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THE

# LAST SUPPER OF OUR LORD

AND

HIS WORDS OF CONSOLATION  
TO THE DISCIPLES

BY

J. MARSHALL ✓ LANG, D.D.

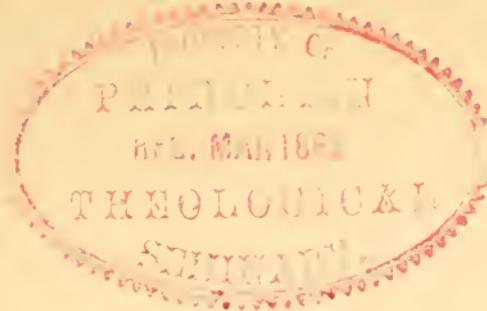
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## I.

### THE FAREWELL TO THE WORLD.

ST JOHN xii. 31-50.

“BEFORE the feast of the Passover,” the short but wonderful life has been lived. Only three years of teaching and labour! But if we “count time by heart-throbs,” if we measure existence by the thought, the feeling, the action, compressed within it, what ages on ages do these three years represent! The Evangelist, with a simplicity which appeals to the heart, closes his Gospel with the sentence, “There are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books John xxi. 25. that should be written.”

It is to a very brief portion of this life—one night, only a part of that one night—that, in the following pages, our attention will be drawn. The night in which the fulness of the Saviour’s love is poured forth and His deepest longing is told! The part of that night which was spent in the upper room at Jerusalem, and on the way thence towards the brook Kedron! We join the disciples at the Supper Table where the earthly-

human fellowship of the Son of God with those who hear His voice is consummated, where also the cloud begins to receive Him out of their sight. Truly "the place whereon we stand is holy;" let us seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit of Truth, of whom it is said, "He shall glorify me: for He shall receive of mine, and

*John xvi. 14.* shall shew it unto you."

"Before the feast of the Passover" the last words of Jesus to the world were spoken. These words are set before us between the 35th and the 50th verses of the twelfth chapter of St John's Gospel; St John interjecting an explanation, for which he claims divine authority, of the unbelief of the people. Solemn and weighty is the Farewell-testimony of the Incarnate Truth! The verses which contain the testimony are regarded by many commentators, not as marking a discourse uttered at one time, but "as a summary of the Lord's teaching gathered up in view of the approaching crisis."

I can scarcely reconcile the language of the 44th verse with this view. "Jesus cried and said" is suggestive to me, not of an epitome of many sayings scattered over a period, but of a distinct and definite speech. And I am disposed, therefore, to look on the passage thus introduced as the concluding part of the address broken off towards the end of the 36th verse, to be reckoned

Westcott,  
"Speaker's  
Commentary," p. 187

among those things of which it is affirmed that when Jesus had spoken them, "He departed and did hide Himself."

ver. 36.

Taken in this connection, the Valedictory Discourse, with the interjected explanation of St John, invites the exercise of prayerful reflection before we proceed to the more private self-revelation of Christ. Thus—in the consideration of warnings and exhortations which bid us examine ourselves to know whether it is "our earnest desire to withstand all unbelief," and to keep His commandment which is life everlasting—shall we be prepared in some measure for nearer communion with our Lord in the transactions and conversations of His Holy Supper.

The subject set before us is that Faith in Himself, which is Christ's first and last demand. Three points are suggested ; two by the parenthesis of the Apostle, and the third by the words of Christ, viz. :—

*The Temperament which renders faith impossible.*

*The Inaction which involves the loss of faith.*

*The Action by which faith is preserved and perfected.*

"Therefore they could not believe." The sentence is a very strong one. It is a conclusion arrived at from the study of a scripture of Isaiah, "He hath blinded their eyes, and

ver. 39.

hardened their heart: that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them."

Ver. 40.

Cf. Isa. vi. 9,  
10.

Let us apprehend the point of the Evangelist's sentence and the Prophet's Scripture.

It is not, we may be assured, an arbitrary act of Divine sovereignty which is referred to in the clauses of the Old Testament saying. What that saying contemplates is a moral condition to which blindness and insensibility belong as necessarily as darkness belongs to night. The Hebrews never conceived of—they knew nothing of—a mere mechanical law. They regarded all law, all sequence, as a mode of God's power. And as, overlooking intermediate and subordinate causes, they spoke of Him as *making* day and night, as related directly and personally to all that is, so they spoke of Him as also *causing* spiritual day and night. In the stolidity which is inevitable when the soul refuses the report of the messengers of God, and closes itself against the evidence of light, they beheld law; and, beholding law, they discerned God. In the working of the law they did not hesitate to trace the action of God, to declare, "It is He who has blinded the eyes and hardened the heart." In point of fact, the blindness is because the necessary conditions of spiritual sight have been traversed. St John dwells much on *cans* and *cannot*s. "The Son

*can* do nothing of Himself, but what he seeth the ‘Father’ do.” “I *can* of mine own self do v. 19. nothing.” That is, “it is the necessity of the v. 30. Divine Sonship to do all in perfect sympathy with and correspondence to the Father.” And, again, as to Discipleship : “No man *can* come vi. 44 to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.” “Except a man be born again, he iii. 3. *cannot* see the Kingdom of God.” In these and in other places the *can* and *cannot* have a moral significance. They refer to impossibilities which have their root in the presence or absence of certain inward states or dispositions. And similarly, the *could not* of the passage before us implies the want of the disposition to believe, the operation of a spirit of mind which is wholly incompatible with a loyal and earnest trust in Jesus Christ.

For example, the people, we are told, meet the Lord with the objection, “We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man?” Two difficulties have xii. 34. been raised in their minds by the saying, “I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.” The one; the law speaks of a king xii. 32. whose “dominion is an everlasting dominion.” Yet Jesus speaks of being “lifted up from the earth.” The other; Jesus assumes the title Son of Man, yet they knew the Messiah as the Son

of David. Was then the Son of Man other than the Messiah? If not other, if the same, why use the *non-national* term? Now, Christ does not deny the reality of these difficulties. He does not find fault with them for having, and for expressing, such difficulties. That is not His way. He is no brow-beater of honest doubt. But what He urges is, "Do not thrust the difficulties between you and the testimony which God has given to this Son of Man. If you cannot see who He is, if you cannot discern the inner glory of His being, at least recognize the force of Divine life that is in Him. You have not forgotten Lazarus called by Him out of the grave and raised from the dead. You know how many signs of this life have been set before you. Yield your minds to this evidence. Leave the perplexities for solution in the future. Take the blessing of the light that is now with you." They would not do so. They determined that they must have an answer to their *hows*. Intellectual cavillings were allowed to intercept spiritual light, to prevent spiritual vision. And such being their temperament, they could not believe.

Is it too much to say that, for the same reason, there are many amongst the people of the nineteenth century who cannot believe? I do not allude to the occasions of unbelief which are part of the deeper spiritual history of a

man ; I allude to a type of mind which is often praised as the sign of intellectual smartness—disputatious, so occupied with little points that the effect of the conjunct testimony is lost, so constantly posing as a debater or a critic, that the light cannot get fully into the heart which, by its own shining, would illumine what seems to be doubtful. Surely, there is much in the surrounding atmospheres, social and literary, which makes it not out of place to entreat the reader to “mark, learn, and inwardly digest” the words of the Lord and of His Apostle as to *the temperament which makes faith impossible.*

Farther, the passage under review is suggestive of *a spiritual inaction which involves the loss of faith.* For, let us note what is said as to the chief rulers. “Many believed on Him ; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the Synagogue. For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.” Compare this statement with that contained in a previous chapter of this Gospel. At the Feast of Tabernacles, the Priests and Pharisees sent officers to apprehend Jesus. The officers failed to do so, excusing themselves by saying, “Never man spake like that man.” “Have any of the Rulers or of the Pharisees believed in Him?” was the immediate retort. One alone, Nicodemus,

vers. 42, 43.  
viii. 45-52.

ventured to protest against the summary procedure of his colleagues, and by so doing aroused their suspicion. Now, we have the assurance that, even in the Sanhedrin, there was a considerable party in favour of the Prophet of Nazareth, although prudential considerations prevented them from confessing Him. No doubt, it was cowardly conduct : but, my reader, can we, whose religious profession is so often negative and colourless, who are so easily ensnared by the fear and governed by the love of the praise of men, afford to cast the stone at the temporising and timid counsellors ?

What was the consequence of their timidity ? A few days after the hiding of Jesus they were implicated in the plottings and schemings which issued in the crucifixion of Him in whom they believed. St John speaks of *many* believers ; we read of only *two* who separated themselves from the procedure of their colleagues at and after the death of Jesus. And of these two, one—Nicodemus—is mentioned in the fourth gospel alone, as having associated himself with the other—Joseph of Arimathæa—in pious care for the Body. Apparently, Joseph was the only dissentient from “the counsel and deed” of the Rulers. The many who, like him, felt the power of Christ, were false to their faith. The synagogue, with the praise of men, proved more

than the solitary sufferer, with the praise of God.

It is dangerous to play with convictions, dangerous even to delay the expression of them in appropriate action. All persons, indeed, are not alike. There are peculiarities of disposition which must be respected. Some are reserved in any indication of feeling, reticent in speech, afraid, sometimes morbidly so, of any exaggeration, and thus it happens that they rather conceal than reveal their true selves. A stranger is apt to mis-judge them. But it is well to remind such persons that they run the risk of both weakening their own faith and love, and hiding, as the Psalmist puts it, the righteousness of God. Their witness Ps. xl. 10. for the Lord may be muffled, their service may be hindered. What Christ Himself insists upon is, that he who is but a faint-hearted believer, who is not truly with Him, is, for practical purposes, really against Him. Alas! do we Luke vi. 23. not all need to be warned of the two great enemies, *cowardice* and *indolence*?—the cowardice which shrinks from “the offence of the cross;” the indolence which is the parent of faithlessness. In the parable no turpitude is charged against the servant who hid the talent. The indictment is: “Thou wicked and *slothful*.” Matt. xxv. 26. From him the talent is taken. “The word of faith which we preach is, that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe

in thine heart that God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and *with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*"

*Rom. x. 8-10.*

What then is *the action in which faith is preserved and perfected?* For the answer, we shall listen to Jesus only. The substance of His instruction is contained in the two sentences, "Believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light." "Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you." In other words, no question is to be allowed to divert the mind from that which is its present and immediate duty—viz., the free, unreserved, acceptance of the light that is shining on the soul. "Whosoever doth make manifest is light:" where God is manifested in the righteousness which is so narrow, and the charity which is so broad: where human nature is manifested in what is worst and in what is best—the depths disclosed and the heights revealed; where there is "truth followed in love:" there is light. Christ, the Incarnate Truth and Love, could say, "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on Me should not abide in darkness." Darkness is the condition to which, in His coming, He looks: and the way of His deliverance from the darkness acknowledged by the mind is, a fearless confidence in light, and a

*Ver. 36*

*Ver. 35.*

*Eph. v. 13.*

*Eph. iv. 15.*

*Ver. 46.*

whole-hearted welcome to all in Himself which interprets need, fulfils desire, awakens, inspires, gives light.

*Believe and walk.* The error of the people with whose objections Christ is dealing is that they stand still, putting their scruples between them and Him. His command is, *walk*. Use what light you have: set yourselves in the path which faith in the light shall indicate. For this is the duty of men in all times. If I were asked, what is the first thing in practical wisdom in respect of doubts and difficulties, I should say, walk: and what is the second thing, I should say, walk: and what is the third thing, I should still say, walk—in, up to, the light already yours. Is it scanty? At least to the full measure of its scantiness let it lead you. Do not quit even that small measure in the expectation of finding a light in some other region. Trust God for this that it cannot be His will to leave any soul in darkness, that he who asks and waits, *all the while walking*, will undoubtedly receive. Yes: truth-finding is far more dependent on a right state of will than on any intellectual acuteness or grasp. The most intellectually acute often miss the truth, sometimes lose what once they had, because the will has got some twist, or, somewhere in the character there is the “little rift within the lute, which by-and-bye shall make the music mute.”

Whatever may be doubtful, it cannot be doubtful to a healthy mind that God's commandments are to be kept, that in things great and small the duty is to follow "the blessed steps of Jesus' most holy life." Only let us be sure that *we walk*, that if we cannot say, we are going from strength to strength, we can at least say that, although faint, we are pursuing. "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord: His going forth is prepared as the morning; and He shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth."

Hosea vi. 3.

"*Believe that you may be the children of light.*" The sentence strikes on the ear. It seems to emphasize that not to believe or to cease to believe is to pass into darkness. And is it not so? On all sides we are encompassed by things hard to be understood: mystery everywhere: problems bearing on life and destiny which defy the attempt to solve them. But the Revelation of Jesus Christ is the crystalline whose radiance is shed across the whole sphere of thought. The labyrinth may be intricate; but, learning of Him, we have at least a clue through it; we may go farther and say with Pascal, "There is light enough for those who wish to see, although there is darkness enough to confound those of an opposite disposition." But not to wish to see! Or to see

and not perceive! To have the organ of sight obscured by some moral fungus which must ultimately destroy the power of vision, the spirit of faith! How sad! On the other hand, how great the blessing prepared for the heart “believing, true, and clean!” What a phrase, the child of light! God is light; they that are born of God are the children of light.

“*While ye have light*” is the cry of Jesus. It is the last opportunity. He is about to depart. And the farewell is solemn, pathetic, gentle. “If any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.” Still the arms are out-<sup>Ver. 47.</sup> stretched. Still it is the Saviour-love that pleads.

“Souls of men! why will ye scatter  
Like a crowd of frightened sheep?  
Foolish hearts! why will ye wander  
From a love so true and deep?”

One hour—then “He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My words, hath one that judgeth him.” Who? “The word that I have spoken Ver. 48.  
the same shall judge him at the last day.” Thus the Lord, the “swift witness” of the kingdom, shakes off the dust of His feet as He leaves the unbelieving world. Shortly hence it will marvel at His silence. For His own—as may it be ours to see!—the best speech has been kept until now.

## II.

### THE SUPPER—PREPARATIONS.

“All things are now ready.”—ST LUKE xiv. 14.

FROM the world which had rejected Him and which He has judged, Jesus has departed and hidden Himself. But there is a farther withdrawal, the consciousness of which is now fully present to Him. “He must depart out of this world to the Father.” And knowing that the hour is at hand, His care for those whom the Father had given Him becomes especially manifest. They are to remain in the world which He leaves. They are to be the founders of a new Brotherhood and Communion of Saints. He sees before them hostilities, persecutions, trials from which flesh and blood would shrink. To comfort them ; to bind them to Himself by a bond never to be broken ; to declare the law of their union in Him and one with another ; to compact the fellowship of all who should believe in Him through their testimony by word, sacrament, and prayer—this is the final and supreme anxiety. The love with which He glows, conjoined with the sense of

John xiii. 1.

His headship over all things to His church, John xiii.<sup>3</sup> finds its expression in the transactions and conversations of the Last Supper.

It has been well observed that whilst “in only a very few, and those scattered parts of the sacred history, has the united testimony of the four Evangelists been vouchsafed to us in reference to the same fact,” a striking difference appears when we come to the record of the Sufferings, the Passion, and Death of Jesus. That record is given by all. “The four streams that go forth to water the earth must here meet in a common channel: the four winds of the Spirit of Life must here be united and one.” In all the gospels, a supper is described as having immediately preceded the agony in the garden. We may assume—for there seems no sufficient reason to doubt—that the same meal is alluded to by all the historians.

The three earlier, whom it is customary to name the Synoptists, because, as compared with the fourth, they give a combined view of the life of Christ, distinctly assert that this was the Paschal meal which introduced the feast of the Passover, and which, by statute, was held on the fourteenth day of the first month, *i.e.*, Nisan or Abib. If we study their language by itself, the impression is irresistible that the supper of Christ with the twelve was the legal and ordinary eating of the Sacrificial Lamb with

Ellicott's  
Lectures on  
the Life of  
our Lord, p.  
281.

unleavened bread and bitter herbs. But what says St John? The first verse of his thirteenth chapter apparently implies that the supper afterwards mentioned was “before the feast of the Passover.” And his narrative of the trial

xiii. 1.

indicates that, in the early morning of the day of the crucifixion, those who led Jesus to the Hall of Judgment would not enter it “lest they should be defiled, but that *they might eat the Passover*,” and that when Jesus stood before Pilate at noon on that day it was the *preparation of the Passover*. Clearly, therefore, at that time the Paschal Supper was still, at least to many, a thing of the future. How can these conflicting statements be reconciled?

xviii. 28.

xix. 14.

We are not called, in a volume meant for household reading, to review the controversies which this question has excited. And yet, since all connected with the supper of our Lord is interesting to the Christian mind, we may not wholly evade it.

I shall take leave summarily to dismiss a supposition to which Canon Farrar has given the weight of his name—that, “by a perfectly natural identification, and one which would have been regarded as unimportant, the Last Supper, which *was a quasi Passover, a new and Christian Passover*, and one in which, as in its antitype, memories of joy and sorrow were strangely blended, got to be identified even in

the memory of the Synoptists with the Jewish Passover, and that St John silently but deliberately corrected this erroneous impression which, even in his time, had come to be generally prevalent.” The insinuation thus conveyed of a confusion “in the memory of the Synoptists,” which so coloured their statement of facts as to make it the means of spreading an “erroneous impression,” seems to me inconsistent with any real belief in the illumination—the guidance into all the truth—which Christ promised them, and, on the face of it, is in the last degree improbable. St Matthew, one of the twelve, must have had all the events of the memorable feast present to him in compiling his gospel: and, if he is at any point a trustworthy chronicler, surely we may rely on him for exact and truthful information with regard to the time of the feast. Surely we cannot for a moment imagine that all the three independent witnesses lent themselves to the spread of what the Apostles, according to the view given above, must have known was a mere illusion.

To accept the accuracy of all the narratives is, with me, a fixed point. I wish, neither for the sake of St John to impugn the entire veracity of the other members of “the Evangelistic company,” nor for their sakes to impugn the entire veracity of St John. If it seems impossible formally to harmonize them, it may

Life of  
Christ, Ex-  
cursus x. p.  
482.

be recollect that we are not in possession of all the facts connected with the celebration of the Paschal meal at the time of our Lord: that, on account, say of the enormous multitude assembling in Jerusalem for the Passover—probably about two millions and a half, involving the sacrifice of 260,000 lambs—extensions of time, for the space of a day after the 14th, might have been allowed, rendering it possible that many might not, on the 15th Nisan, have eaten the Passover: at all events that, adopting the wise principle of Dean Alford, “we may be sure that *if we knew the real process of the transactions themselves, that knowledge would enable us to give an account of the diversities of narrative and arrangement which the gospels now present to us.* But without such knowledge all attempts to accomplish this analysis in minute detail must be merely conjectural, and must tend to weaken the evangelic testimony rather than to strengthen it.”

Greek Testament, Prolegomena, p.  
23.

The tendency of Scriptural exposition is, undoubtedly, towards the view that Christ’s time for keeping the Passover was twenty-four hours earlier than the time observed by the people. So thought the Greek Fathers; so thought many in the Church of the early centuries, who recognized in this the way through which the anti-typical relation of Christ to the Paschal lamb was fulfilled—His death on the day and hour when the multitude were eating the

typical Lamb, being, for all who believe in Him, the sacrifice of *their* Passover, “the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.” I do not object to this view if John i. 29. it is conceded that this was not “a *quasi* Passover,” but a real and legitimate observance of the meal. There is no warrant for the idea of a “*quasi* Passover.” What was it? What could it be? After, but not until, the destruction of Jerusalem, did *memorial* suppers come to be substituted for the *sacrificial* feasts. In our Lord’s day, such a kind of supper was unknown. And the words of the Synoptists are unambiguous as to this, that it was *the Passover* which the two Apostles made ready. Jesus Himself speaks of His desire “*to eat this Passover*” with His disciples. That it was not a “*quasi Paschal*” meal but a true and orderly Paschal supper is, with me, another fixed point: if before the general celebration, because, for some reason unknown to us, such an anticipation was possible and was valid.

Let this suffice by way of discussion. It is not necessary that we find a solution of the difficulties suggested by the comparison of the four Records. It is enough that we trace directions along which, *if we were informed as to all particulars*, a solution might be found. Our position shall be that the supper, whose events and whose unfoldings of love we desire

to trace, was the Passover which Peter and John had made ready, and which, "when the even was come," the Lord celebrated with His little flock.

*"All things are now ready."*

*The Room* is ready. In the earlier part of the day, the two Apostles whom the Lord had sent before His face found "the guest-chamber" furnished and prepared. Pious Israelites were in the habit of setting apart a portion of their homes, when the size of the house admitted of so doing, for the entertainment of strangers at the great national festival. This portion is claimed from some householder for the use of Jesus. Who he was we know not. Tradition, as usual, is eager to supply the missing information. Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathæa, John Mark, are names presented to us, but these names are merely conjectural. We infer that he was at least a secret disciple. The words which Peter and John are instructed to address to him imply his recognition of Christ's authority, and a certain almost confidential knowledge as to His mission. "*The master saith, my time is at hand.*" Whether, on a previous day when visiting the city, Jesus had, in calm prescience, arranged with him both for the approaching supper and for the man who should guide His messengers to the house, it is needless either to assert or deny. The Evange-

Luke xxii.  
11.

Matt. xxvi.  
18.

lists merely record the designation of the guide <sup>Mark xiv. 13,</sup> to Peter and John, and the message which, <sup><sup>14.</sup> Luke xxii.  
10, 11.</sup> following him, they were to deliver to the “goodman of the house” into which he en- <sup>Mark xiv. 16.</sup> tered. “Thus does our Lord go on His way, every thing ministering to His foreseen need, with child-like serenity and ease providing for every earthly want.”

Stier, Words  
of the Lord  
Jesus, vol.  
vii. 12.

The house must have been a large one: its “good-man” a person of means and importance. For we are introduced to “a large upper room.” It is observable that in such a room, marked as the abode, or, as we might say, the rendezvous of the Apostles, the Disciples assembled on their return to Jerusalem after the Ascension. <sup>Acts i. 13.</sup> Such a room was “the one place” in which <sup>Acts ii. 1.</sup> they were all “with one accord” when the “day of Pentecost was fully come.” It has been supposed—and the supposition is plausible—that the upper room of which we read in the history of the Church is the same as that which was consecrated by the Paschal meal on the night of the Betrayal. And if, as we read in the Book of the Acts, the Believers were wont to meet in the house of the mother of John Mark, <sup>Acts xii. 12.</sup> the identification of the householder with him, already alluded to, receives a measure of support. Be this as it may, all things in the upper room are ready. Not only are the tables set, and the couches placed, and the mats in order,

but the tapestry is spread over the couches in token that guests are expected.

*The Supper* is ready. Assuming that it was a real Paschal meal, the command to make ready the Passover would include all that the customary observance of the feast required. To begin with, the putting away of leaven or ferment from the house in which the meal was to be kept. Such was the anxiety as to this that the house was searched with lighted wax-candles, and a solemn form of “annulling, scattering, and accounting as the dust of the earth all manner of ferment” was pronounced. There was, farther, the provision of the bitter herbs, the bread without leaven, the fruit-cake or sauce composed of raisins, dates, and figs pressed together, the wine or fruit of the vine before it had time to ferment. Finally, the lamb which had been selected on the 10th day of the month, and was slain “between the evenings” of the 14th, *i.e.*, between 3 and 6 P.M., by the Levites before the altar of brass in the Temple, was received from the Priest with imposing ceremonial, and was borne to the place of assembly to be roasted in preparation for the evening. All the requirements of a becoming celebration of the rite would be attended to by those whom the Lord had commissioned. Very simple the supper to which He and His own sat down: only to the spiritual eye could it announce the

“feast of fat things, of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined,” which on mount Zion the Lord God Isa. xxv. 6. was preparing for all people.

“*Christ our Passover*” is ready. He knows that “the hour is come”—the hour for which He had come into the world. Loving hands have anointed His body for the burial. To His human soul the sign of the glorifying through sorrow has been given. As, at the birth, the men from the East came to offer gifts, so, on one of the busy days in the Temple, in the week which the Triumphal Entry ushered in, Greeks came from the West to prefigure, by their request, “We would see Jesus,” the catholic nature and blessings of His kingdom. That request, we are told, stirred the soul of Jesus with a strange emotion. First, solemnly triumphant, as conveying an intimation which others could not discern that the sacrifice was due—(might not their desire have been expressed on the 10th of the month, the day on which the unblemished one of the flock was chosen for the offering?)—that, now, the seed must fall into the ground and die, and in death be quickened into the glory of the Resurrection. And, then, for an instant a shadow plays across the countenance: only to bring into fuller relief the consecration of the will. “Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father save

Stier, vol. 6,  
p. 78, 79.

John xii. 23-  
28.

me from this hour. But for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy name."

Yes : it is finished—the witness-bearing, the manifestation of the kingdom of God. For one day He has waited in the deep seclusion of Bethany. There is no record of word or deed on the Wednesday before He suffered. A portion of its time, we may conceive, had been devoted to the instruction of His Apostles : the greater portion of it to conference with the Father, and the anointing of soul supplied through such conference. We seem to hear, rising from the quiet of the mountain village, the sentences of that 22nd Psalm which the voice from the cross proves to have been specially present to Him in His last time on the earth. "Be not far from me ; for trouble is near ; for there is none to help. Many bulls have compassed me about : strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round. They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and roaring lion. . . . Be not Thou far from me, O Lord : O my strength, haste Thee to help me." But the veil of an impenetrable secrecy hides that day from our view. It was a Sabbath to the spirit of Christ, and "that Sabbath was a high day."

The making ready of the anti-typal Passover involved another and a fearfully contrasting act. Early in the week, the Chief Priests and Scribes

and Elders had resolved, by fair means or foul, <sup>Matt. xxvi.</sup>  
<sup>3, 4.</sup> to get rid of their Judge and Condemner. The sooner the better: for every day the crowd of pilgrims increased, and who could answer for the commotion which might be excited? We can imagine the consultations in the dimly-lighted chamber—the partial light only bringing into more lurid relief the lines on the faces of the Counsellors. “They *sought* how they might kill him,” says St Luke. Whether on <sup>Luke xxii. 2.</sup> the Tuesday or Wednesday does not appear: but their deliberations were cast into something like shape by the tidings that one of the twelve was ready to forward their guilty project. And we are informed of the satisfaction which lighted their countenances as they concluded the bargain with Judas Iscariot. Outside <sup>Ver. 5.</sup> Jerusalem, love is directing its prayer and looking up: in the House of Jehovah, hatred and malice are plotting the death, and thirsting for the blood, of the Innocent.

But man in his hatred only prepares for God in His love. Judas has secured the sacrifice of the Lamb that shall take away the sin of the world.

“*All things are now ready.*”

“*When the hour was come, He sat down, and the twelve Apostles with Him.*”

### III.

#### THE SUPPER—FIRST WORDS.

ST LUKE xxii. 14.

PROBABLY before the time of our Lord the older ritual of the Paschal Supper had been modified —departed from at some points, and added to at others. The earlier attitude of standing with loins girt, shoes on feet, and staff in the hand had been superseded by the practice of reclining, as was customary at meals, on small couches or cushions placed around the table. Otherwise, many petty observances had been introduced, the effect of which was to make the ceremonial more elaborate and stately. If the statements of the Mishna and the Talmud are to be relied upon as accurately representing the usage then existing, we are able to reproduce the procedure of such a company as that which A.D. 33 assembled in the guest-room of the unknown disciple at Jerusalem.

We suppose that the ablutions preparatory to the celebration of a feast have been performed. The master of the family has seated himself on the central couch, the senior or the most honoured members of the party being next him. He raises a cup which had been filled

with the juice of the grape, blesses “the King of the universe who had created the fruit of the vine,” drinks the cup in token that all should follow his example. This done, the hands of all are washed. Next, the door of the chamber opens, and a small table or tray is brought in on which are placed the bitter herbs, the unleavened bread, the Paschal Lamb, the *Chagigah* or appointed feast offering of the flock, and the sauce or cake so compressed as to resemble clay in remembrance of the bitter toil of the Israelite in Egypt. Reverently the master raises his eye to heaven, blessing the name of the Eternal, and from the tray selects a herb—the company imitating the action—dips it in the sauce, and eats it. This done, he sets the smaller table aside, and recites the tale of the deliverance from the house of bondage, concluding with the pouring of wine into the cup. “What mean ye by this service?” interposes the youngest of the guests, and the master responds in prescribed liturgical form, beginning, “How different is this night from all other nights,” and he bids the table again be set before him, and announces the meaning of the Passover; first, expounding the symbolism of the bitter herbs, then, the symbolism of the unleavened bread; and calling those present “to confess, to praise, to laud, to glorify, to honour, to extol, to magnify, and to ascribe victory to Him who did unto our

Fathers and unto us all these signs, and who brought us forth from bondage to freedom, from sorrow to joy, from darkness to marvellous light, and to say before Him, Halleluiah." In obedience to this command, the first part of the Hallel—the 113th and 114th Psalms—is sung. At its conclusion the cup which had previously been prepared is drunk. And again the hands are washed. Now begins the eating of the Passover, introduced by the breaking of two cakes with both hands, and pronouncing over them a formula of blessing. A small portion is given to each person, with the sentence, "This is the bread of affliction which our fathers did eat in the land of Egypt," and each person eats, dipping the portion into the sauce. The partaking of the lamb is proceeded with, and the "children of the family" converse on the works of the Lord, and the "years of the ancient times." The last food tasted is the flesh of the lamb. And when all are satisfied, the third cup is elevated and blessed, and, repeating the same sentence, all drink together. The thanksgiving is prolonged—special reference being made to the covenant made with Abraham, and the Law which came by Moses. A fourth cup is filled, and high praise is rendered through the repetition of Psalms, especially the 145th. When this cup is quaffed the feast is at an end. A fifth cup, preceded by the great Hallel—the 136th Psalm—may be taken, but the probabilities are

that it is not. With the singing of Hymns or parts of the Hallel, the master and his associates exchange farewells, and quit the scene of their holy assembly.

Kitto's  
"Cyclopæ-  
dia," Art.  
Passover.

Such was the etiquette of the supper which our Lord and His twelve Apostles celebrated. Whether all minutiae were adhered to we cannot say. But, connecting the narratives of the Evangelists with the account of the ceremonial with which the Rabbinical books supply us, there can be little doubt that, omitting perhaps mere petty ordinances, all that was necessary to the orderly observance of the meal was complied with. St Luke tells us of two cups, which we have little difficulty in distinguishing as the first or introductory cup and the third or the cup of Benediction. We recognize the point in the order of the meal at which the breaking of bread occurred—the new formula “This is my body broken for you,” taking the place of the old, “This is the bread of affliction.” The washing of the feet seems to belong to the stage when, after the second cup, all washed: the strange thing being that the Lord washed the disciples, and not the hands but the feet. The Hymn sung before the departure to the mount of Olives we identify as the customary parting act of praise. Enough, in short, is presented in the gospels to assure us that it was not a *quasi*, but a real Paschal meal to which Jesus sat down on the night of His betrayal.

Vers. 19, 20.

Matt. xxvi.

<sup>30.</sup>

But it is impossible exactly to harmonize the four testimonies, or to assign to each of the incidents related its precise place in the Passover ritual. The notices of the evening are very brief and fragmentary. That which the Synoptists are careful to record is the Institution of the Holy Eucharist: but whether, with

Matt. xxvi.

21.

Mark xiv. 18.

Luke xxii. 21.

St Matthew and St Mark, we are to regard the announcement of the traitor as before, or with St

Luke, as after, the Institution, or whether there were two announcements, the one before and the other after: when the strife related by St Luke as to which of the Apostles should be accounted the greatest occurred—at the beginning or in the middle of the feast, previous to, or subsequent to, the feet-washing mentioned alone by St John: the precise time of the feet washing: the precise time of the departure of Judas: the precise time of the warning to Simon:—these are points which, in consequence of our imperfect knowledge of all that happened, cannot absolutely be determined. Let us not insist that “every part shall be tesselated into one complete and consistent whole.” That the attempt must be hopeless is an evidence of the inartistic construction of the gospels, and of the independence of the sacred Biographers. There is no straining after effect. There could have been no collusion between writers whose accounts, identical as to the main facts, are yet separate, almost different, as to their details.

Premising therefore that only a *probable* outline can be presented—an outline to which, at several points, exception may be taken by the reader, let us endeavour to recall and to consider the meaning of the transactions of the upper room in which Peter and John had made ready the supper.

The soil gathered in the short journey from Bethany having been removed by the washing “with pure water,” the Lord and His own have taken their seats. It is possible that the contention over the relative greatness of the twelve, or, as has been supposed, of the three, Peter, James, and John, may have been occasioned in connection with the question who should sit next the Master. I am disposed, however, to relegate this contention to a later period in the evening. I suppose that, without unseemly wrangling, all have bent down and are reclining in expectation of the introductory act. Every eye is fixed on Jesus. The cup which it is customary at once to fill is before Him. He fills it: but before raising it in His right hand, He looks to either side, the countenance beaming with the light of an unspeakable love, and utters the first word of the feast;

“*With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer: for I say unto you I will not any more eat thereof until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.*”

Vers. 15, 16.

Thus the shepherd of the little flock, the father of the family now convened, pours forth His heart. The saying is charged with intense emotion :—to say, I desire, were insufficient, the phrase employed is the emphatic, “ardently, vehemently have I desired.” *This* Passover has been contemplated for many days—Ah! shall we speak only of days?—and always as an event so significant, so fruitful of blessing, that the craving for it has overcome the shrinking of the sensitive soul from the immediately impending passion. The human heart has been *wearying* for its hour of supreme rejoicing love, when it shall be free to abandon itself to communion with its brethren, unrestrained by the shadow of a hostile world, and to give them its best—the secret of its own peace and triumph. We cannot doubt that the longing for such fellowship and self-bestowment was an essential element in the ardour which, having for long been pent up as in a sealed fountain, now finds expression.

We turn to this word as a consecration of all that is purest and loftiest in the brotherhood of men. It is the man Christ Jesus who craves to eat with His brother men. Even as, afterwards in Gethsemane He seeks the support of the chosen three, and articulates the disappointment of His soul when He finds them sleeping in the cry “What! could ye not watch with me one hour?” so in the prospect of suffering,

of that baptism of blood for which His soul was straitened until it should be accomplished, He anticipates, feeds on the anticipation of, the strength which He should receive through the responsive love of those whom He had called to Himself. He did not ask from them more than that they should receive Him, that they should open their souls to Him, that He should know that He had given the Father's word to them and they had trusted Him, and that He and they were one. All this is beautifully, unselfishly, human. And because it is so, I take it to be a mirror of the love of God. For the heart of God is human, and longs to find itself welcomed, understood, and responded to. Its delight is to eat with us, and when the door of thought is closed against its light, and the warmth of affection and the energy of will are withdrawn from its communion, the condemnation is, "I was an hungered, but you gave me no meat : I was thirsty, but you gave me no drink : I was a stranger, *you took me not in.*"

Matt. xxv.  
42, 43.

But the first sentences of Jesus at the supper table are not a mere utterance of human tenderness: they are full of the purpose and "travail" of the Redeemer. "*This Passover,*" —why *this?* why was the *Passover* distinctively present to his mind? Why should it be a desire so strong to share this particular festival before He suffered? There was much indeed

which appealed to all that was heroic and national in the great annual festival. But there is an element in the longing of Christ above and beyond the feeling of the Israelite. It is the *last* Passover of the true spiritual Israel of God. *His* last, not simply because He must depart out of this world to the Father, but because His departure is the sign that with it the entire system of which the Passover was the crown must disappear. It was ready to vanish away. It was not to be lost. Nothing is lost. It is not God's way to destroy. He carries the bud on into the flower, the germ into the fruit, the child into the man, the shadow into the substance: the one is done away because it is fulfilled in the other. And it is because the prophetic eye of Jesus sees the kingdom of God; the real, true, Heavenly Commonwealth which all that was in the past typified, prepared for, had led up to; the kingdom to be built on a New Testament in the blood of "the Lamb that taketh away the sin of the world;" the kingdom which is "righteousness, peace, joy in the Holy Ghost"; because He sees this kingdom coming, yea, in that house at that moment, that the ardour of the spirit approaches the confines of impatience. He is looking to the feast of spiritual fellowship in which the heart of man shall eat, not the bread of affliction, but the bread of the Eternal Life. Full in His view is the com-

plete in-gathering of the “redeemed from all lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south,” and “until this <sup>Ps. cvii. 3.</sup> last most blessed re-union and re-instatement of fellowship He takes farewell” of earthly <sup>Stier, vii. 37.</sup> rite and ordinance. “*I will not any more eat thereof.*”—Nay; holding the cup in His hand, He cries, “*Take this and divide it among yourselves.* I have done with all cup-drinkings <sup>Ver. 17.</sup> which precede the cup of benediction to be shortly put into your hands. The time of the Re-formation has arrived. *I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God shall come.*”

Ver. 18.

The sower of tares is never far behind the householder who sows the good seed. After the introductory words—at some point in the earlier portion of the feast—I insert the strife mentioned by St Luke. True, the account of the strife would seem to be connected with that of the questioning caused by the intimation that the hand of the betrayer was with the Lord on the Table. “*They began to inquire among themselves which of them it was that should do this thing. And there was also a strife.*” <sup>Vers. 23, 24.</sup> The contention might, with no violence to the probabilities of things, have arisen at the very time of the solemn impression which had been excited. Alas! who of us does not know how

rapidly the mind slides from thought the most solemn into mere trivialities! Nor could we deny that the protestations of the Disciples might, naturally enough, lead on to assertions of devotion, and from assertions of devotion to the urging of claims for the higher places in the expected kingdom. But, in his statement of the events of the Supper, St Luke does not aim at exact chronological sequence. His *also* may imply nothing more than that the dispute as to preeminence was one of the features of the evening. Now, there is an undoubted connection between the dispute and the feet-washing. The language of the 27th verse proves this. Which of the two preceded the other? I think it on the whole more likely that the dispute preceded, and was the occasion of, the notable act of the Lord. In this case, we must transfer the occurrence to a point in the Supper previous to the institution of the Eucharist. When we study the thirteenth chapter of St John's Gospel, we can scarcely find space for the strife and the word with regard to it after Jesus had “taken his garments and was set down again.”

It is the old contention with which the Master had previously dealt: the contention, let it be said, as old as our sinful human nature. Are we not sometimes conscious of its shadow across our soul? The “chief seats,” the great positions

—how men have wrangled for them, how men lust after them in their hearts even in holy convocations and at holy seasons! Perhaps, one of the number was dissatisfied at the place assigned to him at the table. Perhaps—a more probable explanation—the reference recently made to the coming Kingdom of God had aroused in the as yet carnal minds of the twelve the idea of dignities and ranks. So it is: they grow hot and eager over the question “*who should be accounted the greatest.*”

Ver. 24.

The controversy is observed by the Lord. My readers, when the mind is full of a holy thought, when the level of feeling is high, when the soul is aglow with some great and noble purpose, what can so irritate every finer sensibility as to realize, through the glance or speech of those with whom you are associated, not only that there is an imperfect appreciation of what most inspires you, but that their spirits are out of tune with yours and are influenced by things petty and earthly? What must it have been to Christ to listen to the murmurings—selfish and small—of the men over whom His heart was yearning in that hour of special and solemn conference! How marvellously patient is the Son of God! How gentle, withal how pungent, His reproof as He recalls the lines of His past exposure of the mistake which they committed, and brings them back to the truth of His king-

dom as exemplified in Himself! As if His kingdom were some earthly principality, some tetrarchate like that of Herod, or even empire like that of Rome, in which lordships are exercised and sycophants extol potentates as benefactors! Had He not told them before; must He tell them again,

*“Ye shall not be so, but he that is greatest among you let him be as the younger, and he that is chief as he that doth serve. For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? But I am among you as he that serveth.”*

Vers. 26, 27.

Yes! He is about to give such an enforcement of this lesson as His church shall never forget. Meanwhile—before he embodies His instruction in deed—He gives a gracious and encouraging message. In loving embrace He takes these foolish, slow-hearted Disciples again to His heart. Had they not accompanied Him during the past three years? Had they not trusted Him, even although they did not understand Him? In spite of hard sayings, of defections, of oppositions, had they not loyally clung to Him? He cannot forget this. In His own large and generous way, He must speak as if He were their debtor for all this faithfulness, for the child-like confidence which they had reposed in Him. He will assure them of the true kingdom. He will declare to them the prin-

palities, the thrones which are awaiting them—thrones not such as they dreamt of, but better far; thrones in which they shall sit with Him as His assessors, judging the tribes of Israel: “in which, having become members of His body through the participation of His flesh and blood, in the power of His spirit and of His love they shall serve while they rule;”

Stier, vol.  
vii. p. 29.

“*Ye are they who have continued with Me in My temptations, and I appoint unto you a kingdom as My Father hath appointed unto Me. That ye may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*”

Vers. 28-30.

## IV.

### THE WASHING OF THE FEET.

ST JOHN xiii. 1-16.

“I am among you as he that serveth.”

NOT, as might be supposed, when supper was ended; rather, whilst supper is proceeding; possibly, after the drinking of the second cup, when the custom was to wash the hands. Then Jesus gives the great sign of His kingdom, and, in so doing, enforces in a way never to be forgotten His rebuke of all contentions about precedences and dignities. The unadorned tale of the Evangelist is the evidence of the profound impression made by the event which he relates. He contrasts the real and essential glory of the Lord with the lowliness of the service He performs. Reading the third and fourth verses, we feel that the secret strain which His soul repeats is that elsewhere expressed, “Behold what manner of love!” And the account of the action is such as only one who had been an eye witness could produce: it is so graphic and vivid in its minuteness that we see how every feature of the Lord and His work had been

photographed in the mind. The Scripture is this :—

*"He riseth from supper, and laid aside His garments; and took a towel, and girded Himself. After that He poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the Disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded."*

Vers. 4, 5.

Let the reader pause for an instant over each part of this description : the calm, deliberate rising from the couch ; the stripping from the upper part of the body of the *simchah* and the *cetoneth*—folding them up and laying them on a place by themselves, as was done with the clothes on the morning of the resurrection ; the encircling of the waist with the towel, as was the fashion of the menial ; the taking of the basin which had been put behind the guests in readiness for use, and filling it with water ; the disciples, all the while, held in wonder, gazing on their Master, and anon exchanging glances each with the other ; the wonder passing into a stupefying amazement as they observe Him beginning to do what only a slave would do, to stoop and wash their feet. Was ever deed more strange ? more a reversal of all that was fitting to the relation existing between Him and them ?

The astonishment is expressed by Peter. It has been thought—for what reason we cannot say—that Judas was the first approached by

Ver. 6.

See Revised Version.

Ver. 6.

Jesus. I take it that Simon was the first. St John's "*Then cometh He to Simon Peter,*" may be accepted as "*So cometh He, i.e.,* as thus beginning to wash the Disciples." And, as on previous occasions, Simon is the interpreter of the sentiment of his brethren: when Jesus would pour the water on him, the exclamation, half in surprise, and half in indignation, is, "*Lord, dost thou wash my feet?*"

It is the Humility which offends, or rather, the form which the Humility assumes. Shall we blame the out-spoken Apostle? Do not most people expect their great man to comport himself in a distinguished way—to have a grand air about him? Condescension is well because it is condescension; in the bending there is a manifest and graceful bending. Any token of lowliness is grateful in which the character attributed to the hero is sustained, through which men are lifted towards his level. But this action is contrary to all such expectation and requirement. I believe that if the Lord had said to Simon, "Come, take the towel and wash my feet," Simon would have felt the graciousness of the command. For him to do so would not have been out of place. Nay, in view of the solemnities of the evening, he might have felt himself drawn nearer to his Lord in obeying the command. But for his Lord to take the towel and do the office of the slave to him—this is out of

the question; something quite unseemly and without any apparent reason for it. Perhaps, the old feeling which had found utterance by the lake of Galilee comes back—"Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Any way, Luke vi. 1. there is much of the old impetuosity which had, even in former days, presumed to rebuke the Master, in the withdrawal of the feet from Jesus' touch, and the protest against Jesus' deed. Let it suffice to notice the scope of Jesus' answer: namely, that, not at that moment, but at a future time, His perplexed Disciple will understand what now puzzles and irritates; he will see that the Humiliation complained of is the proper and abiding glory of the Son of God.

Ver. 7.

What we discern, then, in the incident so lovingly presented by the Evangelist, is a Parable or symbol of the Heavenly Kingdom, and the greatness which that Kingdom recognizes. When the temper or conduct of any person who calls himself Christ's is opposed to its teaching, the servant is a would-be-greater man than the master. It is the pictorial setting forth of "the law of the spirit of the life in Christ Jesus." Receiving it as such, three points are suggested:—

*The Light in which it is bathed.*

*The Love by which it is glorified.*

*The Purity on which it insists.*

In the sentence with which he introduces the work of Christ, St John reminds us that, by means of it, we are taken into the *light of the Kingdom and of the Eternal Sonship of Christ*. It may be that what is related in the fourth verse is intended to contrast with that which is stated in the third : “*Although Jesus knew that the Father had given all things into His hand, and that He came from God and went to God, yet, He riseth from supper, &c.*” But, not the less is it evident that what the Apostle would convey is that Jesus’ action is in the full consciousness of both His Divine Mission and His Divine Person : that it is congruous to the truth of the one, and is the fulfilment of the reality of the other. It is the King in whose hand is universal empire ; it is the Son in perfect response to the Father’s mind, and enjoying the supreme complacency of His Father’s love ; who pours the water into the basin, and begins to wash the feet.

This is an offence to Peter, because he does not yet know *who* his master is. When he does know, it will seem as consistent with His glory as now it seems inconsistent. Even Jewish Rabbis had so far anticipated the action. “*Among men,*” they said, “*the slave washes his master : but with God it is not so.*” Let it be realized that Jesus is God : the only one of whom it could be said that He came

forth from the bosom of the Father into the world, and that He goes from the world into the bosom of the Father:—then the *surprise* because of the Humility ceases. It remains wonderful: but this because *He* is the wonderful. Once let us comprehend the marvellous stooping in coming into the world at all: every instance of stooping afterwards is only harmonious with what we expect, is only a particular manifestation of the transcendent fact. In this exchange of master's and menial's places, we behold “the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,” we discern the Godhead in our John i. 14. Lord.

For how shall we think of the greatness of God? Not surely as if it were an indefinitely dilated Kingship of the Gentiles.

Such grandeur were but a created thing,  
A spectre, terror, and a grief,  
Out of all keeping with a world so calm,  
Oppressing on belief.

No. Pride may worship the magnified image of itself. But, for all children of quietness, there are—if one may particularize when every act is a lesson—*two special tokens of God* in the ministry of Jesus. The one, His answer to a question of the disciples betraying the same temper as that which has shewn itself at the table. “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of

heaven?" The answer is, *a little child set in their midst*, and the saying, "Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven." Childhood, in its self-unconsciousness, its pure, simple joy in loving, its beauty of obedience, is the sign of the High and Lofty One. Where there is a little child in the house, there God is preaching a sermon to all that are in the house. To receive that child in the name of Christ, seeing and welcoming the Christ-heart in all that is genuinely child-like, is to receive the God-heart also. "Verily, O Lord, this childhood is life. Verily, O Lord, when Thy tenderness shall have made the world great, then, children like Thee, will all men smile in the face of the great God."

"Unspoken  
Sermons" by  
Geo.  
M'Donald,  
p. 17.

The other sign of Divine greatness alluded to is the service of the Lord now set before us. It, too, declares the infinite humbleness of God: but there is in it a farther and fuller eloquence. "Who is like unto the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high, who humbleth Himself to behold things in heaven and things on the earth," exclaims the Psalmist. In Jesus' action, there is not merely the *beholding* of the small and making room for it in the lap of the Eternal, there is the Highest Himself becoming the Lowest, declaring, in symbol of exhaustless meaning, that service is diviner than rule,

obedience than command, that the glory of God is the capacity of measureless sacrifice. The Lord, bending over the Disciples' feet, in the form of the slave—such is the greatness of God.

When that deed, then, is truly the light of our seeing, not imitated as Emperors and Popes are wont to do—a mere piece of stage-effect—but accepted as that in which the Lord is to be recognized: when, in its teaching, we discern that the only dignity worth having is that of ministry which makes self of no reputation, then is benevolence purified and strengthened. It becomes not a mere impulse, it is a spirit of life: not an amusement or a luxury, but a business; not an occasional spasm but a habit of will. It shines, for it is bathed in the light of the life in Christ.

But let us observe more closely the *love by which the transaction related is glorified*. It is not quite certain whether or not the first verse of this chapter is to be regarded as a paragraph by itself, as separate from the narrative of the washing to which the second and third verses are the introduction. But, however this may be, the first verse is exhibitive of the consciousness from which all that was said and done that evening originated. And, truly, is it not a wonderful picture alike of the *patience* and the *wisdom* of love?

Ver. I.

*Its patience.*—“Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them *to the end.*” The Apostle feels as he writes, how persevering, how long-suffering his gracious Master had been. Had there not been much to tempt the withdrawal, at least to test the constancy, of His love? Much in the conduct of the Disciples, much in their hardness of heart; casting a look forward, much in their failure to watch with Him, and their cowardice and faithlessness? It is hard to love when there is no fuel in the objects of the devotion for the flame. What could He find in these dull-hearted fishermen? But He loved them, for they were “His own.” They were His Father’s gift to Him. They were part of His riches, part of Himself. And thus He loved them all through—“*to the end*” or “*to the uttermost.*” Never more gracious was the love than at the end. In the immediate prospect of the Passion and the Cross, the last discourse and the last prayer are all for them. He laid aside His garment that evening, for He had laid aside a great deal more. He had sacrificed Himself that He might be their Good Shepherd, giving His life for them.

Is not this a lesson, my reader, as to our bearing towards those whom God has given us? Who are they? To begin with, our own kith and kin. In the circle, still wider, they are, all who are associated with us as brethren in the

Lord. In the widest circle, they are, according to the parable of the good Samaritan, all and any who need our help, who appeal to us on the ground of some want in them asking supply from us. Well, then, if Christ could love these slow, foolish, men of Galilee, if He can bear and forbear as He does with us, may we not persevere in our love, despite rebuffs and provocations of one kind or another, not allowing the sense of union to be broken by things which pain and offend, accounting any whom God sends to us as His gift—part of our possession in Him—and stooping to them in lowliness and self-repression? And when we can find nothing in themselves to interest, should we not draw our interest in them from God's interest in them, and so receive them as Christ received His own, whom He loved “to the end?” “When I leave Thy table,” says Tholuck, “refreshed by Thy love, I will meet all my brethren with a new heart. They are not merely *my* brethren, they are also *Thine*.”

This is the patience, behold also the *wisdom of love*—its power of finding and using the means adapted to the end which it regards. The verses from the 13th to the 16th are distinct as to this, that the purpose of the Lord, in rising from the table, was to pass His disciples into a higher standard in the education which He was conducting. “*If I, your Lord and Master, have*

Hours of  
Christian  
Devotion,  
pp. 543, 544.

Ver. 14.

washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet." What would these disciples connect with, what meaning would they put into, this washing? First, I think, through Christ's manner and the words which fell from His lips, they would see in it a *symbol of separateness from the soil of evil*; and next, in reference to the universal practice, they would see in it a *preparation for a feast*—for good things which God has prepared for them that love Him. The twofold thought applies to Christian life and action.

To wash one another's feet is, in the deeper meaning of the thing, *to help one another out of the evil that is in the world, to aid one another in the keeping of a pure conscience and of a wholesome and holy life.* This assuredly must be our first concern as to those whom God has given us. Our love will show itself by counting nothing too lowly, and nothing too hard, by which we may strengthen against sin—lead into the way of peace, or at least witness for the eternally right and good. For example, supposing one has wronged you, really wronged you, injured you at the innermost place of your heart, spoken or done what you feel was not only an unkindness and a personal pain, but an untruth between him and God;—to carry out the idea symbolised by Christ, you must not merely forgive that one, you must try to get him out of that untruth

which is between him and God, to have the soul cleansed from the evil that it has contracted. And a man is great, Christ-like, in the measure in which he can lay aside merely personal considerations, and in tender yet faithful love deal with, that he may win, his brother. Did not Jesus wash the feet of Judas, into whom Satan had entered? Did He not try, even to the last moment, to save him from his lie? Brainerd, in his younger days, carried away by an indiscreet zeal, provoked the censure of his seniors at college, and was severely, too severely, punished. In later years he saw his error. He had been unkindly treated; but he could say, "I would willingly humble myself before those whom my error led into sin, and ask their forgiveness, although they should still refuse to own that in which they wronged me." Was not that Christ-like indeed? Is it not truly divine to come down from a vantage ground and be nowhere, that God's love may be manifested, and men may indeed know it in its separation from evil?

But we recollect that washing entered largely into the hospitalities of the East—that it was *the refreshment which prepared for, welcomed to, some abundance which was provided for another.* Rising from supper, the soul filled with the thought of the kingdom which would be opened when He had overcome the sharpness of death,—is it too much to think that this

reference was in the mind of Jesus when He gave the example that we should do as He had done? What more truly an imitation of God than to seek out the dust-soiled and worn and weary, and express the desire of infinite love "to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive Isa. lvii. 15. the heart of the contrite one." The more self is sunk and lost in the consciousness of what God is seeking in them, and of the welcome in God's heart for them, the more beautiful the ministry. Silver and gold this Christ had none, but what He had He gave. He had the love of the Father; He had the kingdom of God; He had the eternal life; He had the new brotherhood; He had all the treasures, for He was Himself the fountain-fulness; and He went down into the depths of man's sin that He might make the sinner ready for the Supper of God. To be and to do anything, if only another is made a partaker of our good,—this is to do as He has done to us.

But the action which we are considering, whilst glorified by love "to the uttermost," is the solemn *enforcement of the purity demanded from Christ's disciple*. Simon Peter, as we have seen, remonstrated when he saw his Master stooping behind him. The reply of Jesus, so gentle yet so authoritative, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know here-

after"—in effect reminding him that the true love is manifested in obedience which waits till "the Lord shall Himself explain things now beyond our reach"—only calls forth the vehement "Thou shalt never wash my feet." It is <sup>Ver. 8.</sup> necessary that Jesus deal with His follower with sharpness and decision.

His peremptory *never* is met by the sentence, "*If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me.*" <sup>Ver. 8.</sup> "You perceive," writes Krummacher, "how the more profound and mystic meaning of our Lord's act shines forth in these words—namely, as having reference to the blood of atonement, to forgiveness, justification, and purification from sin. You know how much lies concealed in this passage, and how every syllable has its profound signification. '*If I wash thee not.*' Yes. Thou Lord Jesus must do it, for who ever purified himself from sin. '*If I do not wash thee.*' Yes, thou must wash us; for teaching, instructing, and setting us an example is not sufficient. '*If I wash thee not.*' Certainly, what does it avail me if Peter or Paul is cleansed, and I remain defiled? I must be forgiven and feel that I am absolved; and it remains eternally true that he who is not washed in the blood of Christ has no part with Him or in the blessings of His kingdom." It was this inner meaning which the Apostle apprehended; and <sup>The Suffering Saviour," p. 30.</sup> the tone of his speech is completely altered.

Ver. 9.

"Lord, not my feet only, but my hands and my head." "I cannot have enough of this cleansing. I am a sinful man. Wash me throughly. My hands—all the activities of my body; my head—all the intelligence and capacity of thought and will that is in me; my whole self, as well as my feet. Lord purify and sanctify me wholly." Thus Christ's victory is gained. The opposing will is conquered. He concludes His conversation with the assurance that already the disciple has been washed in the laver of regeneration; that he and his brethren were clean through the word which He had spoken unto them—ah! there is the addition, "but not all"—and one thus washed needs not "save to wash his feet," to be purged from the outward pollution gathered in the daily walk, that the will which has been surrendered to the Lord may be kept "unspotted from the world."

Ver. 10

My readers, the principle must never be overlooked that Christ-like purity is needed for Christ-like service. As He was wholly the Father's, so we must be wholly His, yielding ourselves to Him, that all His work may be done in us. There are many things, in His discipline, His way to us, for which we cannot account. There are times when our hot and impatient spirit will be ready to chafe against His authority, and to question the reason of His procedure—times of perplexity when we shall feel ourselves

unable to rouse the energy, or when the energy of the soul seems to draw away from Him. Nevertheless—

“To the lowly soul  
He doth Himself impart,  
And for His cradle and His throne  
Chooseth the pure in heart.”

Only let us be true to Him and He will teach us, as we are able to bear it, the secret of all that He is doing for us, and help us into all that He would do by us—our hearts being purified by this faith to that “unfeigned love of the brethren” which unites to Him who washed : Peter 1. 22. the disciples’ feet.

## V.

### THE BETRAYER.

ST JOHN xiii. 18-30.

“That man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed.”

THERE are two names in Scripture to which a fearful character is appended, “Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, *who made Israel to sin*,” “Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve *who also betrayed Him*.” It is with this man, Apostle and *also* Betrayer, that we have now to do. He had received the grace of God in vain ; even the crowning grace which he had shared with the other members of the family of Christ had failed to melt the icy coldness of the heart into which the devil had put the hellish thought. “*He knew who should betray him ; therefore said He, Ye are not all clean.*”

John xiii. 11

No sooner has Jesus “taken his garments” and again seated Himself than the consciousness of this presence comes down, like a darkening cloud, on His spirit. Who can estimate the self-restraint which had been exercised during the time that Judas had been associated with Him !

Why *he* was one of the chosen, why the Lord selected a man whom He knew to be a Devil as one of His companions, endowing him with "the powers of the world to come," trusting him, assigning him a place of special honour and importance as the treasurer of His household—this is one of the "secret things which belong to the Lord our God." But what a burden must he have been on the pure and unspotted heart of Christ! What a continual sorrow and heaviness to detect the signs of the evil that was working within him—the decadence of the first love, the gradual encroachment of a sour worldly temper on all that was most generous in His nature, the changing attitude of mind towards Himself as it became more and more manifest that the idea of the kingship with which he had invested Jesus of Nazareth was nothing better than a dream. Now, the crisis has come. Heaven and hell are in that room in mysterious conjunction. And the Lord is troubled in Ver. 21. spirit, and ominous are the words which fall from His lips.

We can discern a gradation in the announcement of the Betrayer. There is, first, a general intimation—one calculated to attract attention—that in which the Disciples are reminded of the pathetic word of the Psalmist as to "the familiar friend" who has lifted up his heel against him. There is, next, the *testifying* out Ver. 18.  
Cf. Ps. xli. 9.

Ver. 21.

of deep emotion, "*Amen, amen, I say unto you, one of you shall betray me.*" This is more distinct, bidding each member of the amazed company ask, "Is it I?" and prompting Simon Peter to motion John to inquire, "Lord, who is it?" Then follows the sentence, "*He it is to whom I shall give the sop when I have dipped it.*"

Vers. 24-25.

Ver. 26.

It would seem that Judas was seated so near the Lord as to dip the piece of flesh or bread which he might take during the meal in the same dish. To him the morsel, moistened by the sauce on the table, was given. In the excitement, it may be, the eleven did not observe this; if they did, they failed to apprehend the force of the saying which followed—and is it strange that to their simplicity of soul the deed on which their companion was bent was almost incredible?—the saying which hastened the fatal moment, "*Thou hast said,*" "*That thou doest, do quickly.*"

Matt. xxvi.

25.

Ver. 27.

At what period of the evening this transaction occurred it is impossible to determine. Whether it preceded or followed the institution of the Eucharist is a point to which an importance, I cannot but think often exaggerated, has been attached. Four opinions have been held and defended by reference both to what is said and what is omitted in the sacred narrative.

I. That the announcement of the Betrayer and his departure were *before* both the breaking

and giving of the bread and the cup, as the <sup>Matt. xxvi.  
21-26.</sup>  
narratives of St Matthew and St Mark suggest. <sup>Mark xiv.  
18-22.</sup>

2. That they were *after* the breaking and giving of the bread and the cup, as the narrative of St Luke implies.

3. That the *more general* intimations of the traitor were made at *an early stage* of the meal. The meal then proceeded; *after* the bread and the cup, there was the sign which Judas understood, and in consequence of which he left the supper party.

4. That the *more general* intimations *preceded the breaking of the bread*, of which Judas partook. The more *special and private* *preceded the drinking of the cup* when supper was ended, so that of the cup Judas did not partake.

It appears to me that the last mentioned opinion is untenable. The account of St John will not allow us to suppose such a dividing of the words of Christ. The third of the views is possible. Many indeed insert the consecration of the bread and wine between the 22d and 23d verses of the chapter in the fourth gospel, that is, after Jesus had testified, and before He had given the sop. But I must regard this order as intrinsically improbable. Surely, when the shadow was resting on the soul, when, so to say, the Lord was in the middle of His final dealing with Judas, this was not the moment at which we can suppose the institution of a new mode

of communion and bond of love. Between the first and the second of the opinions referred to, on the whole—not denying that there are probabilities on the other side also—I incline to the first. There is not much force in the argument founded on the charge when the cup was

Matt. xxvi.

<sup>27-</sup>

Alford's  
Greek Testa-  
ment, p. 248.

Matt. xxvi.

<sup>31.</sup>

passed, “Drink ye *all* of it”—an expression, it is urged, which “leads us to suppose that the same persons, the twelve, were present.” Not necessarily so ; the *all* in the charge might have been equivalent to the “*all ye* shall be offended,” which included only the eleven. And, weighing the record of St Luke with those of the other two Synoptists and of St John, there is this to be said :—St Luke is content with a vague and general summing up of the Lord’s words about the traitor; the other Synoptists are more definite and particular ; whilst St John gives at considerable length the speech of Jesus, and the heart-searching of the Apostles. I accept the guidance of the more circumstantial histories. Two are explicit as to time. In the fourth gospel we are reminded that the supper was proceeding when Judas was declared, the stage of dipping the morsels of flesh in the sauce having not yet passed. One such morsel thus dipped was the token, immediately followed by departure. But the cup was not blessed until a later stage—until the supper was ended. “If this view be correct, we must suppose that the departure of

the traitor took place after Matthew xxvi. 25, and that verse 26, ‘as they were eating, Jesus took bread and blessed it,’ refers to a resumption of the supper after the interruption caused by his leaving the apartment.”

Ellicot's  
Historical  
Lectures, p.  
325.

Passing from the question as to the place in the course of the evening to be assigned to the discovery of the Betrayer, let us reflect on the tragic story of his life.

Imagination reverts to the period of childhood : think of him as the fair boy, whose presence gladdens the house of Simon of Kerioth. He has received the name Judas—“the confessor” or “the praise of God.” Who could have anticipated, watching the romp of the bright-eyed child, that over him, long years afterwards, the Incarnate Truth would say, “Better that he had never been born.” Oh, sad mystery and pain of love! How often repeated! How many the parents doomed to sob over the misery of manhood or womanhood : “Would God our child had never been born, or that we had laid him long since in the narrow grave!”

Mark xiv. 21

I suppose that, as he grew up, the son of Simon developed a nature full of force, practical yet impulsive, with tendencies which, according to the influences which might gain the ascendancy, would render him a prominent per-

*John xii. 6.*

son in his generation, either for good or for evil. What moved him to attach himself to Jesus has not been disclosed. We do not read of any call addressed to him to leave his work or his home. But we may take for granted that, in joining the company of the Prophet of Nazareth, he acted, if not from high spiritual motives, at least in good faith. And his aptitudes were recognised by Christ, for he was entrusted with the chest or box of the little flock, and was called to be one of the Apostles. How it came about that he, the chosen Apostle, was transformed into the devil, which Christ declared him to be, we can only infer from a hint given by St John. When stating the objection taken by Judas to the extravagance of Mary, who anointed the feet of her Lord, the evangelist adds, "*This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.*" A man's weakness is generally in the region of his strength; his temptations are developed by his opportunities. The son of Simon had administrative capacity. He had an eye for business, as we might say. Gradually the avaricious spirit dominated. First there came the demon of disappointment. "This Jesus of Nazareth—is *he* the person whom you took him to be? where is the kingdom, with the power and the glory, which you expected? why keep to him?" And with this demon was joined

the fiend of covetousness. "Whilst you are with him, use the box for your own ends." And so, by degrees, fainter and ever fainter became the torch of his zeal ; feebler and ever feebler the opposition to the strange gods whose fire was burning in his worldly heart. He passed into the condition of the hypocrite ; for his adherence to Christ was no longer a reality. And on the occasion of the supper in Simon's house at Bethany, the word of Christ proved to him that he had been detected. From that moment "he no longer guided himself, another was dragging him behind him ; his feet were stumbling on the dark mountains."

Another explanation has been given. The act of Judas in entering into a compact with the Scribes and Pharisees has been represented as "a miscalculation." Like his brethren, he had never of course realised the true nature of Christ and His kingdom. "In this only he outran them—that sharing in their blindness, he greatly exceeded them in presumption." Weary with the delay in Christ's assertion of the Messiahship, he resolved at length "to precipitate him into action by a force from without, and throw him into the centre of some popular movement, such as, once beginning to revolve, could not afterwards be suspended or checked. The league with the authorities was the mode by which he sought thus to force the hand of his Master. It was when

De Quincey  
—“Essay on  
Judas Is-  
cariot.”

he saw his plan miscarry, his hope melt away, that the remorse at having been the means of the spilling of innocent blood hurried him towards the suicide’s death.” Such is the theory propounded by ingenious writers. I do not wonder at their doing so. For the betrayal sounds a sad indictment against our poor human nature ; and one would fain, in charity, grasp at any statement which, consistently with a regard to truth, could remove from the name of Iscariot the blackness of darkness which seems to encompass it. But the theory will not stand investigation. It cannot be reconciled with the distinct testimony of Jesus, with His horror of spirit, with His ringing “Woe to that man,” with the scope of all the Scriptures concerning him. Its only authority is the brain of its projectors. No. Charity must hold to the truth even when it cannot rejoice in it ; when it can only lift up the hands of a holy amazement, or shed the tears of a holy sorrow.

What is the direction of the true charity ? It calls sin, sin ; has no glosses, no refinements, no ingenious accounting for what is evil in God’s sight. But it prompts two things. *Reticence as to the ultimate fate of the sinner.* It leaves every man with his Maker and Judge, and declines for itself the judgment-seat. There is a fine reserve in the utterance of St Peter as to Judas—he went “to his own place.” Reserved as to another, charity is *unsparing in the*

*summons to each person to ask, Is it I?* What was done by one of mankind is possible for any one of mankind. If we have been kept from the great transgression, whose, whence, has been the strength? May there not, after all, be approaches to it in our own character and history? Or, may there not, at other points of our nature, be yieldings to sin? "Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord. Let us lift up our heart with our hands unto God in the heavens."

Lamenta. iii  
40, 41.

Judas sits at the supper-table. The thirty pieces of silver for which he had undertaken to guide the minions of Priest and Scribe to his Master are in his purse. He cannot yet break away. "Hold Him fast," he said afterwards to the soldiers. "Aye, thou false-hearted Apostle,<sup>Matt. xxvi. 48.</sup> He has held thee fast. Even now, the cry of the Saviour's heart is, How shall I give thee up? See the hand is stretched forth. It offers thee a token of kindness, the morsel which He Himself has dipped—affecting sign that the old relation is still unbroken. Wilt thou not surrender to this last appeal? Wilt thou not pour out thy guilty heart before that patient, yearning gentleness? It is the last moment of the eleventh hour; only this one remaining moment, Judas! Judas!—"

Alas, what means the opening door? Is it

the door of grace? or the door of judgment? One coming in, coming to the Christ? or, one going out, going from the Christ? That poor soul is going out—

The door is closed. He has gone out. There is a terrible power on him. He had not meant to do it just then. But now he *must* go. "That thou doest do quickly," has been spoken.

*Jehn xiii. 30.* Immediately he must depart; "*and it is night.*"

A grand, awful word! It is night, for he has left Christ. The blackness of the eternal darkness enwraps him, as it enwraps every man between whom and the love and light of God there is the door which himself has closed.

## VI.

### THE WORD OF RELIEF.

ST JOHN xiii. 31, 32.

“Now is the Son of man glorified.”

“NOW,” a burden has been removed, a darkness has passed, a restraint has been withdrawn. It is a word of relief—the bird in the human heart of Jesus flying again to its mountain. The presence of Judas has hindered the revelation of Himself to His disciples. At length the word has been spoken which released the betrayer for his deed and Christ for His work. *“Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now—”*

John xiii. 31.

What farther? May reader and writer be so taught of the Spirit of Truth as to “comprehend with all saints what is the length, and depth, and breadth, and height” of the twofold <sup>Ephes. iii. 18.</sup> *glorifying*—the present and the future—set forth in the saying which, we suppose, immediately followed the departure of the son of perdition.

*Now is the Son of man glorified,  
And God is glorified in Him,  
And God shall glorify Him in Himself,  
And straightway shall He glorify Him.*

John xiii. 31,  
32.

John xii. 27,  
28.

“*Now is the Son of Man glorified.*” The exclamation thrills with the sense of triumph. It is an outburst of Saviour-joy. The sluice has been withdrawn and victorious love pours itself freely forth. When we look back to the chapter immediately preceding, we see how different is the expression of feeling in it from that which now and henceforth marks the discourse of Jesus. In both there is not so much the anticipation as the consciousness of the hour. But, in the former chapter, there is the alternation of joy and sorrow, sorrow and joy. Elation of soul is followed by troubling of soul, that again by the rest of a holy self-recollection. At the supper table, and afterwards, until the agony of Gethsemane swept over the heart, there is perfect calm, wondrous elevation of thought. A brother’s tenderness blends with a Redeemer’s gladness. He has triumphed. The Prince of this world would come again in the garden, but only to find nothing in Him. The subtlest conflict with hell had been connected with the one who had gone out. In him, the spirit wholly opposite to Christ’s had been gathered up. He had

endured this contradiction of sinners. He had been faithful to the mission of Eternal Love. The truth of the Son of Man had been fully vindicated. Now, now, the *glory* is ensphering Him.

*It is the glory of sacrifice*—sacrifice in the form of a perfect separation to God. The world has gone out ; He is now alone with His beloved and with the Father. As we have seen, His last words to the unbelieving world have been spoken ; as that world-spirit was per- *Vide chap. i.* sonated in Judas, it has been permitted to fill up the measure of its guilt. He is the Lamb of God who openeth not His mouth. He is the Holy One of Israel. For the sake of those around Him, and of all who shall believe on Him through their word, He is the altogether sanctified, the very Truth and Love of God.

The glory of the sacrifice is this :

In the first place, *Love enters itself into the position, becomes identified, even to the uttermost, with the need of those for whom it has given itself.* Christ, who had been joined to us in flesh and blood, who had been “ tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin,” is now *Heb. iv. 15.* serving Himself (so to speak) before God instead of us, one with us *there where* only He could reach and find us. The last and crowning act of sacrifice is begun—the act which is peculiar to the cross. For the cross is not merely the

climax of the obedience ; it is the “satisfaction and oblation for the sin of the world.” On it, the Son of Man was “made sin for us”; on His pure and unspotted heart He bore our exceeding misery. The taking of the whole burden of “that which was lost,” loving to the last possibility of loving—that was the sacrifice. And surely we shall add, that was the joy. For love is never so joyful as when the soul loses the sense of distinctness from, becomes perfectly one with, the loved. For *self* to die into another and re-exist no longer apart from, but in and of the other, is the sovereign blessedness of love. It is restless until it realises this; it is glad in the measure in which it does realise this. And what a river-fulness is to the ocean-fulness, that, as I take it, this gladness even at its purest is to that which filled the heart of Jesus when the hour of love’s supreme longing came. “*Now* is the Son of Man glorified.”

But “there is a glory which excelleth :” *The love of the Son perfectly responding to the will of the Father.* So it had been through every hour and act of ministry. The meat of the Son of Man had been to do the will of the Father in heaven. He had lived by the Father : every word corresponding to a voice which He had heard, every motion corresponding to a glance which He had seen. *Now*, the full proof of the Son’s Amen is to be given. Hitherto, he has *done* the will, now He is to *bear*.

Hitherto, it has been the *action*, now it is the *passion*. Hitherto, He had drunk the cup of service, with the assured sense of complacent favour, "My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased;" now He must drink the cup of woful suffering, with the sense of a face withdrawn, the supporting Father's love hidden as behind a murky cloud. Hitherto, there had been *approbation* lighting up the heart, no matter what the opposition of men : now, there is *condemnation*, the righteousness that is against sin exhausting itself on the One made sin. What a word is that, my readers ? "*Made sin for us.*" Oh, let us remember that <sup>2 Cor. v. 21.</sup> it is all of God. It is *not* the Son coming between us and the Father, interposing to save us from the Father. Nay, it is the Father dealing with us through the Son. The Father wills, the Son accepts. The Father makes, the Son is made. The Father will not spare, the Son will not be spared. Behold the glory of the sacrifice :— Absolute oneness, will in man with will in God.

And herein we trace the greatness of the triumph manifest in the word of Jesus. As we see Him with the shadows of Gethsemane and Calvary close to His vision, His soul is rising in sweetest sympathy with the purpose and will of the Father. He is the sent of God. He has no will but God's. He sees right up into the thought of the Eternal Love. The hour is to

be to him one of darkness and agony which it is impossible for language to represent. Hard is the pleading of the flesh to be saved from it. But the spirit has conquered. And for the joy that is set before Him ;—in the conscious fellowship of His Father's love, and of the new way to be opened for men through His broken body and shed blood ;—for that joy, all which must come between Him and its consummation is overlooked ; there is present only the Father's sweet and holy will, that shall see its travail, that shall find its satisfaction, in a world redeemed by the blood of the Son of His love. “Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him.”

Thus far, Jesus speaks to the eleven of a glory which *is*, or, as the verb might rather be rendered, *was*, for it is as certain as if it were concluded. But in the latter part of His word of relief, He speaks of a glorifying *to be* after and through the former glorifying of the Son of Man. There is the more general affirmation, *God shall glorify the Son of Man in Himself*, and there is the more definite “*He shall straightway glorify Him.*”

Ver. 32.

Let us keep in view that the subject of the sentences is the *Son of Man*. The scope of the saying we will observe to be that the Son of Man in whom God is glorified shall be glorified in God. Naturally we connect this word with

the prayer of the seventeenth chapter, “ I glorified Thee on the earth : I finished the work which Thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Thou me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.” If I were to distinguish Cf. xvii. 5. between the word before us and that prayer, I would say that the *Son of Man* is more specially presented in the word before us. In the prayer, it is the Son who came out from the Father, who is in the bosom of the Father, that cries, “ Let me back to the glory which I had with Thee in the praises of eternity.” But, conjoining the two testimonies, the thought suggested is this : There was the anointing of Jesus as the Son of Man at His birth ; there was the anointing of the Son of Man as the Messiah at His baptism ; there was the anointing of the Messiah as the Son of God with power—the administrator of the Holy Ghost, who sits at the right hand of the Majesty on high, all power given to Him in heaven and on earth—in the Resurrection and Ascension. He is *where* He was before ; but He is there *with an addition*. He is the only begotten of the Father and *the Son of Man*. The humanity which was taken into the Godhead in the Incarnation, God, in the raising up of Jesus, has taken for ever into the Godhead : He has glorified it *in Himself*. That is set forth in the Epistle to the Hebrews

as the ground and reason of Christ's priesthood. His glorified humanity is the way of all blessing. In it heaven and earth are made so nigh that we, living by Him, are truly sitting in the heavenly places. The first sign of the glorifying in God Himself is the word of the risen Saviour, "My Father and your Father, my God and your God."

Cap. xx. 17.

"*Straightway*," Jesus adds, shall God thus glorify the Son of Man. The word has a loving glance to the "little children" around Him. His time with them in the old relation is nearly concluded. They may be certain that although they cannot follow Him through the sufferings into the glory, that although His path must be a lonely one, the sun which seems to set shall rise immediately. The lifting up from the earth by the Cross shall begin the real and everlasting glory of the Son of Man in God. There and then "*the Ecce Homo* is changed to the eye of faith into *Behold thy God.*"

Stier, vol. 6.

154.

Here, it may be, the discourse of Jesus is, for a little while, suspended. It is difficult to find such a break in the narrative of St John as will admit the institution of the Eucharistic rite. Objections may be taken to any break suggested. But it seems to me that there is an intrinsic justification of the pause which I have marked. That the word recorded in the 31st and 32d

verses should instantly follow the departure of Judas is highly probable. We can scarcely conceive that it was preceded by any act. All eyes were turned to the centre of the circle which had been broken ; and it was natural that the relief of the Christ-heart should at once find utterance. But the word recorded is a most fit and appropriate introduction to the rite which derives its fullest meaning from the glorifying of the humanity of the Lord, which invites us to feed on the flesh which is meat indeed and the blood which is drink indeed. Therefore, without presuming to do more than indicate a possible sequence, we may suppose that after the solemn, triumphant look upward and forward, Jesus was silent for a time, longer or shorter. None would venture to ask Him anything. Lo ! as the supper proceeds —having approached the stage at which the father of the family was wont, with both hands, to break the cake and pass it around as “the bread of affliction”—the Father of the family represented in the guest-chamber takes bread and blesses and breaks it and gives it to His own, but—*not* as the bread of affliction—as the token and memorial of Himself which the ages to come should hallow as pre-eminently the showing of the Lord’s death until He come.

## VII.

### THE BREAD AND THE CUP.

ST MATT. xxvi. 26-30 ; ST MARK. xiv. 22-26 ; ST LUKE xxii. 19, 20 ; ST JOHN xiii. 33, 34 ; I COR. xi. 23-26.

LIKE the kingdom of which it is the symbol, the ordinance which we call the Lord's Supper did not come with observation. Nothing can be more quiet and simple than the account of its institution. It is difficult to realise that, in the few short sentences which record the consecration of the bread and the cup, the Evangelists relate the appointment of the most solemn and distinctive of the ordinances of the Christian Church. All the more congruous on this account are the sacred narratives to the character of that ordinance. Its impressiveness is not derived from what is external. There is no "pomp, pride, or circumstance" connected with it. Its influence is dependent on the spiritual light which pervades it, on the purpose to which it is consecrated, on the blessing of the Lord which is for ever associated with it.

As it has previously been remarked, the exact period in the history of the evening at which

the institution of the rite occurred cannot be determined. The weight of probabilities seems to me in favour of the time which we have supposed—after the departure of the traitor, and the utterance of the words occasioned by his departure. But the Synoptists are content with the general statement, “As they were eating ;” Matt. xxvi.  
 “As they did eat.” St Luke merely says, “He  
 took bread.”  
Mark xiv. 22.  
 Luke xxii. 19.

There are variations in the terms which our Lord is represented as employing. One version is, “My body given,” the others merely, “My body.” One is more full in the report as to the cup, beginning with the command, “*Drink ye all of it;*” and adding, “*For this is My blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.*” Another only mentions the giving of the cup and the drinking of it by all, and presents the shorter formula, “*For this is My blood of the new testament, which is shed for many.*” The third omits the reference to the drinking of the cup, and has, “*This cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you.*” Thus we are reminded, as we are often reminded, that a mere verbal accuracy in reproducing the things which Christ said is not of the essence of Divine inspiration. Whatsoever is necessary to a true apprehension of the eternal verities, or to a right reception and observance of His commandments, is set before us;

Matt. xxvi.  
 27, 28.  
 Mark xiv.  
 23, 24.  
 Luke xxii.  
 20.

but a rigid literalism is not in the plan of the illuminating Spirit of Truth. Small deviations in the repetition of the sacred formula probably crept into the use of the Churches, and such deviations the compilers of the Gospels were permitted to present. It is only the worshipper of the letter who is puzzled over them, or who feels that they detract in any degree from the perfect truthfulness and trustworthiness of the histories.

But all the narratives are careful to note the several parts of the action of Jesus, as if each of these parts was essential to the action. They all report that He took the bread ; that He blessed it, or gave thanks ; that He broke the bread which He had blessed ; that He gave the bread thus blessed and broken to His disciples. They are unanimous, too, in describing Him as saying over the bread, "*This is My body.*" Reverting to the account of the Passover ceremonial, we may assume that what the Lord then consecrated was one of the cakes of unleavened bread which were used at the feast. It was customary for the master, at a particular stage, to break two cakes with both hands and render thanks in the sentence, "Blessed be Thou, O Lord our God, the King of the universe, Who bringest forth food out of the earth;" and, having so done, to distribute pieces of the cake to all around, saying, "This is the bread of affliction

which our father's did eat in the land of Egypt." Jesus, we may assume, observed this custom, but changed the word from "This is the bread of affliction," to "This is My body." At a later period,—"after supper,"—probably when the third cup, the cup of Benediction, was passed,<sup>Luke xxii.  
20.</sup> there followed the setting apart of the sign of the new testament in the Redeemer's blood. Pious Israelites were wont, in connection with this cup, to speak of the law given by Moses and the Covenant made with their Fathers. The Lord renews the face of this memorial by testifying "*This cup*"—the one which I am holding, which I give to you—"is the *new* testament." After having thus spoken, whilst the disciples are drinking, He refers a second time that evening to "the fruit of the vine." "*I will not drink of it henceforth, until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom.*" Possibly the word quoted by St John about His speedy departure, whither His "little children" could not come, was associated with this reference. Probably, too, the new commandment was uttered in that moment of high spiritual communion.<sup>Matt. xxvi.  
29. Mark xiv. 25.  
John xiii. 31,  
32.</sup>

There is another account of the institution of the Eucharist, which is in many ways significant.<sup>1 Cor. xi. 23-27.</sup> The first letter of St Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians was written either shortly after or shortly before the first of the Gospels, that of St

Matthew. Its date, we may assume, was about A.D. 57. It contains a distinct and full record of the memorable transaction on the night in which the Saviour was betrayed. Its "almost exact coincidence with the account in St Luke is important, as confirming the tradition of the author of that Gospel being the same as the companion of St Paul." What is most striking is, that it is prefaced by the sentence, "I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you." The sentence undoubtedly suggests that he had obtained the information which now he communicates, not at second-hand, through one of the eleven or by some other channel, but at first-hand, from the Lord Himself. The fact he may have known, but even those who are unwilling to admit the idea of a special conference with Christ allow that the phrase, "from the Lord," may perhaps mean "that he had confirmed to him by immediate revelation what he already knew as a fact"; and if so, we have, in the paragraph of the epistle, an authoritative declaration of the risen Lord Himself, as to His intention to appoint an ordinance of binding force in His church until He come; and an authoritative explanation by Himself of the nature, purpose, and meaning of the ordinance.

Stanley on  
Corinthians,  
vol. i. 241.

Stanley on  
Corinthians,  
vol. i. 241.

Three questions present themselves. *What*

*is the relation of this ordinance to the Old Testament festival? What is its office with regard to the person and work of our Lord? What is its place in the spiritual life and discipline of the Christian Church?*

That the Lord's Supper has some relation to the Passover will be at once conceded. "Christianity," it has well been remarked, "can never separate itself from its historic basis in the religion of Israel; the revelation of God in Christ cannot be divorced from the earlier revelation on which our Lord built. In all true religion; the new rests upon the old." If we suppose that the hour in which Christ sat down with the twelve, and the act by which He hallowed the bread and the cup, mark the transition moment between the old and the new, we are bound to conclude that in the old there is the introduction to the new, and all that is spiritual or essential in the old melts into, and re-exists in, the new.

Robertson  
Smith's Old  
Testament  
in Jewish  
Church,  
Preface, p. 7.

Indeed, it may with justice be affirmed that the Christian supper is the Israelite supper condensed, but with a new meaning and application. Is not this entirely in consonance with Divine thoughts and ways? In the establishment of covenant-signs, God appropriates what already is, only attaching to it a special significance and value. The rainbow, as a physical

phenomenon, existed before the flood; after the flood it was made the sign of the covenant established with Noah. The rite of circumcision was probably in use among the Egyptians before the day of Abraham; it was sanctified as the token of the covenant with Abraham and his seed. Baptism was a custom recognised in Judæa; not only were there the washings prescribed by the law, but there was the immersion of proselytes as the symbol of their separation to a teacher or doctrine. Christ only altered the purport of such washings when He commanded His Apostles to baptize "into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy

Matt. xxviii.  
19.

sanctioned modes, we may conceive that the Holy Eucharist is an adaptation of the great Jewish festival, by which, whilst the catholic truth of the festival is preserved, there is at the same time thrown around it a higher grace and glory. The ceremonial must, in many parts, be altered. There is no need now of the Paschal Lamb, slain "between evenings" and eaten wholly, because Christ the Passover, the very Lamb of God, has been sacrificed for us; and "by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." All that appealed only to the national feeling of Israel may now be omitted. The petty details of the feast can no longer interest those who have

1 Cor. v. 7.

Hebrews x.  
14.

been made free from the law. Thanksgivings have been lifted to a higher plane ; for now we celebrate the deliverance from the curse and bondage of sin ; we give thanks for an Eternal Redemption, in which the whole human family is interested, through which enmities between man and man have been slain, and Jew and Gentile “rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ in whom they have received the reconciliation.” Thus, in the Christian ordinance, the levels of thought peculiar to the Passover have been elevated, whilst all that transcended the limits of Jewish history, that witnessed for the universally good and true, has been as it were epitomised. At the Table of the Lord, the whole Israel of God is represented : the two Testaments are united in Him who is manifested as the Bread of Life ; we can look upwards and say—

“ Now of Thy love we deem  
As of an ocean vast,  
Mounting in tides against the stream  
Of ages gone and past.

“ Both theirs and ours Thou art,  
As we and they are Thine ;  
Kings, Prophets, Patriarchs—all have part  
Along the sacred line.”

But, in respect of the Eucharist, we must keep in view another principle on which our

estimate of the relation of the Old Testament to the New should proceed. We are in the habit of saying that the one presents the type, the other the antitype. Be it so. But the nature of the antitype is declared, not so much by the points of resemblance between it and the type, as by the points of difference. The law is only the *shadow*, it is not the *image* of the good things to come : we can trace an outline, but we cannot discern the reality. It is through the contrasts between the Law and the Gospel : by indicating wherein the verities of the gospel excel the ordinances of the law,—have the efficacy which is wanting in the rites of “the worldly sanctuary,”—that the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews sets forth “the great salvation,” the “more perfect tabernacle” of which Christ is High Priest for ever. Let us not then regard the Lord’s Supper as only the Passover revived in another form. As the husk protects the seed until it is sufficiently matured to burst into fulness of life, so the economy of the law protected the truth of spiritual services “until the time of Reformation.” There was a reformation of all things in Christ. His feast is a new thing. It is observable how careful St Paul is to disengage it from its first Jewish setting. There is no reference whatever in his narrative to the Paschal supper. He does not speak of the night on which this Supper was held ; he

Hebrews ii.

<sup>3</sup> Hebrews x.

ii.

Hebrews  
ix. 10.

speaks “of the night in which the Lord was betrayed.” His thought is occupied only with Christ, with the preaching of His death in sacramental act, with the communion in His body and blood. The commentary on the Supper is not the Passover ceremonial, or the history which that ceremonial depicted; it is—as the Apostle’s language implies—the discourse of Christ concerning Himself as the Bread of Life. John vi. 32-58.

The first Christians understood this. They did not at once break from the worship of the Temple; they were “continually in the temple, praising and blessing God.” But they had Luke xxiv. 53. their own distinctive worship too. The believers assembled together to offer their homage to the Risen Saviour, and provoke to love and good works, and in their assemblies, the crowning bond at once of their fellowship with the Lord and with one another was the breaking of bread. Acts iii. 12. That was, at an early period, at least in some Gentile churches, associated with the love-feast—a proof that the Christian instinct beheld in the Supper of Jesus an institution more flexible, more clothed with sweet and gentle humanities, than the somewhat stately and formal celebration of Israel’s Passover.

Thus, then, the Lord’s Supper, conserving all that was true in the Old Testament ordinance, occupies a place of its own as the symbol of the

new covenant. The inquiry next suggested is, *What is its office with regard to the person and work of the Lord?*

The intimacy of its relation to Him is asserted in His own words and enforced by His own action. He pointed to Himself when He instituted the rite; He associated the bread with His body, and the cup with the Testament in His blood; He consecrated the eating and drinking by the reference, "in remembrance of Me." What He was to them; what He is for them; what He would be in them—it is with this that He immediately connects the thought of His own. Christendom, in every age, has kept the charge of her Lord, and has designated the simple meal which can be traced to the night of the betrayal as emphatically *His Supper*. Controversy enters only when the effort is made to interpret the sacred formula, or to define the mode of the identification of the elements with the facts to which they correspond—the body and blood of Christ.

To exhibit and discuss theories on a subject so abstruse is foreign to my purpose. My readers will share the sentiment expressed by Canon Farrar, when he says:—"The transubstantiation and sacramental controversies which have raged for centuries around the feast of communion and Christian love are as heart-saddening as they are strange and needless. They would

never have arisen if it had been sufficiently observed that it was a characteristic of Christ's teaching to adopt the language of picture and emotion. But to turn metaphor into fact, poetry into prose, rhetoric into logic, parable into systematic theology, is at once fatal and absurd. It is to warn us against such error that Jesus said so emphatically, *It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you they are Spirit and they are life.*"

Yet, it is necessary to guard this statement. The "language of picture and emotion" is not to be opposed to the language in which definite meanings are attached to phrases. It is not to be regarded as inexact, wholly figurative, speech. When Christ says, "This is My body," we are not to exclaim, "Oh, that is mere poetry, a mere pictorial setting of the thought that, in some way, the bread reminds us of Him." We must maintain that there is a special office between the bread and the very body of the Lord. Our contention is only that the truth of the words which Christ has spoken is not to be sought in what appears to the mind of the flesh, not in the mere letter, but in the spiritual sense which the spiritual mind discerns. Endeavouring thus to apprehend them, let us trace a more *general* and a more *special* ministry in the Holy Eucharist. It is a *memorial of Christ*; it

"Life of  
Christ," vol.  
ii. p. 292.

is a means of communicating Himself as the bread of the eternal life to as many as receive Him.

Luke xxii.  
19. Cor. xi. 24. “*In or into the remembrance of Me*”—this is the clause which we find in the accounts of St Luke and St Paul; and even supposing that the clause had been omitted, the action observed in the administration of the ordinance would have explained its purport. Every part of it is “in remembrance” of the successive stages in the “revelation of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.” The taking of the bread suggests the incarnation; the breaking suggests the life of humiliation and the death of sacrifice; the free gift of the virtue of the death and the salvation by the life is declared in the giving of the bread; the filling and drinking of the cup are significant of the pouring out of the blood for the remission of sins. But, in the express appeal which He makes to the loyalty and gratitude of the heart, Christ has manifested Himself as the Man who “knew what was in man.”

It is part of what we may call the *unselfish selfishness* of love to desire acknowledgment. It waits for a response in order that, through this response, it may be the more fully associated with the beloved. Its gratification is not only in what it receives, but in the opportunity which it has, through the answering love, of passing into the innermost place of the soul. One of those indications whose aggregate is an

evidence of immortality is the wish to be remembered, as proved by putting some token into the hand of the one to be left behind as a special *keep-sake*. It is not from the fear of being forgotten that parent or friend does this ; he does it in the conviction that he will not be forgotten ; the craving is that the keep-sake shall serve as a special point of conjunction between the one that is taken and the one that is left—that, in which the testimony is borne, “love’s too precious to be lost.” And we are all aware of the influence exercised by even little things which are, in some way, particularly related to the dead. The toy which is kept in “the place apart,” telling of the little hand that has vanished ; the seal or ring or trifle which reminds of the dying bed whence it was given us ; anything which is separated from all other objects by its association with the departed, which is wholly sacred to him, is invested with a power of quickening and intensifying recollection, of gathering up the effect of the presence and transforming it into “a shaping spirit of imagination.” The remembrance is not exhausted by the special moment or act ; the special moment or act communicates an impulse which is felt through the life.

So with Christ’s Holy Supper. I am sure that the appointment of it comes straight from the humanity in Him. It is a most tender,

gentle, irresistibly human commandment. To refuse to keep it seems to me equivalent to the refusal to acknowledge Him in the definite way which He has marked out. It is to refuse Him the gratification of love. I never see the multitudes passing into the houses of prayer in this city on a communion Sunday—all bent on one service, and that a service of simple loyalty to Christ, a confession of Him and fellowship with Him—without feeling that to the human heart of the Lord this must be a pleasing and joyous spectacle. The welling up of so many fountains which His love has unsealed ; the lifting of so many eyes to Him ; persons of all temperaments, diversities of condition, learned and unlearned, high and low, rich and poor, all finding in Him a common centre, an everlasting bond of unity ; the glorifying of Him in His death and resurrection—surely herein He sees the travail of His soul. Not merely to be loved must He desire this, but in order that His love may blend itself with all the life of His own—that being thus received into the experience of men He may sup with them and they with Him.

And we who do this *in remembrance* are thereby strengthened in the remembrance of Him continually. Let us not suppose that Jesus instituted the rite lest He should *not be remembered*. He pre-supposes in the appointment the love of those whom He addresses. Because they are

His, He bids them in solemn service remind themselves of all that He is to them as Lord and Saviour, and all that they are bound to be to Him as His loving people, redeemed with His blood. The Eucharist is not *the remembrance*; it is a memorial *into* the remembrance. It is an ordinance, the purpose of which is that from it there shall proceed the law of the devotion which is to inspire all the life. "In this ordinance of the Lord's Supper, as it were, is the reservoir; out of it there come the streams that freshen and gladden the piety of daily life. Only remember, not the outward act, but the emotions which it kindles, are the reservoir. Not sitting down there and taking the cup in your hand, but the deeper glow of feeling which is legitimately kindled therein, and the intenser faith which springs therefrom—these are the fountains which will nourish verdure and life through the dusty days."

"Maclaren's  
Sermons," p.  
<sub>26.</sub>

But it must be remarked that the remembrance of Christ is not set before us as the principal matter of the command, "Do this." That is the *direction* but not the *substance* of the command. What we are to do is to take and eat, to take and drink; eat that over which the sentence has been pronounced, "This is My body," drink that of which it has been said, "This is the new testament in My blood." In view of this, I have spoken of the Lord's Supper as a *means by which Christ communicates Himself to His Church.*

The position which I would assume in regard to the words of our Lord, as has already been indicated, is briefly this:—They are no more to be interpreted in the mere letter than are such words as “I am the door,” “I am the true vine,” to be held as declaring that Christ is literally a door, or literally a vine. To suppose that the bread which the Lord held in His hand had been changed into His body—the body in which He was then amongst His disciples—is to suppose that which is “repugnant to reason.” To insist that, after consecration, when there has been truly the intention to consecrate, bread ceases to be bread, although retaining the accidents of bread, and becomes the very body of Christ in which He is offered up to His Father, is to insist on that which is “repugnant not to Scripture alone, but even to common sense and reason, and overthroweth the nature of the Sacrament.”

“Confession  
of Faith,”  
cap. 29.

Nevertheless, the words of institution are not to be explained away. If we ask, Has Christ, in any other discourse, shed light on the meaning which He attaches to them? our answer must be that the fullest exposition of that spiritual truth is to be found in the sermon preached at Capernaum on the bread of life. Not that we are at liberty to say, this sermon was intended to be the commentary on the doctrine of the Supper. It has a signification apart from and beyond the outward

ordinance. But the ordinance, for all that is most blessed and real in its observance, refers us to that sermon. There we have the Lord Himself interpreting what is the reality signified by the bread to be eaten and the cup to be drunk. We can trace some differences in utterance between the earlier and the later speech. The earlier uses the *future* tense, "The flesh which I *will* give for the life of the world;" the later uses a *present* with the John vi. 51. force of a *past*, "My body, which is broken, is *being* broken,"—the same consciousness of the death as already a fact which appeared in the exclamation, "Now is the Son of Man glorified." The earlier speaks only of the *flesh*, the later speaks of "the *body*;" and it is difficult to dissociate from the "body" the fuller new testament conception of the Church as Christ's body—Himself being its head—so that the bread of the sacrament may be regarded as the representation of the whole Christ, Head and body, the unity formed and fulfilled in the sacrifice of the flesh.

But the essential point of the teaching in the earlier sermon, which we transfer to our understanding of the Eucharist, is that in it we are called, in a true although spiritual sense, to realise our part in, to eat and drink of, the body and blood of the Son of God. Everything connected with such a rite has its

value: We may note the change of tone in regard to its two parts. The one part is directly related to "My body;" the other, which was "after the Supper," is directly related to the new testament *in* the blood, not to the blood itself. The one points us to the seat and principle of all our nourishment in body and soul—we live out of, we live by, the humanity of the risen Christ; the other reminds us of the position which we occupy, and calls us individually to realise its blessedness. "You who are feeding on Christ in your hearts with thanksgiving, drink ye all of the new testament in His blood." And what, my readers, is the pledge which, through the action He appoints, our Lord is giving us? Is it not that when, in obedience to Him, we do this, He makes our doing effectual to spiritual nourishment and growth in grace? By the co-operating power of the Holy Spirit, there is, simultaneously with the eating and drinking of the sacramental mysteries, an eating and drinking of the truths which they represent. Christ, in His broken body, gives Himself anew to us; we appropriate anew our share in His testament with all its benefits. It is not an empty rite—not a mere, although touching, ceremony—it is a transaction between Christ and us, the measure or proof of which is *not our feeling of something, but His will to bestow, who is "able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that*

*we ask or think."* I believe that the Lord's table is indeed the communion table; that it is the place and the manner of special communion, Christ with the life of man as well as the life of man with Christ. "We partake not now of a dead sacrifice, such as the Israelites ate, but of a *living*, the life and immortal communication of which was not attained to in the old covenant." <sup>Ephesians iii. 20. "Stier," vii. 119.</sup> This sacrifice is communicated to the Church through the Supper of the Lord, and each person, in the membership of the Church, whose mouth is opened to receive and assimilate it is, in the Supper of the Lord, a communicant in this sacrifice. "Eat," "My flesh is meat indeed;" "Drink," "My blood is drink indeed. As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me shall live by Me." <sup>John vi. 55. 57.</sup>

An ordinance thus related to the person and work of Christ cannot but occupy *a place of marked importance in the life and discipline of the Church*. To define this place, as foreshadowed in the institution and illustrated by Christian experience, will be the object of the following chapter.

## VIII.

### THE LORD'S SUPPER IN HIS CHURCH.

ST JOHN xiii. 33-35 ; ST MATT. xxvi. 29 ; ST MARK xiv. 25.

"When ye come together. . . . to eat the Lord's Supper"—  
I Cor. xi. 20.

TO the first disciples the recollection of the evening in the upper room was enhanced and enforced by the recollection of appearances after the resurrection in which their Lord "was known of them in breaking of bread." When Luke xxiv. John xxi. 13. the Holy Ghost brought "all things to their remembrance," and taught them the meaning of these things, as embodied both in word and deed, the meal which had been instituted became the most prominent feature of their fellowship. In the course of time, there grew up around it conceptions which in part were borrowed from the heathen mystery, and in part were the expression of the sacrificial aspect of the Paschal Supper. And thus the notion of a sacrifice—not merely an "oblation of all possible praise" to God, but a presentation, a repetition, of the offering made by Christ, gradually overshadowed and obscured the earlier

and purer ideas of memorial and communion. But no such notion confused the thought of Christians in the apostolic period and in the century succeeding. Happy men! They knew nothing of Eucharistic controversies! They were content to recall what their Master had said and done; they felt—without needing to elaborate any system or doctrine on the subject—that the “cup of blessing which they blessed was the communion of the blood of Christ, and the bread which they broke was the communion of the body of Christ.”

1 Cor. xi. 16.

A beautiful glimpse of the Christian community in the first hour of morning is given in a passage from the book of the Acts of the Apostles previously alluded to. The “three thousand souls” added to the church on the day of Pentecost, “continued stedfastly in the Apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in *breaking of bread* and in *prayers*.” “And all that believed. . . . continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and *breaking bread from house to house*, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart.” There can be little doubt Acts ii. 42-46. that this eating of meat had a symbolic and sacramental character. Probably, a simple, social feast was held of which all shared, and in which, as its climax, there was the special remembrance of Jesus in the blessing of the bread and the cup. How this would be done we are

enabled to conceive from the description of the custom of the churches given by Justin, who was put to death about the year 165 A.D. "There is brought," he says, "to the president of the brethren bread and a cup of wine mingled with water, and he, taking them, gives praise and glory to the Father of the Universe, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and offers thanks at considerable length for our being counted worthy to receive these things at His hands. And when He has given thanks, and all the people have expressed their assent, those who are called by us deacons give to each of those present to partake of the bread and wine mingled with water over which the thanksgiving was pronounced, and for those

<sup>"First Apo-</sup>  
logy," cap.  
<sup>65.</sup>

Such was the practice in the assemblies of believers in the second century, when, in consequence of abuses which had occasioned scandal, the reception "of the food called the Eucharist" was disengaged from the meal in which "every one took his own supper." In the beginning, when it was the crowning act of such a meal, the custom must have been even more simple than that sketched by the Christian Father.

Taking a more general view of the ordinance, the inquiry awaiting our consideration is, What

has its appointment and observance secured for the life and discipline of the church? A wide question, at only three sides of which we can glance!

*It is the Ark of the Church's Testimony.*—“As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup ye do show, ‘or preach,’ the Lord’s death.” *There* is <sup>1 Cor. xi. 26.</sup> the central point of Christian truth—the person of Christ. *There* is the central position of Christian faith — the death of Christ as the basis of reconciliation with God and all spiritual blessing. *There* is the central privilege of Christian fellowship—the proclaiming or preaching of that death. The Lord’s Supper stands in the midst of Christendom the abiding witness for essential and everlasting verity.

Is not this an unspeakable gain? Recollect, for instance, some of the tendencies of thought which have been manifest in successive ages; and see how good it has been that the Lord has “lifted up a standard against the enemy coming in like a flood.”

Isa. lix. 19.

One of such tendencies is towards *a kind of philosophical speculation which uses historical fact only as a convenient symbol.* In the early times, there were those who spiritualised Scripture to such an extent that the literal sense was “nothing accounted of;” on the words of Scripture was constructed an edifice of fan-

tastic creations, sometimes beautiful, sometimes really interpreting a hidden truth, but sometimes also far-fetched, even "handling the word of God deceitfully." Against this school of allegorists, there remained ever the protest of a rite which had no meaning at all, unless the plain fact of Christ's death, with the history to which it belonged, was fully admitted. And so with regard to "the generation, O how lofty its eyes!" who in these same times spun their fancies about the *gnosis*, the inner, recondite truth, to which only the initiated might attain, who developed what St Paul saw to be working in his day, "the profane and vain babblings" against which he warned the ministers of God. Let us not think that our age is, or any age can be, free from the peril of systems of thought which would separate religion from any special record of history. Indeed, that represents a marked feature in much of the culture of the day. The facts to which Christianity appeals are regarded as mere shapes in which religious ideas have taken form—shapes to be retained or set aside in proportion as their fitness is recognised by the mind. But, what is to be made of the rite which the immemorial use of the Christian Church has hallowed as the sign and seal of the Catholic faith? Turn where we may, it meets our view, and always it points to Jesus Christ, who was born, lived,

"suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, buried, and rose again on the third day." It insists on keeping the truth as it is in Jesus firmly rooted and grounded in the soil of sober history. From all intellectual wanderings, it draws the heart ever to the fire —ever to the cross and the death of the Lord. It is a law and testimony; if any speak not according to it, it is because the true Christian Isa. viii. 20. light is not in them.

Another tendency fraught with danger is *to substitute a mere religious morality for salvation from sin through the blood of Christ.* The revolt of many minds from what is called "the blood theology" is undoubted. And it must be confessed that occasion for this revolt has, too often, been given by hard and harsh utterances as to the satisfaction of the eternal righteousness demanded from and yielded by the Redeemer. But who can say, remembering that of which all are invited to drink—"the new testament in *my blood shed for many, for the remission of sins*"—that it is possible, consistently with its own claim, to reduce the new testament of our Lord to an ethic, however pure and lofty ; to think of Him as only an example, however perfect, of obedience to the will of God and sympathy with men. So long as the Lord's Supper is exalted in the Church, it will be impossible to expel the conviction that there

is something in the death of Christ which the thought of an example cannot exhaust, something more in His sufferings than the pain of the righteous, than even the pressure on a pure and unspotted heart of the consciousness of "our exceeding misery ;" that, beyond all this, in a region which we cannot penetrate, there was on the Cross made "a full, and perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, satisfaction, and oblation, for the sin of the whole world." It is enough to say this ; and, for the rest, to imitate the wise reticence of Bishop Butler—" *How and in what particular way* it had this efficacy there are not wanting persons who have endeavoured to explain, but I do not find that Scripture has explained it."

"Analogy,"  
part ii. cap. 5.

What is the testimony of the Lord's Supper ? Let me state it in the words of a prelate remarkable for his shrewdness—" If Christ had been merely a martyr—the greatest of all martyrs—to the cause of divine truth, it would indeed have been natural that his death should have been in some way solemnly commemorated by the Church ; and perhaps by some symbolical commemoration of the *death* itself ; but not by the *eating and drinking* of the symbols of His body and blood. This would be an unmeaning and utterly absurd kind of ceremonial in celebrating a mere martyrdom, such as that of Stephen, for instance, or of any other martyr however eminent."

Thus, then, in eating the Lord's Supper we show the Lord's death ; we take our part in the preaching of the sermon "world without end," whose text is, "Jesus Christ and Him crucified." As the word of testimony was contained in the ark, so the word, the ministry of reconciliation, is contained in the ordinance which Christ appointed on the night in which He was betrayed.

The Lord's Supper is the *sign of the one body, the expression and bond of Christian union.* I do not suppose, as some thoughtful expositors have suggested, that the *matter* of the new commandment recorded by St John was the institution of the Supper ; and that the latter part of the verse in his Gospel, "*That ye love one another ; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another,*" describes only the intention of, the John xiii. 34. purpose to be served by, the commandment, or the meal which Christ enjoined. This seems to me a forced and unnatural interpretation. The substance of the commandment, which is called *new*, is Love ; and that which makes it new is the measure now presented, the rule now given, the motive power now called into exercise. That men should love one another is a teaching of any and every form of natural piety : it is a law as old as human nature. But that men had not fulfilled this law, that the perception of its universal character had scarcely visited and

influenced human thought, is simply the teaching of history. A man as such was not accounted a brother. It was a virtue to hate the foreigner. The slave was the mere chattel of his master. The neighbour was a fact recognised only in so far as it was convenient to recognise him. What was wanting was that which Christ supplied—a standard to which the appeal of the heart was straight and direct; a centre of unity; a spirit of life prompting irresistibly to love; a fellowship which would educate the charity which “still enlarged as it receives the grace includes creation in its wide embrace”—“Even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.”

The “new commandment” is a word at once of the Father to His little children, and of the Master to His disciples. A *word of the Father* spoken in the prospect of being shortly separated from His own, of His going whither they cannot follow. In His absence, He reminds them that they shall find their solace and strength, they shall realise, too, His spiritual presence, in the warmth of a mutual love derived from and resembling His love to them. A *word of the Master*, assuring them that their witness for Him, and their highest power on the world outside would be found, not in mighty works which should excite wonder and admiration, but in the silent, yet ever convincing action of

love. “*In this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another.*”

John xiii. 35.

So it was. We recall—we read with something of mournful interest, because the expression of the love is fainter in the Church of this day than it should be—we recall the words of the Christian apologist, in which he witnesses for the spirit of the Church before yet the third century of the Christian period had dawned, and exhibits the width of the interval by which the new commandment had separated it from the world. Addressing the rulers of the Roman Empire thus, he writes :—“ It is mainly the deeds of a love so noble that lead many to put a brand upon us. See, they say, how they love one another, for themselves are animated by mutual hatred ; how they are ready even to die for one another, for they themselves will sooner put to death. And they are wroth with us, too, because we call each other brethren, for no other reason, as I think, than because among themselves names of consanguinity are assumed in mere pretence of affection. But we are your brethren as well, by the law of our common mother nature, though you are hardly men, because brothers so unkind.”

Now, in the ordinance of Christ's Supper all the essentials of the new commandment are presented. The commandment is the *soul* of the new testament in the Redeemer's blood of

“Tertullian  
Apologeti-  
cus,” par. 39.

which, in the cup, we drink. It is the *life* of the Life which we receive through the body, of which, in the bread, we sacramentally eat. More particularly, we may observe—

In the commandment Christ does not bid His disciples love men as men. That was the end to which He looked forward, but, as the means to this end, He proposed a love, man to man, in and because of the love of men to Himself. It is to this love and loyalty that the Holy Supper calls us. What it asks is a supreme and constant devotion to Him. Creed, ritual, government—all are moved aside; it is purely and only into the remembrance of Him that we “do this.”

In the commandment Christ speaks of the infusion of His own love, His own Self, into all thus loving Him and keeping His words. Their love is but the outward movement of His love in them, the manifestation of Himself as truly dwelling in them. The reality of the Holy Supper is this indwelling of Christ, this passing of His life into, that it may be assimilated by, the spiritual nature, as food is assimilated by the physical. In the consciousness of union with Him we may feel ourselves so possessed by His spirit that it is not the language of exaggeration to say, “I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.” And, as each type of existence yields fruit after its kind, so this

Divine eternal life has its natural organic expression in a love to others, *such as His love in us.*

In the new commandment, Christ implies the fact of a society, with a distinct corporate character, whose members are bound to each other in a speciality of relation, in affections and sympathies of peculiar vitality and warmth. Afterwards, in His prayer to the Father, He dwells on the truth of this communion, "I in them and Thou in Me, that they may be one in us." The Holy Supper is the token and pledge of this fellowship, "We being many are" declared to be "one bread and one body, for we are all partakers of <sup>1 Cor. x. 17.</sup> that one bread." There is no feature more distinctive than this—that all Christians are members one of another, because they are all members of the one Christ.

"Is Christ divided? Yea, for us,  
The one white loaf He breaks ;  
But every piece is bread, and thus  
Of one strength each partakes."

Nor do we limit this fellowship to those actually associated with us in the celebration of the meal; not even to those who form Christ's family on earth. The Lord's table, wherever it is spread, is the gathering point for all the family. *There* the whole Church is together. A pity it is that the rite which we name *the Communion* should so often be regarded as a line of separation, rather than that in which

all lines of separation are obliterated, and we are borne into the midst of the One Body. Oh, my reader, shall we not seek deliverance from all that narrows the sense of the Communion of Saints? Shall we not cherish more the feeling of Christendom? Shall we not endeavour more vividly to realise that Christendom is a larger word than we can measure; that it includes the dead who have died, as well as the living who live, in the Lord; that "death makes no vacancy in its lists, but at its banquet-table the perfected spirits of just men, with an innumerable company of angels, sit down beside those who have not yet sur-

*Ecce Homo,* rendered their bodies to the grave."

cap. 15.

Thus the Lord's Supper, substantiating the new commandment, is the sign of the One Body; and as such it is scarcely possible to over-estimate its influence on the history and discipline of the Church. It has kept the heart warm. Its "still small voice," overborne by the strife of controversy, has always been heard after the earthquake. It has supplied a force which works deeper than all that breaks the unity of the body. It has its word of separation—separation from "the world that lieth in wickedness." But it binds the separated people together; presenting the hallowed memorial, it repeats the gentle word, "*Love one another, as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.*"

Finally, *the Lord's Supper marks the horizon of all Christian worship and service.* “*Till He* <sup>1 Cor. xi. 26.</sup> *come*” is part of the institution as received by St Paul. And is not this clause only the epitome of the word which two of the evangelists report our Lord to have uttered after He had charged His disciples to drink of the cup. Let my readers observe that there is a *first*, and that there is a *second*, announcement as to the drinking of Christ with His own. The first, related by St Luke, *preceded* the appointment of the Eucharist. It was the declaration that He <sup>Luke xxii. 18.</sup> would not share the Passover-cup with them until it had received its completion in the sacrament to be observed after He had risen from the dead. But now, having instituted the sacrament, there is still the look forward; there is the second of the announcements referred to, and this time we trace a difference. Having passed the cup, the Master subjoins, “But I say unto you, ‘I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, *until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom.*’” Mark, <sup>Matt. xxvi.</sup> *it is not merely “drink wine anew with you.”* <sup>29.</sup> <sup>Mark xiv. 25.</sup> What is pointed to is a *new wine*—wine of a higher quality, of another kind and character—that which is to be drunk when the kingdom of the Father is fully come. The Apostle's clause identifies this kingdom-coming with the Church's “blessed hope”—the coming of her Lord.

Therefore, the Holy Supper is prophetic as well as commemorative. We not only rest in thought on what has been finished; we anticipate in desire the glory yet to be manifested. Our thanksgiving is for the death, in the expectation of the appearing, of the Lord. In every celebration of the rite, there is a witness borne to the still imperfect condition of the Church. We have only the first fruits of the spirit. The kingdom *is*, but it is only *in its beginning*. We possess but the token-penny, the earnest, of the inheritance. This is not the final dispensation. We have not yet attained, neither are we perfect. It were sad to be shut up to the belief that the period which began when the Lord was received out of sight is the realisation of His marriage supper. No; we are seeing through a glass darkly: the seeing face to face is yet to be. We have truths, festivals, governments, ministries, only in fragments; the harmony, the order in which all is proportioned—"that which is perfect"—is to come. This is what the table prepared for us certifies. Many minds have many opinions as to the manner of the second advent; but all Christians, in eating and drinking according to Christ's commandment, are exhorted to look for, and hasten the day of, the Lord—"that day when He shall drink the new cup with His Disciples in His Father's kingdom."

"*Even so, come Lord Jesus.*"

## IX.

### THE TABLE-TALK.

ST JOHN xiii. 23-25, and 36-38.

CONVERSATION usually followed the passing of the third cup at the Paschal Supper. The ceremonial of the feast having been observed, there was then liberty for the exchange of thought among the members of the family. Thus, after the blessing of the bread and the cup by our Lord, the fulness of speech, hitherto restrained, poured forth. Follow the course of the stream as it rolls on to the end of the seventeenth chapter—oh, my readers, what depths of love are there! It is related that, towards the close of his life, the illustrious Vinet contemplated the exposition of these precious words. He stopped: He exclaimed, "*A Divine confusion!*" It is difficult to distinguish the sequences and connections of the discourse. We cannot divide it into paragraphs, each presenting a point distinct from all the others. The speech is too spontaneous, too much the thinking aloud of love intense in its

consciousness, and *seeing* the truth it expresses, to be held in by the bit and bridle of human logic. Let it be said with reverence that it belongs to a region in which the poor rules of composition and utterance avail not. Who would describe it as eloquent? Who would attach to it any of the phrases which we are wont to attach to the excellency of the wisdom of men? No; this outpouring of the heart of Christ must not be too minutely analysed; we must not insist on measuring it by the canons of rhetoric, or mapping it out according to the plan of the dialectician. With regard to it, preeminently, the voice of the Eternal may be heard, "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at My word." Let us say, with Vinet, "A Divine confusion," and forbear from searching for a scheme or schedule in which a place is found for every sentence, and a consecutive development of ideas is traced.

Isa. lxvi. 2.

It is a *consolation* which Christ unfolds. We can see that, in the unfolding, He passes from the condition of His disciples immediately consequent on His departure to the more general condition of His disciples as such. The near and the remote are included in the perspective, but they are always mingled; the Lord returns from one to another, and unites both in many of His sayings. The substance of the consolation

is—*Himself*. It begins, continues, and ends in sublime self-assertion. We can discern the stripes of light in, but always *in*, this self-assertion. First, there is *Himself in the mystery of His own being*; secondly, *Himself in the relation of His person to His own*, as the centre and principle of their life. In the first, the predominating consciousness is the Father; the glance of the Son is to the glory with “the Father’s own self, which He had before the world was.” In the second, the predominating consciousness is the Church; its union with Him; its indwelling Guide and Illuminator; its antagonisms and conflicts; its final and everlasting blessedness. But, here again, there is no clear separation of topics; it is not with sharply cut divisions, but, as has already been said, with *stripes of light* that we have to do. I will not farther analyse. I will not attempt to arrange the discourse in sections. I have read and studied many such sectional arrangements, and none of them has fully satisfied me. Rather let us follow the Master whithersoever, in the revelation of His mind, He goes; seeking only that we listen to Him for His word not for conceptions or commentary of our own, and praying *in the Holy Ghost for the Holy Ghost* whose “anointing teacheth of all things, and is truth, and is no lie.” Verily, we are drawing near <sup>1 John ii. 27.</sup>

to the Holy of Holies in the life of the Son of God.

"That wonderful passage," as one has written in glowing sentences, "from every line of which shines forth the Divinity of Him who spake, though each syllable be tinged with the sadness of a soul which even now gazed full on the agony in the garden, and bore, in prospect, the crown of thorns—syllables, too, which were uttered from the very shadow of the tomb! Who is there that peruses these solemn words whose heart does not burn within him, as each expression of human affection—that sympathy with His earthly brethren which every tone conveys—became the point of contact through which those revelations of the eternal word reach the spirit of man? . . . When difficulties embarrass the reason, and perplexities entangle the intellect—and who is that man over whose understanding doubt has not at times cast its shadow, or whose faith the stern realities of life have not put to the trial?—the fainting soul will find its refuge in the words which introduce this series of promise and encouragement, words which still whisper to our ear the same assurance that once supported the Apostle sinking in the wind-tossed sea: "Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in Me."

Lee on  
Inspiration,  
pp. 35, 36.

Before we attempt to glean in the fields of

thought to which the address of our Lord invites us, let us regard what I may call *some preliminary speech between Him and His disciples*.

Is not this an interesting glimpse? “*Now, there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples whom Jesus loved.*” The little company assembled in the upper room at Jerusalem was the first <sup>Ver. 23.</sup> *Œcumene* Council of the Christian Church. The Apostles “sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel,”—interpreters of the universal theocracy, the true Israel of God. In them the Church of all times, in the manifoldness of the operations, and the diversity of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, was represented on the night in which the Lord was betrayed. The men rich in the practical wisdom of the spiritual life are there—personated in St James. There, too, are the men of critical temperament, ready to believe yet insisting that the ground be sure—the variety personated in St Thomas. There, likewise, are the men of fervent spirit, impetuous resolution, and eager purpose—the variety personated in St Peter. All are within the sphere of Jesus’ attraction. But the *bosom* is reserved for, it is the throne of, the *Johns*. They feel the throbs of the Saviour’s heart. They know Him as He knows the Father. Whose is the Gospel that leads to the Holy of Holies, that opens the door into the Lord’s innermost self? I imagine that none but he

who lay on Jesus' breast had the outline of the last discourse and the last prayer complete in its links, complete in its clothing, in His remembrance. The secret of the Lord was with him—"the disciple whom Jesus loved."

There is a type of mind for which the Lord has prepared "a pavilion from the strife of tongues."

*Ps. xxxi. 20.*

Affectionate, disposed to lean, depending on others "not from want of courage, or from weakness of intellect, but from intensity of affections, because of the trembling spirit of humanity in them," learning Christ by a kind of spiritual intuition—the receptive faculty not hindered by the interception of the combative or critical spirit,—for *this* mind the pavilion is Jesus' bosom. Observe the 24th verse. To know the thought of the Lord's heart, the Simon Peters, the leaders, the primates of the Church, must "beckon" to the Johns. *Theirs* is the power of asking the questions which reach into "the secret place of the Most High."

*Ver. 24.*

*Ps. xcii. 1.*

Between *them* and Christ there are passages along which His voice is borne to them as it is not borne to others. Observe, too, what is suggested by the 25th verse. *Before* he asks, John is described as *leaning*; *when* he asks, he is *lying* on the breast—his ear, as it were, at the very lips of the Master—reposing and listening, and so listening that not the softest tone shall

Robertson's  
Sermons, p.  
251.

*Ver. 25.*

escape him, that he shall catch the whisper of those private communications, through which is bestowed that "hidden manna, and that white stone with the new name written in it, which no man knoweth saving he who receiveth it." My <sup>Rev. ii. 17.</sup> readers, it is in the mind thus bent, all its weight on the Saviour's love, its ear turned to hear, that the music of the Eucharist is evoked, "Blessed be the Lord : for He hath shewed me His marvellous kindness in the city fenced from the pride of man"—the strong city of Jesus' bosom.

<sup>Ps. xxxi. 21.</sup>

But the narrative sets another disciple in our view. It is reserved to *Simon Peter* more immediately to introduce the conference which Jesus holds with His own. We have already considered the dialogue between Simon and his Master occasioned by the washing of the feet. The closing part of the chapter under review proves that, although he may have been for the time solemnised, he is the same *Simon Peter* still, full of "that impetuous curiosity which springs from a lack of self-knowledge and self-communion." "As I said unto the Jews," Jesus had said, "Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you." Was the jealously-loving <sup>Stier, vol. 6, p. 74.</sup> <sup>Ver. 33.</sup> *Simon* offended that a word addressed to *the Jews* should be applied to his brethren and himself? Anyhow, what can this intimation of *going somewhere* mean? Where can He go

that they cannot accompany Him? What new move is contemplated? They had, only a few days ago, followed Him from the farther side of Jordan, although knowing the perils which beset their path; and they are as ready to retrace their steps, to follow Him anywhere from Dan to Beersheba. For the slow-hearted man had failed to penetrate the real meaning of the announcement; and thus there is given the hasty reply, "Lord, whither goest Thou?"

Ver. 36.

Kind yet significant is the answer: "*Whither I go, thou canst not follow Me now; but thou shalt follow Me afterwards.*" "Not now, only afterwards."

Ver. 36.

Why not now, Lord? I will lay down my life for Thy sake." Ah, we can imagine the gentle light in "the quiet eye" of the Master as, bending forward, He asks, with a pathos whose impression will never fade from the soul until the oneness of disciple and Master is declared on the Martyr's cross,

Ver. 37.

"*Wilt thou lay down thy life for My sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied Me thrice.*"

Ver. 38.

O Peter! there are days of sorrow between thee and the hour "when thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not."

Chap. xxii. 18.

Later in this evening, a shadow will again flit across the countenance of the Lord, and ominous words concerning the Satan who desired to

have thee and the little flock, that he might sift you as wheat, will fall from His lips. Again, from thee shall rise the bold protestation, to which the twice repeated warning will have given increased momentum, that though all should forsake Him, yet not thou. O Simon the disciple! there is yet a great gulph between thee and Peter the Apostle. Thou hast yet to learn the lesson which poor human nature learns only through sharp discipline, through many thrusts of that two-edged sword, experience—the lesson that all self-nourished strength is only weakness. Brave, very brave, thou art ; but to the eye of Him with whom thou hast to do, there is present the scene in the High Priest's palace: already He hears the words in which thou shalt flaunt thy denial of Him. Blessed be His name! the warning precedes the fall ; and more than the warning, the intimation of the prayer that has ascended for thee, “that thy faith fail not : and that when thou art converted, thou shalt be able to strengthen thy brethren.” The remembrance of that warning, the virtue of that intercession, will call thee back ; it will cause the bitter tear, “the godly sorrow that worketh repentance.” And Christ will not fail thee until thy thrice-told denial is wiped away by His thrice-asked question, “ Lovest thou Me ?” and His thrice-given charge, “ Feed My sheep, Feed My lambs.”

Luke xxii.  
31-33.

Luke xxii.  
32.

Chap. xxi.  
15-18.

The discourse begins. At first it is interrupted by questions or remarks from one or another of the disciples. Gradually they cease from asking anything, and listen in silence to Him whose life-giving words flow over their souls. For my part, I thank Thomas and Philip and Judas not Iscariot. Their interruptions serve as pauses which permit us to linger over things too deep and high for us. There is a charm, moreover, in this, that, by means of them, the utterance of the Lord is more than a monologue. It is a communion—He with them and they with Him. May we not change the pronouns?—He with *us* and *we* with Him.

## X.

### THE BEGINNING OF THE DISCOURSE.

ST. JOHN xiv. 1-3.

“*Let not your heart be troubled;*” thus begins a Ver. 1 discourse which extends far into the night. The disciples, we suppose, are sad and silent. Simon Peter, from eager protestations of readiness to suffer and die, has been sent back into his own heart to commune and be still. And enough has been said and done to excite in every mind the apprehension of impending sorrow—of a time, not far distant, when those now assembled in the upper room shall be left as sheep without a shepherd. Hitherto the utterance of Christ, although gentle and tender, has been authoritative as that of a master speaking to his scholars, or a father to his children; now all relations must blend in the one, *the Comforter*. Only a little while is left to Him, and that little while must be devoted to the strengthening of His own against the trials and sorrows awaiting them. He contemplates the future rather than the present; in advance of

the dark days which He beholds as already near He would provide them, and all who shall believe in Him through their word, with "a strong consolation." Very artless, very human, are the sentences through which His comfort is conveyed. But how profound the truth with which they are charged! "Those three chapters which M. Renan pronounces to be full of 'the dryness of metaphysics and the darkness of abstract dogmas,' have been, as a matter of fact, watered by the tears of all the purest love and deepest sorrow of Christian humanity for eighteen centuries. Never is the New Testament more able to dispense with external evidence than in those matchless words; nowhere more than here is it sensibly divine."

Liddon's  
Bampton  
Lectures, p.

271.

The demand which Christ makes is an illustration of the simplicity of manner and fulness of meaning alluded to. When all that lies beyond the hour is enwrapped in gloom, and the feeling of uncertainty is predominant, what more natural than to insist that there must be one fixed point, and that fixed point a loyal trust in Jesus Himself? It had been His way, in past times, to make this the condition of the blessing which it was in His heart to give. Now, more than ever, is it called for. The spiritual sustenance of His followers, in the circumstances through which they must pass, is wholly depend-

ent on the relation of their hearts to Him. They must confide in Him absolutely and with unfaltering devotion, in spite of appearances and of all kinds of hostile influences ; they must rely on Him as the One who has access to the hidden realms, and who only knows the Father, to whom the future is naked and opened, and who, having all things in His hands, will never fail and never forsake. Therefore the charge, so sweetly peremptory, “ *Ye believe in God, believe also in Me.*”

Ver. 1.

It is doubtful whether we should regard the two *believes* in this charge as *both indicatives*, or, as in the authorised version, *the one indicative and the other imperative*, or *as both imperatives*. The last of these views commends itself to me. The disciples needed the one believing as well as the other ; they had yet to realise what is involved in a true faith in God. But, however we take the verbs, the essential matter set forth is that Christ claims a confidence, not only like to, but *simultaneous with*, confidence in the living God. How terrible the blasphemy of such a claim if made by a mere creature of the Eternal ! How distinct the witness which it gives that He who spoke the word deemed it no self-enrichment to claim equality with God ! For we must keep the *also* where and as the Lord placed it. The latter *believe* implies the same conditions as the former ; it cannot mean a less and lower

faith than the former. The commandment is, to trust God for being that Father whom the Son has declared, and *also* to trust Him for being the Son to whom God has testified—to trust Him as God alone is to be trusted, and as, indeed, the Lord and God of the human heart.

Is not Christendom built on the *also* of Christ's supper table? Luther has remarked that in this fourteenth chapter "we have the great articles of Christian doctrine in most impressive exhibition, and fundamentally established as in hardly another place of Scripture." This is true. Let

Quoted by  
Stier, vol. 6,  
p. 183.

the reader observe, for instance, the unfolding of the cardinal doctrine of the Trinity. But the first verse is especially significant. Sometimes we turn with a sigh from the elaborate confessions of later ages to the confession summed up in the short saying of the Lord. Less than this there may not be, more than this there need not be, in the faith of a Christian. The *also* must stand out in bold relief, rightly apprehended and firmly grasped; but when it is so grasped the mind holds the essential Christian verity. Is it not this *also* which we have in view in all mission-labour? "Why think of the conversion of the Jews," said a friend lately to one who had appealed to his interest; "the Jews believe as well as ourselves in God, and is not that enough?" Clearly it was not enough, else Christ would not have come into the world and suffered and died.

Clearly it was not enough, else Christ would not have spoken His *also*. To publish *it*, and all that it implies, is the duty which He lays on His Church, as being necessary to the salvation of the world, to the possession of the life eternal. It is the *plus* in respect of which the faith of the Christian Church is apart from and more than every mere theistic religion—a *plus* that is not an addition only, but a new faith. For the trust in God, which is *also* with trust in Christ, is not the same as the trust which is without ; it is an incalculable difference that is realised when we say, “Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

2 Cor. i. 3.

This, then, is the mainstay of the comfort which the Lord would give. Before He opens up its wealth, He asks from His disciples, “*Believe in God, believe also in Me.*”

But He is going away into some unseen state or world. What can His little children henceforth have in common with Him ? They will not even know whither He has vanished. And wherever His abode may be, will He not be separated from them ? What can they rest on ? What is there longer to cling to ? Trust Him ? But where will He be ? What relations will He hold to them ? What is the hope of any reunion with Him ? of any recovery of that fellowship so soon to be broken ? These are the thoughts

which have arisen in their minds ; and He answers them in speech pre-eminently cheering, adapted to their capacity, but partly revealing, and partly concealing, truths and hopes in which troubled hearts of all times should find

Isaiah xxxii. 2. “the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.”

Let us endeavour to gather up some crumbs of the feast spread in the words—How sweet is their rhythm !

*“In My Father’s house are many mansions : if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself ; that where I am, there ye may be also.”*

Vers. 2, 3.

So familiar, be it observed, is the circle of ideas presented. A Father’s house—home with its solid and enduring bliss, its refreshments and solaces, its duties and enjoyments, its sober liberty and beauteous order. The assurance of Him who, as the Son of the Father, abides in John viii. 35. that house for ever is that He will secure for all His little children a right to the good foreshadowed. That to which He points them is not a mere guest-chamber like the one in which they are then assembled. It is a spacious palace with many mansions, with room for them all, and abundance of light and peace ; and in due time He pledges them that He will return to reconstitute the broken fellowship and reunite

the scattered family. How partially they to whom He spoke entered into His mind in thus speaking, the interruptions which follow prove; but the testimony was given in expectation of the day when the spirit of truth should bring all things to remembrance, and open up their hidden meanings. To us, my readers, on whom the mystery of the future and the unseen presses, how precious the glimpses which are furnished of "that sweet and blessed country which eager hearts expect!"

May we not, from Christ's word, infer that *the visible and the invisible alike are in His Father's house?* We distinguish between things seen and things unseen as if they belonged to opposite realms. But there is no such distinction in the mind of God. He is equally in all realms. We do read of a "heaven of heavens."<sup>1 Kings viii.</sup> Jewish Rabbis spoke of seven heavens; but all such classifications and divisions are only imperfect signs of fellowships more or less intimate between the spirit purified by love and Him who is love. In respect of this science, in its progressive discoveries, is the minister of faith, because it is ever completing the evidence of the unity of all worlds. The same great laws, we know, universally operate, the same forces act; all planets, bodies, beings, things, are bound together in mutual and reciprocal influence. All are only

different portions of the one Father's house. Solemn and sweet to reflect that, go where we may, we never can go from Him, that one place is as much God's as another's. "Everything," as John Sterling writes, "is so wonderful, great, and holy, so sad and yet not bitter, so full of death and so bordering on heaven." Solemn and sweet also to reflect that, whatever death may be, God is more than death ; and whithersoever the soul may be bound, it can only pass into some other room in the house. "If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there; if I make my bed in sheol, behold, Thou art there. . . . The darkness hideth not from Thee; but the night shineth as the day : the darkness and the light are both alike to Thee."

Ps. cxxxix.  
8-12.

What is the comfort which the Lord offers to the children of the house ? Standing beside us on the earth, and speaking of that upper kingdom into which He is about to pass, He puts this thread into our hands : "You know one thing ; you know *My Father*. You have seen what He is to Me ; you have felt what, in Me, He is to you. When you are sure of Him, for all that is beyond you have nothing to fear. He will be the same to you *there* as He has been in your sight *here* ; the same love and gentleness and wisdom in which I have lived penetrate every mansion." When I hold this thread, and, holding it, read between the lines of Jesus'

Carlyle's  
"Life of Ster-  
ling," p. 392.

word, a certain home-likeness and homeliness invest the thought of the life that shall be. For it occurs to me to argue thus. Sometimes a person has many mansions. When I am familiar with one of them—with what is characteristic in it of taste, genius, and position—I form an idea concerning the others. I say to myself that what I have found in the one I know will be evidenced in them likewise. Thus, with regard to the unseen and the seen, Christ who came from the one saw everywhere its likenesses and counterparts in the other. And shall not we, going from this world, find the unseen wondrously like to all that spoke to us of our Father here? It will be no strange land; it will be the reality of which this present is the shadow—the light seen in the very light of God. Anyhow, “there or here,” whispers our guide, “it is equally My Father’s house. In all possible states and conditions that house encompasses you, with its revelations of unspeakable love and tenderness. And for all there is a welcome, since in it there are many mansions.”

Do we not, in Christ’s word, perceive that *He has a work with reference to His own in both the worlds seen and unseen?* “I go,” He says, “to prepare a place for you.”

The sentence rises to the heart when we meditate on the dread fact of death. There is

Job vii. 15.  
16.

a temperament which the petulant, passionate cry of Job interprets, "I would not live alway : my soul chooseth death rather than my life."

But this temperament is morbid. A mind healthy in its action is free from it. No doubt, there is an approach to it often to be traced in nobler souls. Wearied by conflict with incertitudes, or by the continual fight with sin, or by the experience of their own ideals remaining mere broken fragments, not seldom do we find men craving release from the burden of the flesh, so that either the wished for light and truth may be enjoyed, or the everlasting silence entered. But, speaking generally, there is a deep, desperate grudge between death and life. To die, when one feels the bound of strength, the thrill of love ! To see the countenance changing, and know, as we see it, that a presence is being sent away ; that we may long for the "sound of a voice that is still," but the longing can never be answered—man does ask, man has ever asked, "Can this cruel captivity be carried captive ?" What we want is not to lose being, but to have more being ; to have better instruments with which to mine in the depths of truth, or, at least, the power of more nobly using the instruments we have ; to be able to carry out all the thought, the desire, the aim of the spirit at the moments of its highest inspiration—not, as now, ever beaten back and baffled and

worsted ; to be purer, truer, wiser, more blessed ; to "know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, and be filled according to all the fulness of God." Does not Jesus interpret this want when Ephes. iii. 19. He bids us think of Him as the *Forerunner* who for us "has entered within the veil ?" when He Heb. vi. 20. says, I am going to fulfil that desire, to prepare a place for you—

"Where faith is lost in sight,  
And patient hope is crowned,  
And everlasting light  
Its glory throws around."

A place made ready by Him ! "It was reserved for Christ," remarks a commentator, "to throw heaven open, in the first instance, by His *word* in the farewell discourses, and, secondly, by His *act* in the ascension itself." The *going*, Lange on St John, p. 449. "the being taken up into heaven," was, in a real sense, the *opening* of heaven to us. How, what the effect of, this entrance of the glorified body of the Lord into the Heavenlies we need not farther inquire. Nor need we enter at length on the question what the preparation of the place includes. Peter and John, listening to their Master, could recall that they had been sent in advance of the rest to *prepare* the room and the Passover. They must have understood—and this is sufficient for us—that the Lord's making ready for His own covers all that is needful, whether in the heavenlies or in them, for the enjoyment of the

glorious things which the Father had prepared for Him and His. It comprehends the whole preparatory discipline of earth, the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, the "making meet for the inheritance;" although the specific thought in His utterance is confined to that which is to be done in the state whither He goes. The place, let us assure ourselves, is there—the mansion for each of the trusting followers ; each his own place, his own crown, his own sphere, his own knowledge of the Lord. As manifold as the character, experiences, aptitudes, of the blessed are the mansions which Christ ensures shall exactly correspond to the persons and the persons to them. For each there shall be the perfected participation in the joy of the Lord ; rest from labour, yet rest in service ; freedom to be and to do all which perfect sympathy with the thought and will of the Eternal Love shall prompt ; increasing desire, but no pain in the desire ; running, but no weariness ; walking, but no faintness. "There is a place by Me," said Jehovah to Moses, "and thou shalt stand upon a rock : and it shall come to pass, while My glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock." What says Jehovah-Jesus to His own ? "A place by Me—I take you to it, that there, not as a mere passing sight but an abiding vision, you may behold My glory." He would not entrust its preparation to other hands : "I

go to prepare ; I come to receive you to Myself."

Does not the word of Christ shed some light on the question as to the *continuance of relationships and intimacies between the dead and the living?* Is death the end of those connections in which life is linked to life? The African savage has his dead laid near his dwelling. In so doing, he darkly feels "They are not lost." Through all sorts of vagaries and superstitions we can trace the idea that the world into which the departed enter is around us, and that between ours and it the communication is unceasing. When we commit the remains of the beloved to the dust, and turn from the hallowed spot, feeling that "there hath passed away a glory from the earth," does there not rise from the inmost self the protest, It is not, it cannot be all over between us; the love that united us is too precious to be lost? And does there not rise towards "the sightless range" which holds the vanished a breathing such as that which the poet has interpreted in his verse ?

"Descend, and touch and enter ; hear  
The wish too strong for words to name ;  
That in this blindness of the frame  
My ghost may feel that Thine is near."

Ah, we wonder and question ! Sometimes we think it strange that He who has "the keys of

Hades and death" should never have opened the hidden regions to our sight, should never have given us more than the hints that are furnished by His last discourse and prayer. The gates are but a little way unlocked ; and, as Bunyan says when his wonderful dream had reached its consummation, "the gates are quickly shut up again," and we are left only to wish ourselves among the blest. But is there not wisdom in this reticence ? Otherwise might not the strength of our interest be diverted from that which is its true course, fellowship with the Eternal and Holy One, to the comparatively profitless course of "seeking, the living to the dead?" But here is a fact full of meaning. There is no break in the relation between Christ and His own. He had never deceived them. He had announced to them beforehand what would happen. He had been perfectly honest and candid with them. And He would have given them notice that the hour which removed Him from their sight was the conclusion of their intercourse, if that had been possible. It was impossible. The consolation mainly depends on the pledged continuance of Jesus with them, nay, on the assurance that, through His departure, His union with them would pass into a higher form, would become more real and intimate than ever. Now, my belief is that the resurrection of Christ is, in all belonging to it, exemplary. He was "the

first begotten of the dead," "the first fruits of them that slept." If death could not alter the realities of His communion with men, if it only made that communion more blessed and close, may we not conceive that so it is with ours and us? Was *He* lost when He passed out of sight? Why shall we think that *they* are lost when our eyes no longer behold them? Did *He* cease to care for His flock when He went to the Father? Why shall we think that *they* have ceased to care for us? Were there no ways of speech from *Him* to those who waited for His word after He had gone? Why shall we think that there can be no speaking from "the quiet shore," spirit to spirit? I, for one, cannot believe that there is a great, bridgeless, gulph between the living and the dead. We are, they are; they in mansions we cannot discern, but the mansions are all in our Father's house; and the heavens are open, and God and His holy ones are continually ascending and descending on the Son of Man.

John i. 51.

Is not Christ's word the token that in both the seen and the unseen worlds the life and joy of the spiritual being are the same? The house is blessed because it is His Father's; it is the vision of the Father, the satisfaction with His likeness, which suffices for the archangel that never sinned as for the sinner who has been snatched

Rev. i. 5.

1 Cor. xv. 20

like a brand from the burning. And the home-  
coming, *how* is it? “*I will come and receive you  
to Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.*”

Ver. 3.

When Martha met Jesus on His way to the house of death she had faith enough to say, “I know that my brother will rise again in the

Chap. xi. 24. resurrection at the last day.” Her verb was in

the *future* tense; and future is too often the tense of Christians when they think of the resurrection. Christ’s tense is the *present*: “*I am* the resurrection and the life: he that liveth

Chap. xi. 25. and believeth in Me *shall never die.*” He has

already risen. This is the victory over death; to be now in conscious possession of a life over which death has no dominion; to have interests and associations which join us to what is deathless, because it is divine; to have the existence wedded to that Christ on whom the spiritual eye is gazing, and receiving power to become the son of God; to know that we are partakers of the eternal life, and that nothing can “separate from the love of God which is in Jesus

Rom. viii. 39. Christ.”

Therefore, in the word of comfort, Jesus describes the blessedness of the unseen future as being that—nothing else, and nothing less—which had measured the blessedness of His disciples during the time of their intercourse—“*where I am, there ye may be also.*” This, at least, was a teaching which they could grasp, a

promise on which they could feed. And He surrounds the promise with an inviolable yea and amen, when He solemnly protests that He will come again and receive them : that His going is for their gain, and if He goes assuredly He will return. At the resurrection, they obtained the first instalment of the coming ; on the day of Pentecost, they were still farther enriched ; in the quickened spiritual life of faith, the believer realises that his Lord has come : the article of death is the taking of the redeemed away to the rest in God ; the appearing in glory is the completion and fulfilment of the coming. Then shall the family be gathered together “from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other,” and so shall they be for ever with the Lord in the perfect light of His Father’s house.

Be still, then, O troubled heart. Have faith in God ; have faith also in Jesus Christ, whom He has sent. Trust Him for the future. Trust Him in the present. Trust Him with thyself. “Go thou thy way till the end be.” Only be sure that thine eyes are ever towards the Lord, approaching as thou dost gaze, transfigured as thou dost approach—resemblance becoming ever more deep and heavenly as thou passest into the sunlight of the glory. What the glory is, who can say ? “Lord, I know but faintly what it shall be, and I ask not to know. Only assure

Matt. xxiv.  
31.

Daniel xii.

13.

138 THE BEGINNING OF THE DISCOURSE.

me that Thou wilt be there. I have long been accustomed to gather my every conception of happiness around Thy name; Thou art to me the abstract and representative of it all. Be but Thyself there: I know my only heaven

in Thee."

Butler's Sermons, Second series, p. 45.

## XI.

### AN INTERRUPTION.

ST JOHN xiv. 4-7.

To the blessed promise of the Father's house, and the preparation of the place, and the coming again to receive His own to Himself, the Lord added the sentence, "*whither I go, ye know the way.*" It would seem that the sentence perplexed the minds of those who heard it. They could not apprehend its meaning. Had not Simon Peter, only a short time before, asked for some information as to the scene to which their Master proposed to withdraw? And, although they had been told of many abiding places in a Father's house, they had not yet ascertained where that house was. They still thought only of some other locality to which Jesus would convey Himself, for they were very foolish, and slow of heart. It is too much to be addressed as if they were acquainted with the path which their Master was about to take. Simon has no heart to speak; but Thomas, called the Twin, interprets the feeling of his companions in the interruption. "Stay, Lord: *we*

Chap. xiv.  
Revised  
Version.

Ver. 5.

*know not whither Thou goest; and how can we know the way?"*

Chap. xi.

It is Thomas who says this. There are only three occasions on which the name of this apostle occurs with special prominence. The first was in connection with the proposed return of Jesus to Judea, when the message as to Lazarus reached Him. The disciples remonstrated on the dangers of such a return: when remonstrances proved unavailing, Thomas exclaimed, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him." He had made up his mind that the issue of the journey must be fatal, but he was ready to share the consequences. The last of the three times was when, after the resurrection, refusing to believe the tale told by his brethren, he was addressed by the risen Saviour in terms of distinct, although gentle, rebuke; and from his heart of hearts was elicited the expression

Chap. xx. 24-  
29.

of unbounded self-surrendering faith. At the supper table, we find him, abruptly, yet with ingenuous frankness, proclaiming the ignorance which he and those around him felt. Gathering up the conjunct testimony of these glimpses, the impression which we form of him is, that he was a man slow in apprehension, wanting in imagination and in the faculty of intuitively discerning a truth,—one who worked heavily towards a conclusion. But the conclusion once got, it is grasped, and it is held with invincible tena-

city. There is a capacity of indefinite sacrifice when the assent of the mind is once obtained, but the reflective so largely preponderates over the impulsive, that enthusiasm comes somewhat late in the day. He has been named the "Rationalist of the Apostles;" may every rationalist be as candid in the investigation of truth as he was, as wishful to see, as earnest in welcoming the light when it would enter the soul, as pure and unfaltering in the consecration of all energies to Him whom reason and affection embrace, uniting in the answer, "My Lord and my God."

Chap. xx. 28.

His protestation—" *Thy* whither and *Thy* how, what of them?"—Christ meets with a word which does not seem to be a reply to it. In point of fact it is; because, for the man Christ Jesus as for us, the way to the Father is the will which was glorified in the Son. The sonship in Christ is the only path to the Father. But, as is the manner of the Lord, He takes the mind beyond the immediate question raised. The interruption of the discourse carries it on to a still farther point, but always in harmony with the note which had been struck, "Believe in God, believe *also* in Me." The attention is at once withdrawn from the *whither*; the reminder is given that this is to be found in the *way*; and forth comes the manifesto of our King—

" *I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by Me.*"

Ver.

To recur to a topic in the previous chapter of this volume, I always associate this manifesto with the utterance of the Lord to Martha, when she met Him after the death of Lazarus. There are some striking points of resemblance. In the sister's mind the thought of resurrection was dissociated from the person of Christ. She conceived of it simply as the result of the mighty power of God to be fulfilled at the last day. It was a distant prospect. It was something quite apart from any conception of spiritual life. The aim of Christ was to raise her faith from the level thus described; to bring her to realise that resurrection is a present fact, and that the continuance of personal being is certain for all who live and believe in Him because of the life that is in Himself. "*I am* the resurrection and the life. . . .

Chap xi. 21-  
26. Believest thou this?" Now, similarly, these slow-hearted disciples conceived of the place and the path at which the Master had hinted, as wholly external to Him. They were mentally debating how He would reach it, what route He would take, and what kind of home it would be. From all such wanderings He brings them back to His initial demand, "faith in me." He tells them that it is to Himself they must look; that He is not speaking of things vague and future; that they will know what they crave only by letting Him unfold the secret of His presence and love. From discussion of goals and ways,

of ends and means, He sets them right before—Himself. “I am—not I show the way, or I speak the truth, or I reveal the life—but, *I am* the way, and the truth, and the life.”

My readers, shall we not pause over this saying, so regal and yet so gracious? Shall we not, for an instant or two, detain every portion of it, that we may realise the feast of fat things which it spreads for us?

We must not separate, and yet we must not depress, any of the three affirmations to which the “I am” is prefixed. They have been thus paraphrased, “The true way of life.” But this is to weaken the force of the saying, inasmuch as it loses the distinction intimated by the connecting *ands*. No; He is *the truth*; the absolute reality, underlying and expressing itself through all appearances; who is the substance of all that is good and lovely; the Word in whom all the thought of God is articulated to man, and all the right thought of man is articulated to God; the Sun, rays of whose light penetrate all the universe of God, whatsoever is true anywhere being the reflection of His infinite fulness. He is *the life*; the source and seat of all life in man, creature, thing; the sum of all that is created; of whom, in our being, we have received, and by whom alone we are enabled in spirit and soul and body to realise continuous existence; who is more especially the cause and

the sustenance of that higher life which is deathless, because it is the eternal life of God in man. Therefore He is *the way*; the only medium between the worlds seen and unseen, between the Father of Spirits and the spirits of men. Not as if He were apart from the Father and the Father from Him; for not only is He *as* the Father, but the Father is *in* Him. His humanity is the Shekinah of an indwelling God, and to have fellowship with Him is to have fellowship with the Eternal Himself. But the high priesthood of men, which is in the very idea of "The Word who was with God and was God," has been substantiated for us sinners in the incarnation, and the crucifixion to which, in His last supper, Jesus looks forward. Through death He passes into the presence of God—the Man with an unchangeable priesthood. As the God-man presenting the accepted sacrifice, "He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him." Nor let us limit the thought.

Heb. vii. 25.

To say that all coming to God the Father is through the Son who dwelt among us, is not to say that only they have access who know and are in conscious sympathy with Jesus Christ. To reject Christ when declared is one thing, not to know Christ because He has not been declared is another thing. Is not the assurance implied in the word of the Lord?—"Wherever anyone is in the way to the Father I am that way. Wherever anyone finds truth, that truth is some-

thing of Mine and testifies of Me. For I am ever from age to age the life and the light of men. Every way not absolutely false leads to the truth ; every real truth has life in itself, but all in Christ."

Stier, vol. vi.  
p. 204.

Ah, it is a gloriously comprehensive, whilst yet it is a jealously exclusive, manifesto. On the pulpit of a church in Bohemia that is associated with the memory of John Huss, the manifesto is written—a fit and becoming symbol for the Reformer, whose life was a contention against the error of intermediaries between the one Mediator and men. Yet Protestants also need to be reminded that neither book nor system must interpose their shadow—that Christ Himself is the all in all. Beautiful is the comment of Thomas a Kempis ; may it interpret, and interpreting, elevate our thought—

*"Without the way there is no going; without the truth there is no knowing; without the life there is no living. I am the way which thou oughtest to follow; the truth which thou oughtest to trust; the life which thou oughtest to hope for."*

*"I am the inviolable way, the infallible truth, the endless life."*

*"I am the straightest way, the supreme truth, the true, the blessed, the uncreated life."*

*"If thou remain in My way thou shalt know the truth, and the truth shall make thee free, and thou shalt lay hold on eternal life."*

Imitation  
of Christ,  
book iii.  
chap. 56

## XII.

### THE REQUEST OF PHILIP.

ST JOHN xiv. 8-11.

“Show us the Father.”

Ver. 7. “*If ye had known Me ye should have known My Father also; from henceforth ye know Him and have seen Him.*” This is a word which anew perplexes the disciples. They must often have spoken one to another of their Lord’s habitual reference to God as His Father. To them the Eternal was one so awful that they scarcely dared to utter “the glorious and fearful name” Jehovah. But He lifted up His eyes to heaven, felt Himself as He did so in heaven, and calmly said to the unseen Presence, Father. They had seen Him retiring to lonely places where, undisturbed by the strife of tongues, He might spend the night in communion with His Father. He had told them that He lived by the Father; that His meat was to do the Father’s will; that He did nothing of Himself but what He saw the Father do. Who was He in whose society Jesus thus

lived? Could He not be made visible also to them? I imagine that with this question their minds had not seldom been occupied. It is almost forced on them now by the sentence to which they had listened. Without reflecting on all that it implied, they fasten on the latter part of it, which asserts that, from the hour then passing, there should begin a distinct and satisfying sight of the Father, and assumes that already they had a discernment of Him. "Nay," cries Philip; "we have not seen, but we long to see; Lord show us the Father, and it sufficeth us!"

Ver. 8

The exclamation is one which accords with all our information concerning Philip. On three other occasions he is specially mentioned in this Gospel; and the impression of him which all the notices sustain is that of a man without <sup>Chap. i. 43-</sup> <sup>46.</sup> guile, ingenuous, downrightly realistic. He is <sup>Chap. vi 5-7.</sup> <sup>Chap. xii 21,</sup> <sup>22.</sup> not like Thomas, of a temperament morbid and slow, brooding over *hows* and intrenching himself behind *excepts*. On the contrary, he is eager, confiding, anxious only to possess the great fact. If he can behold the Father, goal and way and all else are out of reckoning: *that* is enough. Slow and carnal although his apprehension is, still there is the heart of faith beating through it. He has a right thought, a lofty thought, although he approaches it in a wrong direction. His cry is the reverberation

of the deep longing of humanity. And he acknowledges Christ as having the power to satisfy this longing. "Previous to the true 'my Lord and my God,' there was no greater honour given to Christ, no higher power ascribed to Him, than in this *Lord show us* the Father."

Stier, vol. vi.  
p. 206.

Therefore, Jesus bears with the interruption. It is a trial of His patience. Because it evidences the hankering, after the fashion of the Jew, for a sign—a revelation external to Himself conveyed in a bodily shape, at least in a form which the senses can recognise. When the Eternal spoke to him "as a man speaketh to his friend," Moses entreated for a manifestation of His glory; and he was placed in a clift of the rock, and the Eternal passed by and proclaimed the adorable name. Might not such a vision now be vouchsafed for the sake of Him whom Jehovah heard alway? Well, Christ will not overlook the request, because it is the prayer of faith. But first there is a gentle yet touching remonstrance. Surely, these scholars of His might have attained to a higher standard of perception. After the progressive revelations of Himself which they had enjoyed, surely they might have realised who was in Him. "*Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?*"

Exodus  
xxxiii. 34.

Ver. 9.

The saying of Christ, called forth by the apostle's demand, marks the climax of what has been described as *His self-assertion*. It claims nothing less than an essential unity of Being with the Father. We can affirm of any good man that he dwells in God and God in him ; but we dare not affirm of any that to see him is to see the Father also. Taken in connection with the promise of the Comforter which follows, the language of our passage is equivalent to the teaching that the fulness of the Godhead dwells in Jesus bodily. Father and Son are united in His person, and in His name the Holy Ghost shall be sent. Yet it is necessary to keep in view the distinction of the two selves, Father and Son. Jesus is the Son, but He is not the Father ; the Father is *in* Him. The one-ness is not identification ; it is because of a perfect mutual operation, in consequence of which the Father originates and sustains all that the Son does, the Son responds to and fulfils all that the Father wills. It is this harmony, this reciprocal life, wrought out in our flesh, making all the thought and action of the man Christ Jesus divine, which constitutes the mirror of the Fatherhood of God. "From henceforth, we know, we have seen, the Father." Than this showing there is, there can be no other.

For the Father as such can be revealed only

in the Son. And when we speak of God otherwise than as our Father, what conception, clear or dim, have we? The Infinite? The Absolute? Mere abstractions, these. God can be discerned only through the relations in which His being is connected with ours. And relations are understood through their correlations; and the correlation of Fatherhood is Sonship. I may know a person in various ways—as a business man, or a social man, or in respect of some personal characteristics—but I cannot know him as a father except through the observation of what he is to his child, and his child is to him. If, for example, I see one wholly devoted to some great enterprise, giving his own life away for the good of others,—one of a rarely beautiful as well as energetic character,—and I learn from himself that, in all his conduct, he is only carrying out the will of his father, interpreting the mind with which he is in constant communion, I am taught, as otherwise I cannot be taught, what that father in his will and character is. He is revealed to me in the son. Assume that Jesus is the Son of God; trust Him for being so; then God is manifested to us in such wise that we can hold Him as it were by the hand, and live in open converse and sympathy with Him. For we see the Father.

No doubt, there are many unveilings of the Eternal in the things around us. Many are the

"lattices" through which there looks forth a face above the brightness of the sun. But, in regard even to such glimpses, it must be said that we see only with the eyes which we bring. A hard, undevout, mind can look up, and down, and around, and say, There is no God. A mind severely logical and exact may say that, on the whole, the probabilities are on the side of the existence of a Supreme Being; but that the evidence of goodness and love being His predominant attributes is not sufficient. Nature is a cipher. Great are its messages, manifold its witness for God, when we have found the key. But it is an unread cipher until we have found the key. Is there any sermon to the *sinner* in the stones which the geologist handles? Interrogate it as you will, has the universe anything to say as to a personal relation between us individually and God? Has it any assurance of an eternal life? Granting that it suggests, that it authorises the soul to say, God is Almighty, All-wise, the tendency of His rule ever towards righteousness; what does it teach? what can it teach as to a place inside His righteousness for the guilty, as to His disposition towards His lost and alienated children? But there is no difficulty in grasping the words "God is love," when we gaze on the love which has been manifested in the sending of the only begotten Son. There is no difficulty in believing that He has

commended His love towards us as sinners when we behold His Son turning to the woman laden with sin as she bends over His feet in godly sorrow, and saying to her, "Thy sins are forgiven." There is no difficulty in crediting that, despite appearances, He wills that "all men shall be saved and come unto the knowledge of the truth" when we follow His Son to "the place called Calvary," and witness that last act of filial love in which He pours out His life a ransom for many. Oh! there is no difficulty in yielding up the inmost soul to the asking love of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; and accounting it "a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation," that what Fatherhood was shown to be in the Sonship of Jesus, that the Fatherhood of God is to us and all men.

Philip is right. To see the Father sufficeth. But, oh, Philip, to have lived in the light of the Eternal Life as thou hast done, and not seen Him! "No man knoweth the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." And He has been willing to reveal the All-Blessed to thee. "Hast thou not known Me," is the touching appeal. Thou who hast been associated with Him in the most dear and intimate companionship, to have missed the Father whom He was revealing to thee! Thou didst hear that Father in the tones of Jesus' voice. Thou didst

Luke vii. 48.

1 Tim. ii. 4.

Matt. xi. 27.

behold Him in the glance of Jesus' eye. Thou didst feel Him in the breath of Jesus' mouth. Thou didst converse with Him in the discourse on grassy upland, in the parables by the side of Galilee's lake, on the mount of Olives, in the house at Bethany. He has been communing with thee at the supper-table, and yet *thou* art asking, as if He were a stranger to thee, "Show us the Father!"

Very significant is the utterance in which the Lord addresses those who are seated beside Him. Turning to the whole company He recalls the words which He had spoken in that room and at previous times. In them what was most intimately personal to Him had been declared; and the child of the Kingdom should have asked nothing more. "If you are a believer," said Chrysostom on one occasion, "as you ought to be, and love Christ as you ought to love Him, you have no need of miracles, for these are given to unbelievers." Christ assumes that those who love Him have no need of miracles. "*The words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself.*" Had they not discerned Ver. 10. in them the operation of the Father in Him, *His words, the Father's works?*

If the force of this inner testimony is not acknowledged; if the Father-evidencing character of the words is not perceived; the disciples

Chap. x. 37,  
38.

must take the lower ground which He had been content to reserve for the Jews. Thus, at the feast of dedication, when the people came "round about Him" and demanded an explicit statement as to His Messiahship, He concluded the statement He did make with the challenge, "If I do not the works of My Father, believe Me not. But if I do, though ye believe not Me, believe the works: that ye may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him." Then, we see, He refers only to the *works*,—these were for the unbelieving Jews. He calls them to rise from the testimony of the *works* which were pre-eminently the sign of the Father in Him, to the reception of the *words* which were pre-eminently the sign of Him in the Father. Must He set this course before His own? Must He tell them that, since they cannot at once respond to the light that is in the words, since they cannot, with the insight of faith, realise the truth of His person, they, too, must begin with the outward acts, with the miracles which are for unbelievers? There is the sense of disappointment in the alternative presented—"Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me; or else believe Me for the very works' sake."

Ver. 11.

## XIII.

### THE GREATER WORKS.

ST JOHN xiv. 12-15.

“Greater works . . . because I go unto My Father.”

“*Verily, verily, I say unto you.*” Thus we are prepared for a word of special importance. Hitherto, the discourse of Christ, prolonged by the interruptions of the disciples, has been mainly occupied with His relation to the Father. Now, He would pass to the thought of His relation to His followers—to His Church until the end of the ages. And the announcement prefaced by the double Amen marks the transition from the one point to the other. In this way:—The works on account of which He claims the faith of men are not to be regarded as isolated and exceptional, with no successions and no extensions. Far from this, they are only the tokens of a power which shall continue to act,—nay, which shall find immeasurably ampler scope and larger results because of His going to the Father. He has summoned those around Him

Ver. 12.

to a faith in Himself, of the same kind and measure as their faith in God. He has told them, if they cannot respond immediately to the truth of His own personality, to consider the evidence furnished by His works. At once, He reminds them that the faith which He demands is the condition of an union with Him, so energetic that "*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.*"

Are we not tempted to interpose the question, How can this be? The believer in Christ to do Christ's very works, ay, and greater than His—surely this cannot literally be true! What deed of Apostle or Christian in any time can equal or surpass the raising of Lazarus, or the feeding of the thousands in the desert place, or the cure of the sick, and the blind, and the deaf, who were brought to the Prophet of Nazareth? To affirm that such power is possessed by the one who trusts Jesus, may be possessed by ourselves; nay, that more splendid trophies of victory, mightier activities far, are in the grasp of the Church since, and on account of, the departure of Jesus—must not this be accepted as only a bold, paradoxical form of speech?

Against such a view there sounds the solemn "*Verily, verily, I say unto you.*" Christ's language is not that of figure: it is the distinct forecast of fact.

The writers and preachers of the early Christian centuries dwelt often on this forecast. They beheld its fulfilment in the more striking displays of miraculous power by the Apostles and the Church in its first days,—such as the strange tongues in which men declared the works of God, the healing of the sick by the shadow of Peter, and so forth. They pointed to the vast number of miracles, to the extension of the scene of their performance beyond Judea, and the wider effect which they exercised. They referred, above all, to the ingathering at Pentecost of three thousand souls, whereas only one hundred and twenty are mentioned as continuing in prayer after the departure of Jesus. And then they described the spread of His Gospel throughout the different parts of the Roman Empire, until, within a comparatively short period, the sound of the Apostles' testimony had gone through all the earth. Says Luther, interpreting the mind of these Fathers, “Christ took but a little corner for Himself to preach and work miracles in; whereas the Apostles and their followers have spread themselves over the whole world.”

We may dismiss all comparisons in respect of what is merely wonderful in outward act between our Lord's works and those of believers. Such “a mechanical measurement” of the greatness of miracles, as it has well been said, is

Quoted by  
Lange, Com-  
mentary, p.  
379.

entirely foreign to the New Testament. "The term greater does not indicate more astounding miracles, but miracles of a more excellent nature."

Godet's  
Commen-  
tary, p. 247.

Christ, as we have seen, placed His words on a far higher level than His works, understanding by His works the outward manifestations of supernatural force. To these, so far as they were *wonders*, He attached little consequence. It was a pain to Him, that except men saw these wonders, they would not believe. He never put forth His power for mere effect. Whatever He did was related, directly or indirectly, to a moral end or to a purpose of love. Given the conception of the Son of God, with the heart and the will of the Eternal Love, having access to, rather having in Himself, a reserve of infinite power—it is impossible to conceive that He could be deaf to the appeals continually presented to Him, that He could refuse the help which misery asked. Some indications of His will, some flashes of His redemptive energy, we would assuredly expect. He would not have revealed the Father if it had been otherwise. Could the Father have refused to put forth the hand and touch the shrivelled and emaciated figure and said, "I will, be thou clean," when the leper came, beseeching and kneeling, and crying, "If Thou wilt, Thou canst." It is the moving of Jesus' heart with compassion and the

Mark i. 40,  
41.

action obedient to this which manifests God. But there is always an ethical or spiritual element in the work wherein He would have men look for the sign of Him. He bids them *from* what is external *to* what is internal. Even, sometimes, in the manner, always in the farther reference of His doing, the spiritual is declared to be the sphere of the greater work. In that sphere is the more excellent counterpart of His activity which He predicts for the believer.

For, in the history of the Church, we trace, although not under the same special forms, the same kind of energy as that which characterised the life of Jesus. Not a man, called out of the tomb in which he had lain four days, but a Lazarus—a dead community, decaying faiths, consciences whose vitality was suspended—a Lazarus on a larger scale, so to say, has often been quickened, summoned from the sepulchre, loosed and let go. Administering the word and sacraments which Christ has blessed, thousands and tens of thousands have been fed on what seemed a provision wholly inadequate: “The little one has become a thousand, and the small one a strong nation.” Yielding to the guidance Isa. ix. 61. of the spirit of the life in Christ, ministries and agencies of healing have been multiplied, so that every day, in vast numbers and through delicate appliances, by a skill and devotion which themselves are miracles, the sick are

cured, the demon-possessed are exorcised, the diseased and the weary are blessed. In a sense, and a true sense too, it may be said that all the trophies of civilisation, all the marvels of science, all the potencies whose secret the years are more and more yielding up to us, point to works anticipated, in prophetic act, in Christ's, and are thus far the fruit of faith, that confidence in Christ first set the human mind free, by the power of truth, for the pursuit of all that is true and good. But, limiting the promised works to the moral or spiritual realm, whether we regard what Christianity has developed, or regard the development of Christianity itself, surely, we find the ancient description verified : "These signs shall follow them that believe ; in My name shall they cast out devils ; they shall speak with new tongues ; they shall take up serpents ; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them ; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." "Prayers and pains," said the devoted Elliot, "through faith in Christ Jesus will accomplish almost anything."

Mark xvi. 17, 18.

These are the continuation, yet the amplification, of Christ's works. Greater ; as the grown-up man is greater than the child ; as the language, "fitly framed together and compacted," is greater than the rudiments ; as the plan is greater than the first sketch, or the building greater than the plan ; as the harvest is greater

than the seed-time, the reaper than the sower ; as the spiritual is greater than the physical ; as the end is greater than the means ; so are the energies and activities of the Church directed to and instrumental in the regeneration and redemption of the world greater than the energies and activities which visibly radiated from the man Christ Jesus during the time that He went out and in amongst the men of Galilee.

Observe, in the two verses which follow, what the Lord says as to *the administration and the conditions of realising this sovereign, victorious power.*

The source is the Father. Christ declares of His own works, that “it is the Father who doeth them.” But the power is in the hands of the Son who goes to the Father. Hence the promise is, “Whatever ye ask, that will *I* do ;” hence it is added, “*that the Father may be glorified in the Son.*” The honouring of the Son is the glorifying of the Father. Hence, finally, the clause, “*Ask in My name.*” Not as if that clause meant merely the use of the name of Jesus at the end of prayer, adopting such a formula as “for Christ’s sake,” or “through Christ.” The *name*, when employed in Scripture with reference to God, represents the person “in the whole compass of its properties.” Thus, the warning to Israel as to

the Angel whom Jehovah would send is based  
 Exodus xxiii. 21. on the sentence, "My name is in him;" and  
 the assurance given as to the altars which would  
 be reared is, "In all places where I record My  
 name I will come unto thee, and I will bless  
 Exodus xx. 24. thee." Similarly the name of Jesus denotes all  
 that is personal to Him as Lord and Christ. To  
 ask in His name is to have the request accord-  
 dant with His mind, His spirit, His will, to make  
 it in the consciousness of the affiance of our heart  
 with Him. For, the energy fulfilled in the works  
 is His. It is He who baptiseth with the Holy  
 Ghost. "Being by the right hand of God exalted,  
 and having received of the Father the promise  
 of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this,  
 Acts ii. 33. which ye now see and hear," testified St Peter  
 to the amazed and doubting multitude on the  
 day of Pentecost.

What are the conditions of realising the gifts  
 which the Saviour, having gone to the Father,  
 has "received for men, that the Lord God might  
 Psalm lxviii. 18. dwell among them"?

First, a living, self-surrendering faith. "*He-*  
 Ver. 12. *that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall*  
*he do also.*" Not otherwise than through this  
 confidence, opening the heart to Christ that  
 He may come in with His great power, can the  
 spiritual energy referred to be developed in the  
 Church. "Why could not we cast him out?"  
 ask the apostles; and the answer is, "Because"

of your unbelief." For the same reason how much power is lost ! How many of our signs have vanished ! How cold and unfruitful are the ministries ! How barren of blessing too often the ordinances of God's Zion ! We know that the Lord has not withdrawn His gifts. What He shed forth on Pentecost was not a mere passing shower, it was the beginning of a plenteous rain, in which He has willed that His congregation should dwell. Why is it, then, that we see not His mighty arm, as we desire to see it, in the midst of His people ? Why do we not behold the promised "greater works" in the measure and to the extent of His promise ? Why are our missions so hindered ? Admitting that much has been done to preach the gospel for a witness to all the nations, why is it still the day of small things ? Why, in Christendom, do so "many children seek for the Lord's refreshing grace and return empty, or wander without shepherds, having none to guide or recover them " ? Is this because we have forgotten our confidence in the Lord? because we have learned to trust more in the operations of man than in the powers of the world to come ? because we have not, as we should have, the faith which approves itself by seeking to complete the order of the Lord's house, and by leaning only on Him who is faithful to the pledge that He is with His Church always, even to the end ? Shall we not

reflect on this, and renew the prayer of the  
 Luke xvii. 5. apostles, "Lord increase our faith."

For there is, as the farther condition of blessing,  
*the preparation of prayer*—that prayer which is  
 the necessary outcome and manifestation of faith.  
*Ask* is the command of Christ. It represents  
 the activity of reception in the disciple which  
 corresponds to the activity of bestowment in the  
 Lord. How wonderful is the assurance, "*I*What-  
 soever ye shall ask in My name, *that* will I do:"

"If ye shall ask *any thing* in My name, I will do  
 it." Can we forget that such asking preceded  
 the most remarkable exercise of divine power  
 recorded in the history of the Church? The  
 disciples had been for days united in supplica-  
 tion. They were waiting for the earnest of the  
 inheritance; and they waited, *continuing* in prayer.

Acts ii. 1. It was when they were "all with one accord in  
 one place" that the power came upon them.  
 And the narrative of that day is the type and  
 ensample for all days. Christ's Church has one  
 strength, all-sufficient, but *only one*. The strength  
 is in God, and the way of that strength is the  
 channel of fervent, persevering, united asking.  
 Promise on His part does not supersede, it pro-  
 ceeds on the supposition of action, of prayer, on our  
 part. "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew  
 their strength." The waiting, as is shown in the  
 first chapter of the Acts, is in prayer. Unbelief,  
 or half-belief, as to the effectualness of prayer is

the paralysis of the Church. Surely the word is sounding in the ear of all who wait, "Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give Him no rest, till He establish, and till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth."

Isaiah lxii. 6.

Finally, the power is conditioned on the <sup>7</sup>  
*love which is evidenced in obedience.* "If ye love Me keep," or, "ye will keep, My commandments."  
Ver. 15. The speech passes from *believing*, as the main requirement, to *loving*. But is not love the germ of faith? The Lord does not say, Love Me, as He says, Believe on Me. He assumes the love as indeed the first faith, to be perfected as faith increases, but in the heart as the faith of the heart. And we notice of what kind the love is. Not a mere luxury of sentiment, not a mere blissfulness of feeling, but a real oneness of will with Christ, fulfilled in the earnest, practical subjection to His commandments. For him who thus believes, thus prays, thus obeys, the going forth of the promise of the Father is prepared: "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you"—what? whom? Let our next <sup>16</sup> chapter unfold the kernel of the great consolation.

## XIV.

### THE SON'S PRAYER AND THE FATHER'S GIFT.

ST JOHN xiv. 16-24.

"Another Comforter."

NOW the discourse returns to the point at which Thomas interposed his question. The subject-matter of the consolation has not yet been fully declared. One part of it only has been presented, the care and work of Jesus for His own in that Father's house to which He is going. But there remains the other part which deals with their position when He is taken from them. However inspiriting may be the assurance of a power exceeding abundant above all that they could ask or think, it does not meet the whole need and craving of the heart. These poor disciples who had hitherto depended entirely on their Master are to be left as sheep in the midst of wolves—lonely orphaned souls, scholars without a teacher, children without a parent. To exhibit His provision for them in this state of apparent bereavement is the desire

of Christ. And in the gracious sentences before us He proceeds to cheer them with the solemn pledge that if He goes from them in bodily presence it is only that He may come to them in a nearer and more blissful intimacy than they had ever realised, that His connection with them will remain unbroken, and that in a day of clearer illumination, which shall dawn after a little while, they will know what had perplexed them, they will perceive the truth of His Person, and be conscious of something more—they will know that He is in the Father, and they in Him, and He in them.

Ver. 20.

All that this word contains and suggests is summed up in the *promise of the Father*, which is for the first time unfolded. Yes ; hints, fore-shadowings of it had been given at sundry times during the Lord's ministry. But the first plain word, directly and explicitly presenting the office and work of the Holy Ghost, is spoken at the supper table. It lies before us in the sixteenth and seventeenth verses. There are three other descriptions of the mission of this Blessed One in the portion of the address which follows, and, referring to them, we shall afterwards have occasion to glance at some aspects of His mission. But there is a beauty, there is a meaning, peculiar to the earliest of the intimations. It is "the private and confidential" one. Its particular purpose is to show how there

Ver. 19.

shall be such a continuation of the old ties and the old relations, of the help which His followers had ever found in Jesus, that although the world will see Him no more, they and all His believing people will see Him and share in His life. Let us try to gather up some crumbs of the feast which is spread in the saying under review.

The introductory clauses are significant. One of these has already been noticed; one which reminds us both of the end of all true prayer and the reality of all true faith. The disciple who asks in the name of Christ desires a part in the greater works only in so far as the Father may be glorified in the Son. His wish is that in all things he shall fill "a little space," that in all things Christ shall have the pre-eminence. From this love to Him there comes the one supreme longing breathed through all prayer, that the will may be lifted up to Christ's, made one with Christ's, be kept in a constant and entire devotion to Christ's commandments. In such obedience the way is prepared for spiritual blessing. And, therefore, the Lord conjoins with the word enforcing it, the assurance, "*I, for My part, will pray the Father, and He shall give you*—thus loving Me and keeping My commandments—*another Comforter.*"

Ver. 16.

Observe the language. The verb employed to denote Jesus' asking is not the same as that

employed in a preceding verse to denote the asking of the disciples. It is expressive of a more familiar pleading; "rather, perhaps, a manner of asking, implying *actual presence and nearness.*" It is the *praying* of the Mediator after He ascended on high, "through His own blood entering in once for all into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." There is a beautiful commentary on the conjunction of the obedient church and the praying Saviour in the first chapter of the Book of the Acts. "Wait," was the parting injunction of Christ, "for the promise of the Father which ye have heard of Me." They kept the commandment. For ten days they continued in prayer and supplication, waiting. And what was the evidence that He had fulfilled His covenant, that He had prayed the Father? *Pentecost* was the evidence. He had received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost.

Observe the order: "*I will pray. . . . The Father shall give.*" The Comforter is the Father's gift, "sent from the Father," "proceeding from the Father." But the Son also sends: He receives the Father's gift, and in *His name* the Spirit of Truth is sent. That is to say, this Holy Comforter is in the whole truth of Jesus' Person, and the whole truth of Jesus' Person is in Him. He is sent, not as a substitute for the Christ whom the men who

Alford's  
Commentary

Hebrews ix.  
12.

Acts i. 4.

Chap. xv. 26.

Chap. xiv.  
26.

had been given to Him knew, but as the Revelation to them of that very Christ. He is in the name of the man Christ Jesus, and all which this name represents is realised in His communion with men. This is the Redeemer's reward. This is the *new* thing in the Promise which is declared. God's Spirit had always striven with men. From His inspiration come all true thought and right action ; but, since the man was glorified, there has been a new tabernacling of God with men—God in the humanity which Christ took into the Godhead supping with men and they with Him.

For what is the substance of the Promise ? Pause, dear reader, over the expression, “*another Comforter.*” Much has been written in elucidation of that phrase, the Comforter. It is the translation of the Greek term *Paraclete*. Elsewhere it is translated *advocate* ; “we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous.” And there is no doubt that it signifies “one who stands as the counsel of an accused party, who pleads his cause and serves him by advice and help, admonition and encouragement, as his case needs.” Our English Testament, from the days when the first version was prepared by Wycliffe, and distributed over England by his poor priests, has rendered the word as used in the Gospel, *Comforter*. And

1 John ii. 1.

we would not have it otherwise, for it is endeared to us by long use, by tender associations, and by its own attractiveness. But we must recollect that the word comprehends more than is usually attached to the notion of a comforter. Wycliffe meant more when he pressed it into service. Thus, he translates the sentence as to the angel in the garden, "there appeared an angel comforting Him," not merely consoling, but as we read, "*strengthening* Him." It is a helper; one who will be what Jesus, in the days of His flesh, had been: a Counsellor, Teacher, Father, "Guide, Philosopher, Friend"—going before them, leading them, suggesting the thought and the word and giving boldness for the deed, and "interceding within them with groanings which cannot be uttered"—whom the Father has given that He may abide with His Church for ever.

"*Even the Spirit of Truth.*" The Spirit who ver. 17. is truth because He proceedeth from the Father in the name of the Son, and is therefore the tri-unity of God, in whom God is, and is revealed in the spirit of man. The Spirit whose sphere of operation is truth: who receives of Christ the Incarnate Truth, and shows what is Christ's in Nature, in Providence, above all, in the word. The Spirit who leads into and produces the truth in the soul that is opened in trust to Him, by manifesting the correspondence between the

revelation of the Father in the Son and the need and craving of man, by enlightening the eyes to see "the gleam of love and prayer that dawns on every cross and care," and to realise the glorious things which God has prepared for them that love Him, by sanctifying in the truth of the illumined and vivified word. The Spirit who makes true by imparting His own nature, by dwelling within as the "Spirit of wisdom and

Eph. i. 18.  
2 Tim. i. 7.  
Rom. viii. 15.  
Rom. i. 4.  
Acts ix. 31.  
Gal. iv. 6.  
Eph. i. 13.

revelation," "of power and love and of a sound mind," "of adoption," "of holiness," "of comfort"—"the Spirit of God's Son," and thus "the seal" of the believer's Sonship. Oh, how great and precious the promise! the gift of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!

And if it is said that this Spirit "*the world cannot receive*," we do not need to inquire into the ground of the inability thus asserted. The world that *would* not receive Christ, that saw no beauty in Him, that had no sympathy with the mind that was in Him, *could* not receive the other Comforter. Where there is no desire connecting the soul with Christ, no affiance of heart to Him, there is no capacity for the spiritual presence and office of the Comforter. A certain kinship, at least a certain moral attraction, is necessary to fellowship between one person and another. Where the moral conditions of a life are alienated from the life of the Father, there is no readiness for

Ver. 17.

the quickening touch and renovating agency of the Holy Ghost. As there cannot be vision without an organ of sight, knowledge without a faculty of reception, so, in the words of Jesus, the world cannot receive the One whom He will send, "*because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him.*"

Ver. 17.

This is easily understood. But the meaning of what follows is not so plain: "*Ye know Him, for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*" Was not this a new promise? Did not this new promise announce a Presence hitherto unrevealed?

The explanation I take to be this:—Although they did not understand the scope of the Life manifested to them in Christ, the disciples had been in communion with this Holy Spirit; for this Holy Spirit had been speaking to them, breathing on them, circling around them with His gracious influences in the Person of Christ. He was present in Christ, just as, afterwards, they knew Christ to be present in the Spirit. Christ is the *one* Comforter. The Spirit, who is in the name of Christ, is the *other* Comforter. *Another*, not in the sense of a *different*, but the same only in another mode of Being. As we sometimes phrase it, the *alter ego*, the other I. What is pledged to us, therefore, is that the departure of Christ in a visible corporeity ensures the coming of the very self that was

incarnated in Christ in a form in which this self shall be more closely and permanently personal to us. "Think," says the Lord, "of what I was when I went out and in among you. Reflect on the manner of person you have found Me to be; as, in that manner of person, you beheld the Heart and Will of the Father, so in it you have been beholding the character, the work, the Person of the Comforter whom the Father shall give." Let me repeat what I have already said: do not allow thought to conceive of the Holy Spirit as taking Christ's place, as doing duty for the absent Saviour; let us always remember that in Him the place for Christ is secured in the heart. He comes that, by His coming, Christ may abide, not carnally or visibly, but really and spiritually with or by His Church, and may enter into and dwell within those who love the Lord and keep His word.

Ver. 17.

Behold the two great features of the Presence of the Spirit—"He abides with the Church." He is not one who sometimes comes and then goes. It is to be feared that even the language of faith occasionally encourages this conception. We pray for visitations of the Spirit; we plead, "Pass me not, O mighty Spirit;" we refer to works of the Spirit in one place as if there were no such works in another, or at one season as if there were no permanent occupation of the Church by

the Holy Ghost. No doubt there is often a right apprehension of the Lord's saying in such speech, and those who use it are truly resting on the promise. But I cannot help thinking that the belief of the Church needs to be lifted to the height which has been set before us. God's Spirit is not a visitor of the Church. He has been given that He may abide by it for ever. It is His home. We do not require to ask for a grace which is above us in some heaven, or below us in some depth. It is nigh us, even in our mouth and in our heart. Times of special blessing are not the arrivals of a stranger ; they are the tokens of one who is amongst us,—special tokens indicating what we are apt to forget, that He is waiting to be gracious, that there is a plenitude of good which we are not realizing, only because men are not opening the door of their hearts to Him, and because God's faithful people are not vividly and earnestly welcoming, and working in the consciousness of, the Holy Ghost who has been shed abroad. Oh, Spirit of God ! wilt Thou not revive us again that Thy people may rejoice in Thee—Ps. lxxxv. 6.  
*abiding for ever.*

And with this is connected the other feature of the promise, *He shall be in you*—an inward, ver. 17. spiritual revelation through the *immanence*, the indwelling of the Spirit. The two last clauses of the verse have been accepted as corresponding

to the two ideas of the Comforter and the Spirit of Truth. The Comforter shall *abide*; the Spirit shall *be in you*. For this is the characteristic of the Christian state until the coming of the Lord. We know Christ through the experience of Christ. We see Him through what we possess of Him. St Paul prays that his brethren may be “strengthened mightily by the Spirit *in the inner man*, that Christ may dwell in the heart by faith.” The Holy Spirit *in* the inner man is the cause, faith is the welcome, of the indwelling Christ. It is observable that the disciples did not know Christ until they had ceased to see Him; they beheld Him only when He had gone in the bodily presence, and come in the Spirit who had entered into them. In the shewings of Himself during the forty days which intervened between the resurrection and the ascension, after the eyes had been opened to recognise Him, He vanished out of sight. He was preparing them for the vision of the latter days—the vision by faith of the indwelling Christ—“He passed from His hiding place of sight without knowledge to that of knowledge without sight.”

Newman's  
Sermons,  
vol. vi. p.  
144.

Thus the great promise is unfolded which pledges that the eleven now seated with their Lord, and all trusting souls then or since, shall not be left as orphans; that although the Jesus whom the hands have handled must pass from the outward gaze, the Jesus in whom is all

the soul's salvation and desires remains, that "yet a little while" and although the world would not see Him they would see Him. He has not left us; He has gone to the Father only that He might come to us. In the days of His flesh He had not actually come as the Saviour and Lord manifesting Himself to the heart. He did thus come only after the sacrifice had been offered and accepted, and "the new and living way" had been opened. Then, in the communion of the eternal life, did He draw near to, has He established Himself in the midst of, His own. He is, as the God-man, the "High Priest over the house of God," in His Humanity interceding at the right hand of God for us, and administering the power of heaven and earth. He is, in the Spirit of Truth, the Comforter sent in His name from the Father, still with us, ever with us, in our hearts and to our faith. And we are sharers, thus, of His own nature—of the Divine nature. We are partakers of His life—the life of Sonship. It is the history of His life that is being continually repeated by His Church and in the believer; it is His life, in all that is essential to it, in all the elements of its divine truth and beauty, that is received and fulfilled in character and in consciousness. We live because of Him; we live out of Him. In Him we are partakers of the love wherewith He is loved; and He, as

the loved of the Father, communicating this  
Vers. 12-18. love to men, is manifesting Himself to us.

Ver. 22.

But, as the sweet and gracious stream of assurance thuspours forth, a question arises in the mind of one of the disciples. That one is *Judas*. Not Iscariot, the Evangelist is careful to add, as if the mere name raised up the protest and horror of his soul. No word addressed to the Lord is recorded of the man of Kerioth. Persons such as he have little to ask of God. It is Judas Lebbaeus—a cheerful, honest, simple-hearted inquirer in the temple of truth. “Lord, how is it, or what has come to pass, that Thou wilt manifest Thyself to us and not to the world ?” Still, we see, a stumbling over the notion of some external manifestation. How could there be such a manifestation in the special and private way which the Lord had marked? Well, Jesus, bearing patiently with this slowness of heart, is content to summarise the words which He has already spoken ; to repeat that the condition of all seeing of Him is love ; that the corporeity of love, so to speak, is obedience ; that this obedience is the prelude to, the preparation for, spiritual blessing ; that the highest reality of spiritual blessing is the consciousness of His Father's love ; that, in this love, there is a *plural* involved—it is the love of the Triune God ; that, in the fulness of this love, Father and Son in the uniting Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, dwell in the faithful soul ; that,

thus truly and verily, God—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—comes to all who love Christ and makes His abode with them. All this, at that <sup>Ver. 23.</sup> moment, is beyond the spiritual grasp of Judas. But it is sown into his mind, that it may be fructified when the Comforter “shall teach all things, and bring all things to the remembrance, whatsoever He has said unto His own.”

Ver. 26.

It is indeed a marvellous saying, and one which is passed to the humblest and weakest of the disciples of Christ. He takes the most general term: “If a *man* love Me we will come to *him*, and make our abode with *him*.” It is for thee, my reader, for me, for every one who hears and responds to the call of the Lord. Within the breast of each of us there may dwell the majesty, the blessedness, of God. Ah, what is the place which we can make ready for Him whom “the heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain”? Mark the sentence, “*We will make our abode.*” The divine love <sup>Ver. 26.</sup> builds its own house, by the force of its own gentleness, in our rude, rough, unshapen hearts. Not a tent, not a mere temporary residence, an abode, a home!—that there God may dwell, His love casting out our fear, overcoming our selfishness, and subduing all things to itself. Joy, indeed, to thee, O thou lover of Christ, who art keeping His words! In the gift of the Father to thee, truly thy “fellowship is with the Father, <sup>1 John i. 3.</sup> and with His Son Jesus Christ.”

## XV.

### A FAREWELL GREETING.

ST JOHN xiv. 25-31.

“Peace I leave with you.”

Ver. 25. “*Being yet present*”—during the “little while” of His abiding with the disciples—the Lord had spoken to His own. But the spirit and life of His words had not been declared. He is merely the sower sowing the good seed. The awakening of the slumbering germ, the growth of the divine nature begotten by means of the word, the “gathering of fruit unto life eternal,” is reserved for the day of the Holy Ghost. Thus the mutual relation and office of the Promiser and the Promised, Jesus and the other Comforter, are illustrated. The one soweth, the other reapeth; sower and reaper rejoice together.

Chap. iv. 36,  
37. There is a beautiful unselfishness, I think, in the scriptural setting forth of the work of the Three Persons in the Godhead. The *Father* glorifies the Son: “When He bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, He saith, And let

all the angels of God worship Him." The voice <sup>Hebrews i.</sup> out of the cloud proclaims to men, "This is My <sup>6.</sup> beloved Son, hear Him." The *Son* glorifies the <sup>Mark ix. 7.</sup> Father: "He doeth nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do." The *Holy* <sup>Chap. v. 19.</sup> *Spirit* manifests the love of the Father and the Son. He loses Himself in the glory of Christ. He is as "the Friend of the Bridegroom who standeth and heareth him, rejoicing greatly because of the Bridegroom's voice." Christ is <sup>Chap. iii. 29.</sup> the Truth; He is the Spirit of Truth. Christ is the Word; He is the Expositor. Christ is the Light; He is the Illuminator. Christ is the Speaker; He is the Teacher. Apart from Christ there is no revelation. Apart from the Blessed Spirit there is no enlightenment. As the Latin Father has well observed, "We take the words from Christ who speaks; we understand the same words by the Spirit who teaches."

Augustine.

So is it in Christian experience. In regard to *all* knowledge, indeed, we can distinguish between the word-speaking and the word-teaching. The material is provided; laid in order and made ready for the quickening. The germs are implanted, but they must be awakened, and kindled into living consciousness. In every science, in all literature, there is an *Eureka*—a moment when, through the purging of the inward vision, the inner truths, the import and significance of things, are discerned, and what

was hitherto merely objective to the soul becomes its possession and its joy. And thus likewise as to spiritual verities. We may have them, in their due proportion and arrangement, “bone to his bone, the sinews and the flesh upon them, and the skin covering them above, but no breath in them.” The breath is the work of the Holy Spirit ; His the inflatus by which thought is moved, and affection is stirred, and the correspondence between the word and the soul’s need is discerned. “One thing I know, that, *whereas I was blind, now I see.*”

Ezekiel  
xxxvii. 8.

Chap. ix. 25.

Let us observe the scope of the second reference to the Comforter in the last discourse of our Lord. Two things are noticeable—*the designation and the function.*

Ver. 26.

Here, and here only, He is named *the Holy Ghost.* In the other passages which announce His advent He is described as the Spirit of Truth. With this, which relates to the personal reception and recollection of Christ’s sayings, is associated the quality of holiness. Farther, it is to be noted that holiness is predicated of Him when the special assurance is added, “*The Father will send Him in My name.*” He is to be the representative of the Holy One, the sent and separated of God. And the element of His *in-dwelling* is the same as the element of Christ’s *with-dwelling.* There is no realisation of Christ, and no knowledge of Christ, except in holiness ;

spiritual sight is possible only to the soul fashioned according to the Christly pattern. An old English writer well remarks: "As the eye cannot behold the sun unless it be sunlike, and hath the form and resemblance of the sun drawn in it, so neither can the soul of man behold God unless it be godlike—hath God formed in it, and be made partaker of the divine nature. The knowledge of divinity that appears in systems and models is but a poor wan light ; but the powerful energy of divine knowledge displays itself in purified souls ; here we find the land of truth."

As the Expositor of the words of Christ, this Holy Spirit's function is parted into two in the saying concerning Him : "*He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*" Yet we must not divide the two parts. They have a common reference, "whatsoever I have said." The teaching here does not point to additional developments of truth, to words besides, or revelations beyond, the words which Christ has spoken. It stands for the opening up of Christ's mind, as contained implicitly in or declared explicitly by His words. It is the leading of thought into the full significance and consciousness of the Incarnate Son of God, who is in the Father and in whom the Father is. And this is done by recalling the words, by reproducing them in the

John Smith  
—Discourse  
on the  
Method of  
Attaining to  
Divine  
Knowledge  
section 1.

Ver. 26.

Olshausen.

memory, and drawing forth their spiritual force and power. On the testimony of the Lord as to the sufficiency of this work of the Holy Ghost we base our reception of the Gospels and Epistles of the New Testament. His *all things* "must not, indeed, be extended to all conceivable minutiae;" nor does it assert that the apostles, individually, recollected and discerned the full meaning of *all* that Christ did and spoke; but it is equivalent to a pledge that the apostles conjunctly and personally would be so actuated by the Holy Ghost as that a true, adequate, and full interpretation of Himself, in His character, glory, grace, and truth, would be given, through them, to the Church.

And it is permitted us thankfully to believe that, when Jesus says "*He shall teach you,*" He is not isolating the eleven seated around Him; that, although in them His assurance was first and most signally fulfilled, they were "the first fruits" of a harvest of renewed and illuminated souls. The Holy Ghost is still with the Church, teaching the things which Christ has spoken, and leading into further and fuller discoveries of their preciousness. We have not yet attained, neither are we perfect. The Church is only yet learning her primer. Who can set any limits to the potencies of the development and application of Christian truth? Oh, how large, and broad, and deep,

and high is the thought, Christ the Truth! Where is the measure for the “measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ”? Blessed be God, the Holy Spirit has not been withdrawn! In ministries and ordinances He is the Teacher, He is the Reminder. If our ministries and ordinances were only more complete, and filled with the spirit of grace and supplications, how much more distinct would His teaching be. Let us yield our hearts to the conviction that this Comforter has yet many things to say, that He is bidding our faith upwards and forwards to greater things. All truth was not compressed in statements and formularies of the past. The new ever grows out of and completes the old; but there is *a new*, and there will be an ever newer and newer. The inheritance is ever enlarging; new light on Christ’s words; new sight into the pastures for thought that are hidden in these words; new anointings of holiness; new revelations of the living Christ Himself. Always prophetic, always speaking of what is to be, this saying is the pledge of a divine teacher ever teaching the disciple—“the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of the Lord.”

“And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in Thee.” In this wise may we conceive the soul of Christ ascending to the Father. He has

Psalm xxxix.

<sup>7</sup>

given the promise; He has provided for the wants of His little children. All has been pledged to them in the great words concerning the Comforter. May He not, without farther speech, bestow His last benediction, and take the way, through suffering and death, to the glory at the right hand of the Eternal?

*“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”*

Ver. 27.

This is a farewell greeting—a greeting which has respect to the usual salutation at the coming and going of guests—but which, in the hands of Him who makes all things new, is a blessing peculiarly and only His. And every clause of the saying is charged with suggestive thought. The Saviour *leaves* peace. He, in the body, must go, but *this* remains. It is His gospel. He has nothing better to bequeath to His little children. For it is not *a* peace—an ordinary condition of thriving which He marks out—the addition is, “*My peace*,” that which is emphatically His own—in the right of His Being as the Son of God, in the truth of His possession as the Man according to God’s own heart. Had they not felt the majesty of His calm? Had they not seen that, amidst all sorts of disquieting things, “when the blast of the terrible ones was as a storm against the wall;” and now, in the

immediate prospect of the death of which He had told them, He was "in perfect peace," His heart fixed so that it could not be moved? <sup>1saiah xxvi.  
3.</sup> Such is the peace that He leaves with them. Ah, His followers know its secret. They know that it keeps the heart and mind, because its root is a perfect, unbounded, trust in the Father; because the soul is occupied with the Father—the Father that centre which self, in the consciousness of the worldly, is; because desire and purpose dwell in a region above all that speaks of turmoil and strife, and the energy is fed from springs whose source is other and higher than the world. He leaves. Yes; He *gives* this peace to all who trust Him. In them it represents a great spiritual deliverance—deliverance from the guilt and bondage of sin, from all that alienates the life, in its main tendencies, from the Father. A threefold grace: "peace with God by the pardon of sin; peace with themselves by the answer of a good conscience; peace with one another by mutual charity." All needful for this grace He has secured, is securing, by the sacrifice of Himself. Pointing to the blood shed for many, and reminding of the prayer for the Comforter, He can say—I am giving it. Not as the world is wont to give. It identifies peace with outward befallings; it seeks first some good in condition, and then looks for peace; it hews

Bishop  
Horne—  
Sermon on  
Zechariah 9.

out some broken cistern, and says, Drink, and the soul drinks only to thirst again ; it gives its best at the beginning ; soon the appetite goes, or if it remains, the power of satisfying it diminishes, and it becomes only a pain and bitterness ; its amusements end with being toils ; its pleasures end with being scourges. Not thus with this loving Lord. The good to which He directs is the Eternal. The source of supply which He opens is a well of water in the life itself, springing up into everlasting blessedness. The joy He imparts is a sovereign energy of goodness and love. He carries beyond what is transient and fleeting, because He unites to Himself at whose right hand are pleasures for evermore. Ah, yes, He has a rule and a measure of His own in giving. But the giving is so royal, the gift so great, that—no matter what the bereavement of the heart—there is a voice behind sounding in the ear, “Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

Thus the quaint Gurnall has paraphrased the sentence of Christ. “He is both the *testator* to leave, and the *executor* to give out of His own hands what His love has left to believers ; so that there is no fear but that His will shall be performed to the full, seeing He Himself lives to see it done. *Not as the world giveth.* The peace I leave with you is not in your houses, but in your hearts. The comfort I give you lies not

in gold and silver, but in pardon of sin, hopes of glory, and inward consolations, and these shall outlive all the world's joy. Many a dying father hath, in a farewell speech to his children, wished them all peace and comfort when he should be dead and gone ; but who besides Jesus Christ could send a comforter into their hearts, and lodge peace and comfort in their bosoms."

The Christian Armour  
chap. ix.  
section 2.

Great and precious, in truth, is the promise, the legacy, of Jesus to His own. But their countenances still are clouded. All His assurances cannot dispel their gloom. They are brooding, and they keep brooding, heavily over the future before them. The Lord, for an instant, shifts His ground. Why should they think only of themselves ? Are they strangers to the unselfishness of love ? Do they love Him ? Will they not then rejoice when He tells them that He is going to His Father—to an increase and elevation of bliss : "*For My Father is greater than I*" ?

Ver. 28

Men have been puzzled over this sentence as to the Father and the Son. Why should they be so ? "In the very name of Father there is something of eminence which is not in that of Son ; and some kind of priority we must ascribe unto Him whom we call the First in respect of Him whom we term the Second Person ; and, as

Pearson on  
the Creed,  
Art i.

we cannot but ascribe it, so we must endeavour to preserve it." The Son looks up—acknowledges the subordination which does not imply difference of nature—and appeals to those who love Him to forget their own sorrow, to cease from continual self-contemplation, and rejoice with Him in His joy. Nor is it wholly for Himself—although that consideration is made prominent. In His passing to the Father's right hand, the accepted and glorified God-man, His mission shall be accomplished, His Church shall be raised and glorified also, and the blessings represented in the Father's answer to His prayer for the Comforter shall be realised.

But the Lord must hasten. The separation is soon to be. He announces it beforehand; He prepares the minds of His little flock, that their confidence in Him may not be shaken, that they may be assured of the unbroken unity, He in them and they in Him. The final conflict with the Prince of this world is at hand. "As he approached the Redeemer at the commencement of His ministry and tempted Him with the snare of *pleasure*, so now, at the end of His work, He appears and tempts Him by means of *fear*." But in vain. The will is steadfast in obedience. The world-Prince has nothing in the tempted Son of God. In token of the Son's dutiful love He now binds Himself,

Ver. 29.

Ver. 30.

Olshausen.

as it were, with cords on the altar. He offers Himself in sacrifice to be and to bear as the Father gave Him commandment. For Himself and His own the sentence must be uttered:

*"Arise, and let us go hence."*

Ver. 31.

## XVI.

### THE DISCOURSE RESUMED—THE VINE AND THE BRANCHES.

ST JOHN xv. 1-II.

“Abide.”

BETWEEN the final word of the previous chapter and the beginning of the fifteenth, we may insert the singing of the hymn which, as two of the Evangelists inform us, preceded the departure to the Mount of Olives. The Passover-meal was frequently, if not always, concluded with the recitation of the Great Hallel or some other sacred hymn. And the moment appropriate to the farewell song was that immediately after all had arisen in preparation for going thence. But how could the members of that company, so soon to be bereaved, join with heart-felt gratitude and joy in the refrain, “O give thanks unto the Lord for He is good, for His mercy endureth for ever”? The signal to depart rang on their souls like the knell of doom. Hitherto they had been a flock, small

Matt. xxvi.  
Mark xiv. 26.  
30.  
Ps cxxxvi. 1.

but united. So long as their Master was with them they had both a leader and a home; His removal will scatter them, and send them back into the world disappointed, lonely, homeless. He who read the thoughts of their hearts knew the reason of the saddened countenance and the muffled song. And His "*let us go*" must be supplemented by another note. The series of utterances which follows is the unfolding of the sentence "*Abide in Me.*" Is not this the twofold idea of the Christian life—movement, conflict, trial in the outer world; rest, peace, the home of the soul in Christ Himself?

Where the latter portion of the Lord's discourse was spoken we cannot determine. The natural interpretation of the narrative is that it was spoken either on the way to the brook Kedron, or at some spot more or less distant from the upper room. And the difference between it and the former address of the Lord bears out the conception of a different scene—one in which the mind is brought more directly into contact with external things, and the impression of the hostile external world is more vividly formed. Those who insist that there was always a special occasion for the similitudes and parables of Christ suggest various circumstances as the ground-work of the similitude with which the resumed speech begins. Such

Storr.

Lange.

Rosen-muller.

Chap. xviii.  
1.

Chap. xvii. 1.

as : the vineyards which the little company must have skirted on their path, lighted by the moon then fully shining ; the fires which, at the time of the Passover celebration, were kindled for the burning of the offal of the sacrifices and the cut off branches of the vine ; the great vine, described by Josephus, spread on the door of the Temple, its branches and leaves of gold and its clusters of diamonds and pearls, viewed by the Lord who had made a *detour* to the Temple, or from a point in the neighbourhood of the city gate.

Setting such imaginations aside, the words related by St John may, consistently with probabilities, have been uttered in the open air, at a place a little way removed from the crowd. The "going forth over the brook," mentioned in the eighteenth chapter, may refer, not to the quitting of the house in which the feast had been held, but to the passing through the gate, afterwards called St Stephens, to the declivity at whose base the Kedron ran. And it may be noticed that the lifting up of the eyes

to heaven, which immediately preceded the prayer, seems more in consonance with the elevation of the gaze to the "spangled heavens" than the mere upward glance in the room at Jerusalem.

It is right, however, to state that another opinion has obtained the warm support of

expositors such as Stier, Olshausen, Ellicott, and Alford. "We can hardly suppose," it is argued, "that discourses like those set before us could have been delivered to as many as eleven persons walking by the way, and at a time of such publicity as the Paschal feast." The supposition is that the prospect of separation "arrested the steps of the disciples; the assembly broke up but no one moved. And then it was that He again opened His lips." A twig, perchance, "stretched through the window into the room, or the apartment was decorated with the foliage of the vine,"—hence the mould into which the renewed speech was cast.

Alford's  
Commentary  
on St John,  
xv.

Olshausen.

My readers will agree that the time and surroundings of the discourse are of subordinate interest. The revelation of love made in it is the matter which engrosses our attention. What was the need of particular incident or prospect for the suggestion of theme and illustration to the Lord? Had He not been speaking already of "*the fruit of the vine*"? Had He not passed the cup filled with this fruit as the New Testament in His blood? Was not the vine one of the great Old Testament emblems, occupying a chief place in the circle of prophetic symbols? Was it not a specially fitting correspondent in the material universe for the truth He desired to enforce—the truth

of a spiritual organism in which He and His are for ever one? In the treasury of Jesus' mind, doubtless, the comparison which He institutes was among the things both old and new,—old, because the expression of reality, new, because so elastic as to admit of ever fresh applications,—which lay ready for His command when the opportunity called it forth. The opportunity had come; and the great and precious interpretation of the prophetic hieroglyph is presented. May we discern a part at least of the teaching of Jesus!

The subject of the earlier address was chiefly Christ *in His relation to the Father*—the Trinity of the Divine Being in Him to be manifested to His own in the other Comforter whom the Father would send. The subject of the address which now begins is chiefly Christ *in His relation to His Church*; the nature of this relation; the antagonism between those whom it embraces and the world; the help ministered by it against such antagonism; and the final victory and joy which it pledges. When these things have been declared, there comes forth from the inmost consciousness of Jesus that sublime conference with the Father which consummates the ministry of the suffering love of the Son of God on the earth.

Thus the address begins:—

*"I am the true vine."* We have already referred to the spiritual suggestiveness of the vine. Unsightly in stock, "with no form or comeliness," it spreads its foliage. Wonderfully vital, giving man the most rich and generous of fruits, yet requiring the constant skill and care of the gardener,—it is not to be wondered at that this tree and the place of its cultivation, the vineyard, should in scripture use denote the People specially planted by God in the soil of earth as the repository of His covenant and the sign of His kingdom to the nations. Israel according to the flesh is described by the Prophets as "the choice vine on the very fruitful hill," the vine which "brought forth branches and shot forth sprigs," "the son of man whom the Lord had made strong for Himself." Now, Christ, transferring to His own person all expressed in this figure, all of which the "crown of the herbs of the field," as a figure of the Church, can speak to the heart, uses an adjective whose meaning must not be overlooked. "The *true* vine." The student of the New Testament will observe that in the Gospel of St John this adjective—a fuller one than another Greek word also translated true—occurs no less than twenty-two times. And the comparison of the passages will show that "the antithesis cannot lie between the false and the true, but only between the imperfect and the perfect, the shadowy and

Isaiah v. 1, 2.

Ezekiel xix.

10. Psalm lxxx.

the substantial." To recur, for example, to Israel, Christ does not deny that it was a vine of God's planting; the assertion is that in Him alone the truth of the vine—the blessing which it yields in its clusters of grapes and its wine when the grapes are bruised—is realized to the full. "Whatever the name imports, taken in its highest, deepest, widest sense, whatever according to that the vine ought to be, that Christ fully is." He is "made of God to us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." He is "the trunk-root and stem of the kingdom of love." In Him—the Word Incarnate, the man according to God's own heart—is the life of which all the branches receive.

Ver. 1.

"*And My Father is the Husbandman.*" Not the mere vine-dresser; the owner and proprietor as well. Did not the Son come forth from the Father? But the cultivator, the dresser of the vine also. The word of St Paul just quoted is the sign of the Husbandman-care in regard to Christ Himself. "*He was made of God unto us.*" There was a disciplining, a dealing with the Son in the flesh, needed to the perfecting of Him as the cause of eternal salvation. "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered." And still the Church which is Christ's body is under the care of the Father. The Holy Ghost

Hebrews v.  
8.Trench  
Synonyms,  
section 8.

1 Cor. i. 30.

is the promise of the Father. In Him the culture of the Divine Fatherhood is realized, The promise is made good, "I, the Lord, do keep the vineyard. I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night <sup>Isaiah xxvii</sup><sup>3.</sup> and day." And when we reflect on particular branches—on the work of the husbandman, as he scans every sprig and shoot and cluster—is not the assurance of our Lord one of comfort as well as instruction? *My Father;* there is the mark of identification. The Father of Jesus, whom Jesus has revealed, to whom Jesus lifted His eyes—He it is, O Christian, who keeps to Himself the pruning-knife. Dost thou suffer? His hand is in thy suffering. His heart is with thee. His watchfulness is ordering all. He has a purpose in all, and that purpose will be accomplished. "O what a cross to have no cross!" No cross were the sign that there is no husbandman. <sup>Augustine  
on Amos iii.  
2.</sup>

Now, the point of the Lord's exhortation is, that these poor disciples who think only of His leaving them, that all who "believe in God and believe also in Him," are component parts of the vine which the Eternal Father husbands. The tree is not the stem only, it is the stem and the branches. Christ, the vine is not merely His person, it is *His person and His Church*. All who are spiritually affianced to Him are

Eph. v. 30. truly parts of Himself, "members of His body, His flesh, and His bones." What would a vine mean without branches? What would a body be without members and organs? In the most emphatic way the Lord thus assures His own that they are inseparable from Him; that the parting which is near, however painful, cannot break the continuity of a relation which is not one of mere sympathy, but is one of life. The one life animates the tree. It is not in any branch apart from another branch; the branches have it because of their incorporation into the stem, and because, with the stem, they are the tree. *They live in Him, out of Him.* He has joined them to Himself. Let them realize the truth of this vital incorporative union: "*I am the vine, ye are the branches.*"

Ver. 5. Thus, reminding them of their position, Christ bids the disciples continue where they already are, that they may receive the blessedness prepared for them—"Abide in Me and I in you," or, as we might otherwise render it, "Live your life in Me and I shall live My life in you." Truly, a noticeable sentence! Let us observe *how it is enforced* and *what it implies*.

Ver. 4. It is *enforced* by the consideration of utter powerlessness apart from Christ. What pith has the branch in itself? Can it be the source

of its own life and energy? As little can the individual be a fountain to himself. All vital power is in God. "What we have from God," says Bernard of Clairvaux, "we cannot keep without God." It is universally true that all real disciple-force is derived from the Living Word. "If it be said, it is not *all* acting, *absolutely*, but only what is *good* that is impossible, still it must be confessed that only that which is good is real, while what is evil is Olshausen. futile." To forget this, or to act as if we were complete in ourselves, is to lose power. "*Apart* Ver. 5. *from Me ye can do nothing.*"

Nay, to make the assertion still more emphatic, we are reminded of the work of the husbandman. Do we not see him removing all in the tree which tends to mere leaf and wood? Not pruning but lopping off the branch which is not fulfilling the function of life. What is done with such a branch? Simply cast into the fire. Depend upon it, says the Lord, that there is an analogous dealing with men spiritually—that those who will live from themselves, not from the eternal truth and love of God, shall be cast forth and regarded as amongst the withered things Ver. 6. whose end is to be burned.

The abiding insisted on *implies* the realisation of this dependence of the branch on the tree, the conscious and willing reception of the life which passes from the root-stem into every vital portion

of the organism. Because the branches are human souls, the co-operation of will in each branch is demanded. The permanence of the union, the experience of the life-giving power of the Lord, is dependent on the action of the will. What is a promise is also a *condition*: "Take heed to abide in Me in order that I may abide in you, that, as a little ago I pledged, I may come to you, and live within you in the Comforter, even the Holy Ghost."

Ver. 3.

The sentence immediately preceding this charge has, in connection with it, a special force. Christ testifies that the disciples are already "*clean because of the word which He has spoken to them.*" The *word*, in the use of the third verse, denotes all the teaching, indeed the ministry, of the Lord which had encompassed the eleven. They had dwelt in it. It had been the means of elevating their desires, of giving a new direction to their activity, a new character to all their aims. They were still foolish and slow to believe. But, so far at least, the thoughts of their hearts had been cleansed; and He calls them to yield themselves more and more to the influence of that word, illumined as it would be by the Spirit of Truth, to find in it always the meeting-place between Him and them. It is in the word "*dwelling richly in the heart*" that the mutual abiding of Christ and the believer is evermore accomplished.

This can be readily understood. Most of us have known, at least have heard of, some person as to whose goodness and truth there could be no doubt—"whose mere presence has shamed the bad, and made the good better, and been felt at times like the presence of God Himself." Ecce Homo p. 161.

Some of my readers may have been brought into familiar intercourse with one thus minded, one who, in clearness of apprehension, purity of heart, a certain indefinable elevation and beauty of spirit, was their gladly acknowledged superior. Is it possible to describe the indebtedness to Him? Is it the language of exaggeration to say that He lives in the soul, and the soul lives in Him? Well, it is only the highest application of this kind of influence which is represented in the *abiding* on which our Lord insists. To dwell from day to day in the secret of His presence; to have the consciousness of Him ensphering our thought and affection; to keep all the approaches of the spirit so open that there can be a continual influx of His gentleness, His love, His spirit into us; to search the scriptures, listening for His word, and, through His word, seeking the communion of His mind as our wisdom, and righteousness, and holiness; thus to live is to fulfil the injunction, "Abide in Me, and I in you."

This abiding is the secret of *true discipleship, effectual prayer, and Christ-like joy.*

Ver. 8.

Yes ; let us give diligent heed to the saying of our Lord : “ *Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be My disciples.*” We may notice the honour which He puts on discipleship. The sentence is not, “ So shall ye be My apostles.” Apostles and all must, before and above everything else, be learners. That is the *summit* as well as the *beginning* of the Christian life. And the learning advances in the measure in which the fruit-bearing increases. For, in that measure, our sympathy with the Lord, the union of our wills with Him, and therefore our knowledge of Him, is deepened and confirmed. Herein is Jesus’ Father glorified. He desires the glory of His Son—that is the Father’s glory. He is regarding this in all the discipline of His love. “ Whoso knows that the gardener’s arm is not set on work by anger, but by skill, will not conclude that he hates the tree he wounds, but that he has a mind to have it fruitful, and judges these harsh means the fittest to produce that effect.” Always let us say this to ourselves—the mind of my Father in all His dealings with me is to enlarge the capacity of discipleship, of learning the sonship of His Son, of bearing much fruit. Fruit is, so to speak, the concentrated juice or blood of the tree. It is the result and sign of the life which is in that blood. The fruit to which Christ refers is the character, with all its in-

fluence, which expresses the cleansing efficacy of His blood, which is the necessary manifestation of the spirit of a Son. "Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance"—thus St Paul describes Gal. v. 22. "the fruit of the Spirit." How solemn the reminder, "*much* fruit, *so* shall ye be My disciples." Ah, to what must we trace the reason of our spiritual poverty and powerlessness but to this, that we are not abiding in Christ, making Him truly our home, understanding that the order is, first, *in* Him, the inner life fed out of Him, and second, *for* Him, the outer life His witness to men. Some of us, I daresay, feel that we do not attend sufficiently to *the springs* of action. We are so busy, so engaged in work of one kind or another, that the private, personal, communion with the Lord suffers. Oh, for all right service the need is, Christ at the centre of the being, Christ Himself the being's centre. Mrs Stowe has beautifully interpreted the longing of the true disciple :—

"The soul alone, like a neglected harp,  
Grows out of tune, and needs that hand divine ;  
Dwell Thou within it, tune and touch the chords,  
Till every note and string shall answer Thine.

"Abide in me, there have been moments pure  
When I have seen Thy face and felt Thy power ;  
Then evil lost its charm, and passion hushed,  
Owned the divine enchantment of the hour.

"These were but seasons beautiful and rare ;  
 Abide in me and they shall ever be.  
 I ask Thee now fulfil my earnest prayer,  
 Come and abide in me and I in Thee."

Ver. 7.

The secret of discipleship, and the *secret of effectual prayer* also, is contained in the word, *Abide*. How large, yet how carefully defined, is the promise of the seventh verse. How large, "*Ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you;*" but how carefully defined, "*If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you.*" The *if* of the defining clause has its place in the right conception of prayer. Suppose yourself, dear reader, in perfect sympathy with another, thinking in his mind, feeling in his affections, seeing as through his eyes, will not your asking be only the reflection of his purpose? Nay, will not your speaking to him be really his spirit speaking out of you? Now, if you are in Christ—if His mind is the home of your mind, if His words are the material of your thought, and the life which you live in the flesh is being lived in the faith of the Son of God—what the will, in you thus abiding, prompts is only the echo of His voice. There may be much of your own in the expression of the will, much perhaps that is weak and foolish, but there is a prayer in the prayer, an intercession of the spirit with groanings which cannot be uttered. And what is this but the articulated thought of God—His

Spirit speaking from you to Himself? "Lord teach us to pray," said the apostles. The Lord is teaching us to pray when He lays down the fundamental rule, "*Abide in Me and I in you.*"

Finally, thus to abide is the *secret of Christ-like joy*. What was the joy of the Lord? His consciousness of the Father's love. The world was nothing to Him, His Father was all. "He kept His Father's commandments, and abode in His love." There is nothing more in the <sup>Ver. 10.</sup> thought of Jesus than that all who are His should be partakers of this sovereign blessedness. It could be theirs, as it had been His, only through the possession of a home outside the world. Men had asked Him, "Where dwellest Thou?" and it had been sufficient for Him to point upward, "I dwell with Mine own people, with My Father." He points us upward, "*As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you; continue ye in My love.*" There is the <sup>Ver. 9.</sup> home, and here is the home-life—"If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love." <sup>Ver. 10.</sup> Heaven is where He is, enshrined in obedient, dutiful love. Such love is stronger than the world, stronger than death: "I am persuaded that neither height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Jesus Christ our Lord." <sup>Rom. viii. 39.</sup>

"These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might be fulfilled in you, and that your joy might be full."

<sup>Ver. 11.</sup>

## XVII.

### CONFFLICT AND HELP.

CHAPS. XV. 12-27, AND XVI. 1-11.

“The world hateth you.”

WE notice five pauses in the last discourse of our Lord. Five times He repeats, “These things have I spoken unto you.” The prospect Chap. xiv. 25. of the impending separation seems, again and Chap. xv. 11. Chap. xvi. 1. Chap. xvi. 25. again, with new vividness to rise before His Chap. xvi. 33. mind; and, as the eye of the soul regards it, He gathers up the purpose of His address, reviews the circumstances of His little flock, passing on to some farther thought or calling back that He may more fully explain some past voice of love. One of such pauses is now before us. Jesus has illustrated the truth of the Chap. xv. 11. union, vital and organic, in which He and His are joined together; and He has charged His followers to abide in Him, to continue in His love. In this exposition He has presented the ideal of His church, apart from any special surroundings. But He must return to the

position then occupied by the eleven, and to the condition of all who shall believe in Him through their word, as signified by their sorrow and trials. From the eleventh verse of the fifteenth chapter and through the sixteenth chapter, His utterance relates to the two points,

*The disciple, and the world,*

*The supports provided for the disciple.*

Let us endeavour to apprehend the more salient features of the testimony.

One issue of the union which has been described is a separation from the world which involves an irreconcilable antagonism. Christ had delayed making the full extent of this antagonism known until the night of His betrayal.

*"These things I said not unto you at the beginning because I was with you."* Hints and intimations He had indeed repeatedly given. But He had never referred to it so pointedly as then —never “with such disclosure of the deepest ground of the hatred.” So long as He went before them, He stood between them and others; now that He is going away, the plain truth must be plainly told. “If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.”

Chap. xvi. 4.

See how often in this sentence the term *the world* is mentioned. There are some words

Chap. xv. 19.

whose meaning we feel but cannot exactly define ; of such words, "the world" is one. We have all some conception of what it denotes as employed by Christ ; but it is impossible in precise terms to set forth the types of person included in the phrase. To the apostles it signified the mass outside the circle of believers—the Synagogue, the Priesthood, the Schools of the Rabbins, the people soon to be roused to the cry, "Crucify Him, crucify Him." It signified more, as by-and-bye they discovered ; in Luther's pithy phrase, "All Emperors, Kings, Princes, and whatever is noble, rich, great and learned, wise, or anything upon earth." Now, with respect to this mighty opposing force, we can observe a change of tone from previous sayings. In the seventh chapter of this gospel, we read that Jesus declined going up to the temple at the feast of tabernacles because "My time is not yet come : but," turning to the twelve, "your time is alway ready : the world cannot hate you, but me it hateth." How different the language now ! It is, "The world cannot *but* hate you since me it hateth." Master and followers are now identified. He and they are henceforth to be regarded as one—the one tree having the one life. They have been taken out of the world. They have been grafted into Himself. *Therefore* the world hates them.

There is a remarkable bitterness in the hatred which is predicted. We bid our thought back-

Quoted  
"Hare's  
Mission of  
the Com-  
forter."

Chap. vii. 7,  
8.

ward, for an instant, to the time of the apostles. How sharp and rugged the outline of the enmity which they encountered! With regard to the Jews, neither was Jesus nor was His doctrine the fulfilment of the national sentiment concerning the Messiah. But there is a malignity, there is a savage ferocity in the spirit of the Jewish mind for which this will scarcely account. As for the civilisations of Greece and Rome :—why is it that nations so easy, so polite, so deferential to all new doctrines, should kindle into animosity when the truth as it is in Jesus seems to grow and prevail amongst them? What is there about this truth or its promoters which tends to provoke, and, having provoked, to intensify this antagonism? Have we not the answer from Christ Himself? "*The world loves his own.*" It will tolerate modes of religion however various, so long and so far as it finds its own in them. But this kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ is the solemn condemnation of that which the world loves and idolizes. And it will not consent to be merely tolerated. A niche might have been found for Christ in the Pantheon; He might have got the place of another Master, another God, a new light of the world ; it might then have been said what, indeed, we do hear in our time, "The Jew goes his way, and the Heathen goes his way, and the Christian goes his way, and they are all so many ways by which men arrive at the one

end." But this is the place which Christ declines. The word is, "I am *the* Light of the world," "I am *the* Way, and *the* Truth, and *the* Life." There can be no lowering and no compromise of the claim. The demand which eighteen hundred years ago met and meets mankind still is that at the name of Jesus who had been not merely "found in fashion as a man," but had "taken on him the form," not of the mighty or wise, but of the slave, and had undergone the death of the cross, every knee should bow.

Phil. ii. 7-10.

"*Therefore the world hateth.*" The opposition offered by the faith that is in Christ is aggressive, is exasperating. It rouses up the dominant hostility of the selfishness and wickedness in which the world is lying. It calls out the resistance of unregenerate nature to the light and truth of God. Its cut is sharper and deeper than a two-edged sword. The enmity is without excuse, yet it is inevitable. Christ's words do not, like the world-religions, merely scratch the surface of the life. They lay bare the inner places of the moral nature. They convict, not of evil only, but of sin. They do not allow a man to be neutral. They demand to be received or rejected ; and the reception or the rejection is the revelation of the will, of the conscience in a man. "*If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin : but now they have no excuse for their sin. . . If I had not done*

*among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin : but now they have both seen and hated both me and my Father.*" Such <sup>Chap. xv. 22<sup>o</sup></sup> <sub>24,</sub> is Christ's explanation of the world-hatred, its reason and its guilt.

The hatred is announced in sentences perspicuous and prophetic, so plain that those to whom He spoke could not afterwards regard any suffering as strange, could not be offended as if something had been concealed from them. What they would encounter, how they <sup>Chap. xvi. 1.</sup> would be treated are, in precise phraseology, sketched. "*They shall put you out of the synagogue : yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.*" <sup>Chap. xvi. 2.</sup> And this is no incident in one age merely : it is descriptive of an opposition of forces which must perpetuate itself. "*The servant is not greater than his lord : if they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you.*" The forms of the <sup>Chap. xv. 20.</sup> opposition may vary, but in all times "the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." <sup>Romans viii</sup>

St Paul speaks of the "offence of the cross."<sup>7</sup> The object of many, it might appear, is to separate the offence from the cross ; to present for the admiration of men a cross which cannot offend ears polite, which is simply a symbol of the beautiful, the pathetic, the self-devoted. Certainly, there is no need to add to the

offence ; there is no need to attach to the cross an offence which is not proper to it. But the attitude sometimes assumed by modern æstheticism and culture must be jealously watched. Christianity, persecuted for three centuries by Pagan Rome, ultimately triumphed. But what then ? The Prince of this world is "that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan." The Paganism which was conquered was, in one and another and another of its elements, absorbed into the Church, until, in the Church of Rome, the spectacle was exhibited of either—we can scarcely determine which—a Paganised Christianity or a Christianised Paganism. Thus the radical world-hatred, in covert manner, persecutes the Church of God. By subtlety, Jacob stole the birthright. May it not be, that, with similar subtlety, we are betimes offered food which has a savour of the Bread of Life, but which wants its pith and pungency—its solemn dealing with conscience, the work, done by no other but done by Christ, that has respect to sin and righteousness and judgment, and the New Testament in His blood shed for many, for the remission of sin ? The aim is to make religion popular, to send it forth, not in the rough sandals of the soldier, but in the golden slippers of the courtier. Men are more anxious to exhibit the smile than to manifest the frown ; to show how far Christianity goes with the world

than to show where its path and that of the world diverge. So far good. It is a really laudable and blessed work to remove misconstructions which needlessly embarrass the faith of the thoughtful; it is good also to reveal that more human side of Christian truth which is vouched for in the name that Christ took to Himself, the Son of Man. But not at the expense of what is spiritual in the truth; not by hiding the unalterable demand of the gospel; not by making Christ crucified a mere apotheosis of self-sacrifice; not by obliterating or by softening the lines which divide the two camps, the believing church and the unbelieving world. May God help us to be stedfast and unmoveable; not "to pad the cross we bear," still less to be content with a merely ornamental cross, but to deny self and take up the cross of Jesus and follow Him! I dread the Judas who conceals his hatred behind a kiss—the one in the position of the disciple who with a kiss betrays the Christ of God into the hands of sinners.

So much for the disciple and the world: what are the supports which Christ sets before His little flock thus called to conflict and trial in His name and for His sake? I distinguish three such supports—*The consciousness of a Divine election; The strength of a uniting love; The power of the testifying spirit of truth.*

First, it is a support to realise *the election* expressed in the sentence : “*Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain.*” Let us separate the interpretation of these words from applications or misapplications of the doctrine of electing grace. They suggest to us *the fact* which is the main-stay of every “good and faithful servant,” that God seeks the man before the man seeks Him, that service is only a response to His call, that the soul’s love to Him is only “the reflex and reper-  
cussion of His.” In Israel, disciples were wont to choose their own Rabbis, and the disciples of one Rabbi formed a species of club or association. Jesus reminds His disciples that it had not been so with them ; and, in thus reminding, He gives the hint, afterwards to be filled out, of the truth of His Church. There are unions which, by the mutual consent of associates, may be dissolved. But the action of individuals cannot break up such a union as the Family. “No distance breaks the tie of blood ; Brothers are brothers evermore.” The Church is not a dissolvable partnership. Viewed apart from special ecclesiastical constitutions—as the Tree, Stem and Branches, the one Body of the Lord—it stands on the election of the Eternal. It proceeds from the love of the Father and the Son. It may pass into various phases, but

it must live. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but the elective call of the Eternal shall not pass.

Now, to the witnesses for Jesus, the sense of this call is an unfailing encouragement. There is the consciousness of *the elevation* into which it raises. Not servants but friends. Christ does not treat His followers as those to whom an order is merely given, without any exposition of the ordering mind, whose part is merely to execute a command. He makes them His companions. They are His confidants. The secret of the Lord is with them. He manifests Himself to them, and not to the world : “*All things that I have heard of my Father I have made known to you.*” Is not this honour enough ? Those

Chap. xv. 15

who are admitted into the intimacy of the Lord of Glory need not be dismayed because of the brow-beating of the world. With regard to all tribulation, is it not blessed to realise in it the fellowship of His sufferings, to know that they are “made like unto Him by suffering patiently adversities, troubles, sicknesses,” that “the way to eternal joy is to suffer here with Him, and the door into eternal life is gladly to die with Him, so as to rise again from death, and dwell with Him in everlasting life?” Certainly, He who called them to partnership with Himself will not fail or forsake “when comes the evil day.”

Book of  
Common  
Prayer.  
Visitation of  
the Sick.

Encouragement and stimulus in one! Not only the elevation implied in the call, but the *purpose* of the call must be vividly before the mind. What is this? "*That ye should go and bring forth fruit.*" A little while before the Lord had said, "Arise, let us *go* hence." For Him to "*go hence*" was to bring forth fruit. The corn-seed could be quickened into vitality only by His death. His friends must *go* also—ever out of self, ever onwards and outwards. "*He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.*" Is not the philosophy of missions compressed in this monosyllable *go*? Is not the way of holiness, of usefulness, signified in it? It is said that Benjamin Franklin chose for a device to his signet-ring the fruit-bearing tree, and that when, near his end, he was asked for some word of wisdom, he breathed into his son's ear the word *fruitful*. It is the word written into the call, into the mission of the disciple—"ordained that you should go and bring forth fruit."

Matt. x. 39.

Secondly, there is the support of a *brotherhood*, whose cement is love originated and ruled by the love which laid down its life for the world. I take the seventeenth verse as having special reference to the Church in its fight with the world. "Love one another," says Christ; "in this all my commandments are summed up. This is your strength. It will attract the hos-

Chap. xv. 17.

tility of men, but it will be your power in meeting that hostility. The world may hate you, as it has hated me, but, having this love, you will be more than the world ; you will overcome even as I overcame." We can trace a likeness between the thought of Jesus and the beautiful tradition concerning the later years of St John—the tradition that, when old and infirm, he used to be carried into the assembly of Christians at Ephesus, and to say, as he was borne through their midst, "My children, love one another ;" and that when asked why he always said the same thing, he replied, "If this one thing were attained it would be enough." Enough!—but alas, has it been attained ?

The emphasis with which the new commandment is enforced in the last words of Jesus before He suffered is very observable. As if He had foreseen that the occasions of departure from it would multiply as the area of the Church enlarged. The brotherly covenant is the essential feature of His cause, the condition of effectual witnessing against unbelieving mankind ; and the danger of lapsing from it, and thus weakening His testimony, is apparently present to the mind of the Lord. Certainly in our day, the love of Christian for Christian, although still a powerful factor, is not the ardent force that He desired it should be. Christendom is now so mighty a thing, and, like the net of the parable, so gathers

Matt. xiii. 47. to itself "of every kind," that love for another simply on account of his Christian profession can scarcely be a warm and intense affection. Hence the tendency to limit the action of sympathy to smaller sections of the Church, to the denomination to which we belong, or, at least, to a range not far outside of it. Must we not confess that we have too little of the consciousness of the "Holy Catholic Church throughout the world"? that we are not interested as we should be in the welfare of its whole estate, and the several parts of it? Shall we not admit that, beyond certain boundaries, our neighbour Christian is to us but a shadow? How few in our Protestant churches realise that Catholicity which was one of the noblest features of the Reformation in the sixteenth century, and are alive to the duty resting on the stronger communion to help the weaker in the common battle with the world and Belial! Nay, shall we not take guilt to ourselves for our dissensions and jealousies, in consequence of which our churches betimes stand "like cliffs which have been rent 'asunder'? Oh what dishonour has been done to Christ! What harm to His little ones! What waste of energy, what loss of power in many ways by the strifes which, if they prove a zeal for light, evidence the want of love! The Church needs a new lesson in the command, Love one another. How shall we best help in

See D'Aubigné's  
History of  
the Reformation.

counteracting the evil which all true Christians deplore? One way at least is open to us. Let us love Christ more. Let us live more with Christ Himself. Let us draw water, not out of broken cisterns of man's hewing, but out of the wells of salvation. To love Christ with all our strength is "to love one another with a pure heart fervently." "The quickest way to meet," <sup>1 Peter i. 22.</sup> says one who is now beholding the King, "is, I believe, not so much by seeking to approach one another along the outward rim of the circle as by striving each from his own point towards the one centre—towards the heart of God. Every step in that direction is a step towards unity. As the radii converge to the centre, they approach more nearly among themselves."

But finally, as the great support of the disciple in his conflict with the world, there is *the promise*, twice repeated in this connection, *of the co-witnessing Spirit of Truth*. I ought to present the promise otherwise, for the order of the clauses in the former of the two announcements is noteworthy. "When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of me, and *ye also* shall bear witness." The testifier is the <sup>Chap. xv. 26.</sup> Spirit of Truth. The *also* is applied to the disciples. It is God's work, and God Himself takes charge of it. The complementary witness

Robertson's  
Pastoral  
Counsels,  
p. 231.

Zechariah  
iv. 6.

is that of the Church, necessary, essential, but it is along with, *second to*, the Spirit of Truth. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts." This is comforting, I think. Inspiring as well. We, too, are summoned to "speak of what we know, and testify of what we have seen," ever realising that the power of God's Spirit is not a mere accompaniment of the work of man, but that the work of man is only the accompaniment of a direct activity of the Holy Ghost, testifying of Christ to the world, aye, and against the world.

The assurance becomes more explicit still in the latter of the announcements. It is flushed with the sense of victory. Hitherto the world has been viewed as actively hostile to Christ. Now this Holy One, in His coming, will carry the war into the camp of the world. The Lord is so occupied with the grandeur of this aggressive warfare, that He bids His followers dismiss their sorrow, and rejoice with Him in the gain to be secured by His departure, and the consequent sending of the Spirit of Truth. His coming is the signal of a new movement into the outlying darkness, a movement summed up in the significant sentence—"He will reprove the world of sin, and righteousness, and judgment."

Chap. xvi. 8

Mark the three words. The natural conscience has some light with regard to them,

but no real conviction until Christ is made nigh, until the conscience is set immediately before Him. Saul of Tarsus knew them to be more than words ; but their power was not understood until the demonstration of the spirit began with the question of the astonished soul, " Who art Thou, Lord ? " and the answer sent back on it, " I am Jesus of Nazareth whom thou persecutest." Acts xxii. 8.

But what more ?

" Reprove of sin, because they believe not on me." The root, the essence of the world's sin Ver. 9. is the refusal to come to the light, to welcome the light, to accept the testimony which God is giving concerning His Son. This is *sin* : not to believe when the truth is truly presented is, not a misfortune, but sin. The word in the Epistle of St John is very strong. It is to make 1 John v. 10. God a liar, and that is the matter of the indictment of the Spirit against the world.

" Righteousness, because I go to the Father." Ver. 10. What had the *world to do* with this going ? Its unrighteousness had to do with it. Its wicked hands crucified the Lord of glory. " Look on Him whom *you have pierced*" is the preaching of the Spirit. But what had *this going to do* with the world ? It was to be the world's righteousness. The voice might thereafter be lifted up with strength, " If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous : and He is the propitiation for

our sins : and not for our's only, but also for  
the whole world."

<sup>1 John ii. 2.</sup> <sup>Ver. 11.</sup> "Judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." Christ is the world's judge. His word, His cross, is the judgment-seat. He is the Revealer of the thoughts of the heart. What every man is in God's sight is proved by the attitude of the mind to Him. And it is this which every faithful testifying for Christ brings out. If He is the Lord the worship of the whole heart is due to Him. "Thou Satan, thou prince of this world, who dost steal the heart that is His, get thee behind."

These are the main directions of the victorious testimony of the Spirit when the promise of His coming is fulfilled. The warfare of the ages is vividly before the mind of Christ. "With a few great strokes He depicts all and every part of His ministry in the world." "That which was to be effected by His Spirit in the Church, during the whole course of ages down to the end of the world, He concentrates, as it were, into a single point of space and a single moment of time, even as our eye, with the help of distance, concentrates a world into a star." Yes, the sketch of Pentecost, and the immediately succeeding days in the Book of the Acts of the Apostles, is the token of the coming and the beginning of the solemn Refutation. Let us feel that it is proceeding even now. The word by

Olshausen on  
St John xvi.

Hare's Mis-  
sion of the  
Comforter,  
65.

which the Lord denotes the Spirit's work has a more deep and complex meaning than at first appears. "Reprove" in the authorised version has the force of "convict,"—the placing "of the truth of the case in dispute in a clear light before another, so that it must be seen and acknowledged as truth." The conviction may not end in conversion. Those who disputed with Stephen could not resist his wisdom. They were convicted, but they only gnashed on him with their teeth. Not all of those who, beneath the preaching of Peter, were pricked in their heart repented and believed. But the confidence which we are called to cherish is that the battle of the Church is no hopeless contest. It often seems so. We are disposed to exclaim, "Help, Lord, the godly man ceaseth." Have *we* experienced the power of God's spirit in ourselves? Have *we* realized the effect of His coming and convicting as to sin, and righteousness, and judgment? Is He the convicter of all that is worldly in our lives? Then surely we have the pledge that He is "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power which has wrought in us." The grace sufficient for one sinner is sufficient for the whole world. What time our heart is overwhelmed, let us say, as Luther said to Melanthon in time of depression, "Come, sing the forty-sixth Psalm." For with this promise of the

Westcott,  
Speaker's  
Commentary

Convicter in our view, we know assuredly that  
Psalm xlvi.  
<sup>1.</sup> “God is our refuge and strength,” that the  
battle is the Lord’s, and that “the word which  
goeth forth out of His mouth shall not return  
Isaiah iv. 11. unto Him void.”

## XVIII.

### SORROW TURNED INTO JOY.

ST JOHN xvi. 12-33.

“In Me ye have peace.”

THUS, in their conflict with the world, the disciples of Jesus are not alone. He that is with them is more than all than can be against them. “God is in their midst, and they shall not be moved; God shall help them, and that right early.” But their witness is the instrument of Psalm xlvi. 5 the convicting energy of the Holy Ghost. And what of their fitness for the work to which they have been ordained? The question, indeed, is one rather as to the measure of their unfitness, for the crudeness and imperfection of their thoughts has been made only too evident! Do we not often feel, when about to part from friends, as if we had scarcely touched on subjects which were near to our hearts, as if we must say farewell when we had scarcely indicated the deepest currents of our affection and desire? Such a feeling is present to the human soul of Jesus, as, passing from the contemplation of the outer antagonisms, He concentrates His regard

on the men whom the Father had given Him. There is a beautiful touch of charity in His sentence. He might have dwelt, justly and not unkindly, on their incapacity for spiritual truth, on their slow-heartedness and foolishness. But he will not do so *then*, for they are filled with sorrow. He merely speaks of their inability to bear farther communications. Their spirits were too heavy, they were too weighted with grief *then* for fuller conference. "I have yet many things to say to you, but ye cannot bear them now." What is the consolation? Again, *The Paraclete*—His personality again emphasized, that we may be sure that the language is not figurative only of some influence, some moral force of which the apostles would be partakers, but is the plain and literal announcement of a Divine Person in personal action dwelling with and revealing Himself in them.

"*Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He shall guide you into all the truth, for He shall not speak from Himself: but what things soever He shall hear, these shall He speak: and He shall declare unto you the things that are to come. He shall glorify Me, for He shall receive of Mine, and shall declare it unto you.*"

Vers. 13, 14.  
Revised  
Version.

Is not this the crown and consummation of the promise of the Comforter? We observe at once the difference between His mission to the world and His mission to the church. In the

one He is *against*, in the other He is *for*. The difference has been expressively rendered thus : — “He testifies of Jesus—that is the beginning of His office in the world ; He glorifies Jesus—that is the goal and end of His office in believers.” We observe, too, the advance on the previous announcements of “His office in believers.” The announcement towards the end of the fourteenth chapter is great and precious ; but it includes only the words which had already been said. It is the assurance that what the Lord *had spoken* would be recalled and experienced. This refers to what was unsaid, what may have been given in germ, but in its applications and relations to other truths had not been opened up, and to much besides which had not formed part of Jesus’ doctrine. All connected with the passion and the resurrection had yet to be unfolded. Increase of light shed on Scripture ; new light as to the meanings and truths of things, as to the will of God in providence, as to the future of the church and the world ; deeper and wider apprehensions of truth as the soul grew in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord ; these are pledged to the apostles in the day of the Spirit’s coming.

The promise is wide and yet it is limited. It is of Christ’s that the Holy Spirit takes. What is out of or apart from Christ, what is not of the Father but of the world, is beyond the

Stier, vol. vi.

<sup>370.</sup>

Chap. xiv.

<sup>25.</sup>

Ver. 15.

defined field of operation. But then the addition is, "*All things that the Father hath are mine; therefore said I that He taketh of mine and shall declare it unto you.*" The whole range of truth therefore is comprehended: whatsoever is the Father's is the domain of the revelation; He leads into all the truth; He takes of it and shows it, so far as the work of the church requires it, or as it is necessary to the end of His work—the glorifying of Christ. It would be unfair to press this saying as an argument for the absolute infallibility of the apostles. That is certainly not asserted, not even involved. It would be utterly unfair to urge it as a proof of their universal illumination. It is not said that the Spirit shall receive and show all things that the Father hath. All the Father's things are Christ's. He takes of *or out of* this all, and declares what is thus selected to the disciples. To one disciple, He shows that which is appointed for him; to another, that which is appointed for him. Each has his speciality out of that infinite fulness. St John, with the eagle eye, had, most of all, the vision of the future things. To him not only did the Heavens open, but the scroll of futurity, the apocalypse of the hidden which was, and is, and is to come, was vouchsafed. But it is fair to urge that the word of Christ is a pledge of plenary illumination—illumination fully ade-

quate to the office of the apostles of the Church —to the setting forth of Christ in the glory of His person and work and mediatorial kingdom. And, indirectly, it is to all Christians the warrant for the assurance that we receive of the Lord an anointing which abideth in us, an anointing which, in so far as we yield to it and our wills are harmonious with it, “teacheth of all things, and is truth, and is no lie.”

<sup>1</sup> John ii. 7

The clauses of this saying interest me greatly. They are so musical and so full of meaning that they linger in the soul as the sensation of chords even after they have ceased to vibrate. How beautiful the description, for instance, of the *manner* of the blessed Spirit’s glorifying of Christ! He guides into all the truth. How? It was the contention of Jesus in the days of His flesh, that the word which men heard was not His own, that He spoke what He heard of the Father. This other Comforter “*speaks not from Himself*.” He is the listener. He *hears*, and *then* He *speaks*. It is not a mere stereotyped system of doctrine that He dispenses. “He wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned.” His ear <sup>Isaiah 1. 4.</sup> catches, so to speak, every tone, every inflection of the voice of the Eternal, and what things soever He hears He speaks. Oh that we may wait for Him! that our hearts may be so disposed that we shall not miss the whispers which

He may have for us! One of the best and rarest of graces is that of a *good listener*. We do not listen enough for the new words and anointings of the Holy One. And how is the speaking distinguished? It is a *declaring* or showing. In the highest kind of spiritual knowledge, there is an immediateness of perception which is the sign of this showing—a perception that is distinct from mere intellectual grasp, that answers to a vision, an intuition of the fact or truth. We see. So the apostle

Revelation i.  
12.  
Revelation  
xxi. 1  
Revelation  
vi.  
Revelation  
vii. 9.

saw the voice that spake to him; saw the new heavens and the new earth; saw the opening of the seals, and the great multitude before the throne, and the things that must shortly come to pass. St Paul's Epistles are visions of the glory of Jesus. The truth in Him is beheld, is expounded as matter present to the spiritual eye. To show as each disciple can bear it, the fulness of life and truth which is with the Father, and lead him, having his eyes opened, from outer into inner court of the Temple of Truth—Christ the all and in all—is the function of the Comforter with respect to the disciple.

Let me add, by way of re-enforcement of that which has already been remarked upon, that in this, the last of the intimations of the Comforter, the Trinity of Persons in the God-head is most clearly set forth. The Father, who

has all things because He is the Father; the Son, whose these are because they are communicated from the Fatherhood; the Spirit, who, proceeding from the Father, in the name of the Son, takes of and declares these things—thus are we reminded of the Being of the Eternal. The mystery of that Being is not merely to be inferred from proof-texts; it is inlaid in the very structure of the discourse now before us. It is not a subject for speculation or controversy. Jeremy Taylor says, and his words are not more quaint than true, “He that goes about to speak of and understand the mysterious Trinity, and does it by words and names of man’s invention, may amuse himself; he may ‘build three tabernacles’ in his head and talk something, but he knows not what; but the good man that feels the power of the Father, and he, to whom the Son is become Wisdom and Righteousness and Sanctification and Redemption, he in whose heart the love of the Spirit of God is shed, to whom God hath communicated the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, this man though he understands nothing of that which is unintelligible, yet he alone understands the mysteriousness of the Holy Trinity. No man can be convinced well and wisely of the article of the Holy, Blessed, and Undivided Trinity, but he that feels the mightiness of the Father, begetting him to a new life, the wisdom of the

Son, building him up in a most holy faith, and the love of the Spirit of God making him to

Taylor's Sermons, St John vii. 17.

become like God."

With the repetition, in the completer form on which we have dwelt, of the promise which is the centre of His last discourse, our Lord concludes His setting forth of the provision made for the fruit-bearing enjoined on His disciples. He returns on the sentence about "the little while" of His dwelling with them; but He casts it in a mould which perplexes his followers. "*A little while and ye shall not see Me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see Me.*"

Ver. 16.

The tension in which the eleven had been held is now relaxing; the Lord is again at a level nearer their own: and, from one to another the whisper passes, "What can He mean by this saying,—by these two 'little whiles'—the one after which they would not see Him, and the other after which they would, and this because

Vers. 17, 18.

He is going to the Father?" There is no Thomas, or Philip, or Judas with courage enough now to speak. But He perceives the desire for an explanation, interprets their questioning; and, by way of answer, He gives another direction to His word. The one little while would be the time of their lamentation, but the world's jubilation; the other little while would be the time of their jubilation and the

Ver. 19.

world's lamentation. The sorrow and the joy  
of His disciples are portrayed.

Ver. 20.

This is a point which invites us to mark and  
learn the thought of Jesus, articulated in the  
clause, "*Ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow  
shall be turned into joy.*"

Ver. 20.

Not your sorrow shall give place to joy. It  
is your sorrow shall be changed: what was its  
matter shall become the matter of the joy.  
At the moment of the utterance, the matter of  
the grief was the going to the Father, since that  
seemed to involve separation and bereavement.  
And then when the last act of the sacrifice was  
finished, during the little while in which they  
did not see Him, there were gathered into the  
sorrow all the circumstances connected with  
the going away; "How the chief priests and  
rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death  
and crucified Him." Was not all this the very  
material of the joy when the *second* little while  
came? the substance of the worship through  
which the devotion of the heart was poured out  
to the risen and glorified Lord? Analyse that  
worship: is it not the triumph in all on account  
of which the apostles wept while the world  
rejoiced? Has not the cross, once the token of  
deepest shame, been turned into the symbol  
with which all that is most holy and blessed  
in the history of the centuries is associated?  
A strange revolution indeed when a Hebrew

Luke xxiv.  
20.

*Galatians vi.  
14.*

of the Hebrews could write of that which was the most accursed of things—"God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ"! And is not the sepulchre, at whose door Mary sat weeping—the rifled, empty sepulchre—the token of the church's hope and victory? We worship the Christ who was crucified. Day by day we magnify Him. "Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ."

*Ver. 22.*

The joy into which the sorrow is changed "*no man taketh from you.*" And this on account of its hidden spring, and on account also of its intrinsic character.

*Ver. 22.*

The spring—herein it is to be traced: "*Ye now therefore have sorrow, but I will see you again.*" There is a birth-power in that seeing again. The heart, conscious of it, shall be filled with a gladness like that of the mother whose delight in the living babe swallows up all remembrance of anguish. It is not, "You shall see Me"—that is but the consequence whose cause is, "I will see you." It is the self-manifestation of Jesus in the Resurrection-life, in the day of the Spirit—the seeing of which all are partakers in whom He is formed and dwells as the Hope of Glory—that awakens and sustains the joy of the heart which no man taketh away.

*Ver. 21.*

No man, because having it, we have the joy of Christ Himself. His last discourse, when

the shadow of Gethsemane and Calvary lay on His heart, is full of joy. Nine times you find either the verb or the noun denoting it. To be full of His joy is the blessedness which He craves for His own, and with a view to which He speaks to them. How grandly does it stand out against the mere good of outward condition. It is quite apart from the world ; a well-spring in the soul itself, not fed out of a broken cistern, but out of the great fountain of life—out of God Himself. It is an affluence “ne'er given save to the pure and in their purest hours,” a victorious, inward energy which is its own reward. It draws directly from Heaven. “Ask, says Christ, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full.” No words can measure <sup>Ver. 24.</sup> it ; no definitions can limit it ; it flushes the life ; it has songs for the midnight in prison; it carries music in its every thought—“joy unspeakable and full of glory.”

<sup>1</sup> Peter i. 8.

When the apostles found this joy, they found that which—God grant we all may learn. From Bethany, we read that they returned—after the Lord was taken to heaven—not mourning and lamenting, but “with great joy, and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God.” Thenceforth, they abandoned the chase <sup>Luke xxiv. 52, 53.</sup> in which so many are engaged—the chase after happiness. They had got what was better—they had got the joy of the Lord. Be it ours

to cease from connecting the good of the soul with the befallings of the earthly state. So long as our highest thought of bliss is being happy, we are sorry slaves and beggars. "Rejoice in the Lord alway ; and again I say rejoice."

Philippians  
iv. 4.

Ver. 25.

Ver. 27.

Ver. 28.

Ver. 29.

Ver. 30.

Ver. 31.

To the disciples, in the present stage of their mental history, Christ has been speaking in the "dark words" of parable. But what was parable to them then would, in the day of light, be plain and simple speaking. When they and He saw in the same light, obscurities would pass away, and truth be fully revealed. He would speak plainly of the Father. And, as He tells them of the love of His Father for them, and of His having come from the Father into the world, and His returning from the world to the Father, the clouds, for a brief instant, part and scatter, and the mists roll away, and they exclaim, "Lo, now speakest Thou plainly, and speakest no proverb." Their faith rises to the height to which He had pointed when at the beginning of his words He said, "Believe in God, believe also in me." "We believe," is the response, "that Thou camest forth from God." The rejoinder of Jesus is sadly prophetic, and withal gently chiding, "Do ye *now* believe?" But the look into the immediate future discloses a band of disciples forsaking Him and leaving Him alone with His enemies. Ah, well! He is

"not alone, for the Father is with Him." Now, <sup>Ver. 32.</sup> speech to man must end: there follow the retrospect of all that had been uttered; the re-statement of the opposition between the world and Himself; the experience through which His own must pass in their way through the world, balanced by the home which they would find in Him; and—the last note of the discourse—the assurance of victory in the act of laying down His life. For He lays it down that He may take it again. Clear, calm <sup>Chap. x. 17.</sup>—it may have been in the precincts of His Father's temple, or in the open air, or at the Supper table—there comes from the innermost heart of Jesus the tender, yet kingly farewell,

*"These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye may have peace. In the world ye may have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."*

<sup>Ver. 33.</sup>

## XIX.

### THE INTERCESSORY PRAYER.

ST JOHN xvii.

“Now come I to Thee.”

REVERENTLY let us enter the holiest of all. “The true understanding of the prayer in the seventeenth chapter of St John,” observes a man of large and sanctified thought, “goes beyond the measure of faith which the Lord is wont to impart to His disciples during their pilgrimage on earth.” I confess that I almost shrink from its exposition. One of the New Testament Revision company is reported to have said that when its members, in session, proceeded to the consideration of the sublime words of Jesus an intense solemnity was felt by all. They would have been unworthy of their part if it had been otherwise. “Plain and artless though these words may sound, they are so deep, and rich, and wide that no one can find their ground or extent.” But there is one consideration which invites the effort to comprehend a part of their

Spener,  
Life by  
Canstein.

Luther,  
quoted by  
Lange.

meaning. They were spoken not only *to* the Father, but *for* those whom the Father had given Jesus. They are an *instruction* as well as a *prayer*. They present us with the epitome of His ceaseless intercession for His Church. In them the veil is, for a moment, drawn aside, and we behold the Priest in the presence of God for us. They were spoken in the time of the humiliation, but their matter belongs to the eternity of the glory. Jesus paused in the midst of His pleading to say, "These things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves." Surely, then, we fall in with a pur- Ver. 13. pose of the prayer when, without attempting to gather up all the threads of thought, we endeavour to trace the outline of the conference by which the word and the work of our Lord on the night of His Passover are crowned.

The prayer occupies a place of solitary pre-eminence in the Gospels. Christ taught His disciples to pray, but the invocation separates between Him and us. He never said, He never could say, "*our Father.*" He is *the only begotten Son.* There are words of direct speech with God recorded in the Gospels; but there is none in which desire is so concentrated, which so interprets the inner self, as this. In the Epistle to the Hebrews we read of the "strong crying and tears" of the Son of God. But that belongs Heb. v. 7.

to the agony in the garden. Here there are no tears. The soul is serenely bright and calm. The prayer is spoken aloud. Hitherto Jesus had retired to mountain slope or grassy nook ; now, for the first time, His followers are allowed to listen as He pours out His soul. It is impossible to conceive that the transaction which the beloved Apostle reports was invented by the consciousness of any man. It bears on its face the credentials of the Son of God. None could have originated it ; but one like St John could retain it, and the Holy Ghost would bring all things to his remembrance which the Lord had spoken.

Even the attitude of Him who prays was photographed on the memory. The Evangelist is careful to mention that "He lifted up His eyes to heaven." The human heart instinctively looks up when it aspires to heaven. The region of light and love is that freer and purer realm which the Hebrews represented as the heaven of heavens. The eyes are lifted, but not the hands. The elevation of hands becomes a suppliant. He is the High Priest of the redeemed standing, in the right of the Mediatorial kingdom, between God and man, knowing that what He asks is pleasing in God's sight. It is a spiritual meditation rather than a petition. The Son of the love thinks aloud. His thinking assumes a threefold form, "prayer,

profession, revelation." There is retrospect and there is prospect. The reader, with the aid of his Revised New Testament, can distinguish clearly between the glance backward and the glance forward. The Son gives an account of His stewardship, and having so done, contemplates with holy ardour the awaiting glory in which His own are called to be sharers with Himself.

In the sequence of its thought the prayer corresponds to the last discourse. We cannot suppose that any space of time elapsed between the two, for they are so similar—almost exactly parallel—in the order observed. The two main divisions of the discourse, as we have seen, are the Son's relation to the Father, and His relation to His disciples or the Church. These are the two main divisions of the prayer. Not that each is exclusive of the other. The Lord's consciousness of His disciples is vivid when the gaze is most straight from the heart of the Son to the heart of the Father. But we can thus distinguish :—The first five verses are the expression of *the open secret between Jesus and His Father*; from the sixth to the nineteenth verse the desire is occupied with *the circle more immediately around Him*; from the twentieth verse to the end the range of intercession is widened to include *the whole Church*, and to remember the *unbelieving world*. This order may be a guide to us in our farther consideration of the words of the Lord.

## I.

I have spoken of the first part as "*the expression of an open secret.*" The expression begins with a reference to *the hour*. There is no need of farther specialising. The hour which the Love of God had beheld from the foundation of the world: The hour of the one sufficient sacrifice for the sin of the world, of darkness and of light, of the supreme complacency yet the hidden countenance of the Father: The hour up to which all past history had led, from which all history to come should anew depart, for which the Father and the Son had waited; "Father, *the hour is come.*"

Ver. 1.

Chap. xii. 27.  
28.

What then? Two or three days before, the vision of the hour had met His gaze, and He cried, "Save Me." True, there was immediately the addition, "But for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy name." But there was something like oscillation of purpose —there was at least the shrinking of the sensitive human soul from all which the hour involved. That shrinking will re-appear in Gethsemane. But it has no place now. It is observable that the merely personal element is excluded from this part of the prayer. The Son *as the Son* speaks to the Father as the Father. On this high level the desire of the soul is set. The bitter pains of dying are not in the view. It is for the

Father's glory—as the consequence of the authority which the Son possesses—that the humanity in which the eternal life had been manifested should be exalted. “*Father, glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee.*”

Ver. 1.

In this consciousness, the Son puts the Father in remembrance. Had He not received, as the Incarnate Word, authority over all flesh? Was Ver. 2.  
not He, the God-Man, the Head of every man? Had He not been sent, was it not the very purpose of His mission, that He should be a fountain of life in the midst of a dying world? Ver. 2.  
that He should give power to as many as received Him to become what He Himself was, sons of God? This life of sonship is essentially a knowledge of God, Ver. 3.  
such as, in the flesh, He had realized—the knowledge which is the fruit of a perfect trustfulness, oneness of will with the eternal will, love, sympathy, fellowship. This knowledge could not be possessed by men apart from His glorifying. Thus only could He be the Prince and Saviour. Thus only could His “flesh be meat indeed and His blood be drink indeed.” Thus only could the Comforter be sent in the name of the Son, as the spirit of a Son, crying Father. The exaltation of Christ is the magnifying of the Father. The Father's love will see its travail and be satisfied. It will be a new joy in heaven. It will

be the hastening to completion of the Father's kingdom. "Father, the Son to whom Thou hast given authority, the bestower of the life eternal, asks of Thee what Thou wilt give Him ; That He may have the full opportunity of manifesting Thy Name, of fulfilling Thy purpose ; That Thou mayest be glorified in Him ; glorify Thy Son."

And then, having set forth the Alpha and Omega of His longing as the Son, Jesus, the Man, humbles Himself. There comes forth the simple *I*,—the retrospective glance on the work which lies behind. It has been fully done, The ministry of the Redeemer on this earth is completed. He can protest, "*I glorified Thee on the earth, I finished the work Thou gavest Me to do.*" There is still the "*finished*" of Calvary; that refers especially to the sin-bearing, this comprehends the service which He undertook when, in the synagogue of Nazareth, He pointed to Himself as the servant commissioned to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. Nothing had been wanting ! Who but He without sin could say so? And now, in His humility, He appeals to the Father, "*Thy will done ; let Me to Thyself.*" See how, whilst all His action bespeaks a Divine Person, there is ever the sign of One who had emptied Himself of that which it was no prize to claim. He is in the place of man. He is the Man of Faith, whilst He is the

Ver. 4.

Luke iv. 17-  
20.

Eternal Son. He does not say, "I glorify Myself," as He says, "I sanctify Myself." No, He must receive, even though it be a glory which is His own, which He had with the Father before the world was. "I glorified Thee : *Father, now glorify Thou Me.*" "He asked life of Thee and <sup>Ver. 5.</sup> Thou gavest it Him, even length of days for ever and ever. For Thou hast made Him most blessed for ever."

<sup>Psalm xxi. 4-6.</sup>

Most touching is the cry of the Heart of Christ. What reflections on the Being of God are suggested by the word, "*Glorify Thou Me with thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee.*" It sets aside the thought of a solitary <sup>Ver. 5.</sup> Deity—a mere First Cause inhabiting an eternity of monotonous self-contemplation. The Trinity of God is the deliverance from such a thought; the assurance that, in deepest reality, God is Love. But this look from earth to the Father's Bosom; this longing to be where the only blessedness of His nature could be found; this eager, although always self-restrained, "*Now Father—Home at last—with Thine own self;*" is to me altogether beautiful and pathetic.

## II.

But the Son is *the Saviour*. He is the True Vine; and His heart is full of those whom He has grafted into Himself. Is not the manner

of Christ's speech regarding them strikingly tender? Look from the sixth verse onwards. He is so thankful for the great gift of His Father to Him. What was that? "*The men whom Thou gavest me out of the world.*" Was there much for which to be grateful? Some unlearned and ignorant men, whose dulness and deficiency of understanding have been so painfully evidenced; could He not have received a better gift than that? Could not men of higher culture or wider influence than they have been found? *He* dwells on the token of goodness, with which, in their adherence, He had been favoured. Six times there is express mention of it. Again and again, He says, "They are Thine," in an emphatic and distinguishing sense Thine. "*Thine they were,*" He says once. They were the Father's whilst they toiled at their nets, never dreaming what a consecration rested on them. For we little know what divine appointments and meanings hang about our lives! Now, why this resting on the Father's proprietary in these eleven men, and on the present which, in them, the Father had given Him out of the world?

In love there is a beauty-making, glorifying power. "What is Thy Beloved more than another Beloved?" demand the Watchmen of the Bride. To them no more than another, to her "*the chiefest among ten thousand, and alto-*

Ver. 6.

Ver. 6.

gether lovely." The Lord throws His own glory around His poor disciples. He does not look on them according to their intelligence of Him, but according to His intelligence of them. What He saw in them and they were to Him; their calling and election of God; this is put, as it were, to their credit. He thinks and speaks of them in the light of His ordination of them, and of the purpose purposed by the Father concerning them. More than this; there enters a natural human feeling. In his later years, Mahomet spoke with tearful gratitude of her who had been his partner in life through the earlier time of his career. "In the whole world," he protested, "I had but one friend and she was that one—she believed in me when none else did." There is a touch of the same nature—the genuine humanity—in the sentences of Jesus regarding the eleven. They had trusted Him as the world had not. They had opened up their souls to Him. They had believed in Him as the Christ of God. Others had mocked. Others had gone back. They had remained faithful. And He prays for them.

Do not let us put a harsh dogmatic construction on the clause, "I pray not for the world." Ver. 9. There is no refusal to plead for the world. The authority over all flesh given to the Son involves His prayer for all flesh. He remembered mankind on the cross. In the presence of God, He

Canticles v.  
9, 10.

is the intercessor for all men. But as has well been remarked, “the prayer for *the world* takes quite a different form from that for *the Church*. The *former* is to the effect that the world may cease to be what it is ; the *latter*, that the Church may be perfected in that which it has received into itself. Here the *latter* only is the object in view.” Yes, it is “not a dogmatic but an affectionate emphasis,” a speciality of application that is intended in the language of Christ. He is before His Father as the Head of His spiritual family ; the True Vine praying for the branches. And, indeed, is not the prayer for the Church, in another aspect, really a prayer for the world ? The disciples are not monopolists of grace. They constitute the Trustee-Body, intromitting with the ministry of reconciliation, for the benefit of man. To plead for them is to ensure that the estate confided to them shall be administered for the welfare of all the ages. In *them* the Redeemer is glorified.

When He prays for them, see how the Lord approaches the Father. Twice in this conference, a qualifying word is prefixed to the Blessed Name. When, at the close, He refers to the ignorance of the world, He says, “O *Righteous* Father.” The Spirit will convict the world as to *Righteousness*. Now, offering His desire for His own, it is, “*Holy* Father.” The holiness of the Father—His absolute separate-

Olshausen  
on St John  
xvi.

Ver. 25.

Ver. 11.

ness from evil, so that He cannot look on sin—is the ideal which the Son would have fulfilled in those who are the Father's. "One as we are," in this separateness, is the aim of all His intercession. And, in thus observing the care with which Jesus, even in language, sets forth His desire, is there not a lesson of reverence taught? "O how seldom," exclaims the saintly Leighton, "think we that He is God even while we speak to Him, and how quickly do we forget it and let slip that thought! Pray to be taught this form of prayer; and watch over your hearts in prayer, to set them thus, when you enter in to Him, and to call them in when they wander, and pluck them up when they slumber, and think where they are and what they are doing."

Sermon on  
Jer. xiv. 7 9.

The prayer to the "Holy Father" is twofold: the *negative* form, "keep them;" the *positive* form, "sanctify them."

1. He had been their guardian. The Father's gift to Him, He had accepted them as the Father's charge. For His fulfilment of the trust He makes answer. The Name has been manifested. The word has been spoken. His work and offices have been unfolded to them. And He has kept them all in that Holy Father's name. All! Oh what a shadow! I think that the saddest saying in Scripture is, "*None of them is lost but the son of perdition.*" One soul lost! What was that to Him who saw where

Ves. 6-8.

Ver. 1.

we cannot ; who could "brook to look on the depths of sin," and who knew what the perdition of a son of man implied. Sad, terrible ! To go within the veil and say, " Every one, Father, but one. My love failed to win him—he is gone !" Surely this was the sorest anguish of the Saviour's heart. But He is no more in the world. Now, He casts His bereaved and sorrowing children directly and wholly on the Fatherhood of God.

Ver. 11.

*Keep them in the name* with whose light and truth He had surrounded them. Living with Him, they had lived in the revelation of the Father, in the consciousness of all that was essential in the Father's relation to men. In this element may they ever remain ! Well He knows the world before them—the conflict—the trial which has been already portrayed. The evil one who had tempted Him was waiting for them. What can He do more than simply hand His beloved back to His Father, to whom all the situation was fully revealed, and say—Father, they were Thine and Thou gavest them Me : they are Mine and I give them again to Thee. Their place and their fight are in the world, and I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of it. As I guarded them for Thee, guard them now for Me. Holy Father *keep them from the evil.*

Ver. 14.

Ver. 15.

2. And the desire takes more definite shape. They are not of the world. They belong to another realm. They are His and He is the Father's. They constitute a separate community. They are set apart for a distinct work and by a distinct anointing. They must reflect Him: they must witness to the Father's holiness. The centre of the whole supplication of the Lord is the word, "Father, *sanctify or consecrate them.*" Personally consecrate them: and fit them for the mission on which I have sent them."

Personally—"in truth." The mark of the disciple is that he be the true man—in and out, through and through. Nor is truth a mere vague generality. "Thy word is truth." He must be pervaded by that word; what Christ has spoken, what Christ has declared—the Father's message to man—dwelling in Him richly; not a mere outward commandment, but a transforming spirit of life. And thus inspired and actuated by the Spirit of Truth, Christ contemplates the mission of His apostles. Again there comes before us the *as* and *so* found in the discourse on the Vine and the Branches. "As thou didst send Me into the world, so sent I them into the world." It is the *as* and *so of Christ.* The sending of the Apostles is the continuation of the sending of the Son. It is the extension of the Redeemer's work. It is

the mission of Sonship in the world. It is the filling up of the residuum of Christ's sufferings. He might have sent angels : He sent men, men in whom He should re-appear, His love inspiring their hearts and quickening in them the passion for truth and goodness. Because the Father had sent Him, in order that all the purpose of the sending might be accomplished, He has sent them. It is the *as and so of comparison*. Christ's mission both in its scope and in its manner is the measure of the disciples.

Ver. 19.

*"For their sakes I sanctify Myself."* There are other aspects of His sacrifice—if He were praying for the world these would be included. But now, praying for those whom he had washed from the guilt of sin, He thinks specially of the exemplary power of His obedience unto death. His consecration is the motive and the example, the law and spirit, of theirs. It is to pass into them, to constitute their separation from the world, to be the sign of their priesthood and the power of their service. Not a mere profession, not a mere outward non-conformity to practises and precepts of the world ; but the revelation of self-sacrificing love—the love that lays down its life, that for the joy set before it endures the cross, despising the shame. This is the true sanctification of the Apostles. *"Father sanctify them."*

## III.

But now, the range of intercession widens. This self-sacrificing love is the evidence of all true faith. In praying that it might be the possession of those immediately around him, Christ is really praying for all "who shall believe in Him through their word." Explicitly, He offers <sup>Ver. 20.</sup> up the pleading which has implicitly been presented to the Father. And it is to be remarked that the subject of the *unity* of His Church is brought into prominence only when the full scope of His mission is contemplated. For believers, to the end of the age, the word is, "*That they all may be one.*"

<sup>Ver. 21.</sup>

We can distinguish a sequence of thought in the references to unity contained in the prayer. There is first the most general form, "one as we are," having one purpose, one mind, one <sup>Ver. 11.</sup> dwelling-place—the Father's name—the Holy Spirit thus making them one. There is again the more special form, oneness in the communion of Father and Son, proving that the <sup>Ver. 21.</sup> unity of believers is more than a merely moral consent, that it is in a real sense, a vital unity, "*As Thou Father art in me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us.*" And lastly, <sup>Vers. 22, 23,</sup> there is the perfected unity, which is realised <sup>24.</sup> through the giving of the glory which the Father gives the Man Jesus, viz., the knowledge of Him

Ver. 21.

as the Father, and fellowship with Him as the Son with the Father, and which is consummated in the everlasting participation in the Father's beatific presence. Corresponding to the two latter, there are results in the world. The unity of believers in the communion of Father and Son is the means of awaking belief in the divine mission of Christ. The unity in glory—the perfecting into it—is the means of revealing the love with which the Father loves Him, so that men may recognise not only the mission of Christ, but the fellowship of His people in that love. As the perfecting proceeds, the knowledge of the love of God, reflected in and from the Church, will increase.

Ver. 23.

Ah ! when we speak of failure, of the powerlessness of the Church, of the weakness of her testimony, and the fruitlessness of her toil, let us ask whether the perfecting into unity is advancing as it should.

Unity, oneness, is the predominant feature of the last part of the prayer. To the hostile world it is the sign of the Church of Jesus ; it is the power of the Church also. Without it, all evidences fail. With it, there is a force which the world cannot resist. We may not linger over the sublime conception ; we cannot analyse the wonderfully suggestive language. This only,—it is unity in truth, unity in love, unity in the consciousness of the “one Lord, one faith, one

Ephesians iv. baptism, one God and Father of all.” Cen-  
5, 6.

tainly, it is something at once much higher and more elastic than any external uniformity. Yet, there must be a visible attestation of the union. Else how could the world believe? How could the world know? There can be no doubt that the attestation is hindered by the disunion of Christians. But, through all the times, and notwithstanding all kinds of divisions, there has been, is, and will be, the working of the same spirit, the same holy and eternal life. Blurred and marred as the writing is, men have traced—the human heart does trace—the characters—“*I in them, and Thou in me, One* <sup>Vers. 21, 22.</sup> *in us.*”

The climax of the prayer is reached when the Saviour pauses, and, with new solemnity, addresses the Father. Hitherto He has spoken as the Son, who is the Man of Faith. Now the tone becomes regal. For Himself, the spirit of His speech is always that which was breathed in the garden—“not what I will, but what Thou <sup>Mark xiv. 36.</sup> wilt.” But for the Church, He says, “*Father, I will.*” He is the Head of the covenant, and, in its right, He presents the unchallengeable claim. How touching: “As for that which Thou hast given Me—that unity to which all times and lands shall contribute—my will, Father, is, that it be with Me where I am, that those who form this unity may behold My glory; for

Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world."

Ver. 24.

With this *will* for the gathering together of all the family—reminding of, and enforcing the first word of the consolation—prayer, in its more restricted signification, ends. A final appeal comprehending the three main facts on which the prayer proceeded—"the world's ignorance ; the knowledge of the Son ; the faith of the disciples"—concludes the communion. "O righteous Father, the world knew Thee not, but I knew Thee, and these knew that Thou didst send Me. And I made known unto them Thy name, and will make it known ; that the love wherewith Thou lovedst Me may be in them, and I in them." "A more sublime seal than any doxology, than any Amen of another supplication."

Westcott's  
Com-  
mentary.Chap. xiv. 1.  
3.Vers. 25, 26,  
Revised  
Version.Stier, vol. vi.  
p. 522.Chap. xviii.  
1.

"The hour is come." He must no longer tarry. "When Jesus had spoken these words, He went forth with His disciples over the brook Kedron."

<sup>1</sup> Cor. v. 7,  
Revised  
Version.

"Our Passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ."

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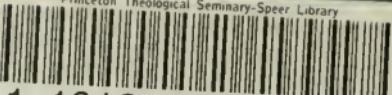








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