Bishop Brooks, who was endeavoring to improve his English, "The Lord saves by grace and not by grammar."

"If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. 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." [Joh.7:17-18]

Jesus possessed the culture of heaven. He had been in the school of the Holy Ghost and had been learning the Scriptures, His text-book since childhood; hence, He was an expert clergyman as well as swordsman. He was dexterous in the use of the Scriptures. He tells those around Him that His doctrine was not His, but was of Him that sent Him. We have remarked before that this Gospel is that of the **Sent One**. He adds, that they would not be in doubt as to His claim if they were willing to do the Father's will; for the spirit of obedience clears the soul of the vapors of earth, which hinders truth's entrance. If any man cries out for true knowledge, as for the gold and treasures of earth, he shall find it. If he wills to walk in the light, he shall get it. Amen! We know that it is so. Jesus declares that you can test the truth by trying it.

"Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me? The people answered and said, Thou hast a devil: who goeth about to kill thee? Jesus answered and said unto them, I have done one work, and ye all marvel. 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." [Joh.7:19-22]

He turns then upon His adversaries, warning them that the very Law to which they were clinging witnessed against them. He charges them with their murderous designs upon His life. The multitudes, ignorant of the intentions of the Sanhedrin, think His words to be that of a fanatic (lunatic), saying, "*Thou hast a devil (demon). Who seeketh to kill thee?*" Jesus returns to the miracles, the healing of the impotent man (recorded in John 5) which had aroused their malignancy. He declares that circumcision belongs to a period previous to that of The Law, though incorporated by Moses into that covenant, but it belonged to the fathers. It had another character altogether than that which they attributed to it. Later, Paul shows that it was the seal of the righteousness of faith in Abraham rather than the seal of the keeping of The Law [Rom.4:11]. The Patriarch received it when his body was dead and fruit from him was naturally impossible. The very time of his circumcision corresponded with its spiritual meaning. Jesus proceeds to show the Jews how that the rite of circumcision (its meaning the very opposite to that of The Law) is preferred by The Law.

"If a man receive circumcision on the Sabbath, that the Law of Moses may not be broken, are ye angry with me because I have made a man every whit whole on the Sabbath?" [Joh.7:23]

How inconsistently men act. They will religiously keep one decree or one law and break a dozen others and at the same time boast of their conduct as exemplary; judging others who differ with them on some little non-essential. Jesus put His finger right down on the sore spot and it made them wince; they wanted to kill Him for the hurt to their conscience. Those controversialists claimed kinship with Moses; but Moses would not have owned one of them. Natural relations are forfeited by apostasy. They only have a right to claim Abraham, Moses, Paul, Peter, and Jesus who are of their spirit and character. Christianity has a character which expresses itself in conduct. It is always in harmony with Truth, whether found in the ancient writings, the Old Testament, or in the New Testament. Oh how wonderfully the Scriptures agree and flow together when our eyes are opened.

Jesus is instructing them if they had ears to hear, that grace always had the priority over law; and though The Law was added [Gal.3:19-26], it never did amalgamate, or become a part of grace. It simply was brought on the scene and allowed a place for a time in Abraham's household (even as Hagar) to show men their need of grace. Sickness and death, the result of sin, could only be remedied by grace as Jesus had shown. "*Take up thy bed and walk*" [Joh.5:8], asserts the superiority of grace over The Law, even as the circumcision of a man upon the Sabbath. Jesus did not patch up the man and give him a crutch to help himself; but He brought him up from absolute ruin and helplessness. With such absolute proof of His Divine Claims as to His doctrine, the Jews are not convinced. Again there is a controversy about Him. His identity is the question that is stirring. Who is He? Why don't the rulers interfere? Do they know this is the Christ?

"Howbeit we know this man whence he is: but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is."
[Joh.7:27]

They advertise their ignorance by their pretensions to knowledge. Forgetting Bethlehem where He was born, they remember Nazareth where His youth was spent. They attached mystery to the Messiah and apparently this Man was too ordinary, too common, the simple Galilean, to impress them in the natural. But He searched their hearts and made them cringe before His x-ray. They did not want the spiritual Man, but the natural man. They desired a Messiah that they could understand.

While they were murmuring these things, the voice of Him of whom they spoke was heard, not to assert His birth in the city of David, or present His claim as David's heir, nor to recall the vision of angels proclaiming His birth, nor the visit of the wise men from the East who followed His star

and found and worshiped the Divine Babe. No, His words declare His amazement that they claimed to know Him and yet did not acknowledge Him.

"Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught, saying, 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. But I know him: for I am from him, and he hath sent me. Then they sought to take him: but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come." [Joh.7:28-30]

Their unbelief staggered Him; although as the omnificent God, He knew that the Jews would deny His claims and reject His words. Nevertheless, His answer has a 2-fold effect, for Truth is always 2-edged. In their wrath, some were stirred to greater lengths and endeavored to arrest Him; but, as it is often written in this Gospel, *"No man laid hands on Him, for His hour had not yet come."* He was the Sovereign of the universe, the Creator and Master of men. They were helpless to do their will until it became God's will. Then they could take Him and lead Him away. He was from God and they knew not the God from whence He had come.

"And many of the people believed on him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?" [Joh.7:31]

His signs convinced them of His Divine Mission, and for the time being, at any rate, they followed Him. The Pharisees became alarmed when they heard of the expressed opinion of some of the multitude concerning Him. Jesus, with perfect composure because He knew who He is and what He had come to do, declares there is no need for their anxiety.

"Then said Jesus unto them, 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?" [Joh.7:33-36]

He tells them that He is going away, back to Him who sent Him into the world. Days would come when at last they would seek Him, but it would be in vain. Then the solemn warning, *"where I am, thither ye cannot come."* The door of Paradise is locked in the face of everyone that closes his heart against Christ. To open the heart and let Jesus in is to let heaven in. But, as before, the leaders flung off the warning. Little did they realize what they were doing or whom they were rejecting. Satan had them blinded even as He has the religious leaders today. The Jews think that He is merely speaking of going to the dispersed of Israel, who have been scattered among the Gentiles, and teach them. This too was prophetic, though not according to their thoughts. Little did they imagine, as they lightly spoke of Him and His words, that [lo ammi](#), ("not my people") were to be written against them for the coming age in a more pronounced sense than ever before. Men do not know what decisions they are making when Christ is in view. Whence He had come and whither He was going there could be no welcome from the Father for any rejecter of the Son.

"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. This spoke 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." [Joh.7:37-39]

The last and greatest day of the Feast of Tabernacles had come. It concludes the division of John 7, signaling a great opportunity, a great experience, and a great prophecy. The grace and courage of Christ are sublime.

This is the 2nd of the cries of this portion of Scripture; the earlier one is in John 7:28. There is another in John 11:43, the **cry of command** that death release Lazarus. Here His **cry is of beseechment**, that men may come and receive of the comfort and power that is stored for them in Him. When He speaks of “*thirst*”, He is declaring the need of all men, when of “*drink*” He is revealing the supply that there is in Himself for the thirst; when He says “*Come*”, He is showing how alone the need and the supply can meet. The Fountain is ever flowing for the thirsty; but damned-up for those who will not come. If men do not drink they are not only robbing themselves of refreshment and blessing, but likewise others. To the one who is ever drinking, there is ever flowing out of his body “*rivers of living water*” to thirsty dying souls. Before there can be this outflow, there must be an inflow. Someone has asked this question, “Are you a river or a dry rut?”

John wrote this Gospel many years after Jesus was glorified, which explains this utterance in the light of history and experience. Not until Jesus was glorified (after His death, resurrection, and ascension) was the Spirit given; not until He is glorified spiritually in a believer’s heart and life can the believer have the rivers of living water.

The last day was the sublime day of the feast. The people who had gathered from all parts of the world to Jerusalem for the Tabernacle celebration were soon to separate. It was a day of rest and holy convocation, an 8th day, speaking of a **new creation**, the beginning of a new week of eternity with its blessed gathering and reunion, when all servile work shall have an end and all sin and sorrow will be forever put away. It is with this that the **last day of the feast** corresponded. The **previous 7 days** refer to the Millennium (the picnic day for the Jews and the world).

The **8th day** takes us further in its typical import, even into the eternal state. A ceremony of that day (which has no authority from Scripture, nevertheless is most impressive), was the pouring out of water drawn from the pool of Siloam. It was in celebration of the miraculous springs of water which God opened for the people in the wilderness. But the 8th day marked their entrance into Canaan, when the water-drawing ceased. On this day, the priests formed a procession from the springs up to the Temple. The first one filled a great bucket of water and passed it along the line to the chanting of psalms and prophecies and the sounding of the trumpets. When it was received by the last priest in the procession, he poured it out upon the ground as they sang, “*He shall pour water out of His buckets and His seed shall be as many waters*” [Num.24:7]. “*Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation*” [Isa.12:3]. It was a most glorious day in the courts of God in the Temple in Jerusalem. The people, a broken remnant, rejoiced with great gladness in hope that the Messiah would bring comfort and refreshment to the nation and to the land. Though the centuries have come and gone, their expectation has not yet been realized.

Where were those prophesied streams that were to flow out from Jerusalem in summer and in winter [Zec.14:8]? The ceremonies survived, but, so far, no signs of fulfillment were in evidence. Thirty years previous, there had been the breath of revival in the prophecies heard at Jesus’ birth and later in the thundering tones of John the Baptist; but their voices were now hushed. They had pointed to the Prophet, and signs and wonders of Messianic import were waking up their hopes. Yet, He fell short of their expectation.

- Why didn’t He use His power to rally the waning power of Israel around Him instead of feeding the poor and healing the multitude?
- Why did He not strike off from His people the Roman fetters?
- If He was the Messiah, for what was He waiting?
- What could His delay in putting His power in execution signify?

These were, no doubt, some of the questions which were troubling them and they found no answers.

Yet on that “*last day*,” as this strange, unique Figure in their midst cried out the invitation to them to come to Him and drink, many surely must have understood something of the significance of His words. They must have sensed the fact that Christ was the fulfillment in its deepest measure of the promise, and that he that believed on Him would not only receive the personal presence of the Spirit but pour forth of His fullness upon the barren waste around. It was truly the answer to the Scriptures that in Messiah’s times, the prophet, literally the “**weller-forth of the Divine**”, should not be 1 or 2 individuals but all His handmaidens and His servants. God had pledged Himself to pour out the Spirit, and thus the moral wilderness of the world would be changed into a fruitful field:

“Behold as the waters are poured out upon the ground and spread over the dry soil, so will I give the Spirit of my holiness on thy children and blessing upon thy children’s children” [Isa.44:3 Translation from the Targum].

The Jews knew these Scriptural promises well and acted out the truth of them each year at this feast. What they did not know was that the Fountain, the real **Siloam** (“*rest*”), in which all this refreshment and satisfaction was stored, was Christ who was standing in their midst, calling them to come to Him.

The **fulfillment of this prophecy** carries us on to Pentecost, when the Spirit of God came in answer to Christ’s prayer and the witness of His exaltation at the right hand of God. Peter’s quotation of Joel proves how truly the promise of our Lord fulfilled the Old Testament prophecy [Act.2:17]. But, there shall be another fulfillment for Israel. The **rivers** shall fall upon the nation of Israel when they repent and turn to God with all their heart. In the meantime, the present age intervened and upon The Church has fallen the rivers of water and they have been made fruitful and a blessing to others. Christ’s words paint a wonderful picture of a man indwelt by the Spirit of God. As one has said, “It seems too highly drawn except for a picture of any save the rare exceptions among Christians.” But it ought not to be so. Each of us should long for such an experience as is portrayed by these words of Jesus.

The Spirit of God:

- the **LIVING CENTER** of the practical life,
- the **ENLIGHTENER** of mind and heart,
- the **ENERGY** of the affections and will, and
- all **POWER** and all **WISDOM**, moving in us, to hold us for Christ even against all that is in the world that would draw us away from Him!

What competency, what fullness for all times and all service does this not imply! An eternal supply is thus offered to all that will take it; a perpetual spring in a vessel of earth which must, of necessity, at times overflow the receptacle...the smallness of which need not limit the spring. If we think of the spring and not of the body, this wonderful promise is not too much to say of the Holy Spirit. It is Jesus’ own estimate of the Gift which He gives and who is as able as He to witness of His worth? Our experimental knowledge of His power will depend upon our yieldedness to Him. How much are these living waters allowed to flow out? In the measure as we are a blessing to others.

These sublime utterances relative to the living water which accorded so with their Messianic promises set all the people guessing. Yes, Christ was a mystery. How could it be otherwise? He was the Center and Circumference of all things. We marvel that His earthly body could contain, even for a brief span of years, such immensity; the very God Himself in a tabernacle of flesh. Some enquire, "Is He the Prophet or the Christ?" Others ask, "Or is He neither?" Such were the various comments. Again, there was a division among them. Can Christ come out of Galilee? Out of the portion of the land which was under a cloud? A mixed multitude dwelt there not the pure-blooded Israelite. The greater part of the people held the Galilean Jews in contempt. Christ could not be of that character; so the argument continued.

"Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him? The officers answered, Never man spake like this man." [Joh.7:45-46]

Then came the officers to take Jesus, but His body was holy ground until He gave the signal. They returned to the leaders with the report of their failure to arrest Him, saying, "*Never man spoke as this Man.*" The leaders were nonplused for the moment, but turned not from their intention to do away with "*the deceiver,*" as He appeared to them. The power of His Deity held them back.

"Then answered them the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived? Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him? But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed." [Joh.7:47-49]

That is the same opinion that the clergy hold today in reference to the laity. They argue, "Ignorant of theology and higher education, what can they tell us?" "They are ignorant so far as men's things are concerned." Nevertheless, it is the little and humble soul to whom Jesus reveals Himself. There was at least one learned man, a Pharisee, the night school pupil, Nicodemus, who believed on Him, and now steps in.

"Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them,) Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth? They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet. And every man went unto his own house." [Joh.7:50-53]

They ask suspiciously, "*Art thou also of Galilee? Search and look, for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.*" They were mistaken again. This statement was not the truth. **Jonah** (their type in one sense in his disobedience and consequent chastisement being cast into the waters and later into the whale's belly) was of Galilee. He was also a type of Christ who took the place of the disobedient and sinful Jew as well as that of all men and fell under the waters of judgment and died as the transgressor. His spirit went down to Hades, remaining there 3 days and 3 nights; even as Jonah was that same time in the whale's belly. The people are in a quandary and go their way to their individual homes, not seeing or believing.

THE CANDLESTICK SET UP [JOH.8]

"Jesus went unto the mount of Olives; and early in the morning He came again into the temple and all the people came unto Him; and He sat down and taught them" [Joh.8:1-2]

We have here a most interesting narrative. John 8:1 connects with the preceding chapter. Each man went unto his own home; but Jesus had no home in this world. He went to the Mount of Olives where, alone with His Father, He spent the night in prayer. In the morning, led by the Holy Spirit, Jesus came again to the temple, to meet the vicissitudes of the day. He is the Teacher; so, He sat down to instruct the people and they flocked around Him. Some were eager to hear His words; while others were present to lay a snare upon Him. They were keener in exposing the sins of their fellowmen than in confessing their own. Some of those self-righteous

souls are alive and well today. They profess reverence for religious things; but, inwardly they are full of iniquity and malice even as were those Scribes and Pharisees of long ago. Men are unchanged except by the grace of God.

There are 3 parts to this 8th chapter of John, namely:

1. The **Woman** [Joh.8:1-11],
2. The **TRUE WITNESS** [Joh.8:12-30], and
3. A **TIMELY WARNING** [Joh.8:31-59].

1. THE WOMAN [JOH.8:1-11]

The Scribes and Pharisees bring into the Temple a woman taken in adultery, and setting her in a conspicuous place, demand that the Teacher play the part of Moses. This little episode has been the battle-ground of legality versus grace from an early date. The verdict announced is a hard pill for the self-righteous to swallow. They would relegate the story to another place in Scripture, or take it out altogether. But we cannot allow that it is not in the perfect order of Jesus in this chapter. It is necessary as an illustration to the sermon that follows, which fact we have noticed is peculiar to John's Gospel. Without this little diagnosis of the heart of all men, given by the great Doctor of Divinity, we would not have the key to the lesson herein unfolded.

The Light of the world must reveal that which is hidden. In the darkness, dirt and decay may escape observation; but the light shows them up. The woman and her accusers are both exposed by the light; but the woman does not care, her condition was manifest before. It is her tormentors that shun the light and go out to hide their guilt and sin. Therefore, we cannot give up the illustration found at this place. We are assured that Jesus' victory the previous day over the rulers amazed the common people...it caused some comment. Then, just as today, people were people; controversy claimed their attention. They are eager to hear what this Man will say today; they are not disappointed. They probably affirm that this is the best yet. The leader's futile attempts upon His Person have discouraged them on this line; but they have other tactics to try in order to defeat Him in the eyes of the people. They connive a scheme whereby they hope that He will commit Himself as an offender against The Law (taking issue with Moses), then they will have the populace on their side.

It was the very time for such an effort; in some respects extreme, yet the unusual was necessary. Their plot was against the Friend of publicans and sinners and was well-conceived, Satan being its father. This Man, who dared assume the prerogative of forgiving sins, must be brought out in the open. He had not yet pronounced the pardon on anyone openly condemned by Moses' Law; but now they would make Him declare Himself as for or against the leader of religious Jewry.

"And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not." [Joh.8:3-6]

Jesus had said that He went after that which was lost. Well, without any doubt, they brought such a case to Him; a woman taken in the very act of adultery. Moses' Law had decided her fate. Their question, "Would Jesus dare to reverse that sentence?" If not, His reception of sinners had limitations. If He did, His followers would have to choose between Him and Moses. His persecutors were no doubt jubilant; success seemed obvious.

"So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." [Joh.8:7]

His sermon on the mount was somewhat a contrast with the ancients. May they not also have heard His expression, "*The law and the prophets were until John*" [Luk.16:16]? Such sayings, multiplied and exaggerated (as is common among men), would encourage them in their hope as they came to the Teacher for His opinion. Their surprise must have been great when, instead of the answer they expected, "*He, stooping down, wrote with his finger on the ground.*" They do not understand the action but continue questioning Him. Finally, He lifts Himself up, and facing them, gives them an answer, but it is not the one they want. Christ is not on the scene to reverse Moses' sentence. It is a true and righteous verdict (such a sinner should be stoned) but here the new Law Giver adds a further word, "*Let him that is without sin among you, cast the first stone at her.*" In other words, He is saying, "Let the hands be spotless that carry out the sentence of The Law." He is answering as the Teacher (for so they address Him) not as the Judge. They might say, even as men today would say, "Are law and order to be suspended because there are no holy hands to officiate?" No. Jesus would not speak these words as a Judge. The Judge has to do with the accused, not with the executioner. Jesus plainly refused this place at His first advent. He says to one who would have put Him in this office, "*Man, who made me a judge, or a divider over you*" [Luk.12:14].

In this instance the Teacher, Jesus, is dealing directly with the questioners, not with the accused. They would set Him in opposition to Moses; but He plainly refuses to allow such an allegation. He shows that He alone understands Moses. He uses The Law for the purpose for which it was given—to cut away men's rags of righteousness and make them to feel the sharp edge of its condemnation. The Law's office was to convict men of sin in order that they might realize their need of God's sovereign grace. He that was without sin was the man for which The Law was looking. Like Diogenes and his lamp, which were on a quest for a holy man, so The Law never found one until Christ came upon the premises of this old world. Because of the sentence of The Law, death threatened all men. None could see the face of God and live. This lesson the Teacher fain would teach them; but how dull they were.

"And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst." [Joh.8:8-9]

Men are curious as to what He wrote; but that is easy to understand. It was in the dust that the sentence of fallen man was written, "*Dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return*" [Gen.3:19]. God spoke these words to Adam in the day that he sinned. Here is the only instance where we find Christ writing, He is affirming the sentence of the Creator upon the fallen creature Adam. The Last Adam condemns the first Adam. When Adam sinned, all his progeny came under the sentence of death. Physical death was the penalty for Adam's sin. All men are included in his condemnation. Jesus is here setting his seal to this fact; however, He is doing more. He is affirming the later sentence of eternal death which is affixed to the breaking of The Law. The one refers to original sin; the other to individual transgression which men commit, because of the nature of sin which they inherit from Adam. The sword has not been wielded in vain. The accusers of the woman will not acknowledge that it has touched, or cut them; but the proof is shown by their action. They flee from the presence of the swordsman, "*the eldest unto the last, and Jesus was left alone with the woman.*" Thus the attack failed of its purpose. The would-be accusers leave the woman behind them. It is impossible to stone her with the words of the Teacher ringing in their ears. She remains in the light which the self-righteous found intolerable. It reveals to her no more than that which she knew already. She is guilty and lost. The retreat of those men had not altered that fact; but she did not know what sentence was ahead of her. The Man, the Teacher, had not reversed Moses' law; though for the moment His words have freed her from her captors and apparent executioners.

"When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." [Joh.8:10-11]

What will He say? What will He do? No doubt, both questions were troubling her. Then He says in gentle tones, "*Woman, where are thine accusers? Hath no one condemned thee?*" She answers, "*No man, Lord.*" He says, "*Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.*" According to what we read here, she utters no words of thanks or praise of Him; but we are sure that a work was wrought in her heart that her tormentors missed. His words "*Go, and sin no more*" were not spoken in vain or in irony. They carried the enabling to obey in their grasp. Her deliverance from her captors was but the prelude and earnest of a far greater deliverance...deliverance from the claims of sin and Satan. She is free, in a 2-fold sense. The greater than Moses, the Man from glory, had shown the superiority of Grace over Law. He was the only one who had clean hands; therefore, according to His own words, He could cast a stone at her and kill her. But He refused to do this; rather, He gave her life and a victory over the sin which had enslaved her. He overruled the verdict of The Law, written in the dust, by the introduction of Grace engraved in strength on the heart. As we read in David's Psalms, "Thou hast brought me into the dust of death" [Psa. 22:15]; Jesus went down into the dust and arose; thus, He is able to deliver mankind from the penalty of sin (death) which was hanging over their heads

It was in view of Calvary and the momentous issue of the cross that Jesus could absolve the woman from her guilt and deliver her from the sentence of death. He was the scapegoat ordained to die, and all those who believe escape death as the penalty. "*Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ and the life is the light of men*" [Joh.1:4, 17].

2. THE TRUE WITNESS [JOH.8:12-30]

Then spake Jesus again, saying unto them, I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true." [Joh.8:12-13]

Herein we commence the 2nd part of John 8...the **True Witness** is declaring Himself. The Candlestick is being exhibited in The Tabernacle. The sun is rising above the hills of Judea and its beams are falling upon the world. That light cannot be shut up in one little part of the world. All nations shall receive of its light and blessing. Jesus makes a full and Divine Claim for Himself and immediately the Pharisees challenge His words. They declare that His witness is not true. The Rabbis denominated the Supreme Being the Light of the world. This title assumed by Jesus was an offense to the Jews. The Messiah also was frequently spoken of by the Prophets under the emblem of light [Isa.49:6 and 60:1]. Therefore, by applying the symbol to Himself, the Jews knew that He was claiming the Messiahship; again there is a controversy.

"Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go. Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man. And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me. It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me. Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also. These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on him; for his hour was not yet come." [Joh.8:14-20]

Jesus tells His challengers that He speaks from knowledge whereas they have only ignorance to oppose Him. While they know nothing of His identity, He is aware from where He came and

where He is bound. They are of the flesh and can only judge from that plane. He was identified with the Father and His judgment was in harmony with the throne of God.

His Father bore witness of power, of which at another time Jesus said, “*The father who abideth in me doeth the works*” [Joh.14:10]. Jesus could so speak because **He and the Father were Divinely One**; but this witness they would not accept. They meet it with the question, “*Where is thy Father?*” He answered in no uncertain manner, “*Ye neither know me, nor My Father.*” To know the one was to know the other. He spoke thus in the treasury of the Temple; the hand of God being so powerfully upon Him that they could do nothing. No one laid hands upon Him. The hour of His going awaited His will not theirs, “*I go my way and ye shall seek me and die in your sins. Whether I go, ye cannot come.*” But they have no ear and no heart. His way was not their way. The warning passes over their heads. Their seeking Him would not be in repentance but in idle curiosity; therefore, they would not get the answer they sought and would die in their sins and in defeat.

“Then said the Jews, Will he kill himself? because he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come. And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world.” [Joh.8:22-23]

The Jews sarcastically enquire, “*Will he kill himself?*” Ah, little did they realize who they are mocking. He indignantly answers, “*Ye are from beneath, I am from above.*” As far as heaven is from hell, so great is the difference between them. They are of this world, whose ruler is Satan; they speak his language and are moved by him. There is nothing of God about them. Though they profess His name and faith, they do not sense His presence nor know His power. How very like to conditions today! Although separated by 2 millenniums, the same manner of people is on the scene today. Unregenerate man is identically the same in every age. Three times Jesus reiterates His warning, “*Ye shall die in your sins; for if ye believe not that I am, ye shall die in your sins*” [Joh.8:21-24]. His words announce fearful doom for unbelief! They are aroused at last by this statement thrice repeated.

“Then said they unto him, Who art thou? And Jesus saith unto them, Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning. I have many things to say and to judge of you: but he that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him. They understood not that he spake to them of the Father.” [Joh.8:25-27]

Their attitude to Him was the striking item in His declaration. “*Who art thou?*” they ask. Jesus tells them that He is just the same as He has been declaring from the beginning...**the Messiah**. What use to continue? They will not hear or heed His announcement. He could tell them much more, many things about themselves, but He will only say, “*but he that sent me is true*” [Joh.8:26]. He makes no mistakes. He speaks the things that He has heard of God; no more, no less. But they are deaf to spiritual things; His words are not understood.

Jesus then goes on to speak of His lifting up which they in their unbelief will accomplish. As decreed in the eternal counsel, Jesus is going away in that manner. Afterward, He will be manifested and vindicated. His resurrection will be the witness that He is the Sent One of God, the obedient Servant of Jehovah. He does nothing and speaks nothing of Himself. His ear was digged (opened) as David declared in Psalm 40:6, “*Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened.*” He learned of His Father morning by morning (Isa.50:4-11). The latter portion, the Prophet speaking of the Messiah, is marvelous. It is an apparent description of the scene before us in John 8.

The Servant of the Lord is bearing witness of Himself and challenging anyone to dispute His testimony. His Father who sent Him is with Him. He is not left alone because Jesus always does those things which please God. **Obedience was the keynote of His life.** God’s Word and will were uppermost with Jesus. He knew Himself and also knew that the Father was pleased with His attitude of childlike faith in Him. Likewise is the case of His disciples. Faith will open the pearly gates to anyone; but obedience to the Father’s will wins His applause and

approval. At this point, the Jews appear impressed for we read, *"Many believed on Him."* His witness of Himself is finished and is found effectual.

3. A TIMELY WARNING [JOH.8:31-59]

"Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on Him, If ye continue in my Word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." [Joh.8:31-32]

With these pointed instructions, we begin the 3rd stage of the 8th chapter of John. Jesus is warning those Jews who had professed to believe on Him. He is telling them that continuance in faith is the proof of its reality. Presently, they resent His words and again lapse into unbelief. They are disappointed. Perhaps, when He had spoken of His lifting up they thought He meant exalted as King, and that just suited them. They believed in that sort of a Messiah...a strong, dominating personality; a ruler was that for which they were looking. But His further words are far from turning them to any expectation of political glory. Rather otherwise. His words point only to the need of personal salvation; they refuse any such insinuation. What, they the seed of Abraham needing such deliverances! *"They were never in bondage to any man!"* [Joh.8:33] is their answer. That was a gross exaggeration; for at that very time, they were under the Roman yoke. Jesus does not raise the question, but goes deeper. With one of His double affirmatives He plunges in the sword.

"Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." [Joh.8:34]

He shows them the bondage to which He refers, for that which men often count freedom is the greatest slavery. The Jews, as well as all other men, are herein held captive and must be set free. This is only possible through God's power. Jesus continues His warning.

"And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." [Joh.8:35-36]

Jesus explains that bondmen cannot abide in the house, either God's house or man's house. Servants are not sons; only sons have rights in the home. We cannot help but see the reference here to Hagar and Ishmael, as the Apostle illustrates in Galatians 4:22-31. The 2 seeds of Abraham were plainly in view here. The casting out of the bondmaid was soon to come to pass. The cross was the place of the separation. Herein is witnessed the rejection of the flesh, even the most moral of all mankind, even as were the Jews. It is the Son that abides forever, of which Isaac was the type and Christ and all His progeny the antitype and reality. The spiritual Seed is the Son. The fleshly line is the Servant. The Son is free. He is not in bondage to sin, nor sovereignty. He is God's free man; owning the rule of heaven not of earth. Christ is the Seed and Son through whom other free men are brought into being. *"If therefore the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."* There is no mistake. Christ alone can deliver men from the bondage of sin and give them the right to sonship. He is plainly declaring that their fleshly birth, though carrying with it some honor and responsibility, was not enough. He did not deny that they were born of Abraham; but that was not title to freedom and sonship.

There must be the corresponding likeness in the heart and conduct. When they dare to go further and rest upon their national privilege and claim God as their Father, He must be faithful and show them their true character and likeness. Harsh, apparently were His words; but their pride and self-presumption called for such denunciation.

"I speak that which I have seen with my Father, and ye do that which you have seen with your father." [Joh.8:38]

Jesus shows how far they were removed in reality from what they professed. They claimed to be the people of God and they were the custodians of His Law and Oracles; yet, when His Son and representative came to them they did not know Him. And more, they sought to kill Him. If they had been men of faith, like Abraham, they would have recognized the Son who proceeded from the Father. But alas! His speech they did not understand. As is evident, His words were spiritual while they were earthly. He is speaking plainly—straight out from the shoulder. Finally, He declares their pedigree.

"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." [Joh.8:44]

We are taught by these words that continuous rejection of Christ is dangerous...it is of Satan. In believing Satan, the Jews were led to murder Jesus. The devil was the instigator and author of their rebellion and apostasy. He is the father of all sin and sorrow. All manifest evil may be laid at his door. And, when we listen to Satan instead of God, we are on the way to becoming Satan's children, for whom there is no salvation. Some people make a great boast of their pedigree, even as the Jews; yet, they are ignorant or forgetful of the fact that character settles the question. As we follow on to believe God, we become like Him and vice versa. As men follow on to believe Satan, they become like him. He was a murderer from the dawn of his day. He would have killed God to get His throne. He injected this poison into men and they killed Christ. Because they were filled up with the devil's words of falsity they could not hear God's words of Truth.

They turned with anger upon Jesus, *"then said they to him, we be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God"* [Joh.8:41]. They were giving Him a thrust saying, that His birth was of a sinful character, because His mother was with child while yet unmarried. They would not believe the mystery of the incarnation, though it was written in their Scriptures that *"Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call His Name, Immanuel"* [Isa.7:14]. This very fact, His mother's virginity while yet with child, marked Him out as the Son of God; but their insulting words proved they were the sons of Satan. Jesus further declares,

"He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God." [Joh.8:47]

That is the way to know whether people are of God. Do they understand His words? If not, it may be said to them, even as here, *"Ye are not of God."* This was the last straw.

"Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?" [Joh.8:48]

This is a 2-fold reply to His double charge:

- To the 1st, that they are not true children of Abraham, they retort that He is a Samaritan.
- To the 2nd, that their father is the devil, they say that He is possessed with a demon. They falsely spoke thus. They knew that He was a Galilean.

"Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me. And I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth." [Joh.8:49-50]

Because Jesus is seeking to help any weak or contrite one who is willing to hear, He does not respond to the insult nor quarrel with them. He simply states the fact that they are dishonoring Him and that He seeks not His own glory. The Father knows and judges accordingly. He desires

and seeks after the glory of His Son, because of His stoop unto death in the will of God. Then Jesus closes His warning with comforting assurance to His disciples with His double affirmative.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death." [Joh.8:51]

The Jews meet His words with derision; for they know of no removal of death save by dissolution.

"Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself?" [Joh.8:52-53]

Abraham the great progenitor of the race, was dead; also the prophets. Who dares to promise exemption to the disciples from this foe? Jesus calmly replies that if He, as a man, is honoring Himself, that is empty and foolish talk; but He speaks as the Son of God. His Father honors Him; also, he who honors Him shall be honored of His Father. *"I know Him and keep His Word"* [Joh.8:55], He says.

Throughout this debate, the claims of Christ are credible only as we believe that He was God. The Jews not only do not understand Jesus, but they misquote Him. Yet, their sinful hate only draws from Him another mighty claim, *"Before Abraham was, I am"* [Joh.8:58]. The word **was** implies creation but the word **am** implies existence. Thus, He is taking the Old Testament title of Jehovah. Deity was there manifested; but no knee bowed to Him, no tongue confessed His name in loving homage. What is the sequel? Jesus hid Himself from them.

"Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by." [Joh.8:59]

FIRST TO CAST A STONE

IF THERE'S ONE WHO OFTEN FALTERS
BY THE WAYSIDE IN DESPAIR,
SEEMS UNUSUAL HIS SHORT COMINGS,
DO YOU HOLD HIM UP IN PRAYER?
IF THE WEAK SHOULD STUMBLE, BRETHREN,
IF HE CANNOT STAND ALONE,
LET THE PERFECT ONE AMONG YOU
BE THE FIRST TO THROW A STONE.

IF SO OFTEN HE HAS WAVERED,
YOU CANNOT BELIEVE HIM TRUE,
HAVE YOU MENTIONED IT TO JESUS
AS THE STRONG ONE OUGHT TO DO?
DO YOU EVERY STOP, CONSIDER?
HAVE YOU NO FAULTS OF YOUR OWN?
LET THE PERFECT ONE AMONG YOU
BE THE FIRST TO THROW A STONE.

IS THERE ONE WITH CROSSES HEAVY,
SEEMS HE CANNOT CARRY ALL?
AND HE DON'T KEEP STEP AS WE DO
IF HE EVER CHANCE TO FALL,
DO YOU PLEAD WITH GOD FOR MERCY
TILL HE ANSWERS FROM THE THRONE?
LET THE PERFECT ONE AMONG YOU
BE THE FIRST TO THROW A STONE.

ANONYMOUS

John 9 connects with the preceding 8th chapter. It is a continuation of the same theme: “Jesus, the Light of the world.” He is manifesting the healing rays of that effulgence by making the physically blind to see. Previously, Jesus had opened the spiritual eyes of a poor blind woman and He sought to do the same for the Jews and the blind guides of the Jews; but, that was ineffectual. They refused His service on their behalf and would have put out the light if they could have done so.

“They took up stones to cast at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the Temple, going through the midst of them and so passed by.” [Joh.8:59]

Oh how sad is the record! The same thing is done today. Just as Jesus went out of that Jewish Temple, today He is going out of the midst of the Gentiles; hiding Himself, and so passing by. Men do not know the day of their visitation; and yet, an individual here and there is illuminated and instructed. The Light must shine in the darkness somehow, somewhere. It cannot be entirely hidden. Passing out of the hands of His persecutors and would-be executioners, even as the woman previously, He is arrested by the pitiable condition of a man blind from his birth. His own danger is forgotten in the pleasure He derives from blessing others.

We separate this chapter into 3 parts:

1. **Demonstration** [Joh.9:1-12],
2. **EXAMINATION** [Joh.9:13-34], and
3. **REVELATION** [Joh.9:35-41].

1. DEMONSTRATION [JOH.9: 1-12]

“And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” [Joh.9:1-5]

The state of the blind man engages the heart of the Helper of Mankind. Born blind, what a calamity! And yet, this is the condition of all men by nature. Hence, the Light of the world has shone in the midst. Jesus was not in the world simply as a Sightseer, gazing upon the corruption and sorrow, but He was here as a Sight-Giver. For the first time during His present visit to Jerusalem, the disciples are now brought into the scene. They too appear interested in this case; but they make 2 mistakes which are common to men.

Like Job’s friends, they mistakenly ❶ **attribute specific sufferings to specific sin**. Many so judge today until the same sorrow overtakes them; then they change their opinion. Sometimes chastening is because of failure or disobedience; but often it is for pruning and greater fruitfulness.

The next mistake was that they are ❷ **moved to discuss the man’s case, instead of being moved to help him**, like Jesus was.

Theological discussion was and is a joy to Jews. The sad condition of the man was a puzzle to them, even as the dreadful state of humanity is to many at the present. They enquire, “Why did God create man to sin and suffer?” “Why did He make the devil when He knew the trouble that

he would cause?" These and similar questions trouble individuals. But Jesus does not talk about the why of the matter. He has not come to explain the condition of humanity but to help men out of their state. He is not asking how they fell into the mire but He is pulling them out of the mud. He did not come into the world to diagnose the evil but to triumph over it.

"I must work the work of him that sent me, while it is day," He says; His time was limited. His life-day upon earth was only a little more than 33 years; a little span. He could not waste precious time. He lets the light shine upon all mankind. *"The works of God should be made manifest in him."* The Creator had a great Man in view when He created Adam, or He never would have allowed the devil to ruin His work of art. Jesus came into the world and identified Himself with humanity to undo the works of Satan. This is strikingly figured by His manner of healing the blind man.

"When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing." [Joh.9:6-7]

His spittle, which He mixed with clay and then put the paste upon the eyes of the blind man, figured the union of the divine and human in Jesus Himself; the means whereby man was to be loosed from the bondage and darkness of the devil. It worked most wonderfully after the man obeyed the instruction of Jesus to wash in the pool of Siloam. This tells us of man's faith in the cleansing power of the *"fountain opened...for sin and for uncleanness"* [Zec.13:1].

There must be the appropriation of the work which Jesus accomplished by His death in man's behalf. The union of Deity with humanity has affected his redemption; but men must obey the injunction *"Go, wash."* The pool of the Sent One has been opened. Siloam stands at the service of all mankind; but each must step in and be washed before he can see. It is beautiful to behold the harmony of Scripture, even in the minutest type.

"The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged? Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he. Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened? He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight. Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said, I know not." [Joh.9:8-12]

The miracle of the opened eyes of the man who was born blind causes a decided stir among the people. His neighbors, who were familiar with his condition, were especially moved. They exclaim, *"Is not this he...This is he...He is like him."* The whole thing is amusing. How interested and curious the people were. Supernatural eyes that are being opened continually have ceased to impress the materialistic world. When a person is truly born again, his eyes being opened to the falsity and foolishness of the things of this world, his neighbors and friends deem him peculiar or fanatical. Only the very few are impressed and enquire as to how it happened. The majority are afraid that you will tell them. They go away from us. But we should witness to the wonder anyway, whether they desire the news or not.

In this case, the people want to hear all about the matter. They say, *"How were thine eyes opened?"* The man does not know very much, except that he was blind and now he sees. His reply was simple but effective. He did not know his Surgeon very well; but he knew what He had done. How many Christians are like him? They can tell very little about Jesus but they know that they have been converted. His presence at the right hand of God may be a secret to them but their testimony to salvation is clear. They have been saved and healed and they know it.

2. EXAMINATION [JOH.9:13-34]

The second part of John 9 is before us now. The **examination** begins with entrance of the Pharisees into the picture.

"They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind. And it was the Sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes. Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see. Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the Sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them. They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He said, He is a prophet." [Joh.9:13-17]

The neighbors bring the aforetime blind man to these blind guides that they may give their opinion. For the first time, we now learn that it was the Sabbath day when Jesus made the man to see. This was an insult to the Pharisees' rigorous code. They begin to enquire of the man how he had received his sight, etc., etc. He is not at all backward in declaring what he knows. His answer is right to the point. What a comedy. First the neighbors; then the Pharisees enquire. The parents also are questioned but not for the purpose of giving God the glory, rather for giving Jesus the cross.

The first objection is because of the day...it was the Sabbath. But what better day could Jesus find to work? Their **rest day** spoke of Christ and His work coming after man's 6 days were spent in futile endeavors to work out their redemption by keeping of The Law. It spoke of the end of man's doings when God had to take a hand in the matter of man's salvation. All the healings on the Sabbath were telling this story. God works when men stop. There is no 50-50 scheme in the redemption of mankind from sin and its penalty (death). God does it all or nothing. It is this fact of which the healing of the blind man on the Sabbath is the witness. "How was it done?" is the question; but that is not the important point. The opened eyes are the startling thing which confronts them. We may not know how men are saved; but the fact that they are saved is what matters. Immediately there is a division.

Because it was done on the Sabbath, the Pharisees take a decided stand against the healing of the man. They insist that Jesus is a sinner because He works on that day. The people take issue with them saying, "*How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles?*" [Joh.9:16]. An appeal is then made to the man as to what he thinks of Him who has opened his eyes. He boldly answers, "*He is a Prophet*" [Joh.9:17]. His courage is Divine. He believes and is not afraid to declare his faith. He was true as to what he knew and later gave more testimony.

"But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight. And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see? His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: But by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself." [Joh.9:18-21]

Then the parents are called. The Jews do not believe the man's testimony. They desire further evidence of his birth with blindness. The father and mother are fearful and wary of their replies. They feared the Jews; for it was agreed among the leaders that if any man did confess that Jesus was the Messiah that he "*should be put out of the synagogue*" [Joh.9:22]. Some people are more afraid of the church than of Jesus; more concerned about losing their place in the synagogue than their privilege in salvation.

Again, the Pharisees call the man whose eyes have been opened. All the people are occupied with him; for there is no doubt about the miracle after the witness of his parents. The leaders are indeed in a quandary. They endeavor to get the man to change his opinion of Jesus. His

testimony magnifies Him and they are afraid that the multitude will desert them and run after the Prophet. They say, “*Give God the praise: We know that this man is a sinner*” [Joh.9:24]. They are slipping and losing their cunning in their consternation. Their own spiritual darkness is made more manifest by their words. They are ignorant of God and His ways, as even the man now declares. Mark his wise retort.

“He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.” [Joh.9:25]

“He is not so dumb,” as men would say. He knows something and he puts “*I know*” over against their “*we know*.” He was a more powerful, expressive witness than they were, because his knowledge was based upon real experience and not hearsay or theory as was theirs. They again enquire as to what Jesus did to him and how He opened his eyes.

“He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? will ye also be his disciples?” [Joh.9:27]

He answered boldly. His faith growing as he witnesses, as is always the case. He is amazed that those who are the esteemed leaders of Jewry are so ignorant of the Prophet who has demonstrated His power. He has done so much; performing such a miracle right before their eyes; yet, they do not know Him. This fact is unfathomable to him and he expresses his mind in the matter.

“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.” [Joh.9:30]

He is a witness indeed. His spiritual eyes are opening wide. He is near to the understanding. He continues.

“Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.” [Joh.9:31-33]

He is flatly contradicting their statement that Jesus is a sinner. It is worshippers of God and doers of His will whom He hears. The healed man has the floor and appears to be doing all the talking; and he is making his words count. “*Since the world began, it was never known that a man’s eyes were opened who was born blind.*” Therefore he argues “*If he was not of God*” He could not perform this mighty miracle. The leaders cannot answer him. They are certainly in a quandary; but as is usual when they are getting the worst of the argument, they turn to throwing mud at their opposers. This was how all the sainted men of old were treated; e.g., Bunyan, Tyndale, Luther, Wesley, etc. However, their names will be remembered as long as the world lasts, while their persecutors and critics are forgotten. How bold the man grows because a flood of light is filling his soul.

Now the Jews are angry. They are getting rattled and cry “*...Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out*” [Joh.9:34]. Ah, what a blessing. He is in good company, for Jesus is also outside.

3. REVELATION [JOH.9:35-41]

Jesus finds him and now he gets the **revelation** that all those wise and prudent self-righteous legalists missed. His excommunication was his promotion. He lost the synagogue but found the Savior. It is much better to be outside those churches that refuse to let Christ inside. There are many of these religious clubs in our midst.

"Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him." [Joh.9:35-38]

Jesus said unto the man, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" "Who is he, Lord?" was the childlike answer. The **Great I Am** revealed Himself to the poor creature whom the Jews cast out; and he worshipped God.

"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." [Joh.9:39-41]

The Pharisees heard these words and asked Jesus, "Are we blind also?" Unbelievers see much more than we imagine they do. Sometimes, by their replies, we learn that they have a knowledge of the Truth which their attitude belies because they reject the Light, even as those critics of long ago. Jesus now speaks plainly to them, "If ye were blind, ye should have no sin; but ye say, We see, therefore your sin remaineth." People that have the light and reject it are the greatest sinners in God's sight, even though in the view of men, they may be most moral and respectable. These people are often greatly concerned about the heathen and the manner that they shall be dealt with when they should be concerned about themselves...how God will deal with them.

It is evident that because they were not physically blind, Jesus' words apply to the spiritual blindness of the people. The Pharisees claimed to see in every sense of the word, but they were the real blind folk; therefore, what can Jesus do when they refuse to acknowledge their condition? Nothing; absolutely nothing. He can only walk away in His sorrow and leave them to reap as they have sown. The eternal darkness and doom of the lake of fire awaits all who reject the Gift of God. We have the same ecclesiastical pretention of the leaders in Christendom today. Their blindness and hostility to the Truth is evident even as it was among the Jews. Though these have the Scriptures as their sole court of appeal, they denounce any who dare question their authority or disagree with their theology. They cast them out of the synagogue (sect); in other words, excommunicate them, and feel that they are doing God's service. The people fear such ostracism, even as did the parents of the man whose eyes were opened; but here and there individuals rejoice that they are counted worthy to be cast out into the company of Christ. They have their eyes opened, even as this blind man. They are in the light and the light is in them; while the pretentious class is walking in darkness and is made blind.

John 8 and 9 are connected. The Light of the true Sanctuary, the Tabernacle in the heavens, is herein viewed as shining forth in the wilderness of the world. Jesus was the antitype of the beautiful golden candlestick with its 7 branches, which Moses was instructed to make according to the pattern shown him in the mount and set in its place in the dwelling of God on earth in his day [Exo.26:31-38].

PERFUME AND PRAISE

O YES, THE ROSE MORE FRAGRANCE GIVES
WHEN IT IS CRUSHED THAN WHEN IT LIVES.
IT YIELDS AN OIL, AROMA SWEET,
WHEN IT IS BRUISED BENEATH THE FEET.
"ATTAR OF ROSES," PERFUME RARE,
THEY NAME THIS OIL FROM FLOWER FAIR.

LIKEWISE THE BIRD OF AIR AND SKY
MUST BE LONG CAGED AND ALMOST DIE

BEFORE HER SONG WILL THRILL THE HEART,
AND CAUSE THE TEARS FROM EYES TO START.
THE BROKEN HEART OF SKYLARK BLUE
BRINGS MUSIC SWEET TO ME AND YOU.

IT IS IN PRISON, LONE AND DREAR,
WHERE PRAISE TO GOD GROWS LOUD AND CLEAR;
FOR LOVE MUST BLEED AND BLEED AGAIN,
ERE JESUS' GRACE IS KNOWN BY MEN.
IT'S ALWAYS TRUE WITH PRECIOUS THINGS —
THEY'RE BORN OF BRUISED AND BEATEN WINGS.

CHRIST'S BROKEN HEART ON CALVARY'S HILL
SENT FORTH A PERFUME — AND DOES STILL.
THE THORNY CROWN AND SCARS SO DEEP
YIELD INCENSE SWEET AND MAKE LOVE WEEP.
THRU CRUSHING HOURS BY DAY AND NIGHT,
COME SINGING SAINTS OF REALMS BRIGHT.

THE DOOR TO THE TABERNACLE [JOH. 10]

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. He that entereth in by the door is the Shepherd of the sheep. To Him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear His voice and He calleth His own sheep by name and He leadeth them out." [Joh.10:1-3]

Previously, we saw that the flock of Christ (those believing in Him as the Messiah of Israel, the Son of God) are outside the fold of Judea. The blind man, whose eyes were opened, is a representative of the fold of Judea. But they are outside with Him, as He now unmistakably declares. This portion connects with the preceding chapter. The pronoun [you](#) of John 10:1 refers to the Pharisees of John 9:39-41; and the following verses record the discourse which arose immediately out of the miracle of the healed man and its effects.

There is a double revelation, **2 doors** are mentioned: ❶ The door into the Israelitish fold and ❷ the door into the flock of Christ, the true Shepherd. Israel, the sheep of Jehovah, was an ancient theme of the prophets. He who came into that fold must come with scriptural authority; otherwise, the nation could not be expected to receive Him. But this One came as it was written of Him. Every mark that pointed out the Anointed One, pointed out the Shepherd also. Those marks combined constituted the "door" or entrance by which the true claimant would come. All others were thieves and robbers; men seeking their own gain in ways of treachery and violence.

The true Shepherd of the sheep, Jesus Christ, fulfilled the predictions concerning the Messiah. He came at the definite time prophesied by Daniel, confessedly of David's line, and born at Bethlehem, displaying the signs which could not be confounded with any other. All these marks identified and pointed Jesus out as the true Shepherd of the sheep:

- He came through the door, which the porter, John the Baptist, opened to Jesus.
- The prophesying of His birth, including Zachariah, Elizabeth, and Mary.
- Simeon and Anna at His presentation in the Temple.
- His visible anointing with the Holy Spirit and the Father's testimony from heaven of His beloved Son.

- John the Baptist's announcement of Him as the Lamb of God.

Now, some of the sheep were beginning to hearken to His voice; for He was calling them each with a name which individualized them with perfect and tender knowledge. These listening, following ones were "*His own sheep*" but the greater number of the nation did not respond to His call. He had come to the Israelitish fold; yet the strange fact is that this one had other sheep within its boundaries. The call is an appeal to faith, which some evidenced and others did not; therefore, there was a separation. Some came out of Judaism altogether. They joined the great caravan of "Come-Outers." He leadeth them out. But here is the blessed fact. He is the First Come-Outer, as we read in His own words.

"And when He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him; for they know His voice." The principles of the Jewish fold are now to be abandoned. Law, its governing feature, was to be exchanged for **Love**. The Person of the Shepherd is ever to be before the sheep. His living voice is to be heeded rather than the cold commands on stone. "*The law is not of faith*" [Gal.3:12]; and faith alone is able to produce anything for God from humanity. "*Faith, if it has not works, is dead*" [Jam.2:17] so necessarily productive is it, if it is living. Law is a system of "don'ts" whose inspiring principles are self-interest and fear; while "*faith worketh by love*" and "*love seeketh not her own*" [1Co.13:5]. No one enjoys The Law. It is against the principles of our nature, as aptly expressed in the following lines by a little boy:

I MIGHT HAVE JUST THE MOST'EST FUN IF TWASN'T FOR A WORD,
I THINK THE VERY WORSTEST ONE THAT EVER I HAVE HEARD.
I WISH THAT IT WOULD GO AWAY; BUT I'M AFRAID IT WON'T.
'SPOSE 'AT IT WILL ALWAYS STAY, THAT HORRID WORD OF 'DON'T.'
"DON'T YOU MAKE A BIT OF NOISE, AND DON'T YOU GO OUT-DOORS.
AND DON'T YOU SPREAD YOUR STOCK OF TOYS UPON THE PARLOR FLOORS.
AND DON'T YOU DARE PLAY IN THE DUST, NOR TEASE THE PUSSYCAT.
AND DON'T YOU GET YOUR CLOTHES ALL MUSS'D AND DON'T DO THIS, OR THAT."
IT SEEMS TO ME I HAVEN'T FOUND ONE THING I WANT TO DO;
BUT WHAT THERE'S SOMEONE CLOSE AROUND 'ATS GOT A DON'T OR TWO.
AND SUNDAY, THAT'S THE DAY OF DON'TS, IT'S WORSE THAN ALL THE SEVEN.
O GOODNESS ME! I SURELY HOPE THERE WON'T BE DON'TS IN HEAVEN."

The Law genders to bondage not to liberty. It was a fence thrown around men, a curb upon a will that is naturally lawless, which it had no power to change, and which only fretted and stirred to open rebellion. Therefore, Christ must put "*forth His sheep*," implying the necessary power to free them of the legal system. For not only Judaism, but Christendom witnesses to the resistance that is manifest against the freedom into which Christ has brought His people. Like with Moses long ago, and with Christ, the people are ready today to stone us if we preach the liberty of the Gospel which was revealed to the Apostle Paul from heaven. God must still "*put forth*" His sheep from the organized corrals and fences which formalism and legalism have built up to keep the poor people from the green pastures and still waters into which the Shepherd desires to lead them. It is truly sad to hear the doleful bleating of the sheep. But some of Israel knew the true Shepherd's voice and they were drawn thereby and followed Him. He declares in the deep satisfaction of His heart, "*A stranger will they not follow; but will flee from him; for they know not the voice of strangers.*" This is spiritual knowledge for which they need not be versed in theological lore. In fact, the opposite is generally the case. The unlearned and common people heard the Shepherd's voice in Judea; likewise the same class hear Him today. Observe the 10 figures Jesus uses in this present portion of Scripture:

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. 2 doors , | 6. the THIEF , |
| 2. a FOLD , | 7. the FALSE SHEPHERD , |

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 3. the TRUE SHEPHERD , | 8. the HIRELING , |
| 4. the PORTER , | 9. the FLOCK , and |
| 5. the SHEEP , | 10. the WOLF |

"Then said Jesus unto them, verily, verily, I say unto you I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers; but the sheep did not hear them." [Joh.10:7-8]

Here we have a **2nd door** mentioned by the Shepherd. The **1st door** was the door by which He entered into the Jewish fold. This one is the door for **the sheep to enter into life and liberty**. It is no longer a question of a **Fold**. We hope everyone will get hold of this fact. Christ's sheep are outside with Him. They are a flock. They know their Shepherd. He asserts that other men had come before Him, as they have come after Him and will continue to come and claim His place until the end; yet, His sheep were not deceived. Always, there will be some who will hear His voice. But those to whom He is speaking understand nothing of what He is saying. Therefore, Jesus repeats and emphasizes His claim as The Shepherd of the sheep, dwelling upon their happiness with Him in contrast to their condition with those who would make them a prey, or at least follow their own interests, or leave them as a spoil to others. He is The Good Shepherd who would lay down His life for them, and that as the expression of the Father's love. Again He declares,

"I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved and shall go in and out and find pasture." [Joh.10:9]

Salvation is the beginning of the blessings to the flock of Christ; not as a possible attainment, but as a **Gift** of unconditional grace. It is never to be revoked. The positive security of His sheep tells us at once that He, and they, are outside the legal fold. There is liberty to go in and out; they are no longer controlled or confined by The Law. They may, in New Testament liberty, go back and find in Moses, in the Psalms and in the prophets, some precious things about Christ which are hidden there; but they belong no more to Judaism. There is pasture for them in the Old Testament writings and they appreciate the green pastures, and roam around and feed and marvel at the wondrous grace that was veiled in Moses' face, and they are made glad. Then, they find the glory shining in Jesus' face in the New Testament.

"The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." [Joh.10:10-11]

The Good Shepherd has the care. All the burden of sin has gone. The yoke of The Law has been broken and the sheep are free to follow their Leader. Wisdom and love are manifested by Him, and power which can lack no resources. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. On the contrary, The Good Shepherd comes to give life and that abundantly. Herein is seen a power beyond all creature might. Again, in the language used here, the theme of John's Gospel is emphasized. Life, which is eternal and a gift, is brought to our attention. The Shepherd must lay down His life for His sheep. Only thus could they belong to Him. This statement includes all time...it looks backward as well as forward. Calvary is the center—the only basis of blessing for humanity. Life to fallen men could only come through death, and fruitage for God comes from a new life. Only when the Son came into the world was eternal life fully manifested. It was seen in Him in the knowledge and communion with the Father, which He ever enjoyed, and revealed by Him as the portion of those who believed on Him. Now He had come, by whom all the ages had been framed and to whom all those of the past were looking forward. There was no faith in those who rejected Him; for He was *"the author and finisher of the faith"* [Heb.12:2]. He that believeth on the Son hath life and he that is not subject to the Son hath not life, but *"the wrath of God abideth on Him"* [Joh.3:36].

"But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep." [Joh.10:12-13]

Christ has proved His love to the uttermost. At any cost, He will protect His sheep. The hireling cares not for the poor creatures that are at the mercy of the wolf; for they are not his sheep. As history and nature abundantly witness, when the enemy appears, he leaves the field to take care of his own skin. The wolf catches, devours, and scatters the sheep. This devastation will be especially manifest in the great week, or 7 years of Daniel 9:27, which is yet to be fulfilled. The "hireling" mentioned by Jesus refers especially to the false prophet; and "the wolf" to the counterfeit king of prophecy; in other words, the 2 beasts of Revelation 13. One will influence the nation of the Jews to make an image of the Gentile king and command that all bow down and worship the idol. He will not protect them; but will give them over into the hands of the Satan-filled man. The wrath of God will fall upon them for this idolatry; and such a time of trouble as never has been known will come upon the nation of Israel as well as the whole world [Mat.24:21]. That will be an epochal period. This is the theme of the prophets of the Old Testament as well as being mentioned by Jesus, Paul, Peter, and John. The false shepherd comes to destroy and defeat the sheep; the true Shepherd comes to save, build up, and bless them. Neither did that all wait for redemption to be accomplished. Even in that hour, Jesus was giving life to humanity on the basis of the death He should die. He said,

"I am the Good Shepherd and know my sheep and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father, and I lay down my life for the sheep." [Joh.10:14-15]

The relationship existing between Himself and His Father is the same as between Himself and His sheep. It is a wondrous union – a communion wondrous deep and tender. The love implied in it is that He does all things for His sheep. Such an act of sacrifice and devotion gives the Father's heart a new reason for the love wherewith He loves His beloved Son. He declares "Therefore, doth my Father love me because I lay down my life that I may take it again" [Joh.10:17].

He did not give up the human body which He had taken upon Himself by which to accomplish His work. Oh no. The earthen vessel in which He must die, He took up again, though in a changed condition. The life He laid down He took up again to lay it down no more. He did not exhaust His life, nor limit His capacity and ability to work for man by His death. He served as a Servant upon the earth in the lowest depths of suffering and shame. Now, the same man, Jesus, serves upon the throne of glory in heaven. The Father's love rests upon Him continually. He is a delight forever to the Father, and in this perfect acceptance and satisfaction, all who believe on Him are accepted.

"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." [Joh.10:17-18]

The epistles of the Apostle Paul especially emphasize the place of honor and love His Church, or body, occupies with Him. Our acceptance in the Beloved is rooted in the deep unchangeable love of the Father to the Son. Furthermore, Jesus instructs that He is carrying out His Father's will in all that He was doing then and in that which He would do in the future. The life which He laid down was not by constraint, but a willing sacrifice. He had authority to lay it down. He was the only man who was not compelled to relinquish His life. He had authority to take up His life again. His Father had willed it so in both instances. For as Man, He would not dispose of his own life without His Father's sanction. And that is not all. He said, "This commandment have I received of my Father." Thus throughout, He is seen as the obedient Servant of the Divine Counsels; the Last Adam who lifted up the fallen race by His own obedience unto death [Rom.5:19]. The

Shepherd must die that the sheep might live, and that abundantly, as He has declared. The word **abundantly** signifies “*above the common*”, “*over and above*”, “*exceeding*”, “*superfluity*”, “*richly*” and “*abounding*”. In the spiritual, we are not called to an anemic and impotent life, but to an abounding life of victory. Even physically, we may expect and enjoy health and strength to serve our Lord all the days of our earthly sojourn. There may be exceptions; for God may train some people through their weakened bodies; but generally speaking, a robust, living, abundantly vigorous, and spiritual life will affect the physical. If we are brimming over with glory, our bodies get the overflow. “*The joy of the Lord is your strength*” [Neh.8:10] and the ecstatic expression of the speaking in tongues edifies or builds up the whole man [1Co.14:4]. But even with all these wonderful statements from the wonderful Man, there was little response, except from the most pronounced doubters. We have always noted the fact how the devil can move the old man to express himself. Even timid and backward people become bold in declaring heresy and infidelity. They are daring where angels fear to tread.

As Jews, the words “*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*” are unbearable to them. The “*other sheep*” that Jesus refers to are the Gentiles, who were to be called and become a part of the flock during this present evil age. That was a hard saying to a Jew. It always stirred him to rebellion if there was a suggestion that the Gentiles were to be blessed either as nations, or individuals. When Jesus read of His own anointing from Isaiah 61, in the synagogue at Nazareth, they expressed their commendation (though in unbelief of His Deity); but when He mentioned several Gentiles (Naaman and the Syrophenician woman), they were filled with wrath and sought to destroy Him [Luk.4:16-29].

“There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings. And many of them said, He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him? Others said, These are not the words of him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?” [Joh.10:19-21]

Some of them expressed themselves loudly, even as they do today. They repeated the old blasphemy, “*He hath a demon and is mad* (or raves).” Others will not say as much as this; but they are perplexed and cannot arrive at any decision regarding Him. It is ever thus. Some openly declare their unbelief and infidelity; while others say, “*He is a good man*”; but neither of these classes acknowledge Him as the Son of God, which is the real essence of the matter. He is not holy if not divine, nor good if not God.

A JEWISH FEAST

“And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter. And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon’s porch. Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.” [Joh.10:22-24]

We read of the Feast of Dedication that took place at Jerusalem 2 months later; but the connection is manifest. In reality, it was commemorating the rededication of Solomon’s Temple by Judas Maccabees after its profanation by Antiochus (about 165 B.C.). Jesus walking in the porch is surely significant, as carrying us back to that glorious time of its dedication by way of contrast. Solomon’s massive foundation remained. It had been repaired, but it was only a witness of the failure and ruin which had intervened. Again, the 2nd temple had been renewed by the hands of Herod, called the Edomite, with great magnificence; but no outward show could compensate for vanished spirituality and reality. It witnessed of the Pharisee and his legalistic teaching which had taken the place of the Living Voice that once spoke unto them in the days of Solomon’s glory. All went on apparently as it had been before men, but not in the sight of God. The Ark and Mercy Seat, where the blood should have been sprinkled, the basis of their fellowship, was gone.

Now, there is a New Voice in Solomon's porch; a Voice that did not ignore the ruin, neither was it in harmony with Phariseeism. As no other voice of men, it was a Voice that thrilled the heart and conscience. It was the returning Glory and the awakened Voice. It proclaimed itself everywhere in the temple and synagogue, as well as in the streets and quiet homes. Here was the One of whom the temple was but the figure. But the fervor of enthusiasm around was not for Him. Already He had been rejected, vilified, and blasphemed. The few, who really listened to Him and loved Him, were taking their places as outcasts with Him. His presence shone round about them. He was their Sanctuary if they were outside the material temple. The Jews came to Him in Solomon's porch and urged Him to tell them plainly if He is the Christ.

"Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you." [Joh.10:25-26]

The people were endeavoring to throw upon Jesus a responsibility which was their own. They attributed their uncertainty and doubt to His indefiniteness instead of their own unbelief; but He refused to let them get by with their accusations. He faced them with 2 facts: His words and His works. They refused to acknowledge either; thus, they were rejecting Him and His Father. They did not hear their Shepherd's Voice nor see His works which were His credentials from the Father. To reject Him was to reject God. Then Jesus uttered one of the greatest statements of all time for the comfort of the poor, weak, defenseless sheep that were hearing and believing Him.

"My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish, and neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." [Joh.10:27-28]

Another version translates it thus,

"They shall in no wise ever perish and no one shall seize them out of my hand."

It is the strongest possible affirmation for the absolute security of the people of Christ. First of all, they have a new nature and are called **Sheep**, akin to Jesus Himself in His humanity—the Ram of sacrifice and the Lamb of surrender. They also have a fleshly nature; which is not in conformity but in contradiction to the Christ life. This is a strange doctrine to many; nevertheless it is the true experience of every child of God. The character of the Divine Life, or sheep nature, masters the old life if the believer agrees with God and yields to Him. Divine Life abides; it is eternal. Jesus does not leave them in any doubt nor with any inference whatever; though men add to His words. He declares that His sheep *"shall never perish."* The negation faces every way, embraces all consequences and all danger, and meets all the vicissitudes of life. The weakness of the creature, its mutability and corruptibility, as born of Adam, and all its changeability is known to the uttermost; yet here are His words of assurance and comfort. Jesus goes even further. He views the world and its prince, the devil, as against His poor sheep, and He seals His assurance with a double seal. He declares: "They are mine!"

"My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one." [Joh.10:29-30]

Then the revelation of His oneness with the Father is declared. The Shekinah Glory bursts forth, *"I and the Father are One."* The Jews understand Him well now. There is nothing hazy, or undefined by these words. They had asked for a plain statement of His identity. When He gave them the answer *"they took up stones to stone Him"* [Joh.10:31]. We can scarcely believe that such hatred is in the human heart; but it is. The worst part of it is that it manifests itself against that which is good. Nevertheless, they could not carry out their evil purpose. He is the Master of His own destiny. The might of His Presence stilled them.

"Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God. 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?" [Joh.10:32-36]

He calmly appealed to them with these words in the face of their hatred and stone-laden hands: *"Many good works have I shown you from the Father; for which of these good works do ye stone me?"* They could not deny His power, or goodness; but the fact that such an apparently ordinary Man should claim to be the Son of God—that was too much to believe. *"For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy; and because thou being a man (this was that which they refused) makest Thyself God."* His words to them appeared to contradict His works. It was for His words they condemned Him; but His miraculous deeds were simply the witness that His words were true. His Father thus gave the testimony to them.

He thereupon thrust them back upon their own Scriptures. *"Is it not written in your Law, I said, Ye are gods?"* The title [gods](#) had been given to men, those judges in Israel to whom the call and commission came, and they received it. Thus, they became the representatives of Deity. It is not a little matter to be Jehovah's [Sent One](#). It carries with it grave responsibility, but also protection and honor. If all such were counted sacred by Jesus, should it be counted blasphemy when He claimed to be the Son of God?

"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. Therefore they sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand, And went away again beyond Jordan into the place where John at first baptized; and there he abode." [Joh.10:37-40]

He can make His statements no stronger to convince them. They reject the testimony of His words and works. Again they seek to take Him—a thing impossible until His time came. He went forth out of their midst. They could not hold Him. He went where the soil was more receptive, beyond Jordan, where John had been baptizing at the first. It is a hint of His death and the results therefrom; for we read,

"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." [Joh.10:41-42]

MY RECOMPENSE

RECOMPENSE ME WITH THY PRESENCE WHEN MY JOY RECEDES,
WHEN ALL MY VISIONS FALTER — AND MY DEEDS
ARE SEEN AS NAUGHT. WHEN HEAVY IS THE CROSS
AND I AM CRUSHED WITH BITTER SORROW AND LIFE'S LOSS,
LET ME IN CONSCIOUSNESS BEHOLD THY FACE.
I SHALL BE SATISFIED AND REVEL IN THY GRACE.

O MAY I EVER FEEL THY TENDER, PATIENT, HOLY HAND
UPON MY BROW — THO' I MAY NOT UNDERSTAND
WHY IT IS, THAT I AM NOW BEREFT
OF DEAREST HOPES, AND I DISCONSOLATE AM LEFT.
ERASE THE ANGUISH, KNOWING I AM DUST.
WITH FINER, NOBLER, GREATER FAITH MAKE ME TO TRUST.

THO' YESTERDAY WAS MINE (AND THINE), I DID NOT KNOW
THE COMING DAY HELD BITTERNESS AND WOE.
AND WHILE TOMORROW'S SECRET IS UNKNOWN,
I'LL BRAVE ITS SORROW IF I DO NOT WALK ALONE.
O LORD, BE THOU MY GLORY, HONOR, FAME.
EARTH'S LOSS IS NAUGHT FOR THY LOVE'S LASTING,
LUSTROUS FLAME.

MAN INSIDE THE TABERNACLE [JOH. 11]

*"Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. (It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.) Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick."
[Joh.11:1-3]*

The Good Shepherd chapter, John 10, is the center of John's Gospel. It is the very heart of the book. Herein is emphasized the death of The Shepherd, by which the sheep are delivered from the wolf and enter into life and liberty. John 11 tells us of resurrection. Lazarus coming out of the grave anticipates the resurrection of Christ and is in view of that glorious consummation. Some months had elapsed since Jesus went away from Jerusalem beyond Jordan [Joh.10:40]. The record here does not show this; but those familiar with the Gospels recognize this fact. The time between John 10 and 11 is recorded in Luke 11-17:10. The **raising of Lazarus** is the **7th miracle** told us by this evangelist; hence the perfection of supernaturals in which the other 6 were included. The controversy, which began in John 5:5-18, and developed from that point on to John 10:42, is here seen concluded.

John 11 falls into 4 principal parts, of which a miracle is the center:

1. The **Occasion** [John 11:1-16].
2. The **APPROACH** [John 11:17-32].
3. The **PERFORMANCE** [John 11:33-44].
4. The **CONSEQUENCES** [John 11:45-57].

Lazarus, the friend of Jesus, was taken sick, and even though Jesus loved him, He did not hasten to deliver him. Martha and Mary, the sisters of Lazarus, knew that Jesus loved their brother and they naturally concluded that He would hurry to his bedside when He heard of his illness. His Father's will kept Him from the home of His dear friends in that trying hour. Here is a new Man upon the stage of action. He is not governed by natural feelings, but by the word and will of His Father. Lazarus must die. His death was to glorify God, which could not have happened if Jesus were there. Death and Jesus were in antipathy...they were miles apart, the one from the other. When the Son of God came upon the scene, the pale horse galloped away. Jarius' daughter as well as the young man of Nain declares this fact; therefore, He did not heed the cry of the sisters of Lazarus; as we learn later, He prayed,. He knew that His Father would do more for Him than if He had come and prevented Lazarus from dying.

That was surely a test for those 3 choice friends. How they must have looked for Him. Martha, no doubt, became very critical after a certain point. She could not stand the strain; it was a test of their faith and confidence. Many a time Jesus had found rest and comfort in that home; therefore, they had reason to expect Him to hearken to their call. The leverage they sent with it

was wonderful, *“He whom thou lovest is sick.”* They knew their Lord well; and yet we read these words,

“When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby. Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.” [Joh.11:4-6]

As the time passed and Lazarus grew worse, with sickening hearts the sisters must have watched for Jesus. God’s ways are not man’s ways. Man hastens to return favor for favor; but God does not work that way. Sometimes those who have served Him most are apparently most deeply neglected. The babes in Christ are coddled; while His soldiers endure hardships. Christ’s course in this instance, when we grasp its meaning, illumines many a dark misunderstood experience.

After He knew that Lazarus was sick, Jesus tarried in the place where He was. In fact, He knew of the illness before the sisters informed Him. He knew the very moment of Lazarus’ death and informed His disciples that he had fallen asleep. He could have prevented the sickness and death; but He had something better for Lazarus. If He had been in Bethany and healed Lazarus, how much that family and all the saints would have missed seeing the glory of God. Martha, and we, would never have heard Jesus say, *“I am the Resurrection and the Life”* [Joh.11:25].

Mary’s anointing of Jesus is noted here, although it had not yet occurred according to John’s Gospel. She is known, as well as exalted by that glorious act. Her name signifies *“bitterness”* and also *“exaltation”*, telling us the story of the overcoming Christian pathway. It is through the bitterness of the way of humiliation that we are exalted.

“These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep.” [Joh.11:11-13]

But the disciples did not understand. The shadow of death was upon them. They did not understand why Jesus did not rush to heal His friend. When He informed them that He had fallen asleep they misunderstood His language and said, *“Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well.”* He thereupon spoke plainly and declared,

“Lazarus is dead, and I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that ye may believe; nevertheless let us go to him.” [Joh.11:14-15]

Thomas the doubter, who had not yet emerged from the shadow of death, breaks forth in these loyal though unbelieving words, *“Let us go also that we may die with him.”*

“Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house. Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee. Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.” [Joh.11:20-24]

When they arrived at the outskirts of Bethany, they were met by the indomitable Martha. How she knew that Jesus was coming, we are not informed. Her first words were a rebuke, though apparently both a confession of faith and disappointment. *“Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.”* They carry a complaint against Jesus that He had not come to their help when He was called. Then, no doubt excited by His presence, her emotions carry her beyond her actual faith as the results proved, she added, *“But even now I know that whatsoever thou shalt ask of God, he will give it thee.”* Jesus tested her at once by the statement of a fact too great for her to grasp. *“Thy brother*

shall rise again." Her reply shows that she did not believe in such an immediate consummation. *"I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day."* Then comes the memorable words that have comforted so many since...

"I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and everyone that liveth and believeth on me shall never die." [Joh.11:25-26]

Martha had not known that her dear friend Jesus was the Son of God. The evidence of this is in John 11:22, where she uses the word **ask**, which never refers to Christ's prayers but to ours. When he **asks** His Father, the word used is entirely different, as in John 17:1, 5, 9, 15, 20, 24. It is the request of an equal, not the asking of a suppliant. It is interesting to trace this out. How wonderful is the revelation which Martha received. It was the sorrow and storm which brought the glory. We would never have seen the rainbow except for the cloud. Mark Christ's question as to the revelation: *"Believest thou this?"* Martha expected something from Jesus; but He gave her far more than that of which she could have dreamed. He gave her Himself. He who is The Life raises people from death. We should not live in the tombs. The greatest truth is not that He has what we need; but **he is what we need**. He does not only point to a future glory, but to a **present grace**; not to a blessing, but to **Himself the Blessor**.

"She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world. And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee. As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him. Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him." [Joh.11:27-30]

Martha appeared to rise to the occasion. She said, *"Yea, Lord, I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God that should come into the world."* Her faith increased; but considering His words to her it was still short. She appeared to be conscious of her lack; for immediately she left Him, for a better scholar. Mary had been waiting until He called for her. She had learned to wait at His feet. No doubt, Martha told her the words which Jesus had spoken to her and she understood them fully. He was indeed the Teacher to her. She arose quickly and the Jews, her friends, who had come from Jerusalem to comfort the sisters, followed her, as they imagined, to the grave of Lazarus; but they found themselves in the presence of Christ—in the presence of life and not death. Mary had forgotten them. She fell at His feet, her accustomed place, with strong emotion, crying out in the same words of Martha, but in a far different spirit, *"Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died."* The Greek order of these words is different from Martha's statement. Mary uttered the truth; for well she had learned that death could not come into His presence.

"When Jesus therefore saw her weeping and the Jews also weeping which came with her, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled" [Joh.12:33]

Herein is a most impressive scene. Jesus had come to the grave of Lazarus with Mary, Martha, and their companions. He is deeply moved as He hears them wailing, for such is the meaning of the word here translated **weeping**. We read, *"He groaned in the spirit"* which really signified that *"He was moved with indignation."* Within His breast rage clamored for utterance, but it was curbed. He raged or *"snorted"* (another meaning) *with anger,* within Himself.

What was there in the wailing of those women to so enraged Him? It surely was not because their sorrow was so violently expressed, not because it might be termed unbelief that they so mourned—unbelief in that they were not willing to submit to the providence of God in the taking away of Lazarus. No, it could not be for those reasons that Jesus wept; for He wailed also, though not so violently outwardly. Inwardly He was in full sympathy with the grief of that which He was a witness. But why the anger, the rage? It was really out of proportion to the cause; therefore, we must look elsewhere for the reason. The fact that He was **troubled** is mentioned twice; therefore, it is emphasized as an indispensable element of the narrative. He was enraged

at Mary's grief because it poignantly reminded Him of the evil of death, its unnaturalness, its tyranny over all humanity. Wherever man is found, death had held the vantage point throughout the centuries. He is "*snorting*" with anger against the despotic sway of death. Tears of sympathy fill His eyes, but that is only incidental. His soul is filled with rage against the real tyrant, the devil. He is the object of His wrath.

Jesus advances to the tomb as a Champion, ready to take up the cudgels in defense of mankind. The raising of Lazarus is thus not only a great miracle, but a sign and symbol of a greater feat—Jesus' conquest of death, hell, and Satan. John uncovers to us the heart of the Savior. It was in flaming wrath against our enemy that He undertook the battle on our behalf. He wrought our redemption. He broke Satan's power by going right down into his citadel, grappling with him there, conquering and binding the strong one, arising out from under his power into life and immortality, and bringing man into that place of conquest with Him. He moved speedily on to action.

"And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept. Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him! And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?" [Joh.11:34-38]

"*Where have ye laid him?*" He enquired. "*Come and see,*" they answer. Then His tears flowed unrestrained. Precious sympathy of the wondrous Man! Jesus entered into the scene of sorrow, not as an investigator of its woes, but to alleviate and lift them. He knew what He was going to do in that case, and He knew what He was going to accomplish on Calvary to deliver all humanity from sin and death; nevertheless, He wept over the ruin which was manifest and is still manifest. Yes the pale horse is still galloping on, trampling upon the multitudes. He is no respecter of persons; but takes the young as well as the aged, the rich as well as the nobodies, the moral as well as the vile. Even Christians are apparently taken away by death; but these words of the Man, Christ Jesus, are their comfort and hope. "*Whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die*" [Joh.11:26]. Believers only sleep. Lazarus was one of these. He was asleep; but Jesus told the disciples that He would awaken him.

The Jews took notice of His grief and said, "*Behold how He loved him!*" But some criticized and wondered that He had nothing to give him but tears. They said, "He opened the eyes of the blind could He not have prevented this man's death?" Jesus felt their unbelief and was deeply troubled. He realized, as only He could, what it would cost Him to lift the stone from humanity's grave. He saw the cross—the darkness and the tomb into which He had to descend to free men from the shackles with which sin has bound them. Lazarus' death and grave pointed on to His own. Although He was counting the cost every step of the way; yet, He went on, unflinching.

"Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days. Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" [Joh.11:38-40]

At last they arrived at the grave; a cave and a stone lay upon its mouth. Now the unbelief of Martha shows itself. She would oppose the removal of the barrier from the grave. She declared that He had been dead 4 days already; hence, why turn a sweet, though sad, memory into an offence? How little she had believed Jesus' words! The great offence was the unbelief that would retain her brother in the tomb and shut out the glory from her soul as Jesus reminded her, "*Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?*" The resurrection of Christ displayed the full glory of God. He had never manifested such power before or since that moment. It was the supreme, climaxing hour for God and man. It was there that Satan was eternally defeated. The woman's Seed had triumphed [Gen.3:15].

We do not see this absolutely accomplished; yet the basis was laid when Christ was delivered from the embrace of death. We know that all who believe shall come forth from their graves when the Conqueror of death speaks their names. Finally, at the command of Martha, the stone was removed. She dared to obey the Master after His challenge to her faith.

"Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave clothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go." [Joh.11:41-44]

Jesus prayed, "*Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard me,*" adding that He knew He heard Him always; but He so spoke for the benefit of those Jews who might thus be brought to believe.

The preliminaries being accomplished, the Master over death, cried with a loud voice, "*Lazarus, Come forth!*" What a moment! It must have seemed an hour as the multitude of eyes peered into that dark recess while the hush of expectancy fell upon all, as they strained every nerve to catch the first glimpse or the first sound of the returning Lazarus. Jarius' daughter had just breathed her last when she was raised. The widow's son was being carried out to burial when death was halted; but here was one who had been dead "*four days.*" In that southern clime without embalmers, as we have today, Lazarus must have sunk far down into corruption, except as he was preserved by Divine Power. The same One who had raised the girl and the young man, now pledged to raise the older one. His pledge was redeemed!

Stumbling forward, as he must have done, for he was yet bound in the habiliments of death, Lazarus obeyed the call and came out of the cave, a living man. Oh, what a shout must have poured forth from that assemblage! What a cry of joy unfeigned and grateful must have burst forth from Martha and Mary! Lazarus has come back. He has crossed the boundary line, which feat none by himself, nor by the aid of others, had ever accomplished. He returned—a witness that Christ is the Resurrection and the Life; proof that the Son of God has power to release men from death. He has come back. His return to life is a challenge in the face of Christ's would-be murderers that though they slay Him, yet He would arise from the dead. Lazarus is a representation of Christ's victory over the grave. Hallelujah! He came back to walk in the power of that victory; the pattern of the resurrection life which everyone that lives and believes in Christ is called upon now to enjoy. God is glorified in such a life in which there is power over the world, the flesh, and Satan.

"*Loose him and let him go,*" are the emancipating words. Lazarus is brought forth from death, but he is bound and must be set free. If all believers were thus loosed from their grave clothes, how marvelous would be the victory. The world would sit up and take notice even if they did not accept the freedom for themselves. Death, by this stupendous miracle, has been shown to be mastered by Christ; but, it was in view of His own death, burial, and resurrection over which He had been given the dominion. He would come forth into newness of life ere any man of Adam's race could have the hope of resurrection. He would transform the terrible specter death, the enemy of mankind, into a friend. It is now but a dreamless sleep, the casket, a silken couch upon which we rest for the night, to awaken with a shout in the morning. Hallelujah! Christ arose!

"Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him. But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done." [Joh.11:45-46]

The consequences of the miracle are 2-fold as always: ❶ Some believed and ❷ some believed not. The unbelievers rejected the evidence before their eyes. They went and told the Pharisees of the raising of Lazarus. Immediately a council was called, not a peace conference, but a war council. *“What do we?”* the rulers cry; *“for this man doeth many miracles”* [Joh.11:48]. They did not deny the supernaturals by which He evidenced that He was the Sent One; but they refused Him. The Sanhedrin then committed themselves. Tragedy as well as comedy was seen in their council. They admitted much regarding Jesus but argued badly. *“If we let Him alone, all will believe on Him, and the Romans will come and take away our place and nation”* [Joh.11:48]. How wise and yet how otherwise they were.

But Caiaphas, the high priest for that same year, came to the rescue. It must not be supposed that for a moment he had any sympathy for Jesus (he was of the Sadducees); but he speaks as a prophet, not really understanding the significance of his words. He declares, *“Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people and that the whole nation perish not.”* Then added, *“this He spake not of himself.”* His counsel was entirely selfish and unprincipled, but how wonderful are the ways of God. He makes men and nations speak His mind and do His will when they are entirely oblivious to the facts. God is over all things; but Caiaphas did not calculate that from this standpoint. He argued that his arithmetic was so simple that it could not be worked out wrong. He was unaware that he was putting himself, and the Sanhedrin, on record as having killed Jesus Christ to save themselves. It was not by accident that he prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation. And, thank God, it is added, *“Not for that nation only, but for all the children of God that were scattered abroad”* [Joh.11:52].

Is that not a marvelous fact? God had children even then. Israel and The Church, in fact all His people were included in that statement. In the purpose and plan of God, a new creation was seen in the world before the foundation of this earth ball was laid. Before the first man was upon the scene, God had set His heart upon the Second Man. As we learn in the epistles of Paul, God chose Him and His progeny to fulfill all His will.

“Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death. Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews; but went thence unto a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples.” [Joh.11:53-54]

Time was hastening. As John emphasizes, it was a memorable year and a memorable day—the hour of Christ’s rejection. Jesus withdrew Himself and walked no more openly among the Jews, who were in preparation for their Passover. While His enemies were planning for His death, the people appeared to be in expectation and also in uncertainty. They were determined to put an end to the Man who troubled them by His life of meekness, holiness, and undoubted supernaturals. But they did not know that they could no more do that than they could get rid of the shining sun by blowing at it, or stem the rising tide of the ocean with a broom.

“And the Jews’ Passover was nigh at hand: and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the Passover, to purify themselves. Then sought they for Jesus, and spake among themselves, as they stood in the temple, What think ye, that he will not come to the feast? 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.” [Joh.11:55-57]

A great multitude of the Jews were coming up to Jerusalem *“to purify themselves.”* How foolish and far-off from God’s thoughts are the thoughts of men! They were trying to clean the heart by washing the hands. God alone can purify the heart. It is done when we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, as Peter learned in the house of Cornelius, much to his surprise [Act.15:9].

The Jews sought for Jesus. Yes, Jesus came to that Passover Feast, the last one ever celebrated in the will of God. With His apostles Jesus ate of the roast lamb, unleavened bread,

and bitter herbs (the typical memorials); later, that same night, He was taken and crucified in the morning. He attended the Passover...in reality, as the Gospel of John presents Him [Joh.1:29], Jesus was the Lamb of God that took away the sin of the world. The chief priests and Pharisees were there with all their venom stirred, filled with the poison of the serpent. The generation of vipers, self-righteous, moral people were united to kill the Lamb who was ordained before the foundation of the world to die. His hour was drawing near. They gave the command, that *“if any man knew where He was, they would show it that they might take Him.”*

DIV.3, REVELATION OF GOD AS LIGHT TO THE DISCIPLES [JOH. 12-17]

THE ALTAR OF INCENSE [JOH. 12]

“Then Jesus, six days before the Passover, came to Bethany where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom He raised from the dead; there they made Him a supper and Martha served; but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with Him. [Joh.12:1-2]

In John 12, we enter the last mile of the earthly sojourn of Jesus. The shadow of the cross hangs over Him. It is only 6 days until His life-day will be passed. He commences the week with a feast.

John 12 divides easily into 5 parts.

1. Jesus and His friends [Joh.12:1-11]
2. Jesus and The people [Joh.12:12-18]
3. Jesus and the world [Joh.12:19-36]
4. Jesus and His rejection [Joh.12:37-43]
5. Jesus and His love [Joh.12:44-50]

Let us look at the 1st part, **JESUS AND His Friends**.

Six days before the Passover Feast, Jesus comes to Bethany, the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, the scene of the greatest miracle of His great life. These are a typical company in several aspects. They figure the believing remnant of the Jews at the end-time, who will gather to Him while the nation is still in unbelief. This precious family is also representative of the heavenly company, The Church, at the wedding supper in the air [Rev.19:9], in the *“house of Song” (Bethany)*. At a wedding of distinction, all these different parties are seen.

- **Martha**, as always, is found serving. She speaks of those saints who will be at the Feast in the air in that capacity; for such will be there.
- **Lazarus** represents the guests, for he sat at the table with Jesus.
- **Mary** represents The Bridal Company, who will perfume the banqueting house with her costly ointment. Mary, figuring the choicest and most exalted company of all the redeemed, is to the front of the picture in the type, even as The Bride will be in that Wedding Supper in that heavenly scene. She brings a box of ointment of pure spikenard, a precious, expensive compound, which she pours upon the **feet** of Jesus and wipes them with her hair. The other Gospels tell of her anointing His **head**. That was a costly service which she rendered to Jesus. She probably had been saving the money to

purchase the ointment for many months. Nothing was too good for her Lord and Master. He had won her heart and she proved it by her extravagant display.

The Box of Ointment figures the love of the company which will constitute the wife of the Lamb. This people are truly consecrated. Their devotion to Christ is extreme. His glory is uppermost with them. They forget and neglect themselves to pour out upon Him all their wealth of love and adoration. They give all and will get all. Their work of faith and labor of love will never be forgotten. Throughout eternal ages, they will fill the House on High, the New Jerusalem, with the praises of the Lamb. They will lead in the worship of heaven even as they lead in the worship on earth. Their lavish expenditure upon Jesus will be rewarded. Others may murmur and criticize even as at this time, and inquire, "Why such waste?" But Jesus defends the woman's act, saying,

"Leave her alone, against the day of my burying hath she kept this. The poor always you have with you; but me you have not always." [Joh.12:7-8]

Jesus knew Mary's heart's attitude of love toward Him. She understood and entered into sympathy with Him far more than did any of His disciples. They did not even believe that He must die; but Mary did, and more. She believed that Jesus must rise from the dead; hence, she anointed Him for burial before His death. She knew that no one would have that privilege afterward. Again, she represents a beautiful and glorious company of saints that enter into fellowship and sympathy with Jesus far in advance of others of The Church...the Bridal Company. Martha and Lazarus were at the feast; but neither of them had part in that wondrous act of worship. Mary stands out of the picture, unique and alone in her gift of spikenard, rare and precious; so shall the Bridal Company stand forth in that feast on high. They win the love of the Bridegroom by their self-sacrifice and self-abnegation. Regardless of all the objections of the Iscariots in the crowd, they love Him supremely and follow hard after Him.

Judas finds fault with the woman's costly gift and asks why the woman did not give her money to the poor. He was the poor man with whom he sympathized. He had the bag and carried all that was given for necessary expenses and for the poor. Being a thief, he would get the most of the contents. But Jesus knew the thoughts of the heart, even as He does today. He understands and chides the critics. John alone of the Gospel recorders, tells us of the fragrance abiding in the house; the others declare the memorial of Mary's deed which goes out into the world, wherever the Glad Tidings are preached. Glorious testimony to a woman! It is recorded of none other. She has learned at His feet what she poured out upon them. How strange it is that people talk loud of waste when someone is spending on Christ, or His poor. Seldom does the world object to the expenditure of life and money when flying the Atlantic or other foolish stunts is the objective. We need not grieve if God does not endorse our actions. The greatest act of love and the darkest deed of hate are here seen side by side, as though to emphasize the contrast.

The 2nd part of John 12, **Jesus and the People**, now begins.

"Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also whom He had raised from the dead." [Joh.12:9]

Immediately the chief priests are stirred and get busy. They plot the death of Lazarus also; because many of the people believed on Jesus because of the resurrection of Lazarus.

The next day, Jesus enters Jerusalem. When the people hear that He is coming, they go out to meet Him with palm branches in their hands, crying, "*Hosanna; blessed is the King of Israel who cometh in the name of the Lord*" [Joh.12:13]. There is something pathetic about this welcome accorded to Jesus; for soon the multitude were crying for His death. It is much easier to shout for Christ with the

crowd than stand alone with Him at the **cross**. John gives us very few details about the King's entrance into Jerusalem.

There are no elaborate preparations seen here as in the other Gospels; no record of the purification of the temple, nor the strife with Jesus on the part of the rulers of the people and His solemn arraignments of them. On the other hand, we have the effect of the resurrection of Lazarus and the testimony to Jesus because of this miracle which only John records.

TYPICAL OF COMING GLORY

"Jesus, when He had found a young ass, sat thereon, as it is written, Fear not daughter of Zion, behold thy king cometh sitting on the ass's colt." [Joh.12:15]

The fulfillment of Zechariah's prophecy [Zec.9:9] is only realized by the disciples afterwards. It seems here that He accidentally found the colt on which He rode; but we know by the other Gospels that it was loosed to let Him ride and was so prophesied. It refers to the likeness of sinful humanity on which He rode unto His death upon the accursed tree. Wondrous grace!

Many of the people who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of the grave, bare record; and others who heard of it are convinced that He is the King. The rulers, Pharisees and priests, are confounded and say among themselves, "*Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? Behold the world is gone after Him*" [Joh.12:19]. There is no doubt as to the outcome after Jesus had given the commandment to loose the colt. That was the signal for His death. The nation is rejecting Him, of which their prophets foretold. He is about to be "*wounded in the house of His friends*" [Zec.13:6]. John gives us no Olivet discourse, no end-time warnings. He simply tells us of love and hate, friends and foes, the setting aside of Israel nationally, and the coming of the Gentiles.

Here the 3rd part of the John 12 begins, **Jesus and the World**.

"And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast: The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus. Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus. And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified." [Joh.12:20-23]

These were pure Gentiles, not Grecian Jews; worshipers of the true God as revealed to Israel. They are thus sharers of the hopes of the Jews. They approach Philip, as taking hold of the skirts of a Jew [Zec.8:23], acknowledging them as the people having a closer place with God. But Philip is cautious. He counsels with Andrew and then Andrew takes the lead in speaking to Jesus. What they desire of Him is not recorded, nor is it said that He allowed the interview. Rather we would judge from His answer that He did not. We are assured that those Greeks were a committee sent from that nation to invite this wonderful Prophet to visit them. No doubt they were cognizant of the reception the Jews accorded Him. Probably they heard the rumors that the Jews plotted to put Him to death and they were grieved that one so mighty and good should be so treated; therefore, the reason the Grecians were there.

Jesus was in the world, not to impress people with His greatness or goodness, but He was here to die for humanity; therefore, His answer to the Greeks, "*The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified*". He declares this using the title by which He is linked with man as man.

Andrew ("*manly*") is suggestive. He appears to act as the go-between, even as Christ is the mediator between God and man. As Man, all peoples, nations, and languages are to serve Him in a kingdom which shall never be destroyed [Dan.7:14]. In the meantime, that Kingdom is delayed, and the hour was at hand for His strange yet greatest act. The Greeks could have no

part with Him whatever, except He die. He goes on to speak of this necessity immediately with the seal of His double, Amen.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal." [Joh.12:24-25]

Fruit comes by dying not by doing. Sacrifice is the secret of success in production both in soil and soul; it applies to Christ and also to His disciples [Joh.12:23-36]. The grain of wheat has life in it and though it falls into the ground and dies, it carries this with it through death itself. It sets it free from limitations and is in the interest of life which lays hold of and assimilates the surrounding material and expands into the plant which is its resurrection, and later into the many grains of fruit. Every seed sown into the ground is a positive prediction that the Last Adam, Giver of life must die. Union of Christ with humanity was not by His incarnation, though this was a necessary step toward it. It is by His death and resurrection He becomes the Head of a new humanity. When He was in the world Jesus was the Life and the Light of men, but if that was all, the history could be summed up in these words, *"and the Light shineth in darkness and the darkness comprehended it not"* [Joh.1:5]. *He was in the world, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own and His own received Him not* [Joh.1:10-11]. Life must be communicated to the dead. The corn of wheat must die to be able to reproduce that life in others. He must die. He died the death of the transgressor to satisfy the claims of Divine Justice. In resurrection, He is enlarged and becomes the Head of a new creation. *"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation"* [2Co.5:17]. Thus Jesus goes forward to fulfill His destiny. It was for this hour that He came into the world.

The Gentiles coming up to see Jesus marks Him out, not only as the King of the Jews, but as the Savior of men. The burden of the world is upon Him. Past, present, and future center in the Man Christ Jesus. He heard the call of lost humanity from the heights of glory and descended to the low plane of earth to fulfill His destiny. The stoop was voluntary. The glory of God, as well as the blessing of man, had urged Him onward and was still moving Him to the lower stoop; the abyss into which He must yet descend to accomplish all that was written [1Pe.3:19 and Eph.4:9]. He must lay a foundation that can never be shaken.

THE CROSS PRECEDES THE CROWN

Furthermore, His people must be prepared to follow Him in His descent into death.

"He that loveth his life shall lose it. He that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. He that serveth me, let him follow me, and where I am, there shall also my servant be. If any man serve me, him will the father honor." [Joh.12:25-26]

Here is the rule of the game and the reward for service. To be with Christ and honored by His Father, is the reward that love would seek and desire. The way of attainment is by the path which He trod and that way is plain. However, for Him, there was sorrow which we cannot fathom and will never undergo. It was not mere death, but the awful reality of sin which He bore upon the cross that bowed His soul unto the dust. The anticipation of this presses upon Him as He speaks *"Now is my soul troubled and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour"* [Joh.12:27]. Nay, nay, He cannot speak in this wise, because it was for the cause of the death which He was about to die *"that He came unto this hour."* Therefore, He says instead, *"Father, glorify thy Name."* Immediately the answer comes, *"I have both glorified it and will glorify it again"* [Joh.12:28]. The multitude was deaf to the words spoken, though not to the sound.

"The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him." [Joh.12:29]

This marks the 3rd time, that the Father publicly bore witness to His Son: At His baptism, on the Mount of Transfiguration, and here. But alas, the Divine Voice was so little recognized that it was thought a sound of nature or perchance an angelic tone. And yet the Voice had come because of the people.

"Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes. Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die." [Joh.12:30-33]

He needed no witness from the Father; for He walked in continual communion with Him. He warns them that the judgment of the world and its prince are at hand. Jesus' death at its hands would indeed be its condemnation. The usurping ruler, Satan, is about to be cast out by the power of that death upon the cross. His lifting up proved His rejection by the world for which He was bearing the curse.

By the cross, all men were drawn to Him. The word ALL does not signify without exception, but without distinction. The cross of Christ is the only means whereby men may be saved. He is the Great Magnet. Spurgeon declared,

"that He draws like a Trumpet, like a Net, like a Cord, like a Standard, like a Chariot."

He is the Sovereign Savior, because He was the Surrendered Sacrifice. The gory gibbet was glorious—and will be glory for Christ forever.

The 4th part, **Jesus and His Rejection**, follows after He had spoken words of warning to them.

"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." [Joh.12:35-36]

There follows here again, as is shown constantly in John's Gospel, the conflict between faith and unbelief. Man's condition is revealed by the presence of Jesus in the midst as the Savior. The cross is an offense to men unless they realize and admit their need. It is the self-righteous man who refuses the blood-way of salvation...it is abhorrent to him; but how precious for the one who knows that he is a sinner. The verdict of the Scripture is absolutely against the unbeliever and for the Christ and His cross. His "lifting up" is His glory though men refuse to accept this only way of salvation. They are without excuse because He had given them every possible sign that He was the Messiah; yet, they remained adamant. Nevertheless, that was no surprise to Jesus. It had been written centuries earlier, by the prophet Isaiah, that such would be the attitude of Israel. John declares that the prophet had so written; therefore it must be so fulfilled. This does not signify that the unbelief of the people was in order to fulfill a prophecy; but in not believing they fulfilled it. There are 2 quotations here from Isaiah; one refers to Christ's 1st Advent and the other to His 2nd Advent:

1. The 1st is from the marvelous atonement [Isa.53];
2. the 2nd from the great throne vision [Isa.6].

Here are some vivid facts recorded concerning the Scriptures. In the first connection, Isaiah's prophecy is striking. He appears to be distressed that his words are not believed. He inquires, *"Who hath believed our report (preaching)"* [Isa.53:1]? This question is then answered by the second citation. They could not believe because Isaiah said again, as written in John 12:40: *"He hath*

blinded their eyes and hardened their heart that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart and be converted and I should heal them” (compare with Isa.6:9-10).

Here tremendous facts are revealed. The prophetic Word does not make these things to happen; but they are revealed beforehand by the prophecy. Jesus bases all His claims of being what He is, the true and living God, upon His ability to make known beforehand that which shall come to pass. He challenges all claimants to His honor and glory to do likewise, and so prove their claims to Divine Prerogatives: *“Show the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods”* [Isa.41:21-23]. Unbelief is voluntary not compulsory. They could not believe because they would not. Their state was due to their own attitude not to the will of God. Observe this important fact that the Lord whom Isaiah saw (in a vision) sitting upon a throne, was Christ, *“He saw His glory and spoke of Him”* [Isa.6:1]. Nevertheless, with the Glory before their eyes the people did not believe. On account of the Pharisees, the few who did believe feared to confess Him. The verdict of the Scriptures is *“that they loved the praise of men, more than the praise of God”* [Joh.12:43]. Then we read of the sequel, the 5th part, **Jesus and His love**.

“Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on Him that sent me.” [Joh.12:44]

This is the 4th of the loud and piercing cries of Jesus recorded by John (see the table at beginning of John 7).

ONLY WAIT

ONLY WAIT! ONLY WAIT,
THO' THE SHADOWS DARKER GROW
AND THE TEMPESTS LOUDER BLOW.
WE CAN HEAR OUR CAPTAIN SAY
“ALL THESE THINGS SHALL PASS AWAY.”
ONLY WAIT! ONLY WAIT!

ONLY WAIT! ONLY WAIT!
THE NIGHT OF SORROW SHALL BE GONE.
AND SOON WILL COME THE GLORIOUS DAWN.
SIN AND PAIN WILL PASS AWAY
IN THE GLORY OF THAT DAY.
ONLY WAIT! ONLY WAIT!

ONLY WAIT! ONLY WAIT!
THE LONGEST TUNNEL HAS AN END,
AND CHRIST THE HEAVENS SURE SHALL REND,
ON ALL WORKS OF SATAN BLOW
AND DEFEAT OUR EVERY FOE.
ONLY WAIT! ONLY WAIT!

MARY M. BODIE

SERVICE IN THE TABERNACLE [JOH. 13]

“Now before the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour was come that He should depart out of the world unto the Father, having loved His own which were in the world; He loved them to the end.” [Joh.13:1]

With this chapter, we commence the portion where Christ is viewed as the **Light to the disciples**. The Jews are seen already as having rejected Him. John 13:5-12 of this precious chapter show us the **Sovereignty of Service**. The greatest of all men is seen in the menial act

of cleansing the soiled feet of His disciples. Imagine a great man of the world engaged in such a lowly task. He was giving them an example, not that they should get a pan and wash the feet of their brethren, but that they should serve them in every possible manner, and especially in a spiritual sense, is the meaning.

John 13 may be divided into 3 parts:

1. The **Service** [Joh.13:1-12].
2. The **SOP** [Joh.13:13-30].
3. The **SERMON** [Joh.13:31-38].

Jesus stands here on the eve of His departure. The Father's greeting of His Royal Priest and His seat on the royal throne are just ahead. All things are in His hands. The continuance of the earth and humanity depends upon Him. He must finish the work that He has come to do and then eternal glory abides for Him. Nevertheless, His heart is saddened because of those He is leaving. His chosen companions, whose lack of understanding Him, and His purposes, must have been a continual source of pain to Him; yet, He loved them, yea "*loved them unto the end.*" They are the hard-earned spoils from the hand of the enemy, the first-fruits of a great and glorious harvest. He must leave these, His own, the gift of His Father, the work of the Spirit and purchase of His blood, in the world. They must remain in the place of His rejection to witness of Him, and thus be fitted to share with Him in the honors and greatness of His sovereignty over the earth.

1. THE SERVICE [JOH. 13:1-12]

In this great act, we are taught that grace reigns through righteousness. Those, who are to have part with Christ in His great works must be clean. The Father's character must be maintained. He is holy and so must His children be. If they fail to maintain this character, they have an "*Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous*" [1Jo.2:1]. He was not in that position at that time, only anticipatively; for Jesus has not yet ascended to the Father. It is in this character that He acts as responsible before the Father to cleanse His people from all the defilements of the world.

"Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded." [Joh.13:3-5]

In the washing of His disciples' feet, many have seen merely a lesson of humility; some have constituted it the basis of an ordinance to remind them to be humble. But Jesus assures us that there is much more than that in this scene. He tells Peter that he will understand the meaning later, teaching thus that there was a deeper significance than was on the surface.

"Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." [Joh.13:6-9]

Peter certainly knew that his Lord and Master was washing feet; but He said at that present time that Peter **DID NOT KNOW** the real meaning of His act. That is a very important point. The doing to others as Jesus had done depended upon that future knowledge, which they would gain by spiritual revelation. Jesus Christ's work upon the cross, which was being symbolized by that Passover feast of which they were partaking, not only laid the basis for deliverance from all the

guilt of sin but more. It made provision for cleansing from all the defilements of our earthly sojourn. This is done practically by “*the washing of water by the Word*” [Eph 5:26]. Thus light is thrown upon the deeper meaning. It is only as we are thus cleansed that we “*have part with Him*” in fellowship and service. No outward ordinance can accomplish this purification, upon which all the service of our Christian life depends.

Jesus rises from supper, while the meal was in progress (see Revised Version) and girds Himself for service. That is, He leaves the place of communion, as if this was interrupted, and performs the necessary work to renew it again. It was at this juncture, that the devil put it into the heart of Judas to betray Jesus and thereby brought defilement into that holy place. All the disciples were affected, though ignorant of it at that time; yet, this necessitated the efficacy of Jesus’ work. Thus we are taught our susceptibility of defilement in a sinful world where Satan rules. And, until we learn the secret of victory over sin, we often are conscious of defilement and our communion with Jesus Christ and the Father is broken. We may not even know how it happened, as in the case before us; but Jesus knows and immediately proceeds to remedy the situation. There is a most interesting and suggestive thought in this connection. In the beginning, Satan brought defilement into the very presence of God by His own sin and thus marred forever his fellowship with his Creator. Later, he was the instigator of the lapse of the communion of Adam and God in the Garden of Eden, which loss was entailed upon the entire human race. It was on account of this sin and defilement that the Son of God laid aside His royal robes and came to this scene, girded for service. He served mankind even unto death and thus restored him to fellowship with God. This wondrous condescension of the Savior was all acted out here in this last mile of the way of His life.

Notice that all His disciples need the cleansing. Today even as then, we all need to put our feet into the hands of Jesus in order to be kept from the defilements of the way. He alone is capable of judging what is clean according to the perfection of the sanctuary of which He is the Light. Many Christians are continually out of communion with Him; but they are unaware of the fact of their slipping. They live so far beneath the standard, so far below their privileges, and thus know so little of fellowship with the Father and the Son, that they are ignorant of their spiritual uncleanness. But those that have part with Christ in His service of love to others, cannot be careless of the necessary washing by the Word to ensure their clean walk and life. We have the record of John, that after Jesus was crucified and taken down from the cross, “one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side and forthwith came there out “*blood and water*” [Joh.19:34]. Herein is the foundation, not only atonement for sin, the blood, but water also, which refers to the basis of cleansing. Calvary is where we find the full provision for every blessing for mankind. It is there that God’s wrath was appeased and a way opened whereby sinful men may approach and serve a holy God, “*without wrath or doubting*” [2Ti.2:8]. From the Riven Rock, there flowed forth blood and water. Marvelous miracle! When Peter is told, that if he is to have part with Christ, his feet must be washed, he exclaims, “*Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.*”

“Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.”
[Joh.13:10-11]

The washing of regeneration, the cleansing effected by the new birth, needs never to be repeated. Regardless of all the power of Satan and sin, the effect of that bathing abides. Men may cavil, argue, and deny the fact; but here is Jesus’ positive words that he that has been born again (bathed) is clean every whit. *THIS STATEMENT REFERS TO THE BELIEVER’S STANDING IN CHRIST; THE WASHING OF HIS FEET REFERS TO HIS STATE.* “*Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin,*” declares this same Apostle, “*For His Seed remaineth in him and he cannot sin, because he is born of God*” [1Jo.3:9]. The Christ-life, the new creation which we obtain when we believe, **is holy. It cannot sin.** This is God’s verdict upon it. But remember, Christians have another nature...the old creation. It can and does sin and

the believer is often defiled because of this sad fact. We need the cleansing that comes from the Word on the basis of Christ's death upon the cross. Jesus exhorts His disciples to imitate His example. They called Him Lord and Teacher; then let them obey His commands and thus show that they were His learners. If He washed their feet (served them) they might well wash one another's feet. Plainly it was no foot-washing ceremony that He was proposing for their imitation; but the declaration of a deep spiritual need, which love alone could reach and alleviate. In such a scene as this world affords, ever alluring even the hearts of true disciples from their Lord, it is the honor and privilege of His disciples to recover and cleanse them if possible. Judgment merely will not be able for this service. Love alone has the power...love that will humble itself to reach the erring.

"LET BROTHERLY LOVE CONTINUE"

How often those who are debtors to mercy alone deal with their failing brother on the totally opposite principle of law. He that desires to wash his brother's feet must be down at his feet to do it. Grace only breaks the dominion of sin. "Grace reigns through righteousness." Saints are under the government of God as their Father. His chastening may be upon them because of their walk. But remember, the correction of His children is for their own profit. He that has opened the door to man into the presence of God always keeps it open. It is the nail-pierced hand of the lowly Jesus. Overcoming saints are learning and doing as their Lord and Teacher has taught them. He has fully insisted upon the terms of discipleship and they never vary. There is an abundance of need among the people of God for the lowly service to which they are exhorted, the showing of grace to their defiled or wandering brethren. There is no help, or restoration, possible except as we can make them to see through our love and compassion, the provision of grace to meet their need. To get them to Christ is our responsibility.

"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. Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake."
[Joh.13:21-22]

Jesus, in the face of that dreadful fact of Judas' betrayal said, as He was washing the disciples' feet, "*Ye are not all clean.*" Whether he had washed the feet of Judas, we do not know; but if he had, He foretells his treachery. This only fulfills Scripture, as He declares, "*He that eateth bread with me, hath lifted up his heel against me*" [Psa.41:9]. The heel speaks of the most contemptuous rejection possible. It was as if he would inflict upon Christ the serpent's blow, for which later his head should be bruised [Gen.3:15]. It was all foreseen and announced and it came to pass even as it was written. Then He raises them up to fullest identification with Himself.

"He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it? Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly."
[Joh.13:25-27]

Judas hears what He is saying, but his ears are dull of hearing. He has already received the suggestion of Satan in his heart and is on his way to perdition. Here we are treading on the very ante-chamber of Hades. Jesus is troubled. He sees the gathering darkness and the awful depths of Satan's enmity against Him, as well as his power over man. He has Judas in chains now. The lurid shadows of the pit are gathering around him. Jesus did not will it so. He would have saved Judas even then if he had let Him. He says, "*One of you shall deliver me up.*" The other disciples seem scarcely aware of the terrible thing that is taking place in Judas' heart. They cannot conceive of one of their own number being guilty of such wanton treachery. Even after Judas was distinctly pointed out and Jesus dismissed him with these significant words, "*that thou doest, do quickly,*" they did not yet grasp the real fact.

Observe this great point: Jesus Himself gives the signal for His death. Satan was powerful; but Jesus was more so. Judas could never have betrayed Jesus if He had not yielded to the Word that was written. He told him to go and do his worst and thus signed his own death warrant. He knew His hour had come. But no man, or devil, took His life; He laid it down Himself. But Judas, what of him? He had never seen the glory shining in Jesus' face. Here were 2 Jews; yet, they were as wide apart as heaven and hell.

2. THE SOP [JOH. 13:13-30]

"After the sop Satan." It was after he had received this last token of love that Judas was absolutely given over into the hands of the devil, because he had absolutely rejected the Gift of God. Jesus gave the morsel to him as a last hope that he would repent; but rejection was the end. It brought death to him instead of life; for we read, *"He therefore, having received the sop, went immediately out : and it was night."* [Joh.13:30]. That is one of the saddest phrases in Scripture. Night, eternal night had come for Judas. He had gone out from life and light and love. Jesus was relieved at his absence as we see in what follows.

3. THE SERMON [JOH. 13:31-38]

Here begins the 3rd part of this chapter.

"Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, 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. 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. A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." [Joh.13:31-35]

Jesus proceeds to enlarge upon the results of His death. He counted the 3 days and 3 nights in the grave as *"a little while"* (a moment). What faith He manifested! Glory instead of gloom was filling Him. Death was almost upon Him, but Jesus saw glory. In this connection, He speaks in tender words of the love which His disciples should manifest to one another. *"A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you."* What a standard! What a scarcity of such love! It is rare, as all must acknowledge. Christians are divided into sects and schisms in a multitude of forms and are hating rather than loving one another. But Jesus' words stand here unchanged. He declares that by this love *"all men shall know that ye are my disciples."* How ignorant sinners are of the fact that Christians are Christ's learners. Why? Because they view so little of His love being manifested among them.

Simon Peter, the impulsive, loving disciple, can be still no longer. He bursts forth with a question which Jesus' former words had inspired.

"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. Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake. Jesus answered him, 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." [Joh.13:36-38]

"Lord, whither goest Thou?" Was it to death? He would follow Him, and he meant to do so. Physical death was not a terror to him; but he had no real estimate of himself. He was a strong, forceful personality. He could fight to the finish with a sword; but carrying a cross up to the hill of Calvary, was another matter entirely. He had little at that time of the Lamb nature. To surrender as Jesus did was foreign to Peter's propensities. It spelled defeat to him. He did not understand. Jesus tells him that he will not die, but deny Him, saying *"the cock shall not crow until thou hast denied me thrice."*

Not only once but 3 times this erstwhile valiant soldier wilted in the presence of the judgment which was to fall upon His beloved Lord. He would refuse to acknowledge his discipleship.

The other Gospel writers tell us that he vehemently denied the accusation of Jesus, but John is silent as to this point. It was not fitting that he should contradict the Living Word, the Son of God whom John depicts for us. Even if he could not believe that he would thus offend; yet apparently Peter does not say so. In denying Jesus, his failure was in moral courage not physical. Many other strong fellows have been brought down and thus humbled to the dust before God could use them. Peter was being trained for a great place. He was made the leader of the 12 Apostles of the Lamb.

Peter learned the meek and lowly way of the Master later. He was in a great school—that of the Holy Ghost—and he never obtained his diploma until he had really qualified. It is related in a legend, whether true or not we cannot say but are inclined to believe its veracity; it sounds so real and humanlike. It is as follows:

During a dreadful persecution of the Christians at Rome, Peter at the instigation of his friends, decided to leave the city, seeking to escape the death of which he had no fear, according to his words here. Jesus appeared to him at the gate of the city, asking the same question, that Peter had asked Him, “*Whither goest thou?*” Peter, ashamed and smitten to the heart, tells the truth of the matter. Jesus, in His own tender gentle manner, answered “*Said I not unto you, Feed my lambs? Feed my sheep?*” Peter meekly turned back at His Master’s words and encouraged the disciples, strengthening them in word and deed until he too was martyred, crucified even as His Lord.

In the meantime, our lesson shows Jesus preparing His disciples for the separation which was inevitable. He introduced the subject with the precious words “little children.” As we have already noted, Jesus speaks of love as His new commandment. In these closing words of a heart-to-heart talk with His disciples, there are 24 more references to “love.” The talk begins here with these words of love and continues to the close of John 16. This is the new, all-inclusive, and final law of life. It is the essence of the Christ nature. We cannot be laying hold of His life without manifesting love to others. The world is looking upon Christians, and their lives and deeds are weighed in the balances. Their verdict is often entirely wrong; but at other times shrewd and correct. Christ’s love is the standard; His life the touchstone by which we are judged. Let us lay low at His feet and He will lift us up and make us what we ought to be...what we have been apprehended to be. The next 3 chapters in John (14-16) are a continuation of His last talk with His beloved disciples before His departure. John 17 contains His High Priestly prayer.

SERVICE IN THE WORLD [JOH. 14]

“Let not your heart be troubled. Ye believe in God, believe also in me. In My Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.” [Joh.14:1-2]

This much loved and much read chapter in John’s Gospel is a continuation of the heart-to-heart talk of Jesus with His disciples, which He began in the previous portion [Joh.13:31]. It is a part of the 3rd main division of the Gospel of John [John 13-18], the revelation of the Son as Light to the disciples. It is the Holy of Holies of John; the secret place of the Most High God into which Jesus introduces His people. It answers to the Most Holy Place in Moses’ tabernacle.

Observe that there are 2 parts of the last talk of Jesus with His disciples: The **1ST PART** took place in the upper room [Joh.13:31-14:31]; the **2ND PART** took place on the way to the garden in the form of a dialogue.

Jesus replies to the 4 enquirers: Peter, Thomas, Philip, and Jude. The 2nd part is a monologue where Jesus does all the talking. In the sorrow of His nearing departure, the disciples are silent. Peter, as always, is the first to speak; he asks, "Where are you going?" Jesus answers enigmatically, "*Whither I go thou canst not follow now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards.*" But Peter is still curious. "*Why cannot I follow Thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake.*" Jesus does not take much stock in his valiant disciple's strong affirmation. He had told them before that He knew what was in man; therefore He answers Peter's impulsive words kindly, but positively, saying, that Peter would deny rather than die. Then Jesus adds,

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know." [Joh.14:1-4]

Jesus instructs them as He answers the questions. There is a purposeful design in everything that happens to Him, He lets them know. He **must go or else He cannot return**. His first advent with bitterness and shame makes way for His second advent of glory and power. He goes to prepare a place for them in His Father's House. That is the goal and Jesus is the Way to that blest abode. Previous to His coming, and the Jew's rejection of Him, the Temple in Jerusalem was God's dwelling place; now there is a change. The Father's House is above, and in that heavenly home there are many mansions; no provision had been made for man's entrance there. Even sinless Adam had no promise of an abode above. His place was on the earth. It was only through the departure of Jesus, by way of death and resurrection, that it is now possible for man to have a mansion in the sky. He has a right, divinely bought, to an ivory palace in the Father's House. The holy, heavenly Man, Christ Jesus, dying on a cross for sinners, has opened the door of heaven to men who believe. They come into possession of a heavenly life from the Last Adam, the heavenly Man, and are thus eligible to inherit a heavenly home. They are being made ready to enter into those mansions of glory, those ivory palaces, as they journey here on earth; reposing and progressing in the path of faith, growing up into Christ, conformed to His death, that they may be also in the image of His resurrection [Phi.3:3]. No doubt these heavenly mansions refer to our glorified bodies which will be like those of Jesus Christ Himself.

He continues His answer to Peter, "*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.*" He comforts His disciples with assurance. They will be with Him. Not so much the place where they will be, but the Person whom they will see and enjoy forever. He will come and receive them unto Himself.

Thomas steps into the picture with his question, "*Lord, we know not whither thou goest, and how can we know the way?*" Jesus answers with powerful, pointed words that need no addendum, though men have brazenly dared to put their **if's** and **and's** thereto. "*I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No man cometh unto the Father, but by me*" [Joh.14:6]. What more do we need for time and eternity than these infallible words of the infallible Son of God? He is the Way to God, the Truth of God, and the Life from God. We have all things in Him. "*He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life*" [1Jo.5:12]. It is all dependent upon having or not having Christ. He is the Course, the Creed, and the Character. He declares, "*If ye had known me, ye should have known My Father also; and from henceforth ye know Him and have seen Him*" [Joh.14:6]. He thus plainly witnesses of His eternal oneness with the Father. To see Jesus is to see the Father; to know the Father is to be acquainted with Him. They are 2 Persons; but 1 God; 1 in character and Divine Essentiality.

Philip now puts forth a question: "*He saith unto Him, Lord, show us the Father and it sufficeth us*" [Joh.14:8]. Jesus answers Philip with another query. "*Have I been so long a time with you and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father, and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?*" [Joh.14:9].

There is a slight hint of disappointment and chagrin in His words. Although Jesus had revealed God continually as He walked and talked with them day after day, they have not seen the Father. Also, there is sadness hidden beneath the surface as He speaks. They knew so little of Him. They had learned so superficially of His fullness and sufficiency. We too must oftentimes sadden Him as He looks for understanding and does not find it in us. We are so often carnal and selfish instead of spiritual enough to find the depths of satisfaction and apprehend that which is in Him. His words and His works witnessed of the Father; but the disciples were far from getting the vision. He does not positively rebuke them for their ignorance. He knew they were flesh, and He, being a Man, was wholly foreign to their conception of God. They needed the Holy Spirit to lead them into all the Truth of which He was the Depository. He promises this One (the Holy Spirit) to them that they “*shall do greater works*” than those which He has done, when He has gone to the Father. It is then that He will send the Holy Spirit, the Guide and Enlightener, to endue and endow His people to witness to the world of His glorious work of redemption.

His promise is wonderful “*Whatsoever ye shall ask in My Name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son*” [Joh.14:13]. Here is indeed the full assurance of identification of His people with Himself. It does not signify putting His Name at the end of a prayer, but rather the asking **AS HIMSELF**. His Name on the check makes the paper effectual. We are one with Christ through His death and resurrection and the Holy Spirit makes the identification real and effectual. Jesus reiterates His promise: “*If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it*” [Joh.14:14]. He is about to leave His dearly beloved people; but He will not leave them comfortless. He will make provision for them during His absence.

Notice the frequent references to **THE FATHER** and **THE HOLY SPIRIT** in this farewell discourse with His disciples. The Trinity is plainly in view. “*I will pray the FATHER and he will give you ANOTHER COMFORTER.*” As everywhere in John’s Gospel, Jesus associates Himself with the Father and with the Spirit in a manner that would be presumptuous and outrageous if He were not God. There is also the same evidence as to the Personality and Deity of The Spirit. The promise of Jesus is that when the “*Spirit of truth*” comes He will abide in them forever.

“Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.” [Joh.14:17-18]

THE DISTINGUISHING FACT

What declarations of love and cheer! He knows their sorrow at His going. He is not indifferent to their feelings, especially their concern regarding Him. He will come to them again in the Person of the Holy Spirit. He declares that He will not only be **WITH THEM** but **IN Them**. That is the one pertinent, powerful statement which marks this dispensation off from all previous ones. Hitherto, the Holy Spirit’s dwelling in a company of people had never been realized. In previous times, the Holy Spirit came upon individuals and separated them to the service of Jehovah for some special purpose. He was **WITH** them, but not **IN** them as He is today in The Church. No body of people was ever indwelt by the Spirit before this age. On the Day of Pentecost, He was poured out as a mighty effusion in that upper room in Jerusalem. Those 120 disciples were provisionally baptized into one body by the Holy Spirit, and they represent the whole Church endued with power; and any believer now may receive Him at anytime and anywhere. The Holy Spirit has never left The Church. Jesus said, “*When He is come, He shall abide with you forever.*” The world cannot receive the Spirit because He is not visible. They cannot see Him, which statement shows that men must be born anew before they are eligible to receive the Spirit. He does not come upon, nor indwell sinners. The 120 were all disciples of Jesus Christ before the day of Pentecost. He said, “*I will come to you,*” words which plainly referred to the coming of the Spirit to those who believed on Him.

“Yet a little while and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me. Because I live, ye shall live also.” His disciples will behold Him by faith when the Holy Spirit comes. He will give the greater revelation to them of the Son. The fact of His resurrection is told by these words. The world may reject and crucify the King of glory; but they are by no means through with Him. He arose in triumph to await the glorious day of the inauguration as the Emperor of the 5th World Kingdom, the Sovereign of the universe for 1,000 years.

The disciples saw Him alive after His death. They were present when the Holy Spirit came down from heaven in answer to His going up. They were filled and thrilled with the Spirit and endued with power as His witnesses upon the earth. They knew that Jesus was in the Father and they knew that He was in them and they in Him. As Jesus was one with the Father, so they were one with Him in true unity. It was a Divine Reality and they went forth in that consciousness and performed mighty deeds. It made them powerful in their testimony and life. O blessed victory! Transcendent Triumph! Christ was at the right hand of God. The Spirit was the witness of this fact, for He came from heaven as a rushing mighty wind. Then He teaches them that obedience is the expression of love.

“He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, He it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my father and I will love him and will manifest myself to him.” [Joh.14:21]

Christ is the Touchstone. Our attitude toward Him is the test of our love. The Father judges in this manner. If we obey the Son, we obey the Father and He will show Himself to us. These commandments do not refer to Sinai’s decrees, but to God’s precious words of counsel. To love is to do. God expects deeds not words. So many are free with their expressions of love, but do not show forth that same attitude in their doing. God is not mocked by any means. He knows and shows Himself accordingly. John 14:8-21 answers Philip’s question.

Now comes the 4th speaker in this dialogue.

“Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father’s which sent me.” [Joh.14:22-24]

Judas cannot understand the spiritual aspect of things. He views the visible. These are real to him; hence he thinks that if they are able to see Jesus, all men will see Him too. But Jesus instructs him otherwise. He is speaking of the spiritual manifestation to them, for which there must be a yielding to Him in the obedience of faith. This will bring Him and the Father also, to take up their abode in that one by the power of the Spirit. He will become a temple of God.

“He that loveth me not” (notice He stresses **Love** to Himself as the moving power of faithfulness), *keepeth not My sayings, and the word that ye hear is not mine, but the Father’s which sent me.”* His commandments, words, and sayings, are used to convey the same thought. To love Jesus is to delight in everything that concerns Him:

- It is to hang upon His words, lest we lose the faintest whisper of what He would have us do; and
- it is to be willing to die rather than not walk in His will in the least measure.

Such lovers of Jesus need no laws, any more than the infant needs a law to make him love his mother. Our Lord continues to talk with His disciples.

"These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you: but the Comforter which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My Name. He shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you." [Joh.14:25-26]

How very necessary it is that Christians receive the Holy Spirit. He is the Teacher and Enlightener. He reveals to us the Scriptures and reminds us of the written Word at the time of need. He brought all the things that Jesus had said, to the disciples' recollection. He made them able to write the Gospels and other Holy Writings. He revealed to Paul the deep mysteries that were hidden in God, the things concerning The Church. But alas, many who have received Him in His fullness do not yield and let Him teach them. They will not study the Bible under His illumination; therefore they are ignorant of the Truth. If men heed His counsel, how wise they will become with the wisdom that is beyond rubies.

"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." [Joh.14:27]

Their peace will flow like a river from the knowledge of God and His Word. His peace has been to His disciples. They are free from the restlessness and striving of an unsubdued will. Christ's own peace is in their hearts. This peace is supernatural and divine, wrought in them by the power of the Holy Spirit. The world cannot give this peace and neither can it take it away. It is not conditional upon circumstances, prosperity, or, in fact, upon anything visible. God Himself is the Author and the Giver of this peace. The heart is then untroubled and no fear lurks around their dwelling place.

"Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe. Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me. But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence." [Joh.14:28-31]

He is going away, but He will come again; therefore they are to rejoice and not sorrow. He is going back to the Father, from whence He came forth, back to the glory and exaltation which He willingly sacrificed for the years of His earthly sojourn. He is telling them, so that they might believe. Faith is an absolute principle of the Christian life. *"Without faith it is impossible to please God"* [Heb.11:6]. Jesus believed His Father in every step of His life; therefore He could say, *"The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me."* The enemy would attempt his worst; but Jesus will continue to trust His Father. He knows that nothing but the will of God can be done, hence, He will yield and obey. In the very least, nothing in Jesus will answer to Satan's suggestions. At last, here is One Man that is entirely immune to the poison of the serpent.

Jesus will be hanged upon a tree; but fulfills the Father's will. The Son goes as it is written of Him. He loves the Father and manifests this love by His attitude toward His commands. Obedience is the keynote of His life. Without question, murmur, or dispute, Jesus does the Father's will. We may well exclaim, "What a Man!" He stood alone in this respect, unique, invincible, in a class by Himself. But we may now approach unto His perfection by laying hold of His life and claiming His obedience. We too will then glorify the Father saying, even as He, *"Arise, let us go hence,"* to shame, to ridicule, to pain, ostracism, and the silence of the grave. The hour of His going was striking and He hastens on His way.

JESUS CHRIST THE “I AM”

The Deity of Christ is especially emphasized in this Gospel. He affirms Himself to be 8 certain objects, in each of which He says, “*I Am the*”

1. **Bread of life**, “*the living Bread which came down from heaven*” [Joh.6:35, 41, 51].
2. **Light of the world** [Joh.8:12, 9:5, 12:46].
3. **Good Shepherd** [Joh.10:11].
4. **Resurrection and the Life** [Joh.11:25].
5. **Way** [Joh.14:6].
6. **Truth** [Joh.14:6].
7. **True Vine** [Joh.15:1, 5].
8. He had said (indirectly), “*I am the Messiah*” [Joh.4:25-26].

The Jews opposed Him bitterly and sought to kill Him because He declared Himself to be the Son of God. They said, “*Thou art not fifty years old.*” Then He answered, “*Before Abraham was, I Am*” [Joh.8:58]. When the officers were about to seize Him for crucifixion, Jesus said to them, “*I Am*”, and they went backward and fell to the ground [Joh.18:5-6]. Finally, Pilate asked Jesus, “*Art thou the King of the Jews?*” He answered him saying, “*Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born*” [Joh.18:33, 37].

Note that the 3rd, 4th, and the last “*I Am*” statements express 3 of His offices (Prophet, Priest, and King). The 1st and 2nd remind us of the showbread and candlestick in Moses’ Tabernacle.

FELLOWSHIP IN SERVICE [JOH. 15]

“I am the true vine and my father is the Husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, He taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it that it may bring forth more fruit” [Joh.15:1-2]

Jesus is heard continuing His talk with His disciples. They have left the upper room, the supper room, and are now on the way to the battle room...Gethsemane. The disciples are quiet as Jesus is talking. He knows what awaits Him. It is in view of His death and resurrection that He so speaks. It is because of the cross that He calmly proclaims Himself to be the “*true vine*”—the true Israel of God. There is inestimable treasure in this portion. Multitudes have found this crystal spring and have drunk at its refreshing waters, and millions will still come partaking.

We will examine the first 16 verses which easily divide into 2 parts.

1. **Life and Fruitfulness** [Joh.15:1-8].
2. **Love and Friendship** [Joh.15:9-16].

In the first part, 2 things are assumed:

1. LIFE AND FRUITFULNESS [JOH. 15:1-8]

There must be **Life** before there can be **Fruit**; and where there is life there is always some measure of fruitage. Jesus is not referring to salvation, but to that which results there from, fruit-bearing. And the latter does not refer to **Service**, but to **Character**, which manifests itself in doing the will of God. “*The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law*” [Gal 5:22-23]. Fruit is a spontaneous growth on the tree, or vine, not a matter of law or coercion. We are also taught by these words of Jesus that

there are degrees of fruitfulness; “fruit,” “more fruit,” and “much fruit.” Or, according to the other Gospels, “thirty-fold,” “sixty-fold,” and “a hundred-fold.”

2. LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP [JOH. 15:9-16]

Love and **friendship** are an entirely new thought. Friendship with Christ and fellowship with Christians are conditioned upon obedience to a command to love one another. Only in the realm of things divine is love a duty. We may be God's children and yet not be His friends; the one is based on His Gift of life to us in His Son: the other upon our surrender and obedience to Him. The divided heart of a Christian hinders friendship with Jesus because “*the friendship of the world is enmity with God*” [Jam.4:4]. The world hated and rejected Christ and will have and hold the same attitude toward us if we are like Him. There is no mistake about it, regardless of men's words; Jesus says that He is the True Vine. This statement implies that there is another vine that is not of this character, which is a fact. Israel was called “*the vineyard of the LORD*” [Isa.5:7]. God brought them out of Egypt and planted them in the fruitful hill of Zion. They were a cultivated stock, nurtured and cared for by the Great Husbandman Himself. He dug about and pruned that choice plant, beloved for the fathers' sake. He took away all the stones and everything that was detrimental to its growth and fruit-bearing—but to no avail. He could not make that vineyard profitable. It only brought forth wild grapes [Isa.5:4]. Finally He took away the hedge from the unfruitful vine after the nation of Israel had rejected His Son, whom He had sent, that He, the True Vine, might have fruit. Jesus' own individual life was a branch life, lived in entire dependence upon the Father. We read, “*Behold I will bring forth my servant the branch*” [Zech 3:8].

“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. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.” [Joh.15:4-8]

In all the teaching here, Jesus is illustrating His own life-day. Therefore, He knows, by experience and also by nature, the principles of fruit-bearing. A branch has no independent life. Apart from the vine it can do nothing. Independence means death because it has no roots by which to gather nurture from the earth beneath. Its only hope of life and fruit is by way of abiding in the vine, drawing unceasingly strength and vigor from its stock. Again, the branch is lost in the vine. It is unnoticed; does not intrude itself and receives no praise; neither does it call for any attention except from the vine-dresser. The vine, with all that pertains to it, is one. It is not dismembered—roots from branches or branches from vine; fruit is from one complete and perfect whole. This is all most figurative of Christ and His church. Therefore to be joined to Him is to lose our own life. To hate that life and so lay it down, by an act of definite surrender, by which we are counting ourselves eternally severed from the Old Adamic creation, shows we are not depending upon it for any fruitage for God [Joh.12:35].

Remember, here Jesus is speaking of fruit-bearing and teaching some fundamental facts regarding it. He is positively stating that our only hope of being a fruitful branch is to be joined to the Vine; in other words, to be joined to Him. Only a new Divine Life is capable of fruit-bearing. This life signifies a death to the life of our fallen nature. The disciples did not enter into much of the meaning of His words at that time; however, after the Apostle Paul came upon the scene with his marvelous message of the 2 creations, they remembered His words and rejoiced.

“*Abiding in Christ*” signifies a fruitful life without effort or endeavor of any sort. Take the natural branch in the vine as an example. It makes no effort to be a branch or to stay in its place therein. It is a part of the vine and cannot be severed therefrom except by the hand of another because

of fruitlessness. It cannot be “*cast forth as a branch*,” because it is “*withered*”, or lifeless. Likewise, in the spiritual sense, the Father, the Vine Dresser, may see fit to take away some fruitless branches. By so doing He may perfect a sturdy branch and bring to full development its fruit. Or, He may cut off some “withered appendages” from the vine because they have no life. These represent 2 classes that appear to be a part of the True Vine which is Christ. One is fruitless and the other lifeless.

- The “**fruitless branch**,” the 1st class, signifies a true believer, but not a profitable one. Remember though, that he is in the Vine, a part of that most perfect holy Man, Christ Jesus, whose fruit cheers both God and man.
- The “**withered appendages**” hanging on the Vine, the 2nd class, represent professors of religion who have no Divine Life but claim such. The Husbandman casts them forth as branches and they are burnt. Observe, this is not said of fruitless branches. The withered limbs lack the spiritual sap, the life of God, through Christ the Son. That life is made ours experimentally by the Holy Spirit. Herein is the fulfillment of Jesus’ prayer, which we will study later: “*And this is Life Eternal that they may know Thee, the only True God and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent*” ... “*That they all may be One, as Thou Father art in me and I in Thee*” [Joh.17:3, 21].

The life of Christ within is the sap of the Tree of Life springing up to meet its Source and power which is God Himself. Who can help bearing fruit in such a case? It is the limitless life, “*more abundant, exceeding running over and above, even running over the wall*” [Gen.49:22], allowing nothing to stop its onward sweep except the will of the Husbandman. This is possible as we depend upon Christ by faith, yielding to Him that His life and power may be manifested all through our being. However, this will never be realized until we are crippled in all our powers. How painful and long the process! The stronger we are in the natural the more difficult it is to let go and let Christ’s life move in us and through us to bring forth fruit unto perfection. Until we learn that no fruit but that of the Spirit refreshes the heart of God, we fight against the inevitable and criticize others who are not strong and whose fruit is anything but spiritual. Breach upon breach we are broken until at last we say, “I am ready, **Not To Do**,” which is harder than to say, “I am ready **To Do**.” Dependence is not alone the **Acknowledgement** of weakness, it is more; it is the actual **Resting Upon Another**. It is to be taken right off our feet, as it were, and **Flung On God**. “*Lame on both feet*” [2Sa.9:13] but sitting and eating at the King’s table. Growing strong in Jesus and His might. Bringing forth fruit to cheer both God and man.

Furthermore there is another marvelous thought: The union of every branch abiding in the vine is a union of absolute surrender on both sides...the branch to the vine and the vine to the branch. The vine is dependent upon the branches for fruit, even as the branches are dependent upon the vine for life. Therefore, to follow the analogy we must recognize the fact that the disciples of Christ are in the world to manifest His fruitful life. They are to show Him off by the fruit which they bear. It is a witness that He lives in them. The “*fruit of Eshcol*” [Num.13:23-24] will be seen growing upon them as they yield and let His life flow in them to the uttermost. There is no limit to His life and its power as they abide by faith in the Vine. It is then that they have the consciousness of the double abiding of “*I In You*” and “*Ye In me*” [Joh.15:4, 7]. As the life sap rises and flows through the smallest branch of those abiding ones, so His Word abides and His joy is manifested [Joh.15:11]. Thus is His fruit developed and there is no strain, or stress about the matter. It is to cease all self-effort and enter His rest, in stillness of repose and quietly awaiting His working; not murmuring or complaining when He uses the pruning knife to open our hearts to all the action of moisture, warmth, and light...fully absorbed in the True Vine and ignoring ourselves. It is to take no thought of one’s life or fruitfulness; but to expect everything from God.

There is no uncertainty about the matter. The Husbandman is responsible to make every branch fruitful that abides in the True Vine. It cannot be otherwise. Such a branch shall not fail in

bearing fruit, **More Fruit, Much Fruit**. It is **fruit**, NOT WORKS; a **growth**, NOT MANUFACTURE. The bud, the blossom, and finally the fruit are the result of the graft into Christ. Every stage of its development is perfect (every grace in embryo); the bringing forth of the fruit in perfection is that which glorifies God. Let us go on to perfection. *"His branches shall spread."* *"They shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from bearing fruit"* [Jer.17:8]. God declares *"From me is your fruit found"* [Hos.14:6-8].

Here is the concluding verse of the first part of our chapter.

"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you." [Joh.15:16]

We are now ready for the second part, which we may call, **The Church in the World**.

"If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." [Joh.15:18-19]

First, we have the disciples and Christ linked together [Joh.15:1-11], then the disciples and one another [Joh.15:2-17]. Now, we have the subject of the disciples and the world [Joh.15:18-27]. The keynote of this portion is, as Jesus expressed it, *"the servant is not greater than his lord."* [Joh.15:20]. When we are true to Christ then the world is not our friend. The early disciples found it thus. They were treated even as their Lord and Master and so shall we be also. Regardless of all the changes that have taken place in the last 1,900 years, human nature has not changed. Its attitude toward God and Christ Jesus is fundamentally the same, though various in its expressions. These expressions may be violent or contemptuous, respectful or indifferent, atheistic or religious; but, the principle remains unchanged. They do not want *"this Man (Christ) to reign over them."*

The world loves its own. Christ and His people are not of the world; hence, the trouble. They are simply passing through, witnessing of another world, another city, the one that Abraham envisioned ages ago. Men feel the separation between themselves and these pilgrims and strangers and do not like it. God's choice of some people stirs up the wrath of others. Because of this fact, the Jews were ever a target for the nations' ire; likewise the true Christian. He is made to feel the separation. If he does not stir up the enmity of the people, it is because he is not a true witness. We have the positive assertion of Jesus that His people are as He is and the world will hate them because they are His disciples.

The amicable relations that we see between Church and State, dwelling upon the earth and building up of some big thing here by the so-called Christian organizations, are not of God. They are altogether foreign to His mind and out of order for the present age. The Jews are the coming builders on the earth. The Church is a heavenly body of people. God has so decreed it and it is wise to yield to His working and be co-laborers with Him [1Co.3:9]. Paul laid the foundation of a heavenly building; those that build thereon are blessed indeed but those who build otherwise are cursed...their works shall be burned. Those who build otherwise (referred to in Scripture as *"wood, hay, stubble"* [1Co.3:12]) are of the earth, earthy and will disappear in smoke.

These words that have been spoken by Jesus are also the words of the Father and are written for us. They are a witness against false people that claim to know Christ and love Him, and at the same time are disobedient to His words. The fact that they have the light makes them that much more responsible. Like the Jews of Jesus' day, they are laying up for themselves a great damnation. They have the witness of God in their hands (the Bible) and claim to be its exponents, and yet at the same time, they are denying its tenets and teaching. Jesus said to the

Pharisees and Scribes of His day, *"How can ye escape the damnation of hell?"* [Mat.23:33]. The same words may be said to the leaders in Christendom of our time. They have no cloak (covering for their sin); but are exposed by the Word of God. He that hates Jesus, or is indifferent to His teaching holds the same attitude to the Father, and vice versa. He that loves Jesus loves the Father also. **These two are One.** Jesus had done the works of the Father as well as He had spoken His Word, therefore, our attitude to Jesus is counted as our attitude to God the Father. They cannot be separated. To reject the Son is to reject the Father. All such rejection only proves to us that the Scripture must be fulfilled: *"What is written is written."*

"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of me. And ye also shall bear witness because ye have been with me from the beginning." [Joh.15:26-27]

Now we read of another Person that is come upon the scene who is distinct from the Father and the Son but yet, in essence, is one with them. He will be sent, Jesus said, *"to testify of me"* (Jesus). The Lord Jesus Christ is to the front of the stage of the world. He is the striking Figure, the Man of the Hour, of the ages; but especially is He so at the present epoch. As promised, the Holy Spirit was sent; He came on schedule time to endue the disciples with power as witnesses of Jesus. The Spirit and the disciples agree in setting forth the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior of the world and its coming King. Anything short of this is not true witness of Him. God refuses any compromise.

There is a clear distinction in John's Gospel between:

- light and darkness,
- life and death,
- right and wrong,
- the Church and the world,
- truth and error, and
- God and Satan.

These extreme opposites are here. We are choosing even now. Two powers are wrestling for the surrender of mankind. Two Spirits are bidding for their allegiance. Which one is getting you? The hate that Jesus so often mentions is not necessarily a feeling of personal animosity but simply an attitude of the soul toward His Claims. No one and nothing must be preferred to Him. He must be supreme...He will be so in some hearts as long as time endures and then their loyalty and love will be crystallized forever in the New Jerusalem, the abiding eternal city of God [Rev.22:11].

SCARLET AND WHITE (LEV. 14:6-7)

FAR, O SO FAR, SOARED THE LIVING BIRD,
HIGHER AND HIGHER HE FLEW,
TO FREEDOM AND LIFE, SO BLISSFULLY SWEET,
AWAY TO THE VAULTED BLUE.

WHITE, O SO WHITE, WERE THE BEAUTIFUL WINGS,
BUT ON THEM BLOOD-STAIN WAS SEEN;
SCARLET AND WHITE AS UPWARD THEY MOUNT,
SPREAD OUTWARD IN SNOWY SHEEN.

SCARLET AND WHITE, O BEAUTIFUL BIRD,
OUR CHRIST WITH THE BLOOD-DIPPED WING.
FROM DEATH, HE AROSE AND TO HEAVEN HE WENT;
IN THAT GLAD MORNING TO SING.

AWAY, FAR AWAY, TO THE COURTS ABOVE,
FOREVER AND EVER TO REIGN
ON A DAZZLING THRONE. HE BEARS LOVE'S SCARS,
LIKE THE BIRD WITH THE SCARLET STAIN.

FELLOWSHIP IN SUFFERING [JOH. 16]

"These things have I spoken unto you, that you should not be offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues; yea the time cometh that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doeth God service. And these things they will do unto you because they have not known the Father, nor me." [Joh.16:1-3]

Jesus is heard continuing His last talk with His disciples. Their hearts are sorrowful at the thought of His departure, though they do not yet understand all that it signifies, nor how He is going away. His previous words have prepared them in some measure to expect not only an adverse attitude from the world, but its hatred. And this because they will have a new place with God. Identification with Christ involves His rejection as well as His joy. The world itself would identify them. The hatred it had shown to Him they would now manifest to His people. They need not be surprised, for through His death and resurrection, they would become separated from all that they were in the old creation and be joined to Him in the new creation. We must not expect to have all this presented to us here as it is shown to Paul later; but we have the intimation. Only by degrees could the full truth be made known. They were His representatives and witnesses, left here to spread the good tidings of great joy to all people. Peace was to be their theme. The great Gospel of grace was to be proclaimed to the ends of the earth in the power of the Holy Ghost, who would come as the result of His going. These things were needed to be declared by Him, so that after His departure, they would understand.

John 16 may be divided into 2 parts: ❶ The Spirit of the World [Joh.16:1-11] and ❷ The Spirit in The Church [Joh.16:12-15].

1. THE SPIRIT OF THE WORLD [JOH. 16: 1-11]

The hatred of the world was emphasized in John 15:18-25. It is further mentioned here with the cause shown to be religious activity. Fleshly religious zeal leads to fanaticism. It is devilish and cruel. Religious men who are ignorant of the Father and the Son (that is, ignorant of God's grace and goodness) are dangerous. They go to any and all lengths to destroy and defeat the people who disagree with their doctrines. They even deceive themselves and think that they are doing God service.

Saul of Tarsus is an outstanding illustration of such zeal without knowledge. There are many such zealous bigots today. The most difficult world with which we have to deal is the religious world. Even as in Samson's day, it is the Philistine Delilah's that cut off the strong man's hair. If the world were either for Christ or against Him it would be easier to overcome. It is the profession of Christianity with its lukewarmness and laxity, as well as its departure from right doctrine, which hinders and hurts true believers. Reality as well as true religiousness is the crying need of the hour. Because people are ignorant and unaware of their condition, there is little of reality or true religiousness. The most dangerous delusion is that they think they know; yet, for the one who knows that he is ignorant, there is hope. Jesus advises His disciples of the

treatment they will get from the intolerant and ignorant, so that they may be prepared and not stumbled by their attitude. He then continues His discourse.

"But now I go my way to Him that sent me, and none of you asketh me, Whither goest Thou? But because I have said these things, sorrow hath filled your heart." [Joh.16:5]

Although Jesus has repeatedly told them that He is going away, the disciples do not appear to grasp that fact. They are overwhelmed with the bad news; but He has an Anti-toxin for their sorrow. He will send another Comforter, the Holy Spirit.

"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." [Joh.16:7]

Jesus declares that He must depart; otherwise the Spirit will not come. His death and resurrection made way for the advent of the Holy Ghost. His teaching is altogether according to the capacity of His disciples to apprehend. This is always a fundamental principle: **He can only give us what we are able to use.**

When Jesus ascended, His local presence gave way to His universal presence. In His own person, He was limited to one place; but in the Person of the Holy Spirit, He is in every place. He declares, *"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."* This word expedient has the meanings of "advisable under the circumstances," "in order to a means." This shows that it was necessary for Jesus to go. There was to be a gain to them. They were not to lose by His absence but be compensated greatly. His bodily departure was only to make way for a spiritual demonstration (manifestation) that would result in great power for them and good to others. It was absolutely necessary that He go the way that He went. Otherwise, they would never come into the new relationship with Him, which was the result of the Spirit's advent.

"And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." [Joh.16:8-11]

The Holy Spirit's mission is detailed in these verses we just read. There are 3 fundamental facts emphasized for which men are to be reprov'd or convicted by the Holy Spirit's power: ❶ Sin, ❷ Righteousness, and ❸ Judgment.

Calvary has shown all men to be sinners. They all needed a Redeemer: for they were without a righteous standing. Fallen in Adam, through his sin, they could not regain a footing, or righteous character. The Holy Spirit's work is to make all men see their condition, ungodly and undone, needing atonement, which Jesus' death on the cross has supplied. He bore their judgment; but they must accept Him as their sufficient Redeemer and Savior. Otherwise, they will meet the judgment of God themselves.

The Holy Spirit brings to men's remembrance these necessary facts and causes them to seek the forgiveness of sin and the righteousness that the death of Jesus procured and provided for every repentant soul. The statement *"He will convict"* does not necessarily imply that men will receive that conviction. The guilty do not all own their lack of righteousness, nor His righteousness, in providing such a covering. Nonetheless, by the cross God has demonstrated the guilt of the world and placed men under responsibility to receive His sentence.

Christ has been in the world. He has been rejected and cast out of it. He died a malefactor's death. Personally, men may say for themselves that they had no hand in it; but that does not avail to clear them. Condemnation rests upon all men until they accept Him as their Savior.

Judgment has fallen upon Christ. Thus Satan, the prince of this world, had been judged, though the sentence has not yet been executed. It is pronounced; but he is not yet shut out (“*shut up*”) as the case will be later [Rev.20:1-10]. They are not able to bear these things at this time. They need the Holy Spirit to enlighten their darkness. He will light their candle for them [Psa.18:28].

*“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. All **things** that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.” [Joh.16:12-15]*

2. THE SPIRIT IN THE CHURCH [JOH. 16:12-15]

Men are helpless before the power of Satan without the Spirit of God. They cannot understand anything of Divine Realities. Everything of God that is done in the world and all things that are known of Him are dependent upon this Executive of the Godhead. There is a **Revelation** as well as a **Record** anticipated in these verses. The Apostles were guided into all the Truth which was given (especially to the Apostle Paul) and they have left to us their revelation in permanent form. The Seed of the woman crushed the serpent’s head and, by dying, slew man’s enemy and betrayer; this is the first prophecy of a Redeemer, finding on Calvary its fulfillment. A righteous God has acted and He will act further for those that trust and obey, as the Spirit’s presence in the world will demonstrate. The disciples cannot yet understand; therefore, Jesus is unable to tell all that is in His heart for them. “*The Spirit of Truth*” must come. He will guide them into that which they could not receive at that present hour. In all those things, the Son would be revealed; of all things that the Father hath there remains nothing beyond this of which to speak. As Paul says, by the illumination of the Spirit, “*All things were created by Him and for Him; and He is before all things and by Him all things consist*” [Col.1:16-17].

Observe the repetitions of the word **things**, in this portion of Scripture³. They relate to that of which He is speaking. He is making them to know beforehand what is coming to pass, the evil and the good, that they may be prepared by His words for all that would happen as well as be encouraged thereby. “*These things*” are His last words to His chosen disciples (especially this may be said of John 16:16-33). They are rather pathetic and tragic. Not one understood Him. They are puzzled and dismayed.

“A LITTLE WHILE, and ye shall not see me: and again, A LITTLE WHILE, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father. Then said some of his disciples among themselves, What is this that he saith unto us, A LITTLE WHILE, and ye shall not see me: and again, A LITTLE WHILE, and ye shall see me: and, Because I go to the Father? They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A LITTLE WHILE? we cannot tell what he saith. Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto them, Do ye enquire among yourselves of that I said, A LITTLE WHILE, and ye shall not see me: and again, A LITTLE WHILE, and ye shall see me? Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.” [Joh.16:16-20]

In John 16:16-20, this phrase **a little while** is mentioned 7 times, partly by Jesus and partly by the disciples. What does Jesus mean by the words of “*a little while*”? He knows that they would ask Him, so He explains. He declares that there will be a great change in their relationship with Him after His departure. A new order of things is in the making. “*A little while*” of sorrow and suffering is before them; but they will rejoice later. He endeavors to calm and comfort them; but their sorrow is nothing compared to His anguish. His hour is coming, which He compares to a

³ 7 times the phrase “*these things*” is used [John 16:1, 16:3, 16:4 (twice), 16:6, 16:25, 16:33]. The word “*things*” is used 11 times [John 16:1, 3-4, 12-13, 15, 25, 30, 33]. The phrase “*a little while*” is mentioned 7 times [John 16:16 (twice), 16:17 (twice), 16:18, 16:19 (twice)].

woman in travail pains, who is expecting results from her suffering [Joh.16:21]. Likewise with Jesus and His disciples. He affirms great results will follow the travail pains of Calvary. Great results will come to the world. A new man will come to the world. A new man shall come forth from the birth pangs that He is to suffer. Joy will follow the night of sorrow when He is raised from the dead. He will see them again after “*a little while*” on the cross and in the tomb. His death will only be a sleep. His joy will be perfect when He awakens in the morning [Joh.16:22]. Joy born out of pain is the most wonderful joy.

Nowhere in the Scriptures are we taught immunity from sorrow. In fact, we read that the joy of the Christian is a miracle. Paul wrote of himself that he was “*sorrowful, yet always rejoicing*” [2Co.6:10]. His joy was transfigured sorrow. Have you noticed that in this last week of Christ’s most poignant sorrow He spoke most about His joy? He was looking beyond the present. He saw the redemption of the purchased possession to the praise of God’s grace. He envisioned eternity and a transformed earth and heaven. He saw the redeemed of all ages triumphant because of His suffering. He endured the cross for the joy that was set before Him. Likewise His disciples. They endure as seeing Him who is invisible. His joy is their joy. They will see Him again. The “*little while*” will soon be past and their joy no man taketh away from them. It is eternal, like the life that Jesus gives; not a joy dependent upon circumstances, but regardless of all that befalls them.

“And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father.” [Joh.16:23-25]

Jesus now speaks of the future. “*In that day*,” that glad day, when He has risen from the dead and ascended to heaven, they shall ask Him nothing. They shall then have a Father in whom they may confide and on whom they will depend. Nearly 2,000 years ago “*that day*” of jubilation and delight began at Pentecost and will close when Christ returns. There would be no need then to ask Him any question. The Holy Spirit would be present to introduce them to the Father and move them to pray in Jesus’ Name, which is to pray even as He; for in that day they would be a part of Him, baptized into one body.

There are 2 different words used for [ask](#) in John 16:23. The 1st one is a word which means that there would no longer be the need to enquire anything of Him, that is, ask any question. The 2nd one refers to prayer; “*Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name, that shall He give you.*” Jesus admits that He has spoken in proverbs; but in that coming day of gladness, the hour of His triumph, there will be no need for Him to speak. He will be able to tell them plainly of the Father who loves them because He loves them and they love Him.

“I came forth from the Father and am come into the world; again I leave the world and go to the Father.” [Joh.16:28]

By His departure, Jesus will open the way into the very presence of God. They may then prove the sweetness of this way of access and realize the fullness of joy resulting from such Divine Intimacy. His Name is the only passport they need. The sanctuary will be left, not only ajar, but wide open. In the very nearest place to God, there will be a Man, the Man representing them, who had not as yet taken His place on His throne. He is anticipating the great results that will follow His death and resurrection.

“His disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb. Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God. Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe? Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone,

because the Father is with me. These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” [Joh.16:29-33]

The disciples are somewhat convinced and comforted by His words of triumphant faith. They receive a little gleam of the light that is radiating all around them, but their eyes are too dim to see all of its brilliant effulgence. The Holy Spirit must come to remove the covering that is upon them. He is patient with them, though sadly He answers, “*Do ye now believe? Behold the hour cometh, yea is now come, that ye shall be scattered,*” every man shall leave me alone; but I am not alone because the Father is with me.

Jesus knows the end from the beginning. He has come into the world for this hour. To die is His destiny; yea, rather to rise up out of death and live forever. Even though all the dearest and best forsake Him, He must go on to the bitter end. The Father’s will is paramount with Him. He will obey even unto death. Alone He stands, the Master Man, the world against Him; yet He shouts His swan song, “*Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.*” They will enjoy the peace with God that He will purchase at the cost of His life-blood; and they will have tribulation also at the hands of enemies. The shadow of the cross is falling upon Him and His faithful followers; but He cries, “I have conquered!” It is as though all His suffering and sacrifice were past. Such fortitude and faith! There is nothing to compare with it in all history. “Cheerio my comrades!” He shouts at the foot of the cross and at the mouth of the grave. There is a bright tomorrow for the ransomed of Jesus Christ. Hallelujah!

THE HIGH PRIEST’S PETITION [JOH. 17]

“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. Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is Life eternal, that they may know thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” [Joh.17:1-3]

No portion of the Word needs the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit more than this High Priestly prayer of Jesus. Jesus is speaking to His Father in view of the cross, pouring out His soul for our worshipful contemplation rather than for critical analysis. It is holy ground that we tread here—the very presence of the ante-chamber of Deity. As we read these words penned for our admonition and instruction, our hearts should be contrite and our heads bowed. Jesus has ended His discourse with His disciples. He now turns and addresses His Father, putting into His hands these poor, and presently to be scattered, sheep for whom He is about to die. Not for these alone is Jesus to be sacrificed but for all humanity; He will “*taste death for every man!*” [Heb.2:9].

We are privileged to listen-in to the intercession of the Melchizedek, or Royal Priest, for His saints. We are ushered in, as it were, to the throne room on high where He sits close to His Father as the Representative of His people. We see the work of redemption (the cross, resurrection, and ascension) being anticipated as accomplished. We have seen the same character attaching to much that He says in this Gospel, but especially in this latter portion.

Jesus is seen in John 13 as the Advocate, or that which connects with this service, and involves the same position as the Risen and Ascended Man upon the throne. He knew that the Father had put all things into His hands...that is, given Him Lordship over all. He is seen as having repaired the breach between God and man; made by Adam’s sin. Thus, authority over the earth, which He has redeemed, is part of His reward. In the beginning, it was given into Adam’s hand and by his disobedience he handed it over to the devil. But, Christ stepped on the scene and despoiled Satan’s power by the cross. He has defeated the enemy and loosed man’s claims.

He has ransomed us from the grave. We do not see all this manifested yet; but we see Jesus, who has been made King, sitting on His Father's throne as having overcome.

When we believe, we are translated into the Kingdom of the Son of God's love. The Melchizedek Priesthood of Christ is thought by many to contemplate simply the earthly (or millennial kingdom) in its exercise; but the bread and wine, which he served to Abraham, leads to a wider application. In its typical signification, in which alone we must view Genesis 14, the whole action and circumstance speak distinctly of the blessing of Christians, though not denying that there is an application also to Israel and millennial times. But Sodom is not yet judged, and we surely may claim Abraham as representative of the Christian in his heavenly calling. Abraham, the Hebrew, "one passing through" a scene in which he is a stranger and by which he will not be enriched "*from a thread even to a shoe-latchet*," is met by the Priest of Salem. He is given bread and wine and thus strengthened for the advancing temptation from the king of Sodom with his proffer of the spoil of the battle.

In the following prayer, it was as though Jesus was in that position where He is able to meet His people in their days of temptation with the "bread and wine," which show forth His death, resurrection, and ascension to the place of power that He is enjoying in the present age.

The prayer of Jesus, in John 17, may be divided into 3 parts:

1. Christ's Prayer for the **GLORY OF HIS FATHER** [Joh.17:1-5].
2. Christ's Prayer for **HIS DISCIPLES** [Joh.17:6-19].
3. Christ's Prayer for **THE WHOLE CHURCH** [Joh.17:20-26].

1. CHRIST'S PRAYER FOR THE GLORY OF HIS FATHER [JOH. 17:1-5]

"These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. 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." [Joh.17:1-5]

The heart of Jesus is free. He appears oblivious to those about Him and is occupied with God for them. He is speaking as the Son, having fulfilled the mission on which He was sent and is now ready to take the place belonging to Him in a past eternity...the glory which He had with the Father. However, there is this difference: Jesus now takes that place of honor from His Father's hand as a Man and will carry through in climaxing power on the throne what He began in excruciating pain upon the cross. He is speaking to His Father in the consciousness and communion of the co-equal Son, yet in entire devotion and reverence, saying, "*Glorify thy Son, that thy Son may glorify thee.*" He speaks as though He has died and been raised from the dead and all authority given unto Him. This scene pictures the cross as past. Like Abraham, He counts the things that be not as though they were. All flesh is in His hands; but it is as the Head of a new creation that He makes claim to this place of power. His Father gave it and the disciples to Him, to whom the Son gives eternal life.

He has the ability to sustain each of these whom the Father gives. He is able to keep them eternally safe and secure. This requires Divine Power which He, as the Eternal Son, is able to display. But notice it is a Man, through the obedience of the cross (He "*has finished the work which thou gavest me to do*") that He manifests the power of Deity. It is God Himself in the creature's place who overrules the creature's failure and by His condescending stoop wins him from his ruinous

path of self-will back into His Arms of love and fellowship. After he has once envisioned it, who could refuse such a path that is hallowed by the footsteps of the holy Son of God, the “*author and finisher of the faith*” [Heb.12:2]?

The Priest continues, “*This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.*” Here is not an absolute definition of eternal life but the way that it is known and realized in experience. The Eternal Son, made flesh, introduces His believing people to His Father. He makes them to know God as their Father. John learned the lesson well; for He declares, “*Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him*” [1Jo.3:1]. The Son Himself has provided the basis for this great change by His death and resurrection. He can now take them into union with Himself. He can make them partakers of His eternal life; which life never had a beginning and will never have an end. They become sons of God by a new birth, made one with the Son in a bundle of life; they learn to know the Father and the Son. He is going back to the Father where He was before. We hear Him say, “*And now, O Father, glorify Thou me with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.*” The Eternal Son is speaking to His Father as co-equal with Him, but with this difference, He is now a Man, the representative Head of a new line of men; He is going back as their Life and Intercessor. He is not ashamed of them because He has communicated to them His life. They are destined to be like Him. Inwardly and outwardly, they will shine in His Image.

The authority over all flesh, which the Father has given Him, will be manifested more in this manner than in any other exercise of it. For even now He changes us from glory to glory, separating us more and more from all that pertains to the flesh. His intercession for us is effectual. We are aware more and more of the power of His prayer for us as we realize the great transformation that He has brought about in our thoughts, desires and affections. Truly we can say, He has power over our flesh, subduing it and making it serve Him and His people. His people are not of this world, any more than He was of the world. He distinctly affirms this fact – and if they do not obey His edict in this respect, they will at length feel His chastening rod upon them. Observe how many references we find to the word [world](#) in this chapter. It would make an interesting Bible study to look into these 14 different citations⁴ and see their value as well as their connection with one another. The people of God in any age are not a part of the world, but rather in contrast to the present system of affairs over which Satan rules. Jesus, as Head over His Church, presents His disciples to the Father; for He made known His Name to them, and they had received His words and knew that He was the Sent One from God. As the Anointed Priest, He is the Intercessor, not for the world (for “*He was separate from sinners*”), but for His own people. They too are separated from the world, made One Body by the One Baptism in the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. There is much talk today about the coming into Church Union, but the vastly greater important thing is Christian Unity which has already been provided for by the One Baptism into one body, into which all Christians have been immersed, whether they know it, or admit it, or not.

But let us return to our subject proper, the priest’s prayer. In Israel, Aaron’s priesthood spoke of an established relationship with God. They offered typical sacrifices which figured the real and living Priest and Priesthood, that of Christ and his people. He went into heaven in the value of the one offering which can never be repeated nor ever lose its efficacy. By this sacrifice Jesus perfected forever those who are sanctified. That is, provisionally His saints are accepted in the Priest’s own unsullied righteousness. This is a reality to faith and will be demonstrated when Christ comes out of heaven and calls His Church up to meet Him in the air. Their bodies of humiliation will then be changed unto bodies of glory [Phi.3:21]. “*The only true God,*” whom Israel knew, a contrast to the false gods of the heathen, was nevertheless in His innermost reality

⁴ 1 Time in John 17:5 6, 17:9, 17:12-13, 17:15, 17:21, 17:23, 17:24 25; 2 times in Joh.17:11, 17:16, 17:18; and 3 times in Joh.17:14.

unknown to even these God's chosen people. This fact was figured by the veil of the sanctuary of the Tabernacle in the wilderness. It shut men outside its holiness. Moses, the choice leader of Israel, could not see God's face. It was the work of Jesus to declare to His people that Name which the Father gave Him. He was to make God known to them, as the Father. Though He had proclaimed Himself as a Father to Israel; yet as such they did not know God. Men must be "*born again*" before they can call Him by the name "Father." The nation of Israel were not the children of God by natural birth any more than are the Gentiles. Only when Christ came, was this Name declared. This is an eternal relationship, not one of time. It was purposed in eternity. Love wanted an object worthy of itself upon which to bestow its affection. Love has been found in those poor helpless creatures who come to Christ, are saved, and learn to call His Father their Father. How wonderful! How incomprehensible, except to faith, that God so loved a lost humanity that He chose a new creation, of the same lump and make of these His children! By sending His own Son in the likeness of this ruined race to die in their stead, He thus made a way whereby His grace could be shown.

"O HOW MARVELOUS!
O HOW WONDERFUL!
AND MY SONG SHALL EVER BE.
O HOW MARVELOUS!
O HOW WONDERFUL!"
IS THIS GRACE OF GOD TO ME.

2. CHRIST'S PRAYER FOR HIS DISCIPLES [Joh. 17:6-19]

"I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them." [Joh.17:6-10]

The Father has given these beloved children to the Son and now He gives them back, saying, "*All mine are thine and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them.*" He was no longer in the world; but they would be left in it without that gracious all-sufficient companionship which they had enjoyed. He commits them to the care of the Divine Father, though He as their Lord directs their service. All things are in His hand concerning them; they have been given to Him but He recognizes the Father's claim as paramount. Therefore, Jesus prays to the Holy Father that they may be kept in His Name...that Name which He had manifested unto them.

"And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves." [Joh.17:11-13]

Christ's atmosphere was God, and into this Sanctuary He brings His people: "*That they may be one as we are one.*" We hear Him saying, "*While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Thy Name*" ... "*None of them is lost, but the son of perdition.*" Only one was repelled by His love and grace; only one rejected Him. He was going to God; but He would not leave them sorrowful but joyful. These words were spoken that His joy might be their portion, even in a scene of trouble, such as is this world. In proportion as their joy in God would be realized, so the hate of the world and its prince would be manifested to them. The light would have its shadow and they would be identified with Jesus in sorrow and in joy.

"I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." [Joh.17:14-19]

Why didn't Jesus pray that they would be taken out of the world? Because the wilderness trials would bring a harvest they would reap throughout eternity. Israel's feast of Tabernacles is the type of this abounding joy and refreshment which we shall enjoy when we have entered into our eternal abiding House. Therefore, Jesus prays that God would "*keep them from the evil*" not from the trouble. He had separated His own entirely from the world and sin by His separation (sanctification) by the cross. But the "*truth*" was the means that would bring about the separation in their experiences. Jesus says that by "*thy truth*", which refers to all the Scriptures, and by this the world would identify them as His disciples. From henceforth they should have an opened heaven, into which He introduces them; it would be characterized by a new Object, a Man set apart there to God and for man. Divine Glory is shining forth in Jesus' face.

Here is another instance of the foundation of Paul's doctrine being in this Gospel of John. The gospel of the glory of Christ was that by which the Apostle to the Gentiles (Paul) was turned to God. He saw the glorified Man Jesus in the heavens and it is here his eyes were fixed forever. Henceforth, the passion of his soul was to win Him as his Bridegroom. Paul desired no greater honor than to be found in Him. This was the goal toward which he ever ran. Paul declares that the object before him detached him from the world. He declares that Christ is made unto us "*wisdom*" from God, even "*sanctification*" [1Co.1:30]. The object absorbed, inspired, and glorified him, as he wrote, "*But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord*" [2Co.3:18]. It is God's face that is "open" (without a veil). This is an inspired comment upon the words before us in the Gospel. We find them developed by the Apostle Paul in his various epistles in which he sets forth the Christian's place. It is the central glory of the cross that Christ is for us and His glory and honor belong to His people. He is waiting for His Church and they are waiting for Him. Even now we may abide by faith where He abides. He wants it that way. Shall we deny Him the joy that He desires and the satisfaction for which He longs?

3. CHRIST'S PRAYER FOR THE WHOLE CHURCH [JOH. 17:20-26]

In this last part of the John 17, Christ prays for the whole Church.

"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." [Joh.17:20-23]

This great momentous request of the Son was answered on the Day of Pentecost. As soon as Jesus entered heaven and sat down upon the Father's throne, the whole Church was baptized into One Body by the One Baptism in the Spirit of God. This is a unity of practical life, a oneness of heart and mind, even that which exists between Father and Son; a unity which the world should be able to see and thus be led to believe. It is not that the world as a whole is meant but individuals moved to accept the Gospel by the love and brotherhood shown. Alas, in our days there is so little of this Divine Oneness manifested. We read in Acts, the inspired history of that time, that at the beginning of this age, this unity was seen. The disciples whole-heartedly entered into the reality of this Divine Brotherhood, a unity between believing Jews and Gentiles. The heaven was opened to them. They could look into the celestial glory and see Jesus, as it

were. It was wonderful! Their faith was a reality and their practical life was in agreement. The desire of the Son of Man was granted. His people were one. God was glorified.

Jesus prayed for all of His people. He desired that the glory which the Father would put upon Him would be shared by His Church; *“bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh”* [Gen.2:23]. They shall shine in His glory. The honors that shall be heaped upon Him shall fall to their portion. They will be manifested with Him in the day of His appearing. The world will then know that He was the Sent One of God and that they were loved of His Father even as He was loved. He desires also that they shall be with Him that they may behold His glory. His heart is wrapped up in His people. He wants them with Him, sharers of all that He is and has. Such love is beyond our comprehension. This is to *“show the exceeding riches of His grace”* [Eph.2:7]. His glory is His own eternal dwelling and we must be where He is to realize the vision.

“Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.” [Joh.17:24-26]

The last words of this climaxing chapter are a declaration to the *“righteous Father”*, that the world hath not known Him. The Son hath been in this scene for 33 years, revealing His Father, but the people have not believed the fact. Now, He is ready to go back whence He came. He knows the attitude of the Jews. The majority have rejected Him and His Father. Only a few believed the Truth. His claims have been scorned; however, regardless of the weakness of the few, He links them up with Himself. These have known the Father, because they have received Him. To them Jesus revealed the Father that they may be loved of the Father even as the Son is loved.

There is power in His prayer and there must be purposes in our hearts that we may receive the answer. In this connection, we have the will of God for His Church declared and outlined for us.

- First, it is His will, that we must be saved [Joh.17:2-3].
- Then, that we be kept [Joh.17:11].
- Further, it is God’s will that we be sanctified (separated) from the world [Joh.17:17-19].
- That we be witnesses in order that others may be saved; therefore we should be missionaries, *“sent ones”* even if only to our neighbors or friends [Joh.17:20].
- Then God wills that His people be one in heart and purpose. Unity should characterize His Church which oneness only God can make and in which He can keep His people [Joh.17:22-23].
- Again it is God’s will that we should love one another as He has loved us [Joh.17:26]. The Lord’s love for us is the standard of our love for each other. How amazing is such a possibility. How far short we come of such devotion. What is the trouble? We do not believe that God will work in us to the extent, that Christ’s very own life and love may be manifested in us by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Remember, this is the prayer of the ascended Lord (the disciple’s prayer is found in Matthew 6). It is His High-Priestly intercession that we are listening to here. If we will trust God *“to work in us to will and to do of His own good pleasure”* [Phi.2:13], it is possible to have it answered in our individual experiences. God’s will is our peace and perfection.

He appeals to the “*righteous Father*” as one who, in the midst of a world alienated from the knowledge of Him, has known Him; and, in spite of their feebleness, He links His disciples with Himself as those who have known His Name and would go to make it known. They, and we, must ever be learners going on to know Him better and better every day. The Mighty Lover and the Father’s Servant is ready for the last act of the drama. In His prayer the cross is as though it is in the past; however, in reality, it is just ahead. It has been written, “*Lo I come to do thy will*” is an expression of Him as the “Burnt Offering;” therefore, as the “Free-Will” sacrifice Jesus goes on to complete His work. There is no agony in the Garden of Gethsemane recorded by John. He shows the Son with the Father going up the mountain to worship [Gen.22:5].

DIV.4, REVELATION OF GOD AS LOVE TO ALL MEN [JOH. 18-20]

With John 18 we are beginning the 4th division of John’s Gospel: God revealed as Love to men. There still remains the epilogue, the 5th division, in John 21.

We separate this division into 3 parts:

1. **The Trial:** The Paschal Lamb Examined [John 18],
2. **The Tragedy:** The Paschal Lamb Slain [John 19], and
3. **The Triumph:** Love Conquers Death [John 20].

1. THE TRIAL: THE PASCHAL LAMB EXAMINED [JOH. 18]

“When Jesus had spoken these words, He went forth with His disciples over the brook Cedron, where there was a garden, into which He entered with His disciples.” [Joh.18:1]

We have read the prayer of Jesus to His Father and we realized that He was speaking as the Great High Priest, of which Aaron was the figure. We saw our place with Him as priests, sharers of His sacrifice and service in the world, and later sharers of His glory. In John 18, we see Him going forth to finish the work as Priest that He anticipated as done in John 17.

In the serenity of faith of who He is, and what He must accomplish, He goes forth to the garden. It was a place often frequented by Jesus and His disciples. It is not called Gethsemane by John; because he is portraying for us the Son of God; therefore, no temptation is recorded. It would not be suitable in this Gospel. It is so inspiring to note how each biographer of the Lord Jesus Christ kept to his Subject and portrayed Him in His official place, relating only what was subservient to Him in that order. This proves the miraculous in these writings.

In John 18 we behold the marvelous Man of Destiny, the Doer of His Father’s will, going on to fulfill that which was marked out for Him. Jesus knew all that would befall him, even the betrayal, trial, and death; but He did not endeavor to escape. He did not run away nor hide; but sought out the garden where often He enjoyed sweet fellowship with His disciples. Judas knew the place and Jesus was aware that shortly he would come and deliver Him to the arresting squad. He knew His hour had come and He was ready to offer Himself up. Only a little while before, He had spoken to His Father as though all things were accomplished concerning His life-day. He knew all things. The Infallible and Mighty God had come to redeem and He must go on to the end. The Love that brought Him on the scene sustained Him up to the cross and kept Him on that rugged tree until He knew the price was paid and atonement fully made.

In this division, the sovereignty of Christ is shown over all circumstances which makes Him the free and willing offering that John's Gospel portrays. We find the complete fulfillment of His own words, *"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"* [Joh.10:18]. Thus beautifully exhibited, we see His sovereignty as well as His sacrifice. He goes over the black winter-torrent brook of Cedron (*"brook in the way"*). There is great significance in the meaning of Cedron because it speaks of that which He had to drink in order that afterward, in resurrection, He might *"lift up the head"* [Psa.110:7]. The joy and blessing which Jesus was to bring to others also brought refreshment and comfort to Him. Beyond the dark abyss of suffering, which was now before Him, He envisioned the Paradise into which He was to bring His own beloved people. Over Cedron then, He passes to the garden, taking with Him His disciples; acting out the last act of the drama in figure. He is clearly going on, knowing well all the significance of His pathway.

Judas knew the place as one of frequent resort of Jesus and His faithful followers [Joh.18:2]. Jesus was found in the garden, and went out of Paradise, as it were, to meet the doom that was hanging over humanity. It is a wonderful story; too great and incomprehensible unless it is revealed to us by the Father. Wise men of the world stumble at the mystery while the little children still believe.

"Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons. Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them. As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground. Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none." [Joh.18:3-9]

In view of the knowledge possessed by Jesus about all things that would happen to Him, how foolish was the number mustered to arrest Him. Judas led the band, which Jesus comes forward to meet. He was not shunning the cross. It was the objective of His birth. The **Must** of His incarnation made the way for the **Must** of His execution. Jesus enquires, *"Whom seek ye?"* When they answer, *"Jesus of Nazareth,"* Jesus says, *"I am he"* and they all fall backward to the ground as though a bolt of lightning had struck them. Thus they are warned that He is no ordinary man, but the eternal Son of God as He witnessed. Regardless, they insist on taking Him. He yields to the arrest with this stipulation that they loose His friends. Blessed Victim! Through His taking we are set free. Do you get the thought? All men are set free by His judgment. Let these go, He says. The death of the Passover Lamb in Egypt preserved Israel's first-born from death, typical of Christ's death for all those who believe.

Peter, out of harmony with the purposes of Jesus, draws his sword and cuts off the ear of the high-priest's servant. This was surely a blunder, but it gave the Mighty Miracle-Worker another opportunity to display His power. He heals the ear, though this service is not revealed to us by John's Gospel. Jesus tells Peter to put up his sword. His time to fight had not yet come. When it does, He will have 12 legions of angels or more if necessary to defend His rights. The other Gospel writers inform us that He declared that He could call for them now if He desired; but how then should atonement be made? No, He could not be delivered until His work was done.

Judas and Peter, and later John and Peter are in contrast in this closing scene in Jesus' earthly life. Both Peter and Judas failed in this hour, but with what a difference.

- One was an unbeliever, the other a believer. There is a great gulf between such.

- One deliberately sold Jesus for 30 pieces of silver, betraying Jesus with a kiss; the other denied Him, not deliberately, but inadvertently as he was taken unawares in the judgment hall. He had followed the officers as they took Jesus and led Him away.
- Judas could not believe that He would not resist them; for he had seen Him many times manifest His power and escape His enemies. But Peter was flesh, even as we, and the fear of the rulers who appeared to be having their way was over him. It might be that he was somewhat offended that his endeavors to protect the Master by using his sword led to a rebuke and his work was in vain. Poor Peter, was strong in himself. He did not understand the situation; but he loved Jesus and believed that He was the Messiah, the Son of God.
- Judas had no faith in His claims. He had viewed Jesus in action, and saw His mighty miracles and His life of victory and heard His surpassing words of wisdom first hand; and yet was not moved to accept and cling to Him. He will always remain a mystery. Peter, on the other hand, we understand. There is a wide gulf between the two.

God can restore the erring and weak believer, as was the case with Peter; but He can do nothing for those who refuse His mercy (Judas). Regardless of a believer's fall and failure, he is a child of God who deals with him as such [Heb.12:5-7]. In the natural, when children are disobedient, they are chastised, but not cast off and put out of the family and home. Seldom is there found a parent so cruel as this would intimate. The authorities are even stirred sometimes when parents punish their children too severely. They come to the rescue and punish the parents.

Shall we say God as a Father is cruel? Shall we so characterize Him, as being less kind in His care and nurture of His children than human parents? The manner in which preachers speak of God is impudent, disgraceful, and blasphemous as regards His chastisement of His people. Some of them insist that He will cast them into hell if they do not walk a chalk line. They give the words of judgment intended for sinners to the saints. There is chastisement for disobedient children, but never a casting away into hell, or the lake of fire for them. Even the nation Israel, a typical people (only a few compared to the many being born again), had a different relationship to God than other nations. The nations were punished when they persecuted Israel, and so they will be again.

Further thoughts as to Judas and Peter:

Judas appears before his treachery, much more attractive than Peter. Observe his quiet demeanor. There is not one hasty, rebellious word or action recorded of him. He went about with the Apostles and they never realized his true character. He had a natural self-control which Peter lacked. They might have imagined one of the tempestuous sons of thunder, John or James, or even the impulsive, quick-tempered Peter was the traitor. Even when Jesus pointed Judas out, there was no hasty word, no denial, nor protest; he said nothing, just calmly walked away. When he came with the officers, he kissed the Master as he probably would have done on other occasions.

Peter, on the other hand, was rude, with a hasty uncontrollable temper. He was impulsive, quickly moved in everything with very little natural physiological attainment. He probably swore at the slightest provocation and everyone knew how he felt and where he stood. But here was the great difference; Peter was honest and loyal in his makeup. There was no unreality about him. Peter was what he was. He would willingly have died fighting for Jesus. He was not a physical coward; however, morally he went down before the enemy. As long as Jesus stood His ground and resisted His foes, he would have been with Him. He believed and worshiped Jesus. It was too much for Peter when Jesus

yielded to His captors and walked away with them. He did not comprehend the surrender (sacrifice) of Calvary. Jesus had told him that He must go away. He explained the cross and His way of departure; but the meaning escaped him. Peter denied Jesus whom he loved, even with curses...but **he was Still Saved**.

Peter's flesh was weak in the presence of the religious humbugs, the apostatized rulers of Jewry (who were much worse than he) and he egregiously failed; but he was always God's child. Jesus had declared that he would fail; but he was so strong and self-reliant that he did not believe it possible. Do you think for a minute that Peter was a weak, sissy sort of a fellow in the natural? No; on the contrary, he was a bold, daring, character. But the mental torture, when such an honest faithful soul is tempted to think he is wrong, to feel that all the energy, time, toil, and sacrifice of his life has been in vain, is beyond words to describe. The suffering is intense. Peter was in such a case and Jesus knew it.

When Jesus met Mary after His resurrection, He sent a special word to Peter. Furthermore, He gave Peter the leading part among the Apostles. He was the more fitted by his failure. Those who are able to keep themselves never know the deep delight of being kept by God. When he was endued with power from on high, Peter "The Failure" became Peter "The Fearless." Notice his career in Acts 1-12. The unfainting God gave him strength [Isa.40:28].

Peter believed God. **Judas** did not. Faith marks the one, unbelief the other. That is the secret of the destiny of each.

Let us return to our subject of the trial of Jesus.

THE TRIAL BEFORE ANNAS [JOH. 18:12-23]

*"Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him, And led him away to Annas first; for he was father in law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year. Now Caiaphas was he, which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people."
[Joh.18:12-14]*

We find that Jesus is taken first to the ecclesiastical court. The Sacrifice is being led to slaughter. The Lamb is being examined for the Passover feast that all other men might be delivered from judgment. They bind Him, who was already bound to the horns of the altar, the meek and lowly Lamb, the Ram of sacrifice [Gen.22:13], who was caught in the thicket by His horns (power). He goes on to fulfill all that is written of Him, the great Leader, to the religious court where the Sanhedrin sat in judgment. Annas, father-in-law to Caiaphas presides.

Jesus' questioning by Annas is not related by the other Gospel writers. John notes the trial before Caiaphas, but gives us no details. Annas was the real high priest, because according to scriptural specifications, there was no cessation of the office except by death. The fact that there were 2 priests in that official place of high priest, proves how far removed they were from God's thoughts. When Scripture is disregarded, God is held in similar contempt. He has "*thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name*" [Psa.138:2 Transliterated]; therefore, they fall or rise together. Men cannot claim to believe God and deny His Word and power. These 2 things are incompatible. Will the court of any king hold guiltless the man who refuses to heed its edicts? Will the city officials hold blameless the man or set of men that defy its rules? They might reason that their ideas were the better and would get quicker and greater results; but that is not the question. The officials will not clear the man who takes such an attitude, neither will God. He has laid down some absolute decrees for His Church and they are sufficient and need no

addenda. So it is in the case of Israel. God had laid down His statutes and decrees, and after the centuries passed they paid little, or no attention to them except as it suited them.

Jesus was the true High Priest. He was not of the order of Aaron but of the tribe of Judah. A change was due. With His advent, a new order of priesthood had entered the scene; Jesus was the Head. Other priests would follow. He must win His honors by sacrifice. Aaron's line of priests had somewhat to offer; therefore as the typical things were passing away, Jesus offered Himself, the real Sacrifice, to whom all the offerings pointed.

It was really the Romans that set up one high priest after the other as it pleased them. We are informed that Caiaphas occupied the High Priest office for that year. We surmise it was a political job but God would not have allowed such conditions if the Jews had obeyed His Word. Caiaphas was the man who gave counsel regarding the expediency of 1 man dying for the people that the whole nation perish not. That was a prophecy of the need of a Savior. It agreed with the Word, though spoken by a rebellious, sinful man, and showed him in the place of a judge prepared with his verdict beforehand. The names of those men, who were on the scene at that momentous season when Jesus was here in person and atonement was made for sin, are immortalized, in a sense. Their names have been preserved through the centuries; while others much greater in the world's matters are unknown. What a miracle! It shows, that to be linked up with the Son of God, whether for or against Him, is to be of consequence. **Jesus is the Person that counts.**

THE TRIAL BEFORE CAIAPHAS [JOHN 18:24-27]

Annas is allied with Caiaphas and his whole aim is to ensnare Jesus. Justice is not a part of this court. He enquires of the doctrine of Jesus and His disciples. Jesus points him to that which He had taught everywhere with the greatest publicity. He had hidden nothing. It was for His accusers to come forward and make their charges and prove their case against Him. To the one smiting Him because He thus spoke, He answers with a quiet remonstrance. Wonderful Man! Having all power yet holding back and hiding His immensity. Annas is baffled, but not turned from his malignancy. He sends Him bound to Caiaphas [Joh.18:19-24]. That trial was not commented upon by John. It was such a farce that the Son of God, though in human form, should stand before a man who had no authority ecclesiastically; therefore, the Spirit did not move John to record its doings. It was all left, even the trial before Annas, without any detailed results for us.

Peter's denial of Jesus occupies more space in John 18 [Joh.18:15-18, 25-27] than the ecclesiastical trial of Jesus [Joh.18:19-24]. In a sense, all men are here judged.

Peter is just a representative man even as **Judas** and **John**. These all speak of different groups of mankind. We have already diagnosed Judas; now we will examine **Peter**, (*"the son of Jonah"*), the erstwhile failing preacher. He inherited his disposition to run away when it was a case of yieldedness to men. **Peter** was *"warming himself"* [Mar.14:67]. We don't doubt that he was cold. His heart was failing him. The world would say that he was getting cold feet; but we say that he was cold in spirit, soul, and body. The power of Satan is terrific. So many men are afraid of being laughed at. Mockery and ridicule are harder for some men to endure than blows. Our hero represents this class of disciples. They will, like Jonah, run from the battle when it is an invisible one. If the army was before them in a physical sense, they would fight; however, putting up the other cheek and letting the boys laugh is too much for these humans.

The maid at the door was suspicious of **Peter** and enquired if he was not one of the followers of Jesus. He denies the allegation; but later, one of the men by the fire asks the question again. He is getting a little warm around the collar now and answers sharply, *"I am not!"* Another of Jesus'

enemies, related to the servant of the high priest whose ear had been cut off by Peter, was not quite satisfied. He had probably noticed that disciple who was so quick with his sword more than the others. That brave man is surely in a corner, when this enquirer said, "*Did I not see thee in the garden with Him?*" Peter denies his Lord the 3rd time; immediately the cock crows. Then the poor fellow remembered Jesus' words to him beforehand, "*The cock shall not crow this day before thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me*" [Joh.13:38, also in Mat.26:34, Mar.14:30, and Luk.22:34].

Now let us look at **John** in this scene. He stands out of the picture, though unnamed and unnoticed apparently. He goes into the courtroom where the more outspoken and bolder man, Peter, breaks down so helplessly. We believe he felt his weakness and prayed that God would keep him true. He was known to the high priest and the damsel at the gate. He was known as a follower of Jesus as her question to Peter (whom John had brought in) shows, "*Art thou also one of this man's followers?*" John was one of those dependable folk. He was always right there when needed. No questions are asked regarding them. Everyone knows just where they stand.

Later, **John**, the beloved disciple, is found in the same open way at the cross. He obtains a precious recognition and precious charge from his dying Savior. Jesus gives His mother into John's care. Jesus knew whom He could trust. John obtained a mother and Mary obtained a son. He was the truest and dearest of the disciples. He loved Jesus supremely and his love was reciprocated. Jesus knew that he would die for Him if necessary. John was entrusted with His mother, but He gave the keys of the Kingdom of heaven to Peter [Mat.16]. Officially, Peter was the greatest of the Apostles; but he was not loved the most, nor did he love the most. He had the greater place before men, preached mighty sermons, performed great miracles; but John was given His most prized possession on earth...His mother.

The religious trial occupied only a small part of the night. It was a sham and a shame. Nothing was proved against Jesus. Those rulers were on trial there. Though Jesus never said a word, the real judge pronounced them guilty. We are all there at that trial, sinners and saints. Observe that of the 16 verses comprising the report in John's Gospel, 7 are not about the trial of Jesus, but refer to Peter. Everyone in this world who names the name of Christ is on trial. Where the Master of the house is arraigned, how foolish to imagine that the remainder of the family shall escape.

THE TRIAL BEFORE PILATE [JOHN 18:28–19:16]

"Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment; and it was early. And they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled, that they might eat the Passover." [Joh.18:28]

We begin here the 3rd section of the John 18: The trial before the civil court.⁵ It is, if possible, more of a farce than the religious trial. It moves to and fro in relation to the Praetorium⁶. The prosecuting party being outside, the judge must perforce come to them if they will not come to him. Mark these 7 movements; they would be amusing if they were not on so solemn an occasion:

1. **Without** [Joh.18:28-32],
2. **Within** [Joh.18:33-38],
3. **Without** [Joh.18:38-40],

⁵ The Trial before Annas [Joh.18:12-23], the Trial before Caiaphas [Joh.18:24-27] and the Trial before Pilate [Joh.18:28 to Joh.19:16].

⁶ The praetorium or palace of Herod (English translation, "judgment-hall").

4. **Within** [Joh.19:1-3],
5. **Without** [Joh.19:4-7],
6. **Within** [Joh.19:8-11], and finally
7. **Without** [Joh.19:12-16].

John 18 relates 3 of these 7 sections we are considering now.

Pilate enquires of the Jews as to the charge. This is outside the judgment hall. It is clear that the Jews want nothing less than Jesus' death, yet they were not able to inflict such a sentence. That power had been taken from them. The civil trial is much dwelt upon here and particulars given which we do not find elsewhere. It is clear that Pilate, the judge, is being judged. His conscience is bared by the light of **the Presence** before which he stands. Judge and accused change places. Hardened and seared as Pilate's conscience may be, he shrivels up before the Christ. Even then, he compares favorably with the blinded, self-righteous, fanatical leaders of Israel. They were darkened by The Light which shone upon them; but from which they had turned. Pilate was not as guilty as the Jews. He shrank from the insane fury which was plainly manifested in them; nevertheless, he was weak. He could not resist them, though he much desired to save Jesus from their enmity.

John shows the under-working of a convicted soul, as none of the other writers; as he portrays Christ as the Son of God and the hearts of others are made manifest all through this scene. The Judge (Jesus Christ) whom God appointed is here seen standing before man's judgment seat, and realizing their terrible condition before the heavenly tribunal as none other could. He takes their sentence upon Himself. Poor blinded men, Satan's dupes, they do not know that God is standing there in the Person of Christ and, by pronouncing sentence upon Him, they are affirming themselves worthy of death.

They call for His death by crucifixion, which was in order for the fulfillment of God's Word. Crucifixion was not a Jewish mode of punishment. The "*hanging upon a tree*," came after death with them. In fact, it had not been the Roman custom, except for a few years. God had moved them to inaugurate this method as it shows the accursed death [Deu.21:23], and that was the way out for the Royal Sin-Bearer.

Here, all that we read of was under the direct supervision of God. It was the most momentous hour of all the world's history. That day, men little reckoned what tremendous significance was connected with that scene. When Pilate enquires as to whether Jesus is King of the Jews Jesus answers Pilate at once, "*Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?*" He means, has Pilate a personal interest in it? He must have heard of His claims, because the news had been carried everywhere, that the Messiah, for whom the Jews were looking for years, was at last upon the scene. Was Pilate alarmed at this ruler? He puts away the question as being a mere Jewish issue. Let Jesus answer as to his own case before his people's accusation. What reason did they have? Jesus lets Pilate know that His Kingdom is a heavenly one and that it had no affinity with that present system of things; otherwise, He would not have been left unarmed and defenseless before His enemies.

Pilate is amazed in the presence of this Man. He does not understand the uneasiness that is upon him. "*Art thou a king then?*" the Roman enquires. Jesus answers, "*Thou sayest that I am a king, to this end was I born.*" His birth was for the purpose that He should reign. He was in the world to bear witness to the Truth. By the Truth He would establish His Kingdom over the hearts and lives of men. Then He drops a word for the conscience of the judge, "*Everyone who is of the truth heareth my voice.*" Like the skeptical Roman that he is, Pilate turns his ears away and asks, "*What is truth?*"

The Romans believed no more in gods; the greater number of them were infidels. The Roman emperor, who ruled the great dominion of which they were a part, was their god. What did they know of truth? What did they care? They were the conquerors of the world. But this Man had made an impression upon Pilate. What was His secret? What is the Truth? He is interested and yet afraid. He steps outside to regain his equilibrium. We know that he could not look Jesus in the face; nevertheless he determines to save His life. He tells the Jews that he finds no fault in the Man. He intends to release Him. However, to appease the Jews, he compromises with them by putting the matter into their hands. Thus, he makes for himself an impossible situation. He had been near to the Kingdom of God, almost touching it, and then turned aside and left the golden glory for the tawdry things of earth. Poor Pilate, poor lost man! Many before and since that day have been near the Kingdom and have not entered; but none so near as he.

What is Truth? The question of all time comes down to us even today. Men are still asking, but many are refusing the answer when it is pointed out to them. **Christ is the Truth.** Jesus had declared this fact before [Joh.14:6]. He stands at the door of men's hearts awaiting an entrance which will lead to the Kingdom of God. The people reveal their state in a worse fashion yet. Pilate has shut for himself the way of escape by saying that he will leave the fate of Jesus with the Jews. They have a custom that he should release a convicted man at the Passover feast which was now due. Therefore, he would release unto them "*the king of the Jews.*" This was like waving a red flag in the face of a bull. They shout, "*Not this man, but Barabbas*" who was a robber, rebel, and murderer. Barabbas was chosen in place of the Holy Son of God; but God was leading on in His foreordained way. His counsels of old were being fulfilled. His Son must die in the place of the criminal over whom the penalty of death was hanging. So on with the drama. Pilate's opportunity is gone.

THE INN-KEEPER'S LAMENT

O SAD, SAD FATE, THAT I SHOULD BE
THE ONE WHO TURNED AWAY FROM THEE.
BUT INN WAS CROWDED — NO PLACE THERE,
NOT EVEN ROOM FOR HEAVEN'S HEIR.
JOSEPH AND MARY WERE TOLD TO GO.
AND ALL THESE YEARS, THAT DEED DOTH SHOW
UPON THE RECORDS HERE BELOW.

MY HEART SMOTE ME, AS THEY WENT ON.
I QUICKLY CRIED, "WAIT TILL DAWN.
A STABLE NEAR HAS PLACE FOR TWO."
THEY WERE RELIEVED. IF I BUT KNEW
A GLEAMING STAR ALL DAZZLING BRIGHT,
WAS HANGING LOW, A SIGN THAT NIGHT
TO WISE MEN, GUIDING THEM ARIGHT.

THEY BROUGHT GIFTS FOR THE CHILD SO FAR
(VISION OF GLORY IN MANGER BARE),
CULLED FOR HIM THE TREASURES OF EARTH,
THE VERY BEST; FOR THEY KNEW HIS WORTH.
OH, WHY COULD I NOT KNOW BEFORE,
THAT THIS CHOICE ONE, THE WISE ADORE,
WOULD DEIGN TO STOP AT MY OWN DOOR?

IF I BUT KNEW, COULD E'EN FOR SEE,
THAT AT MY INN STOOD DESTINY,
I WOULD HAVE SENT THE RICH AWAY,
MADE ROOM FOR CHRIST THAT FATEFUL DAY.
SO NOW, I CRY TO YOU, OH MEN,

2. THE TRAGEDY: THE PASCHAL LAMB SLAIN [JOH. 19]

“Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him. And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe, And said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands. Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him.” [Joh.19:1-4]

What injustice, indignity, derision, and scorn were meted out to the Son of God! It is almost impossible to believe that the human heart, with all its religious veneer, can be so cruel as to deal such treatment to this defenseless and gentle Man. He had not done one wicked deed to any person. Goodness had marked His every step; yet, those wicked men poured upon Him the anathema of the vilest criminal. The Jews were really guiltier in giving Jesus over into the hands of the Gentiles. Pilate even wanted to save Him from death; but, in the face of the envy and hatred manifested by the religious rulers, he was unable to do so. They were like a mob determined to kill their victim. By putting His case into the hands of the people Pilate desired to release Jesus. He hoped the death of Barabbas would appease them; it was of no use. They chose the robber and murderer instead of their glorious King. His name **Barabbas** (“son of a father”) is very significant. They refused another Son of the Father. But who was the father of that lawless one? He was simply a shadow of the one coming in his own name, whom the nation will receive, truly a son of the rebel, Satan, the “*murderer from the beginning*,” [Joh.8:44] of whom Jesus had previously warned [Joh.5:43].

“Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man! When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him.” [Joh.19:5-6]

Pilate, having put the case into the Jews’ hands, was helpless. He had given Jesus up to be scourged, hoping thus to appease the people. In every compromise, Pilate miserably failed. He sought to awaken sympathy in the interesting Man, who arrested his attention. Although he repeatedly asserted that he found no fault in the Man, yet it was all in vain.

It was the Jews who insisted that He must die after the Roman soldiers had mocked Him. They were stirred to greater fury when Pilate brought Him forth, dressed in royal robes and cried, “*Behold the Man*.” They had not pity but instead shouted, “*Crucify him, crucify him*,” demanding the most ignominious death for Him. Pilate yielded Jesus up, saying, “*Take ye Him and crucify Him; for I find no fault in Him*.” By these words Pilate declared that he was not responsible; he was not sending Jesus of Nazareth to death. He acquitted Him of all guilt; therefore if they insisted on crucifying Him, they did so at their own risk. But nothing stopped them. They were bent on getting rid of the Holy Man who convicted them by His accusing eyes and acts of mercy. His very presence brought out their wickedness and showed up their guilt and sin. Then they declared their real accusation against Him:

“The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.” [Joh.19:7]

Jesus must die for what He is and His affirmation of it. He must die for the grace that has brought Him to earth; for the love that made Him identify Himself with mankind. There was no escape for Him. He was the scapegoat [Lev.16]. But Pilate was stricken again by these words.

When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid; And went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin." [Joh.19:8-11]

Pilate was probably reminded of heathen legends of the gods and sons of gods visiting the haunts of men, and though he had not greatly credited such, yet now he was perplexed indeed. Who is this unusual Man, who calmly stands unmoved by all the indignity and opprobrium (criticism, scorn, and contempt) cast upon Him? He muses, "Did He not carry Himself like a god?" There were other influences, for instance the dream of his wife, which were moving him and making him tremble. He called Jesus once more before him, and with unaccustomed awe enquired, "*Who art thou?*" Pilate was not a weak man (except as all men are weak because of sin). He was not easily moved to pity or kindness. He had mingled the blood of the Jews with their own sacrifices and could have trampled them down as the dust under his feet. He was cruel, as were the Romans; but at that moment, he was undecided. He desired to save this innocent Man from death, yet he did not understand his own feelings in the matter. He did not know that he was in hands stronger than his own.

Jesus compassionately tells Pilate that he could have no authority over Him except it was allowed from above. He had been delivered by God into his hands. However, the rulers of the Jews found in this fact their opportunity to pour out all the enmity of their hearts upon this marvelous Man, of whom all the ages prophesied and whom they had been prepared by the voice of heaven's messengers to expect. Therefore, because of their greater light and privilege they had sin greater even than the Gentiles. They had the greater sin than Pilate. Judas, the actual traitor, was but the representation of the nation of Israel.

Poor Pilate was truly in a quandary. He sought again to release Him; but he was not master of himself. Fallible man! He was but a pawn in the hand of God and of Satan also. The Jews knew their man and their opportunity and took advantage of both. They brought an argument to bear upon him that made him as wax in their hands. God is a possibility, he had envisioned something wonderful in the distance, but Caesar was a certainty and nearer at hand. "*If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar*" [Joh.19:12], they cried.

The battle was over for Pilate; Satan had won. The situation had become impossible for him. He succumbed to the inevitable and his hope of eternal blessedness had past. First, he had said, not asked as if to learn, "*What is truth?*" Now, his frightened heart, to which the favor of the Emperor was the supreme boon, collapsed.

"When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. And it was the preparation of the Passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King! But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar. Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led him away." [Joh.19:13-16]

He took his place upon the judgment seat, which for a few moments he had relinquished, and in these words, wherein we may read both taunt and scorn, and yet with a final plea to the Jews, exclaimed, "*Behold Your King.*" They were stung to madness and cried, "*Away with him, away with him, crucify him.*" He answered, "*Shall I crucify your King?*" He was facing them with the fact of the strange Man's identity; but he did not know it. They added further to Pilate's perturbation and fear by these words, "*We have no king but Caesar.*" He then delivered Him up into their devilish hands.

That was not the verdict of the Jews alone, and they have not suffered alone. The whole world has been, and is, wearing the yoke of Caesar instead of the easy yoke of Christ. They have often been very tired of their taskmasters and suffered intolerably at the hands of their rulers. Many times they have risen up against their tyranny and demanded better government; but no great change is noted. Many Caesars now reign instead of one; but things are no better. There will never be any perfection upon the earth, nationally or otherwise, until the Prince of Peace has His place in the world. The people will have Caesar in one form or another until Christ reigns, whose right it is. Jesus was sent forth to death, judged as a criminal and sentenced to the cross; but, as we shall see later, there is a sequel to the story. The end is not yet.

Pilate had not succeeded in saving Jesus from death because it was written that He should go that way; nothing could hinder the fulfillment of Scripture. The human judge could not deliver Him because the Divine Judge had already pronounced sentence. Christ was identified with sinful man by His own free will, and as such must die in man's stead. It is great and wonderful to meditate upon the stately steppings of Jehovah as He goes on in the fulfillment of His Word. As is so vividly seen in this place, He makes all things work out His purposes and plans. Pilate's desire to set Jesus free was made the means to an end. He scourged Him and allowed the Romans, in sport, to mock and crown Him with thorns and smite Him on the face, pulling out the beard; for thus it had been written. Pilate said, "*Ye have a custom,*" but the Jews said, "*We have a law.*" So between the orders and institutions of the ages, Truth has always been put down. But, as has been demonstrated in this instance and will be again, Truth crushed to earth shall rise again.

THE EXECUTION OF JESUS

"And they took Jesus and led him away! He bearing his cross went forth into a place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha." [Joh.19:17]

We have arrived at the last step in the unequalled stoop of the Son of God to the humiliation of Calvary. The character of the offering of Jesus in this Gospel is as the burnt offering. This aspect of the vicarious offering of Jesus is double-sided. It speaks of His willing surrender to His Father's will and, on the other side, His acceptance in the value of that perfect obedience. Accordingly, that which is before us now answers to the types; it is in 2 sections. The first part shows us His completed sacrifice. John's Gospel is unique in its harmony in respect to what he tells and what he omits. There are few details. Facts are emphasized as they bear on the general presentation. Simplicity and depth pervade the whole Gospel of John, and nowhere more than in this closing section. It is holy ground that we are treading; the curious and the critic get little satisfaction here.

"And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha: Where they crucified him, and two other with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst. And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS. This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin. Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews. Pilate answered, What I have written I have written." [Joh.19:17-22]

Jesus came to the place of a skull—the realm of death. Here is where man has come because of sin, death being the seal of the government upon it. Here the love of God for mankind brought Him. He sought Golgotha; for only thus could He lift men from its power and fear. He must take the penalty of sin upon Himself. There was no other way to help us. Two others were hanged with Him. Death to them brought clearly the penalty for sin. Jesus was and always is "in the midst"—He is the center of all God's purposes and plans. Jesus was alone in His death; yet He

did not die alone. Two men, thieves and robbers, were near and yet so far from Him. He was there to taste death in all its hideousness and horror.

Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross. The writing was, “*Jesus of Nazareth, The King of The Jews.*” That was Pilate’s doing and the chief priests and elders objected to the title which was really His accusation; but the governor is firm now. He insisted that it must remain and that too was the edict of Jehovah God. The title was written in 3 languages: Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. The religious (Hebrew), cultured (Greek), and powerful world (Latin or Roman) was faced with the fact that the humbled Holy Man dying upon a cross in the midst of criminals was the **King of the Jews**; and more, He was the **King of the World**. All knees shall bow to Jesus Christ; all tongues shall confess that He is Lord to the glory of God the Father [Rom.14:11, Phi.2:10]. That was the most momentous hour of all time. The Creator was on a cross! What mystery is hidden here!

“Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: 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.” [Joh.19:23-24]

The soldiers, after they crucified the Lord of Life, parted His garments among themselves, casting lots for the beautiful seamless robe that marked Jesus out as distinct from other men. It must have been a priceless garment. We have no record of how He obtained it. His Father had seen to it that He had that tunic of many colors, an embroidered robe of beautiful design, of which Joseph’s coat was the type [Gen.37:3]. His intrinsic righteousness and holiness in perfection, shown by His robe and other clothing, was distributed to cover the nakedness of others, and that, by Divine Appointment (as the “cast lots” speaks), is even given to His enemies. Thus, we all who believe may say, “*He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness*” [Isa.61:10]. This is all prophetic and at the same time in fulfillment of prophecy. “*They parted my garments among them and for my vesture they cast lots*” [Psa.141:7].

“Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. 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. After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.” [Joh.19:25-30]

Jesus’ mother and some friends stood by His cross. Some foes were there too; He was never without both. How great is the contrast here; love and tenderness on the one hand, with cruelty and hatred on the other. Four women, three named Mary, were with Him at the end. Women were His greatest friends and forever this stands to their honor. His mother, what shall we say of her sorrow? Although Scripture draws a veil over it, there are no words to describe her anguish. The Spirit of God would focus our eyes upon the One on the cross. Even His mother must be forgotten in that scene. But Jesus remembered her just before He dismissed His Spirit. He committed His best-loved one to His dearly-loved disciple. He says to his mother, “*Woman, behold thy son,*” and to John, “*Behold thy mother.*” John took her to his home and they comforted each other in those few sad days preceding His resurrection.

The work of redemption, that is, Christ’s death, was accomplished in 6 hours. Jesus was nailed to the cross at 9 in the morning and died at 3 in the afternoon.

On the cross, Jesus made 7 statements:

1. The 1st was a prayer, "*Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do*" [Luk.23:34].
2. The 2nd was spoken to the penitent thief, "*Verily, I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with me in paradise*" [Luk.23:43].
3. "*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*" [Mat.27:46, Mar.15:34].
4. "*Woman, behold thy son*" ... John, "*behold thy mother*" [Joh.19:26-27].
5. "*I thirst*" [Joh.19:28].
6. "*It is finished*" [Joh.19:30].
7. "*Into thy hands I commend my spirit*" [Luk.23:46].

All of these utterances are not recorded in John's Gospel. It would not be suitable or in harmony with John's portrayal of the "*only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth*" [Joh.1:14]. We find no horror of great darkness here. No cry of desertion; no agony portrayed. When He said, "*I thirst*," it is only directly said so that "*the Scripture may be fulfilled.*" The burnt offering character, which Psalm 40 expresses, is here made manifest:

"Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart." [Psa.40:6-8]

The many sacrifices of The Law are here displayed by the One Perfect Sacrifice which cannot and needed not ever be repeated. It shows the entire devotedness to God of the offering which the fire of Divine Holiness only made more manifest. "*When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.*" In the perfect consciousness of who He was, what He had accomplished, and of His perfect acceptance with God, He died, after His triumphant shout. He was the only Man that had power to lay down His life and power to take it up again. His death was not a surprise to Him. It was no accident. He had come to die; for this He was born.

"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 that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water." [Joh.19:31-34]

This request of the Jews had important consequences. It was the fulfillment of 2 prophecies:

- One (in type) is found in Exodus 12, relating to the Passover lamb, "*a bone of which shall not be broken*" and
- the other is found in Zechariah 12:10, "*They would look upon Him whom they had pierced.*"

We have the testimony of His perfect righteousness, fulfilling absolutely the Psalmist's words that Jehovah "*keepeth all his bones; not one of them is broken*" [Psa.34:2]. The soldiers could not break His bones. They could not touch that sacred Body after He had made atonement. He was through. No more could men put sacrilegious hands upon Him. The shield of Jehovah lay over Him, and

the rough, untutored hands of lawless men respected that Holy One. They did not know why, but we know why. The Word of God ruled everywhere even among the ignorant and hostile.

The touch of a soldier's spear certifies to the death of our Redeemer. Out of Christ as the Riven Rock flow streams of spiritual life and blessing. As the beloved writer insists, not water alone came forth but "*blood and water*." The miraculous nature of the flow is clear from the way it is insisted upon, the positive truth of it is reiterated, so that we may be assured that it is a double cure. Cleansing for men is necessary on the one side as well as expiation ("*atonement*") for sin on the other. God must be satisfied in the death of Christ as to the matter of man's iniquity and rebellion as well as to man's sanctification. Christ's marvelous sacrifice on the cross has laid the foundation for man's full redemption—spirit, soul, and body. He is justified by the blood and sanctified (cleansed) by water, a type of the Word practically used in daily life.

"And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced." [Joh.19:35-37]

As the evangelist here reminds us, Israel is yet to look upon Him whom they have pierced. When they do, a fountain will be opened for them for sin and uncleanness. When they find the rift in the Rock they will find the stream that flows from the heart of Christ. Then we read how marvelously God made all things and people serve Him.

"And after this Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus. And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred-pound weight. Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation day; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand." [Joh.19:38-42]

Joseph of Arimathea, a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, comes out in the open now and asks Pilate for the body of Jesus. He was a rich man. He had a new sepulcher, which never had held a dead body. **Nicodemus** also witnessed publicly that he was a believer in the claims of Jesus. It is truly blessed to see the timid becoming bold in the face of the religious foes. God had so worked in their lives through the miraculous death of Christ that they feared no man. Scripture was there fulfilled: He "*was with the rich in His death*" [Isa.53:9]. God is working all things after His eternal counsel and according to the Scriptures.

Nicodemus brings 100 pounds of spices to anoint the body of Jesus for burial. Maybe this was to rival Joseph, if possible, in his gift of a new sepulcher, which was a testimony of honor and devotion to Him who had gone into death to conquer its power. Of the Gospel writers, John alone mentions the amount of the myrrh and spices which are used in the wrapping of His body, which is in harmony with this book. The worth of the Sacrifice of Christ as the burnt offering ever abides in sweet fragrance before God. His holy body is laid in a new sepulcher where no dead body had ever lain. He was that Holy Thing that could not see corruption [Psa.16:10, Act.2:27]; even in death He was separated from sinners.

It is so significant that His temporary resting place was in a garden. The First Adam went to sleep in a garden and awakened to find Eve standing by. Likewise, the Last Adam finds a woman when He arose after His 3 days of sleep; but more of this later.

At the present, we leave Him in the tomb where the seed of immortal life is sown. The "corn of wheat" has fallen into the ground, but it will come forth in resurrection life, bringing forth the much

fruit. While Jesus is asleep, the Jews have their “preparation day” and a mockery of Sabbath Rest. The reality of rest has been wrought for them but they have rejected Him, its Author and Finisher; hence, they can have no rest until they accept Him. A cross, a garden, a tomb, a body are here seen united. Ugliness and beauty meet together, but the one triumphs over the other. Life overcomes death.

JESUS LOVED ME

OF ALL THE FRIENDS, I CHERISH MOST,
IS CHRIST, WHOSE FAITHFUL LOVE
SHALL BE MY THEME AND CONSTANT BOAST
ETERNAL YEARS ABOVE.
SO OLD, YET NEW;
SO STRONG; YET TRUE.
BEFORE THE AGES WERE IN FRAME,
HE LOVED ME. BLESSED BE HIS NAME!

HE WAS THE WORD FROM EONS PAST,
THE SON OF GOD ABOVE;
ADORED BY ALL CREATION VAST,
YET SUCH WAS HIS GREAT LOVE,
HE CAME TO EARTH,
LEFT HEAVEN’S MIRTH,
HIGHEST RANK AND GLORIOUS FAME.
HE LOVED ME. BLESSED BE HIS NAME!

IT WAS A STOOP OF SHAME AND LOSS,
A LONELY PATH HE TROD,
IN WORLD OF SIN, E’EN TO A CROSS,
HE CAME FROM THRONE OF GOD.
O WONDROUS GRACE,
HE CHOSE THIS PLACE,
RECEIVING ALL MY GUILT AND BLAME.
HE LOVED ME. BLESSED BE HIS NAME!

HE IS MY FRIEND. I LIVE TO TELL
THE MARVEL OF HIS LOVE.
AND WHEN IN HEAVENLY BLISS I DWELL,
IN MANSION BRIGHT ABOVE,
MY JOY SHALL BE
HIS FACE TO SEE,
AND SING HIS PRAISE WITH LOUD ACCLAIM,
HE LOVED ME. BLESSED BE HIS NAME!

3. THE TRIUMPH: LOVE CONQUERS DEATH [JOH.20]

“The first day of the week, cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulcher, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulcher.” [Joh.20:1]

We have seen the death of the Christ, the God-Man, on the cross. He faced it bravely. The mob had triumphed but the earth revolted and quaked with a mighty convulsion when Jesus died. Because He was dying as the sinner’s substitute, darkness was over His soul as well as over the land when God turned His face away from His beloved Son. The world had said, “We do not want Him” and it appeared as though God did not want Him either. Looking at His end, from the natural standpoint, as men could say...ignominy, defeat, loss, finis might be written

over all of His life; but, Jesus was Master over it all. His faith remained; a faith that did not loose its grip on God. Storms and clouds were round about Him; but His faith battled through. When He passed into death, the very stronghold of the devil, the arch-enemy of God and man, He commended His Spirit to His Father's care. It is a unique and glorious scene. The Vanquished, yet Unvanquished One passed on into the great unknown with a faith impossible to fallen humanity; however, Divinity is here shown possessing humanity. That is the secret of the invincible faith displayed, as the Man Christ Jesus bowed His head in surrender to death, as if saying,

“Take your toll now; you will not be victor long. I shall rise from the grave and shout and sing and live and reign throughout the eternal ages.”

As far as the intent and purpose of those who accomplished His death, they would have buried Him with the thieves among whom He was numbered; but that was not to be. Having done their utmost they were through. Because there was no other way to save us that death had been permitted.

Joseph (“*He shall add*”) came on the scene with his hopeful cheery name which was Rachel's choice for her first-born; she meant, as it were, this is not the last token of favor that the Lord will **add** to me. So we too ask, “Is the cross the end?” “Is there no more to be added to the story?” Ah, Rachel had her Benjamin (“*the son of the right hand*”). So, for those waiting believers, in their sorrow and travail, there is another ending...an addition. There is an infinitely colossal work **added** to that burial. Joseph, though unconscious of the signification, is brought into the picture. He is of **Arimathea** (“*lifted up*”); and this is what is added. Christ is exalted. He is lifted out of that tomb, up to the right Hand of the Majesty on High.

The name Joseph, wherever used prophetically, tells us of a recovery; for example, Psalm 81:5, where the trumpet's joyful sound is said to be “*appointed to Joseph for a testimony*.” It proclaims the fact that as Joseph was taken out of prison, and later Israel out of Egypt, so again Israel shall be recovered from the dust and exalted with Christ over the earth [Dan.12:2, Eze.37:1-4]. We too, all believers, have a part in that resurrection of Christ. We shall rise up out of the grave and live and reign with Christ 1,000 years. We have a part in Benjamin (“*the son of the right hand*”) when He comes forth from the Father's right hand. This is added to our portion of Joseph (“*He shall add*”).

Nicodemus (“*ruler of the people*”) also has his story to tell. It was not an accident that he attended that burial. He was there by Divine Appointment, even as was Joseph. God was the real Ruler over all things. His name, linked with Joseph's, gives us further information. The God-appointed Ruler of the people, the Lord Jesus Christ, died by the hands of the self-appointed rulers; but He arose and shall come into His place of honor and majesty. Another day is dawning; a new creation will soon emerge from the tomb in radiant light. The Sabbath of the old creation passes in gloom and sorrow.

Friends and apostles of Jesus are disconsolate and discouraged; but their sorrow is turned into joy, as He declared that it should be [Joh.16:20]. The first day of the new week comes and with it the First-Born from the dead, the Head of a new creation steps out of the grave into life. We read nothing in John's Gospel of the futile guarding of the tomb by the Roman soldiers; that would not be fitting for John's Gospel of the Son of God. But we are informed of the stone being rolled away and the open sepulcher in the early morning of that awakening; all are wonderfully suggestive—**Revelation of God as Love to Man**. Every item is under the direct supervision of God. This is the **Triumph Scene of the God-Head**. The 3 Personalities of Deity are on the ground floor of this exhibition. What a **day of Glory** here shines forth! How the flesh shrivels up in the presence of that empty tomb! It is **God's Day**, the day of the mightiest spectacle of

His power; yet, how few know of it and fewer yet view the great event of: **Life Out Of Death, Victory Over The Grave, Honor Over Dishonor and Power Over Weakness.**

"The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre. Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him. Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre. So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying: yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie, And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed. For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead. Then the disciples went away again unto their own home." [Joh.20:1-10]

Some people are prepared for the revelation of the glory of God's transcendent triumph. Mary Magdalene, apparently the most unworthy of all, is chosen first to view the stone rolled away and the open grave. Not a hint of the Truth flashes upon the mind of this woman of destiny, representative of a great company of saints from The Church who will greet the Lord Jesus early on their resurrection day. She views the signs of the new day as calamity at first. She thinks they have taken her Lord away. He is still her "Lord" although she thinks Him dead and her heart is dead with Him.

She runs with her burden of grief to those who are just as incredulous as she; and Peter and John run back with her. They ran fast, we are sure. It is significant that the beloved "other disciple," who penned these lines, outruns Peter. These characters have figurative meanings at this place; they speak of varying ranks in the resurrection. John stoops down and sees the linen clothes, which Mary did not see, lying neatly in order in the sepulcher. But Peter goes further. He not only looks within, but walks into the open grave and sees another token for faith: The cloth that was about Jesus' head folded, not with the other wrappings, but lying by itself in the grave. Everything betokened peace and Divine Order.

John enters the sepulcher after Peter and they both were awed and convinced that Christ had risen from the dead. They knew that if He had been snatched away suddenly by the rude hands of the wicked Jews, that those burial cloths would not have been left carefully folded there. They had not understood His words relative to His rising from the dead; but now believing, they immediately lost interest in the sepulcher. Though still perplexed, they went home to await developments.

But, oh what a change in their perspective and their hope! Their Messiah was risen! He would soon appear and show those wicked Jews what He was and who they were. They were still fleshly and Israel's hopes were all they knew. They expected the Kingdom to be set up at once as their question to the risen Christ, recorded in Acts 1, proves: "*Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?*" [Act.1:6]? His answer was vague. There were other purposes on the horizon which it was not the time to reveal.

"But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus

saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master. 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. Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her.” [Joh.20:11-18]

But Mary cannot leave the place. Her heart is there. She does not understand, and it does not appear that Peter or John told her anything of their findings. She is ignorant and unbelieving; but regardless of all that, her devotion to her Lord Jesus is supreme. Her own sight is so dimmed in the falling tears that she does not see what the Apostles saw and which filled them with expectation for the future. Now, she stands weeping outside the sepulcher and stooping down gazes into it. Maybe it was to prepare her for the greater sight she was to have later. She sees “*two angels in white*” sitting “*the one at the head and the other at the feet,*” where the body of Jesus had lain. They are sitting in peaceful contemplation of the place now vacant. They ask her, “*Woman, why weepest thou?*” Ah, yes! Women are the weepers of the world. There is no question as to who bears the heavier burden of life; but Jesus, through His resurrection, has staunched the wounds of humanity and stopped the falling tear. The query of the angels emphatically declared this consummation. Why weep? Jesus has vanquished death and the grave. Sin has been expiated, sorrow has been eased, and the devil has been annulled. But Mary is absorbed in her quest for her beloved Lord and does not seem to recognize the strangeness of the vision. She answers their question with the same words that she had spoken to the disciples “*they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.*”

Then again she goes away intent on finding “*him whom*” her “*soul loveth*” [SSg.3:1]. She cannot be distracted from her objective even by the miraculous appearance of angels. One alone of all the sons of men fills her vision, and her faith and love are rewarded. As she turns from the sepulcher, although she does not recognize Him, Jesus stands before her. He asks her the same question as did the angels, “*Woman, why weepest thou?*” The answer is that there is no more cause to weep. The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Second Man, has more than compensated for all that Adam’s sin entailed upon the human race. He has defeated Satan by loosing men from his power, from sin, sadness, and sorrow. It is true that we do not see all this victory in evidence. The ruin and wreckage of the old creation are still manifest in our midst. Jesus is still rejected by the world. But, the basis of full and final redemption is found in the cross of Christ. Therefore, we can understand why the question was repeated to Mary Magdalene. She did not grasp its significance...but we may. We may say to all that believe, “*Why weepest thou?*” Death has passed away! Sin has lost its power! Sorrow has ended! Tears are wiped away! Christ has risen! Life and immortality have been brought to light through the Gospel [2Ti.1:10].

But let us return again to the sepulcher and the 2 angels guarding the place where the body of Jesus had lain. It seems to us the sepulcher is a representation of the Mercy Seat in the Most Holy Place in the Tabernacle. The blood of the typical offering the basis of fellowship with God, was sprinkled upon that hallowed place which we know was pointing on to the true Offering, the real Mercy Seat, which is Christ Jesus. The cherubim were always looking upon the Mercy Seat with apparent serenity and satisfaction, as well as peaceful contemplation, which is also seen here in that open tomb. But the anti-typical Mercy Seat, Christ in the garden, shows us more than that typical Mercy Seat in the Tabernacle. Jesus takes us beyond death into life which the typical offerings could not do. Christ’s body was holy. His death was fragrant and a delight to God. And, after He died, the place where He was laid was hallowed ground. His blood, His death, is the basis of all fellowship between God and man. God is satisfied with that Perfect Offerer and Perfect Offering. The saints, represented by the cherubim, also are satisfied. Praise the Lord! The Mercy Seat abides forever. Christ has entered into the very presence of God in the power of His own precious blood (that is His blood was sufficient to open the way), and we

may now approach the holy God without fear. He sees the blood and so passes over us; and more, enjoys our fellowship.

We left Mary hearing the voice of her Beloved. She, not recognizing Him, supposes He is the gardener—and so He is. Adam was the gardener of Eden and Eve was there in fellowship with him in that earthly Paradise from which they were banished because of sin. Here is the Last Adam, Caretaker of another garden, the Paradise above. Mary, representative of a choice company, The Bride of Christ, is the first one to be introduced into that halcyon (*"tranquil"*) scene, out of which she shall never be ousted.

Mary speaks, *"Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him and I will take him away."* He is overcome by her love and loyalty and says, *"Mary."* Ah, she knows Him now. No one can speak her name in that way. She exclaims in her ecstasy, *"Rabboni,"* My Dear Master! Oh, what a denouement (*"final revelation"*)! What a surprise! What rapture! No tongue or pen can do it justice. She was looking for a dead body and finds a living Man, the One she loves supremely, standing before her in wonderful beauty and health. The early bird gets the revelation. It is written, *"I love them that love me and those that seek me early shall find me"* [Pro.8:17]. The details of these precious happenings are only written in John's Gospel...there are more.

Mary, in her delight, was about to take hold of Him, as though to keep Him forever; but He warns her, *"Touch me not; for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go unto My brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father, unto My God and your God."* Here we find that a woman gets the greatest revelation yet given, that of the resurrection of Jesus and its subsequent results to His disciples. They are brought into immediate association with Jesus...His Father is their Father; His God is their God. Such grace and condescension was never known before. Before Christ's coming, here and there an individual enjoyed fellowship with Jehovah such as Abraham, called His friend; David, a man after His own heart; Daniel, a man greatly beloved. Never was a revelation like this heard, that a company of people had been brought into a relationship with Jesus as brethren. *"He is not ashamed to call them brethren,"* is written later in Hebrews 2:11. Here is the fulfillment of Psalm 22:22: *"I will declare Thy Name unto My brethren; in the midst of the congregation, I will praise Thee."* He had spoken before of His relationship with them, but now it is explicitly stated. He, the First-born, has been joined with His brethren through the resurrection.

A new humanity is seen emerging from the debris of the old wreckage and ruin. The *"corn of wheat"* [Joh.12:24] has fallen into the ground and died; therefore, in its coming up into newness of life the harvest begins to appear. Mary is chosen for this honor of proclaiming the great fact that the disciples of Christ have a heavenly Father and that they may call His God their God.

Jesus is going up to receive His welcome from His Father before He can show Himself to His brethren. What an honor has been conferred upon the woman who refused to leave the garden until she had found her heart's desire. She saw Him before His Father gazed upon Him; but notice, she was not allowed to touch Him. No, she could not actually have any part with Him until His Father and God was satisfied. God must get His portion, that is to touch Him first, as the sheaf of first fruits that was waved to Jehovah before the harvest could be distributed; this type is found in Leviticus:

"When ye come into the land which I give unto you and ye reap the harvest therefore; then ye shall bring a sheaf of the first fruits of your harvest unto the priest and He shall wave the sheaf of the fruits before the Lord to be accepted for you. On the morrow after the Sabbath, the priest shall wave it ... and ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears until the self-same day that ye have brought an offering unto your God." [Lev.23:1-11]

The above was fulfilled the very day of Christ's resurrection. He hastened to His Father after showing Himself to Mary. We have no account of that heavenly scene; but in the evening of that first day, He is found in the midst of the disciples who are gathered together.

"Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord." [Joh.20:19-20]

The doors were shut for fear of the Jews; for their spirit was still antagonistic and devilish, no doubt made worse because of the news which had spread about the resurrection of the King of the Jews. But no locked door can keep Jesus from His own; presently He is there, saying, "*Peace be unto you.*" If you can, imagine their joy as they gazed upon their beloved Lord and Leader. He whom they had believed had gone from their midst. He had departed from them for a little hour that He might be with them forever. It needed more than words, even those of the Son of God, to actually convey peace to them. His word brought all the visible old creation into being, but for man's redemption and new creation, "*the Son of Man must be lifted up.*" That Divine Work has been accomplished and He shows the proof of it...the scars in His hands and His side. John tells us of their gladness when they saw Jesus. Although He was glorified, Jesus was the same, so human and compassionate, so like unto themselves.

"Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained." [Joh.20:21-23]

Again Jesus says, "*Peace be unto you*" and sends them out into the world to represent Him, even as He had been sent to represent the Father. They no more belonged to the world than He did. The world could not have this peace. In the real sense of the word, only those who yield to Him find rest to their souls. They have been delivered from the corruption in the world by the knowledge of Jesus. They who reject Him are still a part of the old creation and share in its shameful depraved condition. But the portion and blessing of those who accept Him are outside the world system which has rejected Him. It was only by acknowledging this rejection that the disciples, or we, were able to be competent witnesses. If we dally along in fellowship with those who are out of harmony with Him we lose our testimony. Men may mock and reproach us if we separate ourselves from their company; but we will make an impression upon them nevertheless.

Before His departure, Jesus said to His disciples "*Ye are the salt of the earth*" [Mat.5:13]. Whether men receive our testimony or not, our business is to obey God and separate ourselves from all the contaminating influences of earth. Those early disciples had the vision of their Lord before their eyes and their witness of Him was magnificent and powerful. Men faded away into insignificance before His majesty and might. Jesus was alive again, what else mattered? Life and death, all things, little or big, great or otherwise, were theirs; they were Christ's and He was God's. What had they to fear? They went forth preaching and witnessing the matchless work of redemption and the signs followed. The Lord worked with them in mighty power as they stood united in their faith and testimony. He would do the same today if The Church were all standing as one, wholehearted in their loyal zeal and thus separated from all the wickedness of the world.

Jesus follows with a significant action and further words, "*He breathed on them and saith, Receive ye the Holy Spirit.*" This gesture demonstrates the fact that Christ is the Second Man the Last Adam. It also carries us back to the inbreathing of God into the first man when he became a living soul [Gen.2:7]. The very word breathed used here, which occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, is that used for the beginning of human life in the Garden of Eden. The inference is that here

again is the beginning of life, spiritual life from God incarnate; therefore man becomes a living spirit, a new creation. Here also is a contrast between these 2 heads of the human race. The Last Adam is not Jesus breathed into, as was the first man, but He breathes into others. As the quickening Spirit He communicates Divine Life, the essential element of the new birth. The fundamental truths of the Gospel of John are thus seen embodied in this inbreathing of life into the disciples by the risen Lord.

But this does not necessarily signify that these His associates, men and women who loved and walked with Him in the days of His humiliation, were not born again. His giving of life could not actually wait for His resurrection, though it was dependent upon it. The cross, standing amid the ages, looks backward as well as forward. Jesus assures us of this fact in these words, *"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"* [Joh.5:24]. They had heard His life-giving words before His death. In symbolic fashion, Jesus is simply putting things together that were already theirs. The veil is beginning to drop from Moses' face and thus the glory of Christ's face is being revealed. But there is more food for reflection here.

In the words *"receive ye the Holy Spirit"* Jesus is not interpreting the past but speaking of the future. He is speaking of something which they had not yet received. John, when reporting Jesus' words at the feast of Tabernacles as to the *"living waters,"* remarks that this *"spake He of the Spirit"* which they that believed on Him **should receive**; and then adds, *"For the Holy Spirit was not yet given, for Jesus was not yet glorified"* [Joh.7:39]. Therefore, we see the *"breathing"* on them referred to the new birth, which they had experienced before the resurrection; while His words referred to Pentecost which was experienced after He was glorified. Through the enduement of power, which they would and did receive [Act.2], they were duly equipped to be His representatives in the world. By or through the Gospel, which they were commanded to preach, they had authority to remit or retain sins. That is, if men believed the Good News, they could announce that their sins were remitted; however, if they rejected their testimony, their sins were retained. We have the same authority even unto the present day. There is nothing here on which to build a doctrine of the forgiveness of sins by an ecclesiastical clergy, as has been done by the false church. At any time, any Christian may tell the believer on the Lord Jesus Christ that his sins are forgiven; not because he confessed them to some man but because Jesus has borne them in His own body on the tree [1Pe.2:24].

"But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." [Joh.20:24-29]

Soon the doubting one gets a revelation. It is remarkable that Jesus would so condescend to one of such little faith. Remember, Thomas (*"a twin"*) has a brother just like him. Maybe you or I are that one to whom Jesus pays a special visit to encourage and strengthen faith. We call him *"doubting Thomas;"* but what about his love for Jesus when he, with others, went away beyond Jordan with Him for fear of the Jews [Joh.10:40]? What about when Jesus suggested returning to Judea when He heard the report of Lazarus' sickness? Thomas was the disciple who said, *"Let us go also that we may die with him"* [Joh.11:16]. Jesus ever remembers such self-forgetful devotion... *"greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends"* [Joh.15:13]. Jesus exemplified that love in Himself and prized it in others. Thomas is *"twin"* to Israel. He had to look upon Jesus before he would believe; likewise will the Jews do at their restoration.

A whole week passed with Thomas unbelieving still, like the present time with Israel. But Jesus comes again on the 8th day, the first day of a new week, the disciples being together as they were before and Thomas being with them... *“the doors being shut and [Jesus] stands in midst saying, Peace Be Unto You.”* Now, the doubting one may satisfy himself; but he is broken down in adoring wonder. *“My Lord and My God,”* he exclaims as he gazes upon the beloved Redeemer. Even so at last the nation of Israel will fall at His feet when they look upon Him whom they have pierced. Jesus says, *“Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed.”* And so is the end. As will be the case forever, Jesus is with His beloved people, in their midst, satisfied with His work of redemption and His people’s love and adoration.

Then John adds, that the object of his writing was to awaken and encourage faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, that thus men might have life through His Name.

“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.” [Joh.20:30-31]

John had not attempted to relate all the signs and miracles which Jesus wrought; for that was impossible...they were innumerable. Nor is faith worth much that merely rests upon signs. John’s aim had been to display the Divine Glory of Jesus so that His Name would be made known and glorified among men that they might believe. There is no other Name under heaven given among men whereby they might be saved [Act.4:12].

Acquaintance with the Son of God brings life to men. And so John finishes His Book of the marvelous figure, *“the Word made flesh,”* who tabernacled among men for a little season and then went up where He was before, *“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”* [1Pe.1:8].

DIV.5, EPILOGUE [JOH.21]

THE SHEPHERD AND SHEPHERDS

“After these things, Jesus showed Himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise He showed Himself. There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples.” [Joh.21:1-2]

We have arrived at the last part of our study of the book of John. We are loathe to leave this hallowed pasture ground. We have feasted as we studied and wrote concerning *“Him of whom Moses and the Prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth”* [Joh.1:45]. Sometimes our eyes were wet with tears. At other times we laughed and shouted aloud with joy to contemplate this glorious heavenly Figure which dwelt among men for a little while that they might behold His glory.

Our present John 21 is an appendix (epilogue) to the Gospel of John. The Gospel proper ends with John 20:30 where the risen Lord is in the midst of His people, not yet known as The Church (the body of Christ). The Church (the body of Christ) is not exactly in the line of John’s teaching because it was to be Paul’s teaching after Pentecost. The scene is a prophetic picture of the believing remnant of the end time; but there are also personal lessons for us.

According to John’s Gospel, it appears that Jesus did not meet with His disciples after His resurrection except for those times recorded in John 20; but this silence figures the intervening Church period, of these 1,900 years. In the book of Acts, we learn that *“He was seen of them forty days, speaking of the things concerning the Kingdom of God”* [Act.1:3]. Whenever the sea of Galilee is called

Tiberias we are in Gentile waters. Tiberias was the Roman name, while Galilee was the Jewish name [Joh.6:1]. Therefore we would say that the scene is, typically, the end of the present age, Gentile times, and the beginning of Jewish times. The disciples, whose names are recorded here, give us a little dispensational outline of that time. **Peter** (“*the stone*”); **Thomas** (“*the twin*”); **Nathaniel** (“*the gift of God*”), said to be Bartholomew, one of the apostles and the two sons of **Zebedee** (“*Jah a Giff*”). The 2 sons of Zebedee were **John** (“*God a gracious Giver*”) and **James**, the Greek of **Jacob** (“*supplanter*”). There were 2 others who are not named. Those 7 had waited long for Christ to meet with them. Probably they were without funds and became discouraged. Those days of waiting figure The Tribulation, while the disciples represent the Godly Jewish remnant of that time.

But there is a personal sense that is quite interesting and instructive for us. Their money being gone and the cupboard bare, they had some cause for complaint, having only a slight experience heretofore in trusting God for their daily bread. Jesus had been with them and all the responsibility was upon His shoulders; but now they are cast upon their own initiative. They must believe God themselves for the needs of the day and hour. The weaning time had come and they immediately fall back on their natural resources of fishing as a means of livelihood.

“Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing. But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No. And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.” [Joh.21:3-6]

As always, Peter was the spokesman,. He says, “*I go a fishing,*” and he finds no arguments or protests against his determination. They all agree to go. When the “stone,” the leader, gets wobbly, what can be expected of others? They will follow, as in this case. “*We also go with thee,*” they say, and find, as Jonah did at an earlier date, that all things came their way. “*They went forth and entered a ship immediately.*” Nothing is said as to how they obtained the boat; but oft times the enemy makes it easy when we are getting out of the will of God. Satan helps us make our getaway. Many times we make mistakes in our calculations, thinking because the “south winds blow softly” that all is well. In the beginning, The Church made that mistake when Constantine the Roman emperor (about the 3rd century) made overtures of friendship to her. All persecution stopped; therefore the people imagined that yielding to the world’s embrace was the will of God, although the Scripture declares against it. That was her downfall. The Church never has come back to her first love; never, as a whole, regardless of her claims and boasts, has she risen to her place of preeminence and power with God. Let’s continue with our study.

All apparently went well with the 7 disciples. They had the ship and the nets and they knew how to fish. In the natural it was their business but Jesus had called them to catch men; and there they were, like Jonah, being disobedient to the Master. “*They let down their nets,*” in their old-time style, but something was wrong. They had lost their old-time cunning. “*They toiled all night and caught nothing.*” What was the matter? That was a new experience for them. They were not amateurs at this line of work; therefore they could not understand why the fish were so wary. The reason...Jesus had put them to sleep.

“*In the morning, He stood on the shore;*” but the disciples were ignorant of His identity. As though He were not aware of their sad discouraged state, Jesus calls to them, “*Children, have ye any meat?*” They were cold and hungry. Maybe they had not eaten for days and had gone fishing as a last resort. Jesus was not a cruel Master; even as you and I, those disciples had some lessons to learn. He must wait and let us flounder around in our foolishness and fail and fail again until we have no natural resources left. Similarly, in Elijah’s case, “*the brook must dry up*” before we will trust

Him absolutely. When we are helpless then we see Him standing on the shore of our desperate need and His voice is heard.

It sounds as though Jesus speaks ironically but such is not the case. He just wants them to acknowledge their plight, which they do, answering “No” to His question. Then He tells them to cast the net on the right side and “*ye shall find.*” They obeyed and lo they were not able to draw for the multitude of fishes. What a miracle! It was a tremendous haul and they knew that it was supernatural. They had fished all around in that water and not a fish had they caught. Where were the fish all that long night? Jesus knew. When the Creator called they obeyed His voice and swam right into that net. The same power was manifested when the beasts of the fields and birds of the air came into Noah’s ark; also when a multitude of Israel went out of the city to hear John the Baptist, the preacher of repentance, crying in the wilderness. That great company of fishes figures a multitude of souls that will be caught by the believing remnant after the days of tribulation are over (symbolized by the long night, in which the disciples caught nothing). The “*everlasting Gospel*” [Rev 14:6] will go forth; but the results will not be seen until Jesus Christ is visibly manifested. Then He and His loyal disciples will rejoice over the spoils of victory. They will sit down in fellowship together and reap as they have sown.

“Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher’s coat unto him, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea.”
[Joh.21:7]

Love is not always blind. John recognized the Master first; but Peter is off to meet Him first. Love and Zeal, John and Peter, just as we saw them in John 20:1-10, are in the race again; but now Peter gets to the living Christ ahead of John. He girded on his fisher’s coat which he had laid off (typical of his call to a spiritual ministry) and flung himself into the sea. The ship was not fast enough for this exuberant, ecstatic soul. His Lord, for whom his heart had longed, was waiting yonder. That meeting is not described. We wish it were. Maybe it was too sacred, as Peter poured out his tale of repentance that he had not waited for the Master.

“And the other disciples came in a little ship; (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes. As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread. Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught. Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three; and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken. Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord. Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise. This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.” [Joh.21:8-14]

When the other disciples came in their ship, dragging the net with the multitude of fishes, they saw a fire of coals and a feast spread upon the shore...fish and bread. That was always the menu provided by Jesus. What a feast for hungry men! It makes our mouth water just now as we write. A breakfast not only fit for a king, but cooked by the King. Or, did Peter light that fire and get that meal ready for the others? We know he was good at the work of getting a spiritual feast ready for the people. Note Peter’s great sermons, in the book of Acts, when he fed the thousands of hungry Israelites on the spiritual bread, the Word of Life. Probably similar to the same ones that Jesus had fed with the multiplied loaves and fishes in John 6. Of this we are assured, that morning meal was delicious whoever cooked it. Jesus furnished the bread and fish. What condescension that the Lord of glory would so meet and eat with His disciples.

They may have also eaten some of the fish which had been so miraculously obtained, for they were bidden to bring them to shore. It was Peter who landed them, which shows us the typical picture in this portion. We have here the answer to the final parable of the 7, found in Matthew 13

(figuring the whole historic interlude of this age), where we read of “*the net cast into the sea and gathering of every kind*” [Mat.13:47-50]. Here we find John, in a sense, on the ground of the teaching of the other Gospel writers. Restored Israel will be the center from which living waters will go forth to irrigate the earth. As their casting away has been the reconciling of the world, so their reception back into Jehovah’s fellowship shall be “*life from the dead*” [Rom.11:15]. This supplementary portion identifies Christ’s work on earth and associates Him with His disciples in the world.

Observe that it is Galilee where Jesus meets them, not Bethany or even Jerusalem. It has not the usual character of John’s Gospel, which presents the Divine Person of Jesus outside of all dispensations raising us above all earthly subjects. Notice the prominence of certain disciples, which inform us, in a figurative sense, of those who will be connected with Israel in that coming day of restoration. **Peter**, the leading apostle to the circumcision, is the conspicuous figure. Next is **Thomas**, whom we have already pointed out in a symbolic way, and **Nathaniel** another type of Israel of the latter days. The connection of Nathaniel with Cana of Galilee, where those earthen vessels were filled with water miraculously converted into wine, is noted also. Then the **sons of Zebedee** are named, but not the 2 others who accompanied them.

Peter leads the fishing party; but it was what people would call a “flop.” They toiled faithfully all night but never caught a fish. In the morning came Jesus and the multitude of fishes at His word. It was a remarkable haul, yet we are informed “*the net was not broken.*” That which God performs by His Word, is not dependent upon man’s responsibility, or faithfulness here below, and the results are perfect...**Not A Fish Escapes**. When the disciples bring of the fish which they had caught, as they are bidden to do, there they find some already prepared. This is all strikingly significant of end-time events. **The fish** that Jesus had ready represent the Jewish remnant which will be prepared for His coming; while **the haul** of the disciples from the sea represents the after results from the sea of nations. Tiberias was the name of one of the Roman Caesars and stands for man’s choice for king.

Here, properly speaking, the Epilogue is completed...the Gospel of John is finished. He returns to the Prologue where Jesus is again in the midst of His disciples, as Life and Light and Love. His work on the cross has been finished and now the results are going forth. It is as though He has returned as King of the Jews. In a figure, this present age is passed and we are on Jewish ground. Peter, in his ministry and restoration, figures the nation of Israel. They too, who have denied Jesus, shall come into revival and blessing and then will be made a blessing to the whole world. Let us notice the procedure.

“Now when they had dined, Jesus saith unto Peter, Simon, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto Him, Yea Lord Thou knowest that I love Thee” (have a friendly affection, as is the Greek. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.” [Joh.21:15]

We can but recall and see that Jesus is reminding Peter of his fervent, though boastful words, “*Although all shall be offended, yet will not I*” [Mar.14:29]. His answer of “*Yea, Lord Thou knowest that I love Thee*” shows that he declines the comparison. But Jesus does not allow the matter to rest thus. No, indeed. He has a bone to pick with Peter and He intends that it shall be well done. That self-sufficient fellow must come down a few pegs in his own estimation and acknowledge his own self-sufficiency before Jesus can use him in any great measure.

“He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.” [Joh.21:16-17]

We have herein quite an interesting dialogue and a play upon words.

Jesus, "Do you love me?" Peter, "You are dear to me."

Jesus, "Do you love me?" Peter, "You are dear to me."

Jesus, "Am I dear to you?" Peter, "You are dear to me."

The 2 words translated **love** are used; **AGAPAO** and **PHILEO**. The first, **AGAPAO**, speaks of Divine Love, that of God and Christ. Jesus uses the higher form **AGAPAO** twice; then descends to the lower form, thus searing out Peter's soul. The second, **PHILEO**, speaks of human love; our affection for one another in the natural, even though it may be sanctified by faith in Jesus Christ, as in the case before us.

- **AGAPAO** stands for love as a principle, a love guided by deliberate purpose and discrimination, a part of the essence of the life, not moved by whim or caprice. "God is Love," expresses it.
- **PHILEO** speaks of love that may be ardent and real; but not always enduring, or discriminating.

He adds to His first question, "*more than these*," meaning the other disciples. Peter had affirmed his love in such vehement fashion that he was the more probed to the depths. All through Peter used **PHILEO**, the lesser form of love. At the 3rd instance, using Peter's word for love, Jesus finally takes him up saying "*Hast thou a friendly affection for me?*" Then the disciple's heart gushes forth. It overflows. He cries, "*Lord, thou knowest all things. thou knowest that I love thee* (have an affection for thee)." Peter thus acknowledges that even this love may be questioned now; but thank God, not by Him who knows man's frailty and frame. He was here in this earth scene and understands. Besides He sees the heart and discerns what man does not.

Peter dares not claim much for himself. He does not compare his affection for Jesus with that of others. He leaves all judgment with the Master. Jesus knows and loves and cares and continues on working out His purposes in us, and for us, regardless of the ebb and flow of our feelings. How precious and consoling for weak people like ourselves. Thus, Peter's self-judgment is complete. Searched out by the Divine Eye, he is found out and owns himself to be, not better but worse than others. He has shown himself to be so self-ignorant and boastful that he is altogether ashamed. He cannot claim quality for his love at all; nothing more than overmastering gratitude and a self-abasement is he conscious of, which omniscience alone might see.

Thus the great and needed end is reached. The strong man is converted to weakness and is fitted to strengthen his brethren. What an apparent contradiction. As Peter, step by step, descends the ladder of humiliation Jesus follows him to the lowest rung with assurances of his call to the shepherding of **His sheep**, the work to which Peter is destined. "*Feed My lambs. Tend My sheep. Feed My sheep.*" The faithful Shepherd, who had given His life for the sheep [Joh.10], now calls Peter to the same self-sacrifice. He puts those sheep, so dear to Him into the hands of this humbled man, making him an associate shepherd with Himself. How wonderful is the exhibition of this grace to Peter; for we too may lay hold of it. When we are brought to nothingness, He can use us. How few really enter into this secret of the overcomer. It is the weakened ones that Jesus makes truly strong. Many that we think to be strong have never become weak; therefore, their strength is of themselves. They depend upon their brains, education, personality, or psychological attainments whereby people are swayed; therefore, they do not need God. They may be in the service of Jesus, even as was Peter before he denied Jesus, and some people may really be helped through their ministry...but they miss the best place. It is "*the lame that take the prey*" [Isa.33:23]. Only the weakened, contrite soul is strong. "*Faint, yet pursuing*," [Jdg.8:4] expresses the life-principle of this band. They are "the cutters down" of all the boast of the natural man. So Peter, the new man, is on the way to success.

But Jesus is not yet through with Peter. He takes him back to his first zealous protestation, “*I will go with Thee to prison and to death.*” He says, as it were, Peter, you shall have this honor also.

“Verily, verily, I say unto thee, when thou wast young, thou girdest thyself and walkest where thou wouldst; but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands and another shall gird thee and carry thee whither thou wouldst not. This spoke He, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, He said unto him, Follow me.” [Joh.21:18-19]

Here the veil is lifted from the future; for a moment we have a glimpse of the end. Peter is told that he shall die an unnatural death. He will go, or rather will be carried, forced to go, where he does not want to go. The crucifixion of Peter is foretold. In his first fervent, self-assurance, he had desired to die with his Lord; so in his new sphere of service and dependent last state, Jesus will grant his desire. He denied Him the first time he was called to witness. He will die for Him the second time.

There is a legend to the effect that in the great persecution in Rome during Peter’s life, that of Nero, the disciples urged him to escape. He was well on the way even at the gate, all things being apparently for him in this regard, when Jesus stood before him and said, “Quo Vadis?” that is, “Where goest thou?” Peter informed him that he was running for his life. Jesus gently replied, “*Did I not tell thee to feed my lambs and feed my sheep?*” Peter shamefacedly returned to God’s beloved people and was crucified as his Lord whom he loved supremely. He laid down his life for Jesus’ sake.

Often in the joy of our newfound salvation, we are ecstatic in our love for Jesus; our surrender to Him is absolute and real. We desire His will in our lives. We are intense and earnest and want to give ourselves to Him to the uttermost. We care not what service He may demand, we are ready to go all the way. At the time, He does not appear to demand anything heroic of us. Our life-day proceeds in a calm and uneventful manner as heretofore. We walk and we talk with Jesus and the years fly. Then all at once, there is the test.

We are called upon to sacrifice the best (to offer up our Isaac) to make good our boast, and we find it hard. We are surprised how keenly we suffer. In the youthful days of our first love, we thought everything and anything would be easy to suffer for Jesus’ sake; to go anywhere with Him would be a house of praise. Alas, we say later even as Jesus said, “*The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak*” [Mat.26:41]. When these experiences are far away, Gethsemane and Calvary are wonderful subjects to dwell upon in relation to Jesus and ourselves; but, how very different when they come near us and we enter into something of their meaning.

God knows our hearts and tenderly guards and treasures our love, leading us on and on. He knows that in the beginning we are not able to bear that for which we are asking; however, He accepts our surrender and delights in it. When we are, in some measure, grown up and strong, He allows us to enter into fellowship with Himself in His sufferings. He died that atonement might **be made** and humanity might live. We die that atonement might **be made known**. We sacrifice that others may have the light of the Gospel. Jesus is glorified in such saints. Peter died as he requested but not when he requested. How much we would have missed if Jesus had answered Peter’s desire at the first and he had not played his little part upon the stage of life...making quite a little history in religious circles.

If Peter had not failed and sinned as a believer, we would never have known the compassion that Jesus showed to that humbled disciple. He was restored to his place of ministry. His practical confidence was revived, which was so needful for him. The words of Jesus were as a balm to his wounded soul. He makes no mention of his lapse and there is no charge against

him. When God forgives He also forgets. Peter is walking in the light of Divine Love and “*the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth from all sin*” [1Jo.1:7].

“Then Peter, turning about seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following ... and said, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me.”
[Joh.21:20-22]

Here we have another glimpse into the future and the end of John is revealed. He was to die a natural death even as Peter was to die unnaturally; which in both cases was fulfilled. John lived to a great age and history tells us that he survived even a bath of boiling oil. In a sense, Jesus had foretold that John should not die but live on triumphantly until He returned. However, John informs us that He did not say those words exactly; nevertheless, they were so construed by the early church which expected the return of Jesus before John’s death. In a vision Jesus did come before John died (read the book of Revelation).

God has different purposes and plans for each one of us. He deals with individuals. We are to seek to understand His way for ourselves and let other saints do the same. Peter was much interested in John’s ministry. They were generally found together; therefore, we can understand his question. However, Jesus wants no interference for He says, as it were, “Let John alone, you attend to your own business.” That is good advice for you and me. Jesus is the Head. As one said long ago, “He will pluck His own geese.”

If we follow Him, even as Peter and John, someone else will do the same. When these words were written, Peter’s crucifixion was history; but John lived until the end of the 1st century, peacefully falling asleep as the ripe shock of wheat is cut down at full age. Happy is he that dies as John and honored is he who goes as Peter. Some may not die at all. Jesus may come and call us to Himself before we reach the grave. How glorious! Let us hope and pray that it may be so.

In the meantime, follow Jesus faithfully and do that which He calls us to do.

Amen! May it be so.

LIFE’S LAST CHIME

IT WILL MATTER VERY LITTLE AT THE ENDING OF THE RACE,
THAT WE HALTED AS WE STARTED AND DID NOT GET FIRST PLACE.
AND THOSE LITTLE FRETs AND WORRIES THAT BESET US DAY BY DAY,
WILL APPEAR SO UNIMPORTANT ON THE LAST LAP OF THE WAY.

IT’S THE PRESENT THAT IS COUNTING AS WE’RE RUNNING ON THE COURSE,
AND NOT LAGGING ON THE HIGHWAY, BUT EMPLOYING POW’R AND FORCE:
FOR THE DETOURS AND THE DOUBTINGS ARE CONSUMING PRICELESS TIME,
WHICH WE WILL REGRET SO DEEPLY WHEN HAS SOUNDED LIFE’S LAST CHIME.

OH, THE SKIES ARE DARK THIS MORNING AND IT SEEMS TOO COLD TO RUN;
BUT SOME DAY IN PARADISE, WHEN THE RACE WE SHALL HAVE WON,
AND WE’RE WALKING MIDST THE FLOWERS WHERE THE GOLDEN SUNBEAMS PLAY,
WE WILL NEVER ONCE REMEMBER ANY HARDSHIPS OF THE WAY.

