

The Gospel of John

Introduction

The fourth Gospel has always been ascribed to the beloved disciple, the Apostle John. He was one of the sons of Zebedee. His mother Salome was especially devoted to the Lord. (See Luke 8:3; 23:55 and Mark 16:1.) He knew Him from the beginning of His ministry and had followed Him with much love and faithfulness, and seems to have been the most beloved of the Lord. He never mentions himself in the Gospel by name, but nevertheless speaks of himself, as the disciple whom Jesus loved (Chapters 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20, 24). With James and Peter he was singled out to witness the transfiguration and to go with the Lord to the garden of Gethsemane. The three also were present when the Lord raised the daughter of Jairus from the dead (Mark 5:37). John was likewise an eye-witness of the sufferings of Christ (19:26, 35).

The Johannine Authorship.

The Johannine Authorship of the fourth Gospel is proven by the testimony of the so-called church-fathers. Theophilus of Antioch, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Hippolytus, Origen, Dionysius of Alexandria, Eusebius, and above all, Irenaeus, all speak of this Gospel as the work of the Apostle John. Other ancient authorities might be added. Of great value is the testimony of the two most pronounced enemies of Christianity, Porphyry and Julian. Both speak of the Gospel of John and neither one doubted that the Apostle John wrote this last Gospel. Had there been any evidence against the Johannine authorship we may rest assured that these two prominent adversaries would have made good use of it to reject the authenticity of the Gospel which emphasizes the absolute Deity of Christ.

The most interesting and conclusive evidence for the Johannine authorship is furnished by Irenaeus and Polycarp. Polycarp had known the Apostle John personally and Irenaeus knew Polycarp. In a letter to his friend Florinus, Irenaeus wrote as follows:--

"I can describe the very place in which the blessed Polycarp used to sit when he discoursed, and his goings out and his comings in, and his manner of life, and his personal appearance, and the discourses which he held before the people, and how he would describe his intercourse with John and with the rest who had seen the Lord, and about His miracles, and about His teaching, Polycarp as having received them from eye-witnesses of the life of the Word, would relate altogether in accordance with the Scriptures."

Now Irenaeus who had known Polycarp the friend and companion of the Apostle John, speaks of the Gospel of John as the work of the Apostle John; he treats the entire fourth Gospel as a well-known and long used book in the church. He does not mention what authority he had for doing this. There was no need for it in his day, for everybody knew that this Gospel had been written by John. "When Irenaeus who had conversed with Polycarp, the friend of the Apostle John, quotes this Gospel as the work of the Apostle, we may fairly presume that he had assured himself of this by the testimony of one so well capable of informing him" (Dean Alford, Greek N.T.) This strongest evidence for the Johannine authorship has been ably stated by R. W. Dale of Birmingham in the following words: "Irenaeus had heard Polycarp describe his intercourse with John and the rest who had seen the Lord; this must have been long after John's death, perhaps as late as A.D. 145, or even A.D. 150, for Irenaeus lived into the third century. Was the Fourth Gospel published before that time? Then Polycarp must have spoken of it; if John had not written it, Polycarp would have denied that it was genuine; and Irenaeus, who revered Polycarp, would never have received it. But if it was not published before that time, if it was unknown to John's friend and disciple forty or fifty years after John's death, then, again, it is incredible that Irenaeus should have received it.

"Polycarp's martyrdom was in the year A.D. 155 or A.D. 156. He had known John; and for more than fifty years after the death of John he was one of the trustees and guardians of John's memory. During a great part of that time he was the most conspicuous personage among the Churches of Asia Minor. Nor did he stand alone. He lived to such an advanced age, that he probably survived all the men who had listened with him to John's teaching; but for thirty or forty years after John's death there must have been a large number of other persons who would have associated themselves with him in rejecting a Gospel which falsely claimed John's authority. While these persons lived, such a Gospel would have had no chance of reception; and for thirty years after their death, their personal friends, who had heard them speak of their intercourse with John, would have raised a great controversy if they had been asked to receive as John's a Gospel of which the men who had listened to John himself had never heard, and which contained a different account of our Lord from that which John had given. But within thirty years after the martyrdom of Polycarp our fourth Gospel was universally regarded by the church as having a place among the Christian Scriptures, and as the work of the Apostle John. The conclusion seems irresistible; John must have written it."

The Defeat of the Critics.

The Johannine authorship of this Gospel was first doubted by an English clergyman by name of Evanson, who wrote on it in 1792. In 1820 Prof. Bretschneider followed in the history of the attack upon the authorship of this Gospel. Then came the Tubingen school, Strauss and Baur. Baur, the head of the Tubingen school gave the year 170 as the date when the Gospel of John was written; others put the date at 140; Keim, another critic, at 130; Renan between 117 and 138 A.D. But some of these rationalists were forced to modify their views. The Tubingen school was completely defeated and is now the dead thing of the past. We could fill many pages with the views and opinions of these critics and the answers, which able scholars who maintain the orthodox view, have given to them. This, we are sure, is not needed for true believers. The ripest and the best scholarship declares now that the fourth Gospel was written by John. Well said Neander, "this Gospel, if it be not the work of the Apostle John, is an insoluble enigma."

While the correct year in which the Gospel of John was written cannot be given, it seems quite evident that it was about the year 90 A.D.

The Purpose of the Gospel of John.

Modern critics of this Gospel have opposed the genuineness of it on the ground of the radical diversity between the views of the Person of Christ and His teachings as presented in the Gospel of John and the Synoptics. Such a diversity certainly exists, but it is far from being an evidence against the genuineness of this Gospel. It is an argument for it.

The synoptic Gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke, were already in existence for several decades and their contents known throughout the church. If an uninspired writer, some other one than John the Apostle, had undertaken to write another Gospel, such a writer would, in some way at least, have followed the story, which the Synoptics so closely follow. But the Gospel of John is, as already stated, radically different from the three preceding Gospels, and yet no critic can deny that the Gospel of John reveals the same wonderful Person who is the theme of the other Gospel records. As we have seen Matthew wrote the Jewish Gospel describing our Lord as the King; Mark makes Him known as the true Servant, and Luke pictures the Lord as the perfect Man. Thus the Synoptics emphasize His true humanity and show Him forth as the minister of the circumcision. The first two Gospels at least belong as much to the Old Testament as they belong to the New. True Christianity is not fully revealed in these Gospels. They move on Jewish ground. And what had taken place when finally the Holy Spirit moved the Apostle John to write his Gospel? The nation had completely rejected their Lord and King. The doom predicted by the Lord Jesus had fallen upon Jerusalem. The Roman army had burned the city and the temple. The Gentiles had come into the vineyard and the nation's dispersion among all the nations had begun. The facts are fully recognized by the Spirit

of God in John's Gospel. This we find on the very threshold of this Gospel. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not" (John 1:11). That Judaism was now a thing of the past is learned from the peculiar way in which the Passover-feast is mentioned. "And the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh" (6:4; also 2:13; 11:55). The Sabbath and the Feast of Tabernacles are spoken of in the same way (5:1; 7:2). Such statements, that the divinely given feasts were but "feasts of the Jews," are not found in the Synoptics. In John's Gospel these statements show that we are outside of Judaism. Hebrew names and titles are translated also and the Gentile meaning is given. (Messiah, which is interpreted Christ. 1:41. Rabbi, which is to say, being interpreted, Master. 1:38. The place of a skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha. 19:17, etc.) This is another evidence that Judaism is no longer in view.

But something else had happened since the three first Gospels had been written. The enemy had come in perverting the truth. Wicked apostates and anti-Christian teachers asserted themselves. They denied the Person of the Lord, His essential Deity, the virgin birth, His finished work, His physical resurrection, in one word, "the doctrine of Christ." A flood of error swept over the church. (The Epistles of John, besides the early Christian literature, bear witness to this fact. See First John 2:18-23; 4:1-6. Men were scattering the anti-Christian doctrines everywhere so that the Spirit of God demanded the severest separation from such. "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not in your house, neither bid him God speed. For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (Second John 10-11). An exhortation which is in force for all times.)

"Gnosticism" was corrupting the professing church everywhere. This system spoke of the Lord Jesus as occupying the highest rank in the order of spirits; they also denied the redemption by His blood and the gift of God to believing sinners, that is, eternal life. God in His infinite wisdom held back the pen of the Apostle John till these denials had matured and then he wrote under divine guidance the final Gospel in which the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Only-Begotten, the Second Person of the Godhead, is made known in the fullness of His Glory. Linked with this marvelous picture of Him, Who is the true God and the Eternal Life, is the other great truth made known in the fourth Gospel. Man is dead, destitute of life; he must be born again and receive life. And this eternal life is given by the Son of God to all who believe on Him. It is communicated as a present and abiding possession, dependent on Him, Who is the source and the Life as well. At the same time the Third Person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit, is revealed in this Gospel as He is not revealed in the Synoptics. The Gospel which reveals the Eternal Life is necessarily the Gospel in which the Holy Spirit as the Communicator, Sustainer and Perfecter is fully made known. The Gospel of John is therefore the New Testament Gospel, the good news that Grace and Truth have come by Jesus Christ. It makes known what is more fully revealed in the doctrinal Epistles.

The last chapter in which we hear the Lord Jesus Christ speak, before His passion, is the seventeenth chapter. He speaks to the Father in the great prayer rightly called "the high-priestly prayer." In it He touches upon all the great truths concerning Himself and His own made known in this Gospel, and we shall also find that all the great redemption truths given in their fullness by the Holy Spirit in the Epistles, are clearly revealed in this prayer.

John's Own Testimony.

At the close of the twentieth chapter of this Gospel we find John's own testimony concerning the purpose of this Gospel. "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 (in) His Name." Thus the twofold purpose of the fourth Gospel is given by the Apostle:--Christ the Son of God and the Life He gives to all who believe.

The characteristic features of this Gospel are too numerous to mention in this introductory word.

We shall point them out in the annotations.

The Division of the Gospel of John

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (3:16). This verse may be given as the key-text of this Gospel, while the prominent words are: Life; Believe; Verily.

Different divisions of this Gospel have been suggested. In its structure it has been compared to the three divisions of the temple. The outer court (Chapter 1-12); the Holy Part (13-16); the Holiest (17-21). Others have used chapter 16:28 to divide the Gospel; "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again I leave the world and go to the Father." This is unquestionably the order of events in the Gospel of John. He came forth from the Father (1:1-18); He came into the world (1:19-12); He left the world and has returned to the Father (13-21). Keeping the great purpose of this Gospel in view we make a three-fold division.

I. The Only-begotten, the Eternal Word; His Glory and His Manifestation. Chapter 1:1-2:22.

II. Eternal Life Imparted; what it is and what it Includes. Chapter 2:23-17.

III. "I lay down My life, that I might take it again Chapter 18-21.

First then we behold Him, the Only Begotten, the Creator of all things, the Life and the Light of men, in His full glory. The Eternal Word was made flesh and manifested Himself among men. This is followed by the main section of the Gospel. It begins with the story of Nicodemus in which the absolute necessity of the new birth, the reception of eternal life by faith in the Son of God, is emphasized; it ends with the great summing up of all He taught concerning eternal life and salvation, in the great prayer of Chapter 17. Chapters 3-17 contain the progressive revelation concerning eternal life. The Reception and assurance of it, the Holy Spirit as the Communicator, the provisions for that life, the fruits of it, the goal of it, etc., we can trace in these chapters. In the third part we find the description of how He laid down His life and took it again in resurrection.

Analysis and Annotations

I. The Only-begotten, the Eternal Word; His Glory and His Manifestation -- Chapter 1:1-2:22

CHAPTER 1

1. The Word: the Creator, the Life and the Light. 1-4.
2. The Light and the Darkness. The Light not Known. 5-11.
3. The Word Made Flesh and Its Gracious Results. 12-18.
4. The Witness of John. 19-34.
5. Following Him and Dwelling With Him. 35-42.
6. The Next Day. Nathanael's Unbelief and Confession. 43-49.
7. The Promise of Greater Things. 50-51.

Majestic is the beginning of this Gospel. Hundreds of pages might be written on the opening verses and their meaning would not be exhausted. They are inexhaustible. The name of our Lord as "the Word" (Logos) is exclusively used by the Apostle John. The Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria,

who lived in the days of the Apostle John, also speaks of the Word. Critics have therefore claimed that the Apostle copied from Philo and reproduced his mystical Jewish philosophy. However, this theory has been exploded. Professor Harnack, the eminent German scholar, states "the Logos of John has little more in common with the Logos of Philo than the name." It is significant that the rabbinical paraphrases on the Old Testament (Targumim) speak hundreds of times of the Lord as "the Word" (Memra). These ancient Jewish paraphrases describe Jehovah, when He reveals Himself, by the term "Memra," which is the same as the Greek "Logos"--"the Word." Genesis 3:8 they paraphrased "they heard the Word walking in the garden." These Jewish comments ascribe the creation of the world to the Word. It was "the Word" which communed with the Patriarchs. According to them "the Word" redeemed Israel out of Egypt; "the Word" was dwelling in the tabernacle; "the Word" spake out of the fire of Horeb; "the Word" brought them into the promised land. All the relationship of the Lord with Israel is explained by them as having been through "the Word." In the light of the opening verses of the Gospel of John these Jewish statements appear more than interesting.* (These paraphrases in the form we possess them were written in Aramaic about 300 A.D. But long before they were written they must have existed as traditions among the Jewish people.) The Only Begotten is called "The Word" because He is the express image of God, as the invisible thought is expressed by the corresponding word. He is the revealer and interpreter of the mind and will of God.

"In (the) beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Three great facts are made known concerning our Lord. 1. He is eternal. He did not begin to exist. He has no beginning, for "in the beginning was the Word." He ever was. Before time began and matter was created, He was. 2. He was and is a Person distinct from God the Father, yet one with Him. "The Word was with God." 3. The Lord Jesus Christ is God, for we read "The Word was God." He could therefore not be a being, a creature like the angels. The verses which follow add to this the fact that He is the Creator of all things and the Source of all light and life. Here is the most complete refutation of the wicked teachings concerning the Person of our Lord, which were current in the days of the Apostle, which have been in the world ever since and which will continue to exist till the Lord comes. Arianism, which makes our Lord a Being inferior to God, is answered. So is Socinianism, Unitarianism, Russellism, International Bible Student Association, which teach that Christ was not very God, but a man. Well has it been said in view of the revelation contained in the first verse: "to maintain in the face of such a text, as some so called 'Christians' do, that our Lord Jesus Christ was only a man, is a mournful proof of the perversity of the human heart." And in Him was life, which must be applied to spiritual life. Spiritual life and light is impossible apart from the second Person of the Godhead. The commentator Bengel makes a helpful statement on the opening verses of this chapter. "In the first and second verses of this chapter mention is made of a state before the creation of the world; in the third verse, the world's creation; in the fourth, the time of man's uprightness; in the fifth, the time of man's decline and fall."

John the forerunner is in this Gospel presented to bear witness of the Light. How this reveals the darkness which is in the world that He, Who is the Life and the Light, needed one to announce His coming! "The true light was that which, coming into the world, lighteth every man." (Verse 9; correct translation.) And when He came into the world He had made, the world knew Him not. Even His own, to whom He came, received Him not. This is His rejection by Israel, which in detail is described in the first three Gospels.

Verses 12 and 13 make known the gracious results for those, who receive Him, who believe on His name. The world had not known its Creator; Israel had rejected Him. After the great work of the Cross had been accomplished, the work done for guilty man, the good news is made known. As many as receive Him, to them He gives the right to be the children of God. The new birth is here mentioned for the first time; it is the communication of the divine nature by believing on His name. Believing on Him, receiving Him, we are begotten again and are therefore the children of God. Of this nothing is said in the preceding Gospels. The Gospel of John begins where the others end. The authorized version is incorrect in having "sons of God." (The same error appears in First John 3:2.)

John always speaks of "children" not of "sons." The expression "children of God" denotes the fact that we are God's born ones, born by the new birth into the family of God. "Sons of God" we are called in view of our destiny in Christ and with Him. As sons of God we are also the heirs of God and fellow-heirs of Jesus Christ. Nowhere is it said that we are heirs of God because we are children of God. Our Lord is never called a child of God, for He is not born of God as we are; He is "Son." (Acts 4:30 is incorrect; not "holy child Jesus," but "holy servant.") Verse 14 gives the fact of His incarnation. Here then we read what the Word became. It is almost impossible to believe that men who claim scholarship, who deny the fact of the incarnation, can state as they do, that the Gospel of John has nothing to say on this great foundation truth of our faith. These apostates must be blinded. The great mystery is made known here as it is in Matthew and in Luke. The Eternal Word, the Word which ever was, the Word which is God, became flesh. He became so by the union of two perfect and distinct natures in one Person. His person however cannot be divided. And when He became flesh, took on the creature's form, He did not cease to be very God; He emptied Himself of His outward glory, but not of His Deity. He became truly man, but He was holy, sinless; not alone did He not sin, but He could not sin. There is an ancient Latin statement which is worth repeating. It represents "the Word having become flesh as saying: 'I am what I was, that is God'--'I was not what I am, that is Man'--'I am now called both, God and Man.'" In Him they beheld His glory, the glory of the Only Begotten, full of grace and truth. Grace and truth came by Him. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, declared Him, Whom no one hath seen at any time. These are great statements. The word "grace" is found here for the first time in the New Testament. And He, the Incarnate Word, and He alone is full of Grace and Truth. Out of His fullness have we all received, and grace upon grace. It is all grace, that those receive from Him who believe on His name.

The witness of John the forerunner is different from his witness and preaching as given by the Synoptics. They report mostly his testimony to the nation. Here we read when he saw Jesus coming to him, he saith, "Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world." (Often Christians quote "sins of the world." If our Lord had taken away the sins of the world, the whole world would be saved. Our Lord only bore the sins of those who believe on Him. All who do not believe die in their sins and are lost.) He knew that He Who came to him was to be the Sin-bearer. He knew that He is the true Sacrifice for sin, the true Passover-Lamb, the Lamb which Isaiah predicted. And he testified that the Lamb of God was to take away (not taking away then, or has taken away) the sin of the world. The Lamb of God had to die and the ultimate results of His death are announced in this testimony. They have not yet come, but will be realized in the new heaven and the new earth, when all things are made new.

Beginning with verse 35 we read what happened the next day after John had given his testimony concerning the Lamb of God. The results of that testimony now appear. Once more John points to Him: "Behold the Lamb of God." He, who was the greatest prophet of the Old Testament, directs his disciples to the Lord. The two disciples heard him speak and followed Jesus. These are the blessed steps: speaking the message, hearing (and in hearing believing) then following the Lord. And He knew them and their hearts' desire. His grace was drawing them to Himself. Their question, "Rabbi, where dwellest Thou?" is answered by that most blessed invitation, "Come and see." These are the first words of our Lord besides His question, written in this Gospel. He wanted them to know Him, to be in communion with Himself. They abode with Him that day. It foreshadows the results of the Gospel of Grace. The unmentioned place where they dwelt with Him is typical of the heavenly place where He is now. In faith we see where He abides, and by faith we know we are there in Him. It is a beautiful picture of the gathering which takes place throughout this Gospel-age. He is the Center, and "Come and see" are still His gracious words to all who hear and believe. And how Andrew at once testified and brought his brother Simon to Jesus!

Verses 43-49 unfold another picture. Nathanael (gift of God) would not believe. Philip had testified to him "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." Nathanael under the fig tree, where the Lord had seen him, is the

type of the remnant of Israel. When the Lord spoke to him he owned Him as the Son of God, the King of Israel. So all Israel in a future day will confess Him. Notice the first day, when the first company is gathered to abide with Him (typical of this age and the gathering of a heavenly company); then the second day, when the Lord reveals Himself to unbelieving Nathanael (typical of the conversion of the remnant of Israel).

The last two verses of this marvelous chapter will find their fulfillment in that day when heaven is opened. Then greater things will take place. The angels of God will be seen ascending and descending upon the Son of Man. It will take place when He comes the second time, when Israel acknowledges Him as their King and as the Son of God.

CHAPTER 2:1-22

1. The Marriage in Cana. 1-11.

2. The Temple Cleansed. 12-22.

The second chapter gives the record of the first miracle reported in this Gospel. He manifested His omniscience in the previous chapter and here, in turning water into wine, He reveals Himself as the omnipotent Creator. What harmony there is between the opening of the first two chapters of the Gospel of John. The first chapter speaks of Him as the Creator of all things and in the second chapter He manifests the power of the Creator. He needed no wine, no grapes, no mellowing process, to furnish the best wine. He but commanded and it was so. This is omnipotence. In verse 17 of the previous chapter there is a contrast between Moses representing the law dispensation and our Lord Jesus Christ through whom grace and truth have come. The first miracle Moses did, was turning water into blood, typical of the ministration of the law unto death; the first miracle of our Lord turns water into wine, which is typical of joy and the ministration of Grace which is unto life.

The many applications and lessons of the marriage in Cana and the changing of water into wine we have to omit. But we call attention to the dispensational aspect. The third day* mentioned connects with the preceding chapter. (The numbers 3 and 7 are prominent in this Gospel. Three times the Lord went into Galilee, three times into Judea; three passovers are mentioned, etc. There are seven signs or miracles, seven times the Lord speaks "I am"; seven times the phrase "These things have I spoken unto you, etc." is used.) On the first day the two disciples abode with the Lord. On the second day unbelieving Nathanael confessed Him as Son of God and King of Israel. On the third day there was a marriage. The third day clearly indicates the time of Israel's blessing and restoration. Beautiful is the predicted and still future confession of Israel: "After two days will He revive us, in the third day He will raise us up and we shall live in His sight." (Hosea 6:1-3). The marriage typifies the restored relationship of the Lord with Israel. That is why the mother of Jesus (type of Israel) and His disciples (those who come with Him to the marriage) are mentioned. And this miracle is spoken of as the "beginning of miracles," when He manifested His glory. When He comes again and changes existing conditions, when Israel enters into the promised and blessed relationship, when He manifests His glory, then the wine of joy will not fail. Better things are promised and better things will come, when that blessed day appears. But "His hour is not yet come." It will surely come.

The words of rebuke to Mary clearly show that she erred and was as fallible as any other woman. The Lord rebuked her because He did not want her to interfere with Him and His work. "She erred here, perhaps from an affectionate desire to bring honor to her Son, as she erred on other occasions. The words before us were meant to remind her that she must henceforth leave our Lord to choose His own times and modes of acting. The season of subjection to her and Joseph was over. The season of His public ministry had at length begun. In carrying on that ministry, she must not presume to suggest to Him. The utter contrariety of this verse to the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church about the Virgin Mary is too palpable to be explained away. She was not without error and sin, as Romish writers have dared to assert, and was not meant to be prayed to and

adored. If our Lord would not allow His mother even to suggest to Him the working of a miracle, we may well suppose that all Roman Catholic prayers to the Virgin Mary, and especially prayers entreating her to 'command her Son,' are most offensive and blasphemous in His eyes." (J.C. Ryle.)

The purging of the temple is closely connected with the marriage and miracle of Cana. When He comes again the Father's house, the temple, will be cleansed. "Yea every pot in Jerusalem shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts ... and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite (which means translated: merchantman) in the house of the Lord of hosts." (Zechariah 14:21). This is the first cleansing of the temple, mentioned exclusively by John. The synoptic Gospels report the cleansing which occurred at the close of His ministry. He manifested in it His authority as the Son of God, and Psalm 69:9 was fulfilled in His action. (The whole transaction is a remarkable one, as exhibiting our Lord using more physical exertion, and energetic bodily action, than we see Him using at any other period of His ministry. A word, a touch, or the reaching-forth of a hand, are the ordinary limits of His actions. Here we see Him doing no less than four things:-- (1) Making the scourge;--(2) Driving out the animals;--(3) Pouring out on the ground the changers' money;--(4) Overthrowing the tables. On no occasion do we find Him showing such strong outward marks of indignation, as at the sight of the profanation of the temple. Remembering that the whole transaction is a striking type of what Christ will do at His second coming, we may get some idea of the deep meaning of that remarkable expression, "The wrath of the Lamb." (Revelation 6:16)-- Expository Thoughts on John.))

Then He spoke of His coming death and resurrection in a veiled form. The Jews and His disciples did not understand what temple He meant. He spoke of His own body. "In three days I will raise it up." His resurrection was both through the power of God and by Himself. God raised Him up and He raised Himself up. This statement properly belongs to this Gospel in which we behold Him as the Son of God. The same statement we find in chapter 10:18--"I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it again."

II. Eternal Life Imparted: What it is and What it Includes -- Chapter 2:23-17

The second part of this Gospel contains the blessed teachings the Son of God gave concerning eternal life, how it is imparted and what it includes. Everything in these chapters is new. The story of Nicodemus, the woman at Sychar's well, the healing of the impotent man, the discourses of our Lord, etc., are not reported by the synoptic Gospels. There is not a word of the Sermon on the Mount reported by John; the many miracles, so significantly arranged in Matthew, are omitted (except the feeding of the 5000); nor do we find a single parable concerning the Kingdom of Heaven. The progressive revelation concerning eternal life will be brought out in the annotations. As already stated the teachings begin with the new birth, in which eternal life is imparted, and end with the destiny of those who are born again. This is revealed in His high priestly prayer, "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory."

CHAPTER 2:23-3:36

1. The Many Who Believed on Him. 2:23-25.
2. Nicodemus and the New Birth. 3:1-8.
3. How the New Birth is Accomplished. 9-21.
4. The Last Testimony of John. 22-36.

He worked many miracles in Jerusalem, which are unreported by John. Many therefore believed in

His name, but the Omniscient One knew that they were only convinced, but their hearts had not been touched and so they did not receive Him as the Son of God. But there was one who was more deeply exercised, an earnest, seeking soul, Nicodemus. He came to Jesus by night and addressed Him as Rabbi, acknowledging that He was a teacher come from God. The Lord did not permit him to go on with his address nor to state the object of his visit. The Lord treated him in an abrupt, almost discourteous, way and informed him at once of the absolute necessity of the new birth. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again (literally: born from above) he cannot see the Kingdom of God." Not teaching, mere knowledge, was the need Nicodemus had to see the Kingdom, but to be born from above.

But what Kingdom does our Lord mean? It refers primarily to the Kingdom of the Old Testament, promised to Israel. When that Kingdom comes, with the Return of the Lord, only those of Israel will enter in who are born again. The unbelieving and apostate mass of Jews will be excluded from that earthly, millennial Kingdom. Only the believing remnant inherits that Kingdom to come. This may be learned from Ezekiel 36 and Isaiah 4:3, and other passages. That is why the Lord said to Nicodemus: "Art thou the teacher of Israel, and knowest not these things?"

But the truth our Lord gave to Nicodemus has a wider application. Man is spiritually dead, destitute of spiritual life. In order to enter the Kingdom of God, to be in the presence of God, man must be born anew. Such a statement is nowhere found in the preceding Gospels. In the Gospel of John, the Gospel of Eternal Life, it is put into the foreground. Nicodemus is the only person to whom the Lord spoke of the absolute necessity of the new birth. He never made such a statement to the publicans and the harlots. And who was Nicodemus? A Pharisee, and therefore an extremely religious man. A ruler of the Jews, which necessitated a moral life. The teacher of Israel, one who possessed much learning. Religiousness, morality, education and culture are insufficient to save man and give him a place in the Kingdom of God. The new birth is the one thing needed. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." The flesh is the old nature which every human being brings into the world; it is a fallen, a corrupt nature and can never be anything else. And "they that are in the flesh cannot please God." (Romans 8:8). The natural man may do anything he pleases, become religious and philanthropic, but he cannot please God. What then is the new birth? It is not reformation. Nor is it, as so often stated, an action of the Holy Spirit to make an evil nature good. The flesh cannot be changed into something better. The new birth is the impartation of a new nature, the divine nature, by the Holy Spirit. "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit." This new nature is absolutely holy, as the old nature is absolutely corrupt. This new nature is the only thing which fits man to be in the presence of God.

But what is the meaning of "water" in verse 5? "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God." The water is claimed by ritualists to mean baptism. If a little water is put upon the head of an infant, they would have us believe, regeneration takes place. Others hold upon this statement of our Lord that the water is Christian baptism, and that therefore water-baptism is necessary to salvation. But the words of our Lord have nothing whatever to do with baptism. (Ezekiel 36:25-27 must be linked with John 3:5 and must be considered here as a national promise to Israel, how they will enter the Kingdom. But the verses in Ezekiel have absolutely nothing whatever to do with baptism. To apply them thus is ridiculous.) The water cannot mean Christian baptism. Christian baptism (an entirely different thing from the Jewish baptism of John) was not instituted till after His death and resurrection. If it meant Christian baptism, the Lord's rebuke to Nicodemus would be unjust. How could he know something that was still undivulged? Water in this passage is the figure of the Word of God, which the Spirit of God uses for the quickening of souls. The following passages will demonstrate this fact: Ephesians 5:25-26; 1 Corinthians 4:15; 1 Peter 1:23; James 1:18. Begotten again by the Word of God, and water is the figure of that Word.

The Lord speaks next of revealing heavenly things (in distinction from earthly things relating to Israel). Then the Cross is revealed by which the heavenly things are realized, and how lost man is to be saved and receive eternal life (the new nature). The Son of Man must be lifted up. He Who

knew no sin was made sin for us. "God so loved the world that He gave His Only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life."--"In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because God sent His Only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love; not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1 John 4:9-10). Blessed words these! It is by believing on the Son of God, who died for our sins, that we are saved and are born again.

John bears his final testimony in verses 23-26. He testifies of Christ as the bridegroom, who is to have the bride. John calls himself the friend of the bridegroom. "He must increase, but I must decrease." Note the three &(must's" in this chapter. "Ye must be born again"; the necessity of the new birth. "The Son of Man must be lifted up"; the necessity of the death of the Lord to make salvation possible. "He must increase, but I must decrease"; the result of salvation. The final testimony of John the Baptist takes us beyond the cross. (Verse 35-36). Blessed assurance! He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.--Solemn declaration! He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

CHAPTER 4

1. He Must Needs Pass Through Samaria. 1-5.
2. At Sychar's Well; Jesus and the Samaritan Woman. 6-26.
3. The Woman's Witness and the Believing Samaritans. 27-42.
4. His Return to Galilee. 43-45.
5. The Second Miracle, the Healing of the Nobleman's Son. 46-54.

In the Gospel of Matthew the Lord told His disciples not to go into the way of the Gentiles and not to enter into any city of the Samaritans. (10:5). He sent them to preach the nearness of the Kingdom. Here He must needs go through Samaria. He had left Jerusalem and was on His way to Galilee and passing through Samaria He manifested His marvelous Grace. Tired on account of the way, an evidence of His true humanity, "He sat thus on the well." There He rested in unwearied love, waiting for the poor, fallen woman, whose sad story He knew so well.

To follow the beautiful account of His dealings with the Samaritan woman in all its blessed details is impossible in our brief annotations. What mercy and grace He exhibited in seeking such a one! What wisdom and patience in dealing with her, bearing with her ignorance! And what power in drawing her to Himself and making her a messenger to bring others to Him! How different He treated her in comparison with Nicodemus in the preceding chapter.

The Lord speaks to the Samaritan woman concerning the living water, which He can give to all that ask Him. The central verse of His teaching is the fourteenth, "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." The well or fountain of water in the believer is the indwelling Spirit. In chapter 7:37-39 the Lord speaks also of living water and there the interpretation of it is given. "This He spake of the Spirit, whom they that believe on Him should receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." The believer has therefore not only eternal life, but also the gift of the Spirit, Who dwells in him as the spring of living water.

The new worship is next revealed in answer to the question of the woman. Verses 21-24. The Samaritans worshipped on a mountain (Gerizim); the Jews in the temple, but the hour was coming when the true worshippers would worship the Father in the Spirit. No longer would true believers worship God as the God of Israel, but as Father. It is to be a worship in the Spirit and not confined to a locality. Christian worship has for its foundation the possession of eternal life; the indwelling Spirit is the power of that worship. Only true believers, such who are born again and possess the

gift of the Spirit, can be worshippers. "For we are the circumcision who worship God in the Spirit and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." (Philippians 3:3). And such worshippers the Father seeketh. In Old Testament times the Jews worshipped in an earthly place. In the coming, the millennial age, nations will go up to Jerusalem to worship the Lord of hosts in the great millennial Temple. (Isaiah 2:1-4; Zechariah 14:16, etc.) This present dispensation is the dispensation of Grace, and the Father seeketh worshippers who worship Him in Spirit and in Truth. Thus we are brought in the Gospel of John altogether upon the ground of grace.

Then He revealed Himself to the woman. "Jesus saith to her, I that speak to thee am He." She was face to face with the Messiah; she stood in the presence of Jehovah. She left her waterpot to tell others the good news of the living water. The earthly things were forgotten. And what a messenger she became! How her simple testimony was blessed in the conversion of souls! He abode there two days and is owned and proclaimed not alone as the promised Messiah but as the Saviour of the world. (Verse 42).

Once more we see Him at Cana of Galilee, and the nobleman's son, who was sick at Capernaum, is healed by the Lord. The nobleman represents typically Israel. The word the Lord addressed to him fits that nation. "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." How different from Samaria, where He did no miracle and yet they believed. And as the nobleman and his whole house believed, so will Israel believe in a future day.

CHAPTER 5

1. The Healing of the Impotent Man. 1-9.
2. The Opposition of the Jews. 10-18.
3. His Unity with the Father. 19-23.
4. The Present Hour. Believers Delivered from Death and Judgment. 24-25.
5. The Future Hour. His Power to Raise the Dead. 26-29.
6. Witness Concerning Himself. 30-32.
7. The Witness of John. 33-35.
8. The Witness of His Works. 36.
9. The Witness of the Father. 37-38.
10. The Witness of the Scriptures, and the Unbelief of the Jews. 39-47.

The teachings contained in this chapter are closely linked with the third and fourth chapters. He went up to Jerusalem again. In the foreground stands the healing of the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda with its five porches. An angel troubled the water at certain seasons, so that some were healed. We believe that it was actually so, though we cannot explain it. Many critics attack this occurrence and reject its genuineness. ("After all there is no more real difficulty in the account before us, than in the history of our Lord's temptation in the wilderness, the various cases of Satanic possession, or the release of Peter from prison by an angel. Once admit the existence of angels, their ministry on earth, and the possibility of their interposition to carry out God's designs, and there is nothing that ought to stumble us in the passage. The true secret of some of the objections to it, is the modern tendency to regard all miracles as useless lumber, which must be thrown overboard, if possible, and cast out of the Sacred Narrative on every occasion. Against this tendency we must watch and be on our guard.") But the impotent man could not avail himself of the opportunity for he was helpless. Such was Israel's condition under the law. The thirty-eight years point back to Israel's wandering in the wilderness. Furthermore the impotent man presents a

striking picture of the utter helplessness of man as a sinner. By His word the Lord Jesus made him perfectly whole, so that he took up his bed and walked.

Opposition and objection from the Jews followed at once. They accused the healed man of breaking the Sabbath. He evidently did not know the Lord at all; only after He had spoken to him (Verse 14) did he find out that it was Jesus. Then he told the Jews. Their hatred was turned at once against the Lord. They persecuted Him and sought to slay Him because He had done this miracle on the Sabbath. The Lord's answer is most blessed. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." It is the first time in this Gospel that He speaks of God as "My Father." He, the Son, was in their midst to make the Father known. He told them that His Father works and that the Son works. Sin made this work necessary. He stood in their presence and claimed perfect and unbroken fellowship with His Father.

The Jews knew what He meant. Had He said "Our Father" instead of "My Father" no word of protest would have escaped their lips. They knew His words could mean but one thing, that He is equal with God, by saying that God was His Father. Augustine remarked on this verse: "Behold the Jews understood what the Arians (deniers of His Deity) would not understand." And He accepted the charge of the Jews as a correct one. "He thought it not robbery to be equal with God." (Philippians 2:6). His words which follow declare His perfect unity with the Father in His work; He is the Beloved of the Father; the Father raiseth up the dead, so does He; judgment is committed unto the Son; He is to be honored as the Father is honored. "Whosoever does not honor the Son with equal honor to that which he pays to the Father, however he may imagine that he honors or approaches God, does not honor Him at all; because he can only be known by us as 'the Father who sent his Son.'" (Dean Alford.) Unitarianism, Russellism, the new theology and a host of other which deny the absolute Deity of our Lord, stand condemned and convicted in the presence of these wonderful words, "He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father." All worship apart from the Son of God is idolatry. He claims the unity in Godhead; and such belongs to Him.

Verse 24 is a blessed Gospel text. Hearing and believing are the conditions to receive eternal life. There is no mention made of repentance. The word "repent" so prominent in the Gospel of Matthew in the Kingdom offer is not found once in the fourth Gospel. Faith and repentance, however, are inseparable. He that hears His words and believeth Him that sent the Son also repents. Again eternal life is spoken of as a present possession, "hath" not "shall have" or "shall receive later," but "hath eternal life." And with that gift comes deliverance from judgment. The reception of eternal life is a full acquittal; passed from death and all it means, into life.

"The coming hour" in verse 25 is the present dispensation. The dead are the spiritually dead. They that hear the voice of the Son of God shall live; they receive His life. Then He speaks of an hour which was to come and which has not yet come. Two resurrections are revealed by Him; the resurrection of life and the resurrection of judgment. This does not mean that these two resurrections are to take place the same time, in, what is termed, a general resurrection. Elsewhere we find the full revelation concerning these two resurrections. There is the first resurrection, the resurrection of the just, and a thousand years later the resurrection of the wicked dead. (Revelation 20.) All the wrong teachings concerning the wicked dead, such as Annihilation, Restitution, Restoration, Second Chance, etc., as taught by Seventh Day Adventism, Millennial Dawnism, (also called "International Bible Students' Association" and "Jehovah's Witnesses") Universalism and others, are completely refuted by the words of our Lord in verse 29.

The five witnesses who testify concerning Himself, that He is the Son of God, are of much importance and should be carefully studied.

CHAPTER 6

1. The Feeding of the Five Thousand Men. 1-14.

2. The Attempt to Make Him King, 15.
3. The Stormy Sea. "It is I, be not afraid." 16-21.
4. The Discourse on the Bread of Life. The Food of the Believer. 22-59.
5. The Falling Away of Disciples. 60-66
6. Peter's Confession. 67-71.

The events which are recorded in this chapter happened at the Sea of Galilee, the sea of Tiberias. John exclusively uses this name, an evidence that he wrote after the fall of Jerusalem. By this name the lake had become known to the Gentiles. The feeding of the five thousand is the same mentioned by the Synoptics. This great sign showed that Jehovah was in their midst, He Who had fed His Israel with manna in the wilderness and promised to satisfy the poor with bread. (Psalm 132:15.) When they had seen the great sign they acknowledged Him to be the promised Prophet who should come (Deuteronomy 18:15) and wanted to make Him King. But He departed into a mountain. He knew that all they meant by making Him King was to become the leader of a carnal movement to overthrow the hated Roman government.

The storm on the sea and His coming across the stormy sea we have had in the other Gospels.

The great discourse on the Bread of Life follows. It is connected with the sign of the feeding of the multitude. When He speaks of being the Bread from Heaven He refers to His incarnation. "For the bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven and giveth His life for the world." They rejected that Bread. Then He speaks of eating His flesh and drinking His blood both for the reception of life and for the sustenance of that life. These words have nothing whatever to do with the Lord's supper. Bishop Ryle, who was a leader in a ritualistic church, repudiated this wrong interpretation in the following words: "For one thing, a literal 'eating and drinking' of Christ's body and blood would have been an idea utterly revolting to all Jews, and flatly contradictory to an often-repeated precept of their law.--For another thing, to take a literal view of 'eating and drinking,' is to interpose a bodily act between the soul of man and salvation. This is a thing for which there is no precedent in Scripture. The only things without which we cannot be saved are repentance and faith.--Last, but not least, to take a literal view of 'eating and drinking,' would involve most blasphemous and profane consequences. It would shut out of heaven the penitent thief. He died long after these words were spoken, without any literal eating and drinking. Will any dare to say he had 'no life' in Him?--It would admit to heaven thousands of ignorant, godless communicants in the present day. They literally eat and drink, no doubt! But they have no eternal life, and will not be raised to glory. Let these reasons be carefully pondered.

"The plain truth is, there is a morbid anxiety in fallen man to put a carnal sense on Scriptural expressions, wherever he possibly can. He struggles hard to make religion a matter of forms and ceremonies,--of doing and performing,--of sacraments and ordinances,--of sense and of sight."

The Bread of God, He Himself, gave His life for the world. He gave His body and shed His blood on the cross. It is His sacrificial, atoning death. By faith we partake of it. Without it there is no life. Note the difference in verses 53 and 54. In verse 53 He speaks of those who have eaten His flesh and drunk His blood, apart from which there is no life. By faith the sinner appropriates Him, Who gave His body and shed His blood, and then receives eternal life. In verse 54 He speaks of a continuous eating and drinking. He is the Source of eternal life. The believer feeds on Him; the eternal life the believer has must be sustained, nourished and kept by Himself, by ever feeding on His dying love. "The life that I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." (Galatians 2:20.) And the believer eating and drinking becomes one with Him. "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood dwelleth (literally: abideth) in Me and I in him." It is a wonderful discourse on His incarnation, His sacrificial, atoning death, and the blessed assurances given to those who believe on Him. Precious are the promises of this great chapter. "He that

cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst" (Verse 35.) "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." (Verse 37.) "Every one who seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."* (Verse 40.) "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life." (Verse 47.)

*"The last day" does not mean a day of a final and universal judgment followed by the end of the world. It is the end of the Jewish age to which our Lord refers (the age which is yet to be completed in great tribulation.--Matthew 24). The first resurrection includes Old Testament saints, New Testament saints and the Jewish believers, who are martyred during the great tribulation. The first resurrection will be completed at the close of the tribulation period and followed by the setting up of the Kingdom.

CHAPTER 7

1. My Time is not Yet Come. 1-9.
2. Departure from Galilee; Sought by the Jews. 10-13.
3. In the Temple Teaching. 14-29.
4. Opposition to Him. 30-36.
5. The Indwelling Spirit Promised. 37-39.
6. The Division Among the People Because of Him. 40-44.
7. The Returning Officers and the Defense of Nicodemus. 45-53.

The Lord tarried in Galilee. How He must have sought souls there as He walked in Galilee! He would not walk in Judea (not "Jewry," as in the Authorized Version) because the Jews, that is the leaders of the people, sought to kill Him. The Feast of Tabernacles was at hand and what we find written in this chapter happened during that Feast. His brethren, no doubt sons born to Mary after His own birth, urged Him to go to Judea. Their motives were selfish. They did not believe on Him. However, later they believed, for we find them among those who waited in Jerusalem for the promise of the father. (Acts 1:14.) The Feast of Tabernacles typifies the millennial blessings for Israel and the Gentiles, the great consummation. The world hated Him and He declared that His time had not yet come. We cannot follow at length the interesting account of His coming to Jerusalem, the words He spake, the answers He gave to those who hated Him. He taught and they marvelled. He declared that the doctrine He preached was of Him that sent Him. What a challenge He gave them! "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." Then He told them that they tried to kill Him. "Thou hast a demon," was their reply, while others said: "Is not this He whom they seek to kill?" They sought to take Him and the Pharisees and Chief Priest sent officers to arrest Him. Thus the hatred against Him is manifested. His hour had not yet come; no one could touch Him. When the hour came He yielded Himself. The great center of this chapter is found in verses 37-39. The last day of the Feast of Tabernacles was the greatest. It was the eighth day, a day of rest and holy gathering together. During the seven days of the feast water was daily drawn from the pool of Siloam and then poured out. On the last day this ceremony did not take place. The seven days typified their wilderness journey; the eighth day the entrance into the land. For seven days they drew the water and poured it out, commemorating the water the Lord had supplied to Israel during the wilderness journey. On the eighth day they enjoyed the springs of the land itself an emblem of the living waters which the Lord had promised to His people. Israel has these promises. "And it shall be in that day that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem." (Zechariah 14:8.) The same promise we find elsewhere. (See Ezekiel 47; Isaiah 12.) And He Who had given to His people these promises, Who had come to fulfill them, stood in their midst. They hate Him. They tell Him to His face, "Thou hast a demon."

They seek to kill Him.

On the last day of the feast, typical of Israel's promised blessing and glory, He stood and cried: "If any man thirst let him come unto Me and drink." He offers now upon the rejection of Himself something new to "any man who thirsts"; the national promises of living water pouring forth from Jerusalem cannot be fulfilled now. They will be fulfilled when He comes again. It is an individual invitation, an individual promise, He gives. "He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." We are then told that this means the gift of the Holy Spirit, which they were to receive who came to Him and believed on Him. The promise was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost. Then the Holy Spirit came to dwell in believers. The overflow, the streams of living water to flow from the believer, is the type of the Spirit, the Spirit of power manifesting Himself through the believer in bearing testimony for Christ. In the third chapter we saw the Holy Spirit communicating life; He is the Life-giving Spirit. In the fourth chapter the Lord spoke of the Spirit as the well of living water; He indwells the one who is born again to make communion and worship possible. Then followed His teaching in chapters 5 and 6, again concerning the life the believer hath in Him and how it is sustained. In the present chapter the indwelling Spirit, Who is the well of living water in the believer, is seen flowing forth to others, just as a spring will overflow.

CHAPTER 8

1. The Woman Taken in Adultery. 1-11.
2. The Light of the World. 12.
3. His Testimony Concerning Himself and the Father. 13-20.
4. His Solemn Declarations. 21-47.
5. Before Abraham Was, I Am. 48-59.

The first verse belongs to the preceding chapter. The officers returned without Him, bearing their testimony that "never man spake like this man." Nicodemus ventured his timid defense. Then every man went to his own house while the Lord went to the Mount of Olives.

The story of the woman taken in adultery has been rejected by many leading scholars. It is claimed that it is nothing less than a forgery. The chief arguments against it are the following: That the story is missing in some of the oldest manuscripts and earlier translations; that some of the Greek Fathers never refer to it; that it differs in style from the rest of the Gospel of John, and that the incident ought to be discredited on moral ground. However all these arguments have been proven invalid. Many old manuscripts have the story as well as some of the oldest translations. Others of the so-called church-fathers speak of it. There can be no question whatever of its genuineness. It was omitted on purpose in certain manuscripts. The Grace, which shines forth so marvelously in the Lord's dealing with the woman, was unpalatable to teachers who mixed Law and Grace. They left it out for a purpose.*

*"The argument from alleged discrepancies between the style and language of this passage, and the usual style of St. John's writing, is one which should be received with much caution. We are not dealing with an uninspired but with an inspired writer. Surely it is not too much to say that an inspired writer may occasionally use words and constructions and modes of expression which he generally does not use, and that it is no proof that he did not write a passage because he wrote it in a peculiar way."

It was a clever scheme from the side of the Scribes and Pharisees to tempt Him. The Law of Moses demanded her death by stoning. If He gave as an answer, "let her be stoned!" He would contradict His own testimony that He came not to judge, but to save. If He declared that the guilty woman was not to be stoned, then would He break the law. They appealed to Him as teacher, not as judge. He

was silent and stooped down and wrote with His finger in the ground. (The words, "as though He heard them not" are in italics and must be omitted.) It is the only time we read of our Lord that He wrote. The finger which wrote in the ground was the same which had written the law in the tables of stone. What He wrote we do not know; but it was symbolical of the fact that the law against man is written in the dust, the dust of death. Not alone had the woman deserved death, but all were equally guilty. After His demand, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her," the oldest in the company left first till the Lord was alone with the guilty woman. He did not set aside the law, and yet He manifested His marvelous Grace. The self-righteous accusers were condemned and sneaked into darkness, away from Him Who is the Light. The woman addressed Him as Lord, showing she believed on Him; and He told her to go and sin no more. The Grace He shows demands holiness.

The scene occurred in the Temple and the words He spoke following this incident were likewise spoken there. A great testimony again follows, which He gives concerning Himself. He is the Light of the world; it is not confined to Israel, but the light is to reach the Gentile nations. This is revealed in the Prophet Isaiah. After Messiah's complaint, "I have labored in vain," the rejected One is to be the light to the Gentiles. "I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles that thou mayest be my salvation unto the ends of the earth." (Isaiah 59:1-6.) Then follows an individual promise. He that followeth Him walks not in darkness, but has the light of life. In Him is life as well as light; there is then fellowship with God for the child of life, fellowship one with another if we walk in the light. He then bore additional testimony concerning Himself. He knew where He came from and whither He went. The blind Pharisees did not. And when He spoke of the fellowship of Himself and the Father, they asked, "Where is thy Father?" They were blind and blinded, and knew neither Him nor the Father.

Very solemn are the declarations in verses 21-29. They are as solemn and as true today as when they were uttered by the lips of the Son of God. "I said therefore unto you that ye shall die in your sins; for if ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins." Rejecting Christ, not believing on Him, means to die in sin. When they ask Him again, "Who art thou?" He answered, "Absolutely* what I am also speaking to you." (*The rendering of the Authorized Version is incorrect.) He is the Word, the Truth, the Life, the Light. He is, in the principle of His being, what also He speaks. Essentially, precisely, what He is, He also speaks. The phrase "lifting up" means His crucifixion. (See 3:14 and 12:32.) After that event His vindication would come. He is the "I am." Many believed on Him. Were they true believers or the same class as we find at the close of the second chapter? Most likely they misunderstood His statement of being lifted up. They may have thought of Him becoming King; they certainly knew nothing of the Cross.

More teaching follows. To be a true disciple means to abide in His Word. By the Word and the Spirit we are begotten, and to live as a disciple needs abiding in His Word. The Son is the Deliverer Who makes free from the power of Satan and of Sin, of which He bears witness.

This interesting chapter ends with a startling self-revelation of His absolute Deity, that He is the Eternal Jehovah. Eleven times the name "Abraham" is found in the eighth chapter of John. At the close the Lord speaks of Abraham having seen His day and rejoiced. He saw it in faith. Then when the Jews expressed their astonishment He answered, "Before Abraham was, I AM!" It is the most positive, the clearest declaration of our Lord of His Eternity, that He is God. He is the "I AM"--Jehovah. Thus this great testimony has always been received. We let a few of the ancient teachers speak:

Chrysostom observes: "He said not before Abraham was, I was, but, I AM. As the Father useth this expression I AM, so also doth Christ, for it signifieth continuous being, irrespective of all time. On which account the expression seemed to the Jews blasphemous."

Augustine says: "In these words acknowledge the Creator and discern the creature. He that spake was made the Seed of Abraham; and that Abraham might be, He was before Abraham."

Gregory remarks: "Divinity has no past or future, but always the present; and therefore Jesus does not say before Abraham was I was, but I am."

The Unitarians try to explain this away by saying, "Jesus only meant that He existed as Messiah in God's counsels before Abraham." Astonishing! How do they know what He meant? It is a satanic invention. The Jews knew better. They understood what He meant. They took up stones to stone Him because they knew He claimed absolute Deity. A miracle followed. The Greek means literally "He was hid." Their eyes must have been holden as He went out of the Temple and passed by.

CHAPTER 9

1. The Man Born Blind, Healed. 1-7.
2. The Healed Man Questioned. 8-26.
3. Reviled and Cast Out. 27-34.
4. Jesus Reveals Himself to Him. 35-41.

The healing of the man born blind is a type and an illustration of how Christ, the Light, communicates light and how he who follows the Light walks no more in darkness, but has the light of life. (Chapter 8:12.) And before He healed the man He testified that His day of activity on earth as Man was rapidly drawing to its close. (Verses 4 and 5.) The clay and the spittle did not effect the opening of the eyes; it was the power of Christ. The blind man went and washed in the pool of Siloam and came seeing.

The conflict the blind man had is interesting and instructive, but too lengthy to follow in our annotations. The Pharisees exhibit their hatred against Him Who healed the blind man and they did all in their power to discredit the miracle and Him Who performed it. They questioned the man to confound him, but did not succeed. Then they questioned the parents, but they were afraid to say how their son had received his sight, for the Jews had agreed that if any man confessed Him as Christ he should be put out of the synagogue. Then they questioned the man again and he gave them an excellent testimony. "Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not; one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." And when after repeated questionings the healed one expressed his firm belief that He Who gave him sight was of God, they cast him out.

But they only cast him into the arms of the loving Lord. He heard of what had been done to the man, and He sought for him. Then He revealed Himself to him as the Son of God. The man believed and worshipped Him. He was thrust outside of Judaism and in that outside place Christ found him, and he believed on Christ. Like everything else in the Gospel of John this anticipates the position of true Christianity. It is outside of the camp of Judaism, outside of that which has rejected Christ. "Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach." (Hebrews 13:13.)

CHAPTER 10

1. The Shepherd of the Sheep. 1-5.
2. The Good Shepherd, His Sheep and His Work. 6-21.
3. At the Feast of Dedication; the Repeated Testimony. 22-30.
4. Accused of Blasphemy and His Answer. 31-39.
5. Beyond Jordan; and Many Believed on Him. 40-42.

The teaching of this chapter is closely linked with the preceding event. It has become evident that

the true sheep of Christ, belonging to His flock, would be cast out of the Jewish fold. The healed man cast out had become one of His sheep. Therefore He teaches now more fully concerning Himself as the Shepherd and about His sheep. The Old Testament speaks often of Israel as the sheep of Jehovah, and of Jehovah as the Shepherd. (psalm 80:1; 95:7; 23:1; Ezekiel 34; Zechariah 11:7-9; 13:7.) The true Shepherd had come through the appointed door into the sheepfold, that is among Israel. He is the only One, and the porter (the Holy Spirit) opened to Him. He came and called His own sheep by name to lead them out. And the sheep hear His voice and follow Him. All is Jewish. He came the true Shepherd, into the sheepfold to lead them out to become His flock. It was a parable He spoke in these opening verses, but they did not understand it. What follows is a fuller revelation of Himself as the good Shepherd, and the sheep who belong to His flock. Judaism was a fold out of which the Shepherd leads His flock. He is the Door of the sheep. He is the means of getting into the flock, as a door is the means of getting into a house. Through Him all His sheep must enter by faith into the flock. There is no other door and no other way. He came into the fold by God's appointed way and He is God's appointed way. "I am the door, by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture." A most blessed promise. He is the door. Any man, it does not matter who it is, any man may enter in by Him and then having entered in by Him, that is believed on Him, He promises salvation, liberty and food. These three things are bestowed upon all who believe on Him. Salvation is in Him and it is a present and a perfect salvation; liberty, freed from the bondage of the law which condemned the sinner, a perfect liberty; pasture, food, which He supplies; He Himself is the food, a perfect food. It is all found outside of the fold, the fold of Judaism, and in Christ. He came that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly. The abundant life He speaks of here is the life which comes from His death and resurrection. The good Shepherd had to give His life for the sheep. How different from the hireling, who fleeth and careth not for the sheep. The hirelings were the faithless shepherds. (Ezekiel 34:1-6.) Again He said: "I lay down my life for the sheep."

"The expression, 'laying down the soul or life' for any one, does not occur anywhere else independently in the New Testament. It is never found in profane writers. It must be referred back to the Old Testament, and specially to Isaiah 53:10, where it is said of Messiah, 'He shall make, or place, His soul an offering for sin.'--Hengstenberg

In verse 16 our Lord speaks of other sheep, which are not of this fold. These are the Gentiles. He leads out first from the Jewish fold His sheep; then there are the other sheep whom He will bring and who will hear His voice. The result will be one flock and one Shepherd. The Authorized Version is incorrect in using the word "fold." Judaism was a fold, the church is not. The ecclesiastical folds in which Christendom is divided have been brought about by the Judaizing of the church. The fold no longer exists. There is one flock as there is one Shepherd; one body, as there is one Lord. All who have heard His voice, believed on Him, entered in by Him, are members of the one flock.

At the Feast of Dedication, commemorating the cleansing of the Temple and rededication by Judas Maccabaeus after the desecration by Antiochus, (See Daniel 8:9-14) the Lord continued His blessed teaching, ending it once more with a great revelation of Himself. He makes a most blessed addition to His previous instructions concerning Himself and His sheep. "I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." Here we have the comforting assurance of the absolute security of every sheep of Christ. Eternal life is a present and personal possession, not something which comes after death. It is therefore an abiding possession and cannot be lost. Then He Who is the Life and the Light, the Way and the Truth, assures us that His sheep shall never perish. Some say that He said "no one can pluck them out of His hand" but we can do it ourselves by living in sin, etc. This is fully answered by the correct rendering of His words, "they shall never perish." It means literally: "they shall in no wise ever perish." This is absolute; it covers everything.

Then His great revelation: "I and the Father are one." Again the Jews understood what He meant, for they wanted to stone Him. After His answer they wanted to take Him, but He escaped out of

their hands. His hour had not yet come.

CHAPTER 11

1. The Sickness of Lazarus Announced. 1-4.
2. The Delayed Departure and the Death of Lazarus. 5-16.
3. The Arrival at Bethany. 17-27.
4. Weeping with Them That Weep. 28-38.
5. The Resurrection of Lazarus. 39-46.
6. The Prophecy of Caiaphas. 47-52.
7. Seeking to Kill Him. 53-57.

The resurrection of Lazarus is the final great sign or miracle in this Gospel. It is the greatest Of all. Some critics have discredited it by saying that, if it had really taken place the Synoptics would have something to say about it. The Gospel of John is the Gospel in which this miracle properly belongs. As we have seen, the Gospel of John is the Gospel in which our Lord as Son of God is fully revealed. The resurrection of Lazarus proves Him the Son Of God, Who can raise the dead. The philosopher and skeptic Spinoza declared that if he could be persuaded of the historicity of this miracle he would embrace Christianity. The miracle is supported by the most incontrovertible evidence; it requires more credulity to deny it than to believe it.

A German Expositor (Dr. Tillman) put together the evidences of this great miracle in the following way:

"The whole story is of a nature calculated to exclude all suspicion of imposture, and to confirm the truth of the miracle. A well-known Person of Bethany, named Lazarus, falls sick in the absence of Jesus. His sisters send a message to Jesus, announcing it; but while He is yet absent Lazarus dies, is buried, and kept in the tomb for four days, during which Jesus is still absent. Martha, Mary, and all his friends are convinced of his death. Our Lord, while yet remaining in the place where He had been staying, tells His disciples in plain terms that He means to go to Bethany, to raise Lazarus from the dead, that the glory of God may be illustrated, and their faith confirmed. At our Lord's approach, Martha goes to meet Him, and announces her brother's death, laments the absence of Jesus before the event took place, and yet expresses a faint hope that by some means Jesus might yet render help. Our Lord declares that her brother shall be raised again, and assures her that He has the power of granting life to the dead. Mary approaches, accompanied by weeping friends from Jerusalem. Our Lord Himself is moved, and weeps, and goes to the sepulchre, attended by a crowd. The stone is removed. The stench of the corpse is perceived. Our Lord, after pouring forth audible prayer to His Father, calls forth Lazarus from the grave, in the hearing of all. The dead man obeys the call, comes forth to public view in the same dress that he was buried in, alive and well, and returns home without assistance. All persons present agree that Lazarus is raised to life, and that a great miracle has been worked, though not all believe the person who worked it to be the Messiah. Some go away and tell the rulers at Jerusalem what Jesus has done. Even these do not doubt the truth of the fact; on the contrary, they confess that our Lord by His works is becoming every day more famous, and that He would probably be soon received as Messiah by the whole nation. And therefore the rulers at once take counsel how they may put to death both Jesus and Lazarus. The people, in the meantime hearing of this prodigious transaction, flock in multitudes to Bethany, partly to see Jesus, and partly to view Lazarus. And the consequence is that by and by, when our Lord comes to Jerusalem, the population goes forth in crowds to meet Him and show Him honor, and chiefly because of His work at Bethany. Now, if all these circumstances do not establish the truth of the miracle, there is no truth in history."

To follow the historical account in all its details would take many pages. It reveals the glory, the sympathy and the power of our Lord as perhaps no other Scripture does.

The heart of the chapter is found in His words to Martha: "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." (Verse 25-26.) In the first place these words anticipate His death and resurrection. He Who laid down His life and took it again, is the resurrection, and the life. He can raise the dead, the spiritually and physically dead. But these words take us also forward to His coming again, when they will find their great fulfillment, and when the crowning proof is given that He is the resurrection and the life. The Saints, who believed on Him and died in Christ, will be raised first. This truth is expressed in His words: "He that believeth in Me, though he were dead yet shall he live." And all who live when He comes for His Saints, when His shout opens the graves, will be caught up in clouds, changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, passing into His presence without dying. Of this He speaks in His last statement: "He that liveth (when He comes) and believeth on Me shall never die." (1 Corinthians 15:51; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18.) Who is able to describe the scene as He goes to the cave where His friend Lazarus had been laid away four days previous! Mary sank weeping at His feet. When He saw her weeping, the Jews weeping, then He groaned in the spirit and was troubled. Jesus wept! Oh, precious words! Conscious of His Deity and of His power, He enters with deepest sympathy into the sorrows and afflictions of His people. Such He is still, our great High-priest, Who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. The cave was covered with a stone. When He commands that stone to be removed, Martha interrupted Him by saying, "By this time he stinketh, for he has been dead four days." It was unbelief. After He had lifted His eyes to heaven and had spoken to the Father, He uttered His majestic "Lazarus, come forth!" It was the word of omnipotence to manifest now fully that He is the Son of God, Who hath the power to raise the dead. Who can describe the solemn moment and what happened immediately! Perhaps there was a faint echo out of the cave, for He had cried His command with a loud voice. All eyes were looking towards the dark entrance of the cave, when lo, the dead man was seen struggling forward, bound by the grave clothes. Lazarus, who had been dead four days, whose body had already entered into decomposition, came forth a living man.

"A more plain, distinct, and unmistakable miracle it would be impossible for man to imagine. That a dead man should hear a voice, obey it, rise up, and move forth from his grave alive is utterly contrary to nature. God alone could cause such a thing. What first began life in him, how lungs and heart began to act again, suddenly and instantaneously, it would be waste of time to speculate. It was a miracle and there we must leave it"--C. Ryle.

"He came back, a challenge thrown in the face of Christ's would-be murderers, of the possibility of success against One to Whom death and grave are subject"--Numerical Bible.

A second word He spoke: "Loose him and let him go." Lazarus is the type of a sinner who hears His Word. We are dead in trespasses and sins. Spiritually man is in the grave, in death and in darkness. He is in corruption. The Lord of Life gives life. And besides this He gives with that life--liberty. He looses from the bondage of the law and of sin. In the next chapter we read of Lazarus again. He is in fellowship with the Lord Who raised him from the dead. Life, Liberty and Fellowship are the three blessed things which he receives who hears and believes. Compare this great chapter with the teachings of the fifth chapter. And Lazarus is also a fit type of Israel and her coming national resurrection.

Then many believed on Him, while the Pharisees and chief priests, acknowledging the fact that He did many miracles, plan His death. Remarkable is the prophecy of Caiaphas. He was used as an instrument to utter a great truth. Christ was indeed to die for that nation, and also that He should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.

CHAPTER 12

1. The Feast at Bethany. 1-8.
2. The Entrance into Jerusalem. 9-19.
3. The Inquiring Greeks and His Answer. 20-33.
4. His Final Words. 34-50.

From the close of the previous chapter we learn that the Lord had gone with His disciples to a city called Ephraim. Six days before the Passover He came to Bethany again. They made Him a feast. Lazarus is especially mentioned as well as Martha, who served; Mary also was present with others who were of His disciples. It is a beautiful type of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, when He will have His own with Him. Lazarus represents the Saints risen from the dead, the others represent the Saints who never died, but are changed in a moment. Service is represented in Martha. Fellowship they had together in the feast with the Lord, and worship in Mary, who anointed His feet. The Synoptics record the fact that she also anointed His head; she did both and there is no discrepancy. She was deeply attached to Him and knew of the threatening danger which hung over Him as Man. She did not know the full meaning of her beautiful act, but the Lord knew and said: "Against the day of my burying hath she kept this." And how He appreciated her love and devotion, though she had not the full intelligence of all it meant. It is devotion to Himself our Lord appreciates most in His people. Well has it been said, "She learned at His feet what she poured out there."

A large number of Jews came to Bethany to see Him, while others came out of curiosity to see Lazarus. Then the wicked chief priests held a consultation that they might put Lazarus also to death. We do not hear another word about Lazarus after this.

His triumphant entrance into Jerusalem followed. The account of it in John's Gospel is very brief. The people welcome Him with the Messianic welcome, "Hosanna! (Save now.) Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord." That shout will be heard again in Jerusalem and then it will not be followed by the awful cry, "Crucify Him!" When He comes in power and glory as Israel's King the believing remnant of His people will welcome Him by the same word. (See Matthew 23:39.) Zechariah's prophecy (Zechariah 9:9) is quoted in part, and that which was unfulfilled is omitted. But the disciples did not understand it, nor did they know that they were fulfilling prophecy. Only after "Jesus was glorified" (John 12:16) did they remember these things. The resurrection of Lazarus played an important part in His triumphant entrance into Jerusalem. Those who stood by and saw the miracle done, bore witness, and others met Him because they heard of the miracle. The testimony of His enemies was: "Behold the world is gone after Him."

Then Greeks (Gentiles) inquired after Him, "Sir, we would see Jesus." How great was His triumph! There was no answer to those Greeks. Before the Gentiles could come to Him, He would have to die. The hour then had come when He, the Son of Man, should be glorified. He meant the Cross and that which follows the suffering, His resurrection and ascension. By His death as Son of Man He acquired Glory and receives ultimately the Kingdoms of this world, the nations and the uttermost parts of the earth for His inheritance. He, therefore, speaks of Himself as the grain of wheat. If there is to be fruit from the one grain of wheat it must fall in to the ground and die. The grain of wheat has life in itself and when it is put into the ground that life is carried through death, to be reproduced in the many grains of wheat. The Life had to pass through death so that it might be communicated to others. The fruit springs from His death and resurrection. What a wonderful sacrifice He brought in giving His life! Believers possess the life of the grain of wheat, which passed through death and therefore are to follow Him and manifest it in a practical way. That is why He adds: "He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be; if any man serve Me, him will My Father honor." Giving up, self-denial, the path He went is our path. But how glorious the promised reward!

Then He looked forward to the Cross and His soul was troubled. "Father, save Me from this hour!"

This was His prayer, much like that in Gethsemane. But He also adds at once, "for this cause came I unto this hour." He had come to die. The next request, "Father, glorify Thy Name," is at once answered by the voice from heaven. The Father's Name had been glorified by the Son, in a special manner the Father's Name was glorified in the resurrection of Lazarus. The glorification in the future, "and will glorify it," took place "when Christ was raised up from the dead through the glory of the Father." (Romans 6:4.)

The chapter closes with the final words of our Lord to the people. Many of the chief-rulers believed on Him without making an open confession. The last words He speaks before He gathers His own around Himself are concerning the Father Who sent Him.

CHAPTER 13

1. The Washing of the Disciples' Feet. 1-11.
2. Instructions given; to Wash One Another's Feet. 12-17.
3. The Betrayal Foretold. 18-30.
4. His Own Departure and the New Commandment. 31-35.
5. The Denial of Peter Foretold. 36-38.

We reach with this chapter the most precious portion of this Gospel. The multitudes are left behind. Israel has completely rejected Him and now He gathered His own beloved disciples around Himself and gave them the sweet and blessed words of instruction, of comfort and cheer, His farewell. A little while and He would leave them to return to the Glory from which He came. "He is leaving upon earth the chosen companions of His path; those indeed that have hardly ever understood Him,-- whose lack of sympathy has been itself one of the bitterest trials, of those that made Him the 'Man of Sorrows' that He was. Yet they are his hard-won spoils from the hand of the enemy,--the firstfruits of the spiritual harvest coming in. They are His own, the gift of His Father, the work of His Spirit, the purchase of His blood, by and by to tell out, and, for the ages to come, divine love and power to all His intelligent creation. Nor, spite of their feebleness, can He forget how their hearts awakened by His call, have clung to Him in the scene of His rejection, how they have left their little all to follow Him. Now He is going to leave them in that world whose enmity they must for His sake incur, and in which they would fill up that which was behind of His afflictions for His body's sake, which is the Church (Colossians 1:24). In human tenderness His heart overflows towards them, while in divine fullness; and this is what we find before us now. It is peculiar to John, and furnishes them for the way, and arms them for the impending conflict."--F.W. Grant.

Our brief annotations are not sufficient to cover all the blessed teachings of these chapters. What a great assurance is given in the first verse of this chapter! He knew that His hour had come to depart out of this world. He knew because He is the Son of God. Then follows the assurance of His love for His own; even unto the end. His love knows no change. His tender, loving words addressed to His own in these chapters fully manifest that love which passeth knowledge.

The washing of the disciples' feet was a great symbolical action to teach His own the gracious provision made for them during His absence. Some well meaning Christians have applied the words of our Lord, "ye also ought to wash one another's feet," in a literal way, and teach that the Lord meant this to be done literally. The words of our Lord to Peter, "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter" (Verse 7), show that underneath the outward action of the Lord in washing the disciples' feet there is a deeper spiritual meaning. We see Him girded, with a basin of water in His blessed hands, to wash the disciples' feet. The water explains the spiritual meaning. We have seen that the water in the third chapter is the type of the Word of God. It has the same meaning in this chapter. Peter first refused to have his feet washed; then when the Lord had said unto him, "If I wash thee not thou hast no part with Me," he asked Him to wash his hands and his

head as well. "Jesus saith to him, He that hath been bathed * needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all." (Verse 10 contains two different words for washing; the one is "bathed" and the other "wash." This difference is not made in the Authorized Version.) When the Lord spoke of His disciples being bathed and clean every whit, He had reference to the new birth by the water and the Spirit. They were all bathed, born again, except Judas, whom the Lord meant when He said "but not all." Titus 3:5 reads, literally translated: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us by the bath of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit." This great work is done once for all and cannot be repeated, just as the natural birth cannot be repeated with the same individual.

The Lord washed the disciples' feet, not their hands. Hands are for work and the feet for walking. His action has a meaning in connection with our walk in the world. We contract defilement as we pass on through this world. And defilement severs communion with the Lord. We need therefore cleansing. All disciples need it. This He has graciously provided, and the washing of the disciples' feet typifies that needed cleansing. He uses His Word to bring this about. This is "the washing of water by the Word." He is the Advocate with the Father to restore us to fellowship. We must come to Him with our failures, our stumbling, imperfect walk, our defilement, and place ourselves into His hands as the disciples placed their soiled feet in His loving hands. His own perfect light will then search our innermost beings and bring to light what has defiled us, so that, after cleansing, we can enjoy His fellowship and have part with Him. This necessitates confession and self-judgment from our side. If this blessed truth is not realized and enjoyed in faith, if we do not come to Him for this service of love, we are at a distance from Him.

And we are also to walk in the same spirit of serving and wash one another's feet. As He lovingly deals with us, so we are to deal with one another. The one that is overtaken in a fault is to be restored by him that is spiritual in the spirit of meekness. "He that would cleanse another's feet must be at his feet to cleanse them." How little of all this in a practical way is known among God's people.

The betrayal by Judas is announced, and he goes into the night. The Lord announces also His imminent departure and gives them the new commandment "love one another." The chapter closes with the prediction of Peter's denial.

CHAPTER 14

1. Let not Your Heart be Troubled! 1-7.
2. I Am in the Father and the Father in Me. 8-14.
3. The Other Comforter Promised. 15-27.
4. I Go unto the Father. 28-31.

There is no break between these two chapters. The Lord continues His discourse to the eleven disciples. "Let not your heart be troubled!" What precious words of comfort! How many hearts have been soothed by them and how many tears they have dried! And after His loving words He said again: "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." (Verse 27.) He speaks first of all of the Father's house with its many abodes. The Father's house is no longer the temple, but the blessed home where the loving Father dwells and to which the Son of God was about to return in the form of man, after His death and resurrection. And the Father's house with its many abodes belongs to all who belong to Him; and all who are His, whom He is not ashamed to call brethren (John 20:17; Hebrews 2:11 and Psalm 22:22) belong to the Father's house. He has gone there to prepare a place. The ark of the covenant of the Lord went before Israel to search out a resting place for them (Numbers 11:33) and so He has gone before as our forerunner. What it all means "to prepare a place for you" we cannot fully know, but we know that His great work has removed every barrier for all who believe on Him, and in God's own time the full redemption of the purchased

possession by the power of God will be accomplished. (Ephesians 1:14.) Then His unfulfilled promise, "I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am ye may be also," will be fulfilled. He did not mean the death of His disciples. The death of the believer is not the coming of Himself to the child of God, but when the believer dies he goes to be with Christ. "I will come again" means His coming for those who belong to Him, His Saints. How He will redeem this gracious promise and lead His own into the blessed home, is not revealed here. But He gave it in the form of a special revelation to the Apostle of the Gentiles. (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.) Thomas speaks first. He misunderstood the words of the Lord and was troubled with unbelief. Yet Thomas loved the Lord and was greatly attached to Him, as we learn from Chapter 11:16. Blessed answer he received. "I am the way";--He is the only way to God and to the Father's house; "the Truth";-- the revelation of the Father; and "the Life" as well.

His answer to Philip's question shows that He was grieved. Yet how gentle the rebuke, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." It is another great witness of His oneness with the Father. "I am in the Father and the Father in me." And His own belonging to Him, know the Father in Christ and are His. (Solemn truth it is: "Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father." (1 John 2:23.) "And ye are Christ's and Christ is God's." (1 Corinthians 3:23.) Verse 12 has been a difficulty to many. What did our Lord mean when He said: "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father"? Christian Scientists and extreme faith-healers claim that He meant His actual works of healing and Christians should do now the same works and even greater works. But how could a believer do a greater work than the raising of Lazarus from the dead? The promise "the works that I do shall he do also" was fulfilled immediately after the day of Pentecost. The sick were healed by Peter's shadow, the lame man was healed, demons were driven out, and the dead were raised. Were these miracles to continue to the end of the dispensation? There is nowhere a statement in Scripture that this should be the case. "If miracles were continually in the church, they would cease to be miracles. We never see them in the Bible except at some great crisis in the church's history"--(Thoughts on the Gospel of John.) The "greater works" are spiritual works. The thousands saved in the beginning of the dispensation, the preaching of the Gospel far hence among the Gentiles and the gracious results, are these greater works.

The promise of Prayer in His name follows. This is something new. It is to be addressed to the Father and the Son, and He promises, "If ye shall ask anything in my name I will do it." So far He had spoken of Himself and the Father. God the Father had been revealed in the Son, and now He speaks of the other Person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit. He is promised to come, not to the world, but to His own as the other Comforter. (In Greek "Parakletos," one who is alongside to help. The same word as in 1 John 2:1 "Advocate.") He would come to abide in them, dwell with them and be in them. Verse 18, "I will come to you," does not mean His second coming as in Verse 3. It is Christ Himself in Spirit. The result of the coming and abiding of the Comforter is a blessed knowledge for the believer. "Ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." Love to Him in the power of the Spirit must be expressed in obedience. Then there is the blessed legacy: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." It is not peace with God, but the peace of Himself which He has left us. And that peace will ever be enjoyed if we believe and obey His words.

CHAPTER 15

1. The Vine and the Branch. 1-8.
2. Communion with Him and its Conditions. 9-16.
3. Love One Another! and the Hatred of the World. 17-27.

Israel is called a vine in the Old Testament (Psalm 80:8; Isaiah 5:1-8; Jeremiah 2:21; Hosea 10:1) and Christ here in this parable takes the place of Israel and is the true vine. His disciples are the

branches. Israel under the law covenant could not bear fruit for God, as the law cannot be the source of fruit-bearing. Fruit unto God can only spring from union with Christ. (See Romans 7:4.) He as the true vine on earth brought fruit unto God. The true believer is as closely united to Him as the branch is to the vine. The branch is in Him and He is in the branch. The life-sap of the vine circulates in the branch. And this life and nature in the believer produces the fruit. Our Lord said: "The Father who abideth in me, He doeth the works." And believers should confess: The Lord Jesus Christ Who abideth in me and I in Him, He produces the fruit. Apart from Him we can do nothing. This vital union with Christ, dependence on Him, the result--fruit unto God, is more fully revealed in the Epistles.

He told His disciples, "now ye are clean (literally: purged) through the word that I have spoken unto you." In Chapter 13 He said, "ye are clean, but not all." Judas was then present, but he had gone out to betray Him. But what does it mean: "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit He taketh away," and again, "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"? These words are often taken to teach that a believer's salvation and safety depends upon his fruit-bearing and his faithfulness. These two statements have been much perverted and misapplied as if they taught that a true branch in the vine, one who is really in Christ, may be cut off and be cast away to perish forever. If this were the meaning of these words our Lord would contradict His previous teachings. The branch in the vine which beareth not fruit is not a true believer at all, but one who by profession claims to be a branch in the vine. Note in verse 6 the change from "ye" to "a man." If our Lord had said "if ye abide not in me, ye shall be cast forth as a branch, etc.," it would mean a true believer. But the change makes it clear that no true disciple is meant, but one who makes a profession without being born again.

"These are awful words. They seem, however, to apply specially to backsliders and apostates, like Judas Iscariot. There must be about a man some appearance of professed faith in Christ, before he can come to the state described here. Doubtless there are those who seem to depart from grace, and to go back from union with Christ; but we need not doubt in such cases that the grace was not real, but seeming, and the union was not true, but fictitious. Once more we must remember that we are reading a parable.

After all, the final, miserable ruin and punishment of false professors, is the great lesson which the verse teaches. Abiding in Christ leads to fruitfulness in this life and everlasting happiness in the life to come. Departure from Christ leads to the everlasting fire of hell."--J.C. Ryle.

The secret of true fruit-bearing (the manifestation of the new nature in our life) is abiding in Christ and Christ in us. "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk as He walked." The vine reproduces itself in the branch. And abiding in Christ means to walk in communion with Him and in utter dependence on Himself.

Then He declared: "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you; continue ye in my love." Who is able to fathom the depths of these words! As the Father loved Him so He loveth us. Continue in my love means "abide in my love." "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in His love." A blessed and equally solemn contrast! When we walk in fellowship with Him, when we are obedient to Him, as He was obedient to His Father in His path down here, then we abide in His love. Obedience to His words proves our love to Him, and walking in obedience we abide in His love "and hereby we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments." (1 John 2:3.) Then He declares, "that my joy might remain in you" and "that your joy might be full." For the knowledge of His joy and the fullness of joy we need to walk in obedience.

Once more He mentions the new commandment (13:34) "love one another." The Holy Spirit in the first Epistle of John enlarges upon this. In the world there is no love, but hatred. It hates the true believers, as the world hated Him. The true disciple must expect the same treatment which He

receives in this world. "If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you." Israel is in view in Verse 24. They had seen and hated both Him and the Father.

Once more He announces the coming of the Paraclete, the Comforter. In Chapter 14 our Lord said, "I will pray the Father and He shall send you another Comforter." Here He promises to send Him from the Father. He is to testify of Himself, witnessing to Him as glorified in the presence of the Father. They were to be witnesses of Him.

CHAPTER 16

1. Persecutions Predicted. 1-6.
2. The Comforter and His Demonstration. 7-15.
3. Sorrow and joy. 16-22.
4. The Father Himself Loveth You. 23-27.
5. His Final Word before His Prayer. 28-33.

Again He announced coming persecutions. The world is the same today as then, and before this age ends these predictions of our Lord will be again fulfilled, during the great tribulation.

The coming of the Comforter is once more announced by Him. He could not come unless the Lord departed. He is to be sent to His own and when He comes He will make a great demonstration to the world. The word "reprove" in Verse 8 is incorrect; the Greek word is difficult to express in its full meaning. Some have translated it by "rebuke," others use the word "convince" or "convict." The word "demonstrate" seems to be the nearest to the original. "And when He is come He will bring demonstration to the world of sin, and of righteousness and of judgment." The presence of the Holy Spirit in believers is the proof to the world that the whole world is guilty of the death of Christ; the whole world is under sin and therefore not on probation but under condemnation. The Holy Spirit is also the demonstration to the world of righteousness. This does not mean that He brings righteousness to the world, or makes the world righteous, as so many erroneously believe. Our Lord adds: "Of righteousness, because I go to my Father and ye see me no more." The Holy One was rejected by the world, cast out as an unrighteous One. But He, Who owned and satisfied God's righteousness in dying as the substitute of sinners, is now exalted to the right hand of God; there He is the witness of righteousness. The presence of the Holy Spirit on earth demonstrates this fact. God raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory; the world sees Him no more as a Saviour personally on earth; but will see Him again as Judge, when He comes to judge the world in righteousness. Righteousness is fully displayed in the glory, where He is. The hope of righteousness is to be with Him there. (Galatians 5:5.) The Holy Spirit also brings demonstration to the world of judgment "because the prince of this world is judged." Sentence of judgment is pronounced against Satan, but not yet executed. He is the god of this age, but he was judged in His Cross. Judgment must come upon the world and its prince. The Holy Spirit now present upon the earth in the believers demonstrates this fact.

Many things He had to say unto His disciples, which they could not bear. The many things He mentioned were made known in due time by the Holy Spirit come down from heaven. Of this He speaks in the verses which follow. Note the seven things spoken of the Spirit of Truth: 1. He will guide you into all truth. 2. He shall not speak of Himself. 3. Whatsoever He shall hear that shall He speak. 4. He will show you things to come. 5. He shall glorify Me. 6. He shall receive of Mine. 7. He shall show it unto you. This is the work He does now among and in the Saints. In all His work His gracious aim is to glorify Christ. When we glorify Christ, exalt Him, obey Him, follow Him and are devoted to Him, the Holy Spirit fills and uses us.

Then He spoke of the little while; the little while when they would see Him not; the little while, when

they would see Him again. His final words before His great prayer are full of comfort and assurance. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, He will give it you."--"For the Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God." These are words precious to faith. Once more He speaks of His leaving the world to go back to the Father. But before that homegoing takes place they all were to be scattered and leave Him alone. He added: "Yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me." Our Lord was never forsaken by His Father; He was forsaken of God, the Holy God, when He stood in the sinner's place.

The last utterance to His own is the assurance of peace in Him, the tribulation in the world, and the shout of victory: "Be of good cheer: I have overcome the world." And then His prayer.

CHAPTER 17

1. The Finished Work. 1-5.
2. The Father's Name and the Father's Gift. 6-10.
3. Not of the World but Kept in it. 11-16.
4. Sanctification of Himself for His Own. 17-21.
5. The Glorification. 22-26.

His words were ended to the eleven disciples and next He spoke to the Father, and His disciples listened to all His blessed words. What moments these must have been! His words to the Father told them once more how he loved them, how He cared for them, what He had done and what He would do for them. Whenever we read this great Lord's prayer we can still hear Him pray for His beloved people. What a glimpse it gives of His loving heart! The prayer is His high-priestly prayer. He is in anticipation on the other side of the cross. He knows the work is finished, atonement is made; He is back with the Father and has received the glory. This anticipation is seen in His words, "I have finished the work thou gavest me to do"; "and now I am no more in the world";--"the glory thou hast given me I have given to them." It is impossible to give an exposition of this great chapter. Blessed depths are here which we shall fathom when we are with Him. All He taught concerning Himself and eternal life, what believers are and have in Him, He mentions in His prayer. All the great redemption truths more fully revealed in the New Testament Epistles may be traced in this high-priestly prayer of our Lord. We mention seven of these great truths as made known by Him in addressing the Father.

1. Salvation. He has power to give eternal life to as many as the Father has given Him. "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work thou gavest me to do." He glorified the Father in His life and He finished the work He came to do on the Cross. There alone is redemption and salvation.
2. Manifestation. "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world." (Verse 6.) The Name of God, He, the Son, has made known to those who believe on Him is His Name as "Father." Such a name and relationship of the believer to God was not known in the Old Testament. The Son of God had to come from heaven's glory and declared the Father. After He gave His life and rose from the dead He spoke of "My Father and your Father." The Spirit of Sonship was given by Whom we cry: "Abba-Father."
3. Representation. He is our Priest and Advocate. He appears in the presence of God for us. "I pray for them; I pray not for the world but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine." (Verse 9.) Like the High Priest He carries only the names of His people upon His shoulders and upon His heart. He prays now for His church, His body, for every member. When the church is complete and the body is united to Himself in glory, He will pray for the world. "Ask of Me," the Father has told

Him, "and I will give thee the nations for thine inheritance." (Psalm 2:6.) When He asks this, He will receive the Kingdoms of this world. What comfort it should be to all His people to know He prays for us individually! His love and His power are for us.

4. Identification. We are one with Him, and all His Saints are one. The church is His body, an organism and not an organization. He did not pray for a unity in organization, but for a spiritual unity, which exists. "That they also may be one in us" is not an unanswered petition. The Spirit Who has come unites believers to Him and baptizes them into one body. "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me"--this looks on towards the blessed consummation, when the Saints will appear with Christ in glory; then the world will know.

5. Preservation. He prayed for the keeping of His own. He commits them into His Father's hands. The believers' keeping for eternal life and glory rests not in their own hands but in His hands. Judas is mentioned as the son of perdition; he was never born again.

6. Sanctification. (See Verses 17-19.) He is our Sanctification. In Him we are sanctified. We are sanctified by the Truth, by walking in obedience. Believers are constituted Saints in Christ and are called to walk in separation. The separating power is the Word and the Spirit.

7. Glorification. "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one as we are one" --"Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me, for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." This is His unanswered prayer. Some day it will be answered and all His Saints will be with Him and share His glory.

And oh! the wealth of Grace and Truth in His wonderful words we must pass by! May His own Spirit lead us deeper and fill our hearts with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

III. "I Lay Down My Life, That I Might Take it Again." Chapters 18-21 CHAPTER 18

1. The Arrest in the Garden. 1-11.
2. Before Annas and Caiaphas; Peter's Denial. 12-27.
3. Before Pilate. 28-38.
4. Not this Man, But Barabbas. 39-40.

The hour of His suffering had now come. With His disciples He went across the brook Cedron into the garden. It is the Kidron mentioned frequently in Old Testament history. When David fled from his own son Absalom, he passed weeping over this brook. (2 Samuel 15:23.) See also 2 Chronicles 15:16 and 2 Kings 23:12. It is claimed that the way by which our Lord left the city was the way by which the scapegoat was yearly, on the great day of atonement, sent into the wilderness. The garden, though not named here, is Gethsemane. Judas knew the place, and the Lord knowing that Judas would betray Him, went deliberately there to be delivered into the hands of man. Nothing is said at all by John about the agony, the deep soul-exercise, through which our Lord passed in that night; nor is there a word about His sweat, as it were great drops of blood. All these things are recorded in the Synoptic Gospels, in which His perfect humanity is described, they are passed over in the Gospel of His Deity. But John describes a scene which the other Gospels omit. He manifests His power. When the band of men said that they sought Jesus of Nazareth, He said unto them, "I am He." Then the whole company went backward and fell to the ground. What a scene that must

have been! Several hundred men with their lanterns, torches and weapons all prostrate on the ground before the One Man. They stood in the presence of Jehovah and His power and majesty was present so that the one word was sufficient to prostrate them all. It was a striking evidence that neither the treachery of Judas, nor the wicked hatred of the Jews, nor the power of Rome, could touch our Lord. But the hour had now arrived when He was ready to give Himself up. Augustine made the following comment: "What shall He do when He comes to judge, Who did this when He was about to be judged? What shall be His might when He comes to reign, Who had this might when He was about to die?" Then after His second answer He said, "If therefore ye seek me, let these go their way." Willingly He allows Himself bound, on the condition that His own must be free. It is a blessed illustration of the Gospel. The Good Shepherd gives His life for the sheep. Substitution is fully revealed in this gracious statement. He gives Himself up that His people might be free.

Then Simon Peter drew the sword and cut off the right ear of Malchus. Peter had slept; had he been watching and praying it would not have occurred. And how beautiful the words of the Lord: "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" Perfect willingness and readiness to drink the bitter cup were thus expressed in the presence of His disciples and His enemies.

Then follows the account of Peter's denial, the questioning before Annas, which is only reported by John, and finally He was taken into the judgment hall before Pilate. The miserable character of the Roman Governor is brought fully to light in this Gospel. He was destitute of all moral courage; he acted against better knowledge; he knew the Lord was innocent, yet he dared not to acquit Him for fear of displeasing the Jews. Verse 32 refers to the Lord's death by crucifixion, from the hands of the Gentiles. Note the four questions of Pilate. "Art Thou the King of the Jews?"--"What hast Thou done?"--"Art Thou a King then?"--"What is truth?" The Roman historian Suetonius states that many rumors were then prevalent that a King was about to rise among the Jews who would have dominion over the whole world. No doubt Pilate knew of these rumors and therefore asked the Lord about His Kingship. The answer of our Lord, "My Kingdom is not of this world," has often been misconstrued to mean that the Lord never will have a Kingdom in this world in the sense of a literal Kingdom. Our post-millennial friends use it against a literal interpretation of the prophecies relating to the coming of an earthly Kingdom of Christ. What our Lord meant by saying "My Kingdom is not of this world" is, that His Kingdom has not its origin or nature from the world. He will receive the Kingdom promised unto Him from the Father's hands. (Daniel 7:14.)

CHAPTER 19

1. Behold the Man! 1-7. 2. The Last Question of Pilate and Christ's Last Word. 8-11.
3. Delivered up and Crucified. 12-18.
4. The Title upon the Cross. 19-22.
5. The Parted Garments. 23-24.
6. Behold Thy Son! Behold Thy Mother! 25-27.
7. It is Finished! 28-30.
8. His Legs not Broken. 31-33.
9. The Testimony of the Scriptures. 34-37.
10. The Burial in the Garden. 38-42.

The cruel scourging, such as cruel Rome had invented, then took place. It often was so severe that prisoners died under the awful blows. What pen can ever describe the suffering and the shame He endured! Perhaps Pilate thought this awful scourging would satisfy the Jews, so that the Lord would

be released. Then the mockery followed. The crown of thorns, the emblem of the curse of sin, was put upon His holy brow. The sin-bearer wore that crown for us, that we might wear a crown of glory. When He comes again He comes with many crowns. (Revelation 19:12.) They put the robe of purple, the imperial color, upon Him; ridiculed and smote Him. Then Pilate led Him forth and said: "Behold the Man." Was it pity or contempt? Most likely both. But oh! the sight! To see Him, Who is the Life and the Light, the Holy One, the Creator, treated thus by the creature of the dust! Satan's power energized the chief priests and officers, and the answer they give as they behold "the Man of Sorrows" is "Crucify Him!" "He made Himself the Son of God" was their wicked accusation. He is the Son of God and because He had come in marvelous love to this poor lost world, He was condemned to die.

The last word the Lord Jesus spoke to Pilate is found in verse 11. The authority given from above is from God, Who spared not His own Son; but the Jews, who delivered Him up to Pilate, have the greater sin. Once more we hear Pilate's voice, "Behold your King!" They answer: "Away with Him! Crucify Him!" And then again: "Shall I crucify your King?" The answer of complete apostasy follows: "We have no King but Caesar." Pilate is lost; he delivered Him to be crucified. We see the Lord bearing His cross to the place of the skull, Golgotha. Who can describe His agony and His sufferings as He was lifted up! Two others were crucified with Him. "He was numbered with transgressors." (Isaiah 53:12.)

Above His cross was the title written by Pilate himself. It was written in Hebrew, Latin and Greek. There is no discrepancy between the different Gospels, because they give the inscriptions in different words. Pilate worded them differently in the three languages. Matthew and John report the Hebrew title; Mark gives the Latin and Luke the Greek inscription. (Matthew was guided to leave out "of Nazareth." This is in full accord with the purpose of his Gospel.)

The coat (robe) without seam, woven from the top throughout, is only mentioned by John. The German expositor Bengel calls attention to the fact that our Lord never "rent" His garments in sorrow like Job, Jacob, Joshua, Caleb, Jephthah, Hezekiah, Mordecai, Ezra, Paul and Barnabas. The seamless robe is typical of His perfect righteousness, which now was stripped from Him by man's hand and thus He received the place as the evildoer. Then the prophecy of Psalm 22:18 was literally fulfilled. Could there be anything else but a literal fulfillment of Prophecy?

"The importance of interpreting prophecy literally, and not figuratively, is strongly shown in this verse. The system of interpretation which unhappily prevails among many Christians--I mean the system of spiritualizing away all the plain statements of the prophets, and accommodating them to the Church of Christ-- can never be reconciled with such a verse as this. The plain, literal meaning of words should evidently be the meaning placed on all the statements of Old Testament prophecy. This remark of course does not apply to symbolical prophecies, such as those of the seals, trumpets, and vials in Revelation."

And then the loving tenderness He manifested towards His mother. (Here, with one exception in the first chapter of Acts, we part with Mary; she is not mentioned in the after-books. In all the doctrine of the epistles she has no place. Blessed among women as she is surely by her connection with the human nature of our Lord, the entire silence of Scripture as to her in that fullness of Christian truth which it was the office of the Spirit of truth to communicate is the decisive overthrow of the whole Babel-structure of Mariolatry which Romanism has built up upon a mere sand-foundation. She remains for us in the word of God, a simple woman rejoicing in God her Saviour,--a stone in the temple to His praise, and with no temple of her own. To use the grace of the Redeemer in taking flesh among us by her means to exalt the mother to the dishonor of Christ her Lord is truly a refined wickedness worthy of the arch-deceiver of mankind.--Numerical Bible.)

John has nothing to say of the darkness which enshrouded the Cross. Nor do we find here the cry of the forsaken One: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!" The Father did not forsake the Son; this was His statement in Chapter 16:32. "After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now

accomplished, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst." It is not so much the awful thirst connected with crucifixion which is viewed here, as it is His perfect obedience to do the Father's will and that the Scriptures might be fulfilled. "He bowed His head and gave up the spirit." In Luke's Gospel we read that He said: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (23:46); John says nothing of Him commending His spirit, for as the Son of God He did not need to commend Himself to the Father. The final word preceding the giving up of His spirit is the majestic "It is finished." In the Greek it is but one word, "tetelestai." Never before and never after was ever spoken one word which contains and means so much. It is the shout of the mighty Victor. And who can measure the depths of this one word!

Psalm 34:20 was fulfilled; "A bone of Him shall not be broken." Scripture had to be fulfilled. The spear, which pierced His blessed side, fully evidences that He had died. The blood and water have a most precious meaning. That it was a Supernatural thing we do not doubt. The blood stands for the atonement, which had been made; the water for cleansing. The Jews have a strange tradition that from the rock which was smitten by Moses in the wilderness there flowed, when first smitten, blood and water. (Shemoth Rabba.) John alone mentions this blessed fact. "It is a beautiful testimony of divine grace, answering the last insult man could heap upon Him. They drove Him outside the camp, put Him to death on the Cross, and then, to make His death doubly sure, the soldier pierced His side. Salvation was God's answer to man's insult, for the blood and water were the signs of it." John speaks of this never to be forgotten occurrence, in his first Epistle (5:6). There he mentions water first. It denotes purifying which man needs, and that has come with all its attending blessings by His precious blood. But notice John writes: "And again another scripture saith, They shall look on Him whom they pierced." He does not say, another Scripture was fulfilled. Zechariah 12:10 was not fulfilled when He died, but will be fulfilled when He comes again and the believing remnant of Israel mourns for Him.

Nicodemus is mentioned for the third and last time in the Gospel. He came to Jesus by night and heard the Gospel message from His lips. Later he ventured a weak and timid defense (7:48-53); here he comes out boldly honoring the body of Jesus. Surely he believed and therefore confessed the Lord.

CHAPTER 20

1. The Empty Sepulchre. 1-10.
2. The Risen One and Mary of Magdala. 11-18.
3. The Gathered Company and He in the midst. 19-23.
4. The Second Time. 24-29.
5. The Purpose of John's Record. 30-31.

"I lay down my life that I might take it up again." The sufferings were accomplished. The Good Shepherd laid down His life for the sheep and now we learn how He arose from the dead. Chapter 2:19 was fulfilled. "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up." The stone is rolled away; the sepulchre is empty. Mary of Magdala carried the good news to Peter and John. Peter and John ran together to the sepulchre, and John outran Peter. In the sepulchre all is in order. If a thief had stolen the body he would have acted in fear and haste. A thief would not have gone about in such an orderly way. The linen clothes were lying in the proper place; the napkin (soudarion--sweatcloth) was folded inwards (this is the meaning of "entetuligmenon") in a place by itself. He had detached Himself in a miraculous way without disturbing them at all. It is an evidence of His resurrection in His own power as Son of God.

And how beautiful is the incident when Mary stood weeping and looking into the sepulchre! She beheld two angels there, yet she was not frightened when she beheld these mysterious Beings. Her

heart was so occupied with her Lord that she did not even inquire of the angels. But they addressed her: "Woman, why weepest thou?" Then He came Himself. Her tears of ignorance and unbelief held her eyes that she did not recognize Him till He, Who in resurrection is the great Shepherd of the sheep, called her by name. What sound that one word "Mary" must have had in her ears and heart! She would fall at His feet and hold Him, as the other women held Him by the feet and worshipped Him. (Matthew 28:9.) But He told 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." Matthew reports how they touched Him and held Him by the feet. He is presented in that Gospel as Israel's King. Not a word is said in the first Gospel of His ascension. He is presented in Matthew as if He were to remain on earth, in an earthly relationship with His people. This is why He permitted the holding of His feet. It is symbolical of how the remnant of Israel will enjoy His presence on earth as King in the day of His Return. But John's Gospel reveals a new relationship. He is to ascend into heaven to His Father. She must not hold Him as to keep Him here. (The word "touch" really means: to fasten oneself to, to hang on, to lay hold of.) As true believers we are linked with the glorified Lord. This higher relationship He makes known and she becomes the bearer of the great message. The relationship centers in the word "brethren." Risen from the dead He calls His own "brethren" and speaks of "My Father and your Father, my God and your God." He is not ashamed to call us brethren, because He that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one. (Psalm 22:21-22; Hebrews 2:11-12.) Thus He, the Son of God, Who laid down His life and took it again, has brought us to God, His God and His Father. The Grain of Wheat has brought forth its blessed and gracious fruit in resurrection.

The evening scene of that wonderful day, when He stood in their midst, is very suggestive. In a measure the assembled disciples correspond to the two who, in the first chapter, on the first day abode with Him. Though John does not mention the church, here is a beautiful picture of what the church is. They are shut in and Judaism is shut out. He is in the midst. "Where two or three are gathered together unto my name, there am I in the midst." Here it is fulfilled for the first time. There is the message of Peace; the sending forth; the Holy Spirit, Who comes from Him, Who as the last Adam is the quickening Spirit. He communicates spiritual life, which is divine life. And the authority of the church in discipline on earth, representing Himself, is made known by Him in verse 23. This authority is not conferred upon a priestly class, a doctrine which has produced the most obnoxious corruption of Christianity, but upon believers, who constitute a church.

Thomas corresponds to Nathanael at the close of the first chapter. Both are unbelieving. Both see first and then believe. Both acknowledge Him as God. Thomas, like Nathanael, is the type of the unbelieving Jewish remnant. The Lord comes the second time and then the remnant of His earthly people will fall at His feet and say, "My Lord and my God."

CHAPTER 21

1. At the Sea of Tiberias. The Third Manifestation. 1-14.
2. Peter's Restoration and Ministry; the manner of His Death Predicted. 15-19.
3. Tarry Till I Come. 20-23.
4. Conclusion. 24-25.

This chapter has often been looked upon as an appendix to the Gospel of John. It is not. Quite true, John states in the last two verses of the preceding chapter the purpose of this Gospel, but that does not mean that the twenty-first chapter has no connection with the Gospel itself. Verse 14 shows that it belongs to the Gospel proper.

The third time that He showed Himself after His resurrection --The first time on the first day of the week (Chapter 20:19); this is typical of the present age, when He is in the midst of His people. The second time, when Thomas was present; typical of His second coming and manifestation to Israel.

The third time on the Lake of Tiberias; typical of the future blessings through Israel, and corresponding to the third day in Chapter ii, when there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee. The miraculous draught of fishes took place by His power, but the net did not go to pieces. It was different before His death and resurrection; then the net broke. The scene on the Lake of Tiberias foreshadows the ingathering of the nations into His Kingdom when He returns. The number of the fish caught is given, one hundred and fifty-three. The number of the nations of the world known at that time was exactly 153. How significant this is! Thus all the nations of the world will be gathered into His Kingdom.

But there are blessed spiritual lessons here. He is seen as Lord over His own. He can direct our service as He directed the disciples in casting the net at the right side of the ship. He provides for the need of His servants, as He did then in preparing a breakfast for them. (Verse 9.) He restores His servants who fail, as He so graciously restored Peter, and gives a higher and a better service. He also appoints the time and the manner of the servant's departure out of this life; He told Peter when and how he was to die. He said of John, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" The Lord did not say that he should not die. John lived the longest of the disciples, and on the Isle of Patmos he beheld the events of the future and heard the voice, "Come up hither" and immediately he was in the Spirit and beheld heavenly things. The words of our Lord find likewise an application in connection with John's writings.

"It is simple enough to say that John lives on in his writings. But then it might be urged, that is only what all the inspired writers will; still it cannot but come to mind that, in fact, John's writings not only predict circumstantially the Lord's return, but stretch over all the intervening time till then. While he does not take us up into heaven, as Paul does, and show us our place in the glorified Man up there, yet all the more he seems to abide with the people of God on earth until Christ's return, as a human presence watching and caring for them. John may be thus truly said to be waiting with those on earth for his absent Lord in a way in which we could not speak of any other inspired writer." (F.W. Grant.)

The last word John reports in His Gospel, coming from the lips of our Lord, is "Follow thou me." And thus He speaks to all of His people. Wonderful Gospel it is, this Gospel of the Son of God and the Eternal Life! How full and rich each portion of it! And oh! the Grace which has sought us, saved us, made us one with Him, keeps us and which will soon bring us home to the Father's house with its many mansions. May we follow Him in loving obedience, till He comes.