

THE GOSPEL
—OF THE—
SON OF GOD



**WILLIAM
GILMORE**

**“These things are written
that ye might believe that
JESUS IS THE CHRIST,
THE SON OF GOD.”**

JOHN 20. 31.

THE GOSPEL
OF THE
SON OF GOD

— OR —

The Gospel of John

— FROM —

The Standpoint of the Student

BY

WILLIAM GILMORE



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FOREWORD.

MATTHEW depicts the Lion or Messiah character of our Lord; MARK, the Ox or patient servant character; LUKE, the Man who was indeed "the lowly Man of Sorrows;" but JOHN, like the mighty Eagle, soars Heavenward, and depicts the excelling Glories of the Son of God.

Hence the title of this volume—"THE GOSPEL OF THE SON OF GOD," which, with its addition, "FROM THE STANDPOINT OF THE STUDENT," aptly describes the aim of the book and the ability to achieve that aim. The aim being the exaltation of the Lord Jesus as the Eternal Son, the ability being that of one who, having obtained help of God, has for years studied the Fourth Gospel, and gleaned from all sources available thoughts and suggestions thereon.

It is not sent forth as an exhaustive Exposition of John's Gospel, but rather as a series of Suggestive Studies on the Book, the Themes, the Persons, and the Divine Principles of this precious portion of "The Word of our God." The student is left free to "gather the good into vessels" for private or public use (only he should provide himself with "vessels not a few," 2 Kings 4. 3), and "cast away the bad," if such be found, after all the care and pains bestowed on the volume.

FOREWORD.

Read as an ordinary book, it will refresh the devout soul. The opening up of some of the Miracles and the Character Studies are delightfully suggestive. "Pastors, teachers, and evangelists" will find an abundance of practical topics. The gems of thought, such as—

"CHRIST IS ALWAYS GRAND IN EMERGENCIES" (p. 34);

"SPIRIT-FILLED PEOPLE ALWAYS DELIGHT TO TESTIFY OF CHRIST" (p. 58);

"THE ETERNAL ONE KNOWS NO TENSES" (p.60);

"NO ONE EVER DISCOVERS THE STRONGEST POINT OF CHRIST'S CHARACTER, BECAUSE THERE ARE NO WEAK ONES" (p. 62), are by no means the least valuable portion of this work, and their name is LEGION.

Commending this seed-plot of Spiritual Suggestion to every Christian who has truly said, "MY LORD, AND MY GOD;" to "Him who is, and was, and is to come" (Rev. 1. 4); and to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus, to whom be glory for ever.

HY. PICKERING,
Editor of *The Witness*.

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The Gospel of the Son of God.

THE WRITER.

BEFORE directing your attention to some of the characteristics of the Gospel of John, I wish to note a few things about John himself. It is important to know something of the man as well as of his book.

From certain allusions in his own writings, and other Scriptures which speak of him, we gather that he was probably a native of Bethsaida, a fishing village on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee. His father, Zebedee, was a fisherman, having boats of his own and hired servants. His mother, Salome, was one of the Galilean women who followed Jesus and ministered to Him of their substance. John, and James, his brother, were engaged with their father mending the nets when Jesus called them, and they left all and followed Him.

10 THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

It is interesting to observe that in Matthew 10. 2 he is one of the *twelve*; in Matthew 17. 1 he is one of the *three*; in John 1. 37 he is one of the *two*; and in John 13. 23 he is *the* one. It is significant that John does not mention his own name in this Gospel, but calls himself "that other disciple" (ch. 20. 3), "another disciple" (ch. 18. 15), and "the disciple which testifieth these things" (ch. 21. 24).

His Qualifications.

John had special qualifications for being a witness of the Lord's life, as well as special opportunities for obtaining intimate knowledge. With Peter and James he witnessed some of the Lord's mightiest works—for example, the raising of Jairus' daughter and the transfiguration. John was admitted to peculiar friendship with the Lord. He is represented as leaning on His bosom at supper. He was "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (ch. 13. 23). He was a constant companion of his Lord and Master. He was present at His suffering in the Garden of Gethsemane. He followed Him to the place of judgment. He remained with Him during His agony

on the Cross. The Lord, when dying, committed to him the care of His mother, "and from that hour that disciple took her to his own home" (ch. 19. 27).

His Testimony.

John was an eye witness of the events he recorded. Throughout his Gospel he "testifies" what he had seen and heard. He had a quick eye, and was a close observer. He mentions the time when he began to follow Jesus, "it was about the tenth hour" (ch. 1. 39). He notes that when Judas went out "it was night" (ch. 13. 30). He noticed that when the soldier pierced the side of Christ "there came out blood and water" (ch. 19. 34). When Peter and he came running to the sepulchre it was John who, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying. Again, at the Sea of Galilee, when Jesus stood unknown on the shore, it was John who recognised Him, and said, "It is the Lord" (ch. 21. 7). He is the "Seer" here, as in the book of Revelation.

His Surname.

He was surnamed "Son of Thunder"—a name probably descriptive of his character

12 THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

and a fitting designation of him as the writer of the "Revelation." He is mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles as being with Peter boldly witnessing for the Lord, and the people "took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus" (Acts 4. 13). The last glimpse we have of him in the New Testament is as an exile in the Isle of Patmos, to which he was banished "for the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev. 1. 9).

His Closing Years.

Of his closing years we have no certain knowledge. He is supposed to have died a peaceful death, at an advanced age, near the close of the first century. The study of his life, as of his book, is full of instruction and profit.

THE BOOK.

THE Gospel of John by itself is a very small volume, which can easily be read through in one sitting. Every Christian should read it often, and seek to understand it. No book of the Bible so captivates the student's affections. It is so simple, so heavenly, so full of love. The study of it warms the heart, satisfies the soul, and enlarges the mind. It is a well of water springing up into everlasting life, so deep that no man can fathom it, and rich in Gospel truth. Anxious souls have turned to it and found rest. What multitudes have been saved through John 3. 16: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life;" John 1. 29: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world;" John 6. 37: "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out;" John 3. 36: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life."

14 THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

Comfort in the Book.

It is also rich in those truths which sustain the spiritual life. Tried saints have turned to it and found comfort. How many have found a cure for their troubles in the precious words: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God" (ch. 14. 1); "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself" (ch. 14. 3).

Persons in the Book.

John is the Gospel of personal conversation with Nathanael, with Nicodemus, with the woman of Samaria, with the man at the pool, with the adulterous woman, with the man born blind, with Martha, with Mary, with Pilate, with Peter, and with Thomas.

Themes of the Book.

It is the simplest of the Gospels, yet it deals with the profoundest themes. For example, the Being of God, the Personality and Work of the Holy Spirit, the Deity of Christ, the Resurrection, the Ministry of Angels, the Personality of the Devil, Eternal Punishment, the New Birth, the Living Water, the Bread of

Life, the Good Shepherd, and the Coming of the Lord.

Words of the Book.

Certain words occur very frequently in it, as: Abide, Believe, Father, Know, Light, Life, Love, Sign, Truth, Witness, and World.

Symbols in the Book.

It is a Gospel of symbolism. It contains more references to the symbols of Scripture than any other portion of Holy Writ. In

CHAPTER 1 we have the Word, the Tabernacle, the Way of the Lord, Jacob's Ladder.

CHAPTER 2, the Temple.

CHAPTER 3, the Brazen Serpent, the Offering up of Isaac, the Bridegroom and his Friend.

CHAPTER 4, the Water, the Harvest.

CHAPTER 6, the Manna.

CHAPTER 8, the Light.

CHAPTER 9, Blindness, natural and spiritual.

CHAPTER 10, the Door, the Sheepfold, the Shepherd, the Hireling.

CHAPTER 11, Resurrection, real and spiritual.

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CHAPTER 12, the Altar.

CHAPTER 13, the Laver.

CHAPTERS 14, 15, 16, the Holy Place.

CHAPTER 17, the Holiest of All.

Numbers in the Book.

It is a Gospel of numbers.

Seven is a prominent number. There are seven miracles, seven disciples to whom He showed Himself after His resurrection, seven sayings of the woman of Samaria, seven things Jesus did after the Supper.

Three is also a prominent number. There are three feasts, three miracles in Galilee, three in Jerusalem, three sayings on the Cross, three trials. Pilate made three attempts at Christ's release. Three times Judas is called the betrayer. Three times Peter was asked, "Lovest thou Me?"

Design in the Book.

All the miracles, conversations, incidents, and teachings recorded by John are in keeping with his design in writing the book. The selection of materials was determined by his purpose, which is plainly declared in chapter 20. 31: "But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is

the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through His Name." His theme is that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and his aim that men might believe and possess eternal life. Matthew, Mark, and Luke assert the Deity of Christ, but John demonstrates it. To prove it, he produces

Seven Witnesses.

- I. THE WITNESS OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.
- II. THE WITNESS OF HIS WORKS.
- III. THE WITNESS OF THE FATHER.
- IV. THE WITNESS OF THE SCRIPTURES.
- V. THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT.
- VI. THE WITNESS OF CHRIST HIMSELF.
- VII. THE WITNESS OF VARIOUS INDIVIDUALS.

We shall briefly examine the evidence of these witnesses.

I.

**THE WITNESS OF JOHN
THE BAPTIST.**

1. John was

**The Last and Greatest of the
Prophets.**

He was filled with the Spirit from his mother's womb, and was a Nazarite from his birth. In this manner was he divinely prepared for the great work for which he was chosen. The former prophets foretold the coming of Christ, but it was John's privilege to prepare the way of the Lord, and to point Him out when He came.

2. John was

A Faithful Witness

for his Master, and delighted to draw attention to Him; his one desire being that his hearers should follow Jesus. John was the great man of the hour, the centre of attraction in Israel; yet he took the humble place that his Master might be exalted. His humility is seen in his reply to certain

THE WITNESS OF JOHN. 19

Pharisees who came from Jerusalem to ask him: "Who art thou?" He said he was not the Christ, nor Elias, nor that prophet promised in Deuteronomy 18. 15-18. He was only "a voice," while his Master was "the Word." He would direct their attention away from himself to the person of Christ.

Another illustration of this is found when on one occasion a dispute arose between John's disciples and the Jews about purifying. These came to the Baptist, and said, "Rabbi, He that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptiseth, and all men come to Him" (John 3. 26). This news stirred up no jealousy in the heart of John, but he rejoiced that Christ was all, and said in effect: I am not the Christ, but one sent before Him; not the Bridegroom, but His friend, concluding by that great testimony: "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3. 30).

3. John's witness to

The Deity of Christ

is found chiefly in the first chapter of this Gospel. It is threefold: (1) to the people,

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(2) to the priests and Levites, and (3) to his own disciples.

We can only give a brief summary of his testimony as contained in his few recorded utterances. Take the one in verse 30: "After me cometh a Man which is preferred before me, for He was before me." A wonderful saying, setting forth in a few words both the humanity and the Deity of Christ. "After me" was true as touching His humanity, for John was six months His senior. Jesus was truly human, a real Man, as He is seen at Sychar's well weary and thirsty, and also by the grave of Lazarus so full of genuine human sympathy that it is recorded "Jesus wept." "Before me" was true as regards His Deity. It is a testimony to His pre-existence, for "He was before all things, and by Him all things consist" (Col. 1. 17).

Another witness is found in the familiar words: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1. 29). The title "Lamb of God" carries our thoughts back to the Old Testament Scriptures, and we think of Abel's lamb, of Abraham's word: "God will provide

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Himself a lamb" (Gen. 22. 8), and of the Paschal lamb in Egypt. These were typical foreshadowings of the One whom John saw, the divinely appointed sacrifice for sin.

4. The next day after this testimony we find John speaking of Him again as

The Lamb of God.

"Looking upon Jesus as He walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God" (ch. 1. 36). He does not appear to have addressed these words directly to his disciples, but was only giving expression to the satisfaction of his soul. However, it was a word spoken in season, and was immediately fruitful, for they heard him speak, and straightway followed Jesus. This was real ministry. In verse 33 the forerunner speaks of Christ's work as superior to his own, for he only baptised with water, but the Lord baptised with the Holy Spirit. None could do this but God, hence John disclaimed it, and points to Jesus only as the baptiser with the Holy Spirit.

"All things that John spake of this Man were true" (ch. 10. 41).

II.
THE WITNESS OF HIS
WORKS.

There are recorded by John
Seven Miracles.

- I. THE WATER MADE WINE (ch. 2).
- II. THE NOBLEMAN'S SON HEALED
(ch. 4).
- III. THE MAN AT BETHESDA POOL
(ch. 5).
- IV. THE FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOU-
SAND (ch. 6).
- V. THE WALK UPON THE SEA (ch. 6).
- VI. THE BLIND MAN RECEIVES SIGHT
(ch. 9).
- VII. THE RAISING OF LAZARUS (ch. 11).

In John's Gospel the miracles are called "signs," because they had a significance beyond the work itself. They were manifestations of His glory and signs of His Deity. He says Himself: "The same works that I do bear witness of Me that the Father hath sent Me" (ch. 5. 36). They were all

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acts of mercy showing out the divine heart towards man. All the cases were beyond human skill. The nobleman's son was "at the point of death," and was healed at a distance. The man at the pool had been diseased thirty-eight years, and was utterly helpless. The man in John 9 had been born blind, and "since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind" (ch. 9. 32). Lazarus had been dead four days. But there is nothing too hard for the Lord.

We may see in these miracles

A Progressive Character.

In the water made wine, His power over nature. In the healing of the sick, His power over disease. In His walk on the sea, His power over the elements. In the raising of Lazarus, His power over death and decay—His life-giving power. These signs are frequently referred to in the first twelve chapters while Christ manifested Himself to the world. They testify emphatically to His Deity. He who made the water wine is Himself the Creator of all things. He who fed the multitudes is the Bread of Life. He who

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opened the eyes of one born blind is the Light of the World. He who raised Lazarus is the Resurrection and the Life.

But our Lord's miracles were not merely works of power setting forth His Deity, nor acts of mercy towards those who benefited by them. They were also intended to teach spiritual truths. They were all parables of His saving grace.

We shall now look briefly at the main points of the seven miracles and the spiritual lessons they teach.

I. THE WATER MADE WINE (ch. 2. 1-11).

"The third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee." In chapter 1 we have mention made of three other days: (1) The day of public manifestation (v. 29). (2) The day of gathering to Himself (v. 35). (3) The day of Israel's blessing (v. 43). The third day here is probably the third day after His manifestation to Israel. The glory of Jesus of Nazareth had not yet been seen, and it is significant that the first manifestation of it was on the third day. The third day was to be the day of

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His greatest sign—His resurrection. In chapter 1 we have His glory declared. Here in chapter 2 we have His glory manifested. Marriage is a divine institution, and the Lord showed His respect for it by being present at its celebration. But something was wanting. “The mother of Jesus saith unto Him, They have no wine” (v. 3). Man always fails when most wanted, but it is good to run short that we may be driven to Christ. Faith never looks to Him in vain. Mary is set aside, for flesh and its relationships have no place in the matter. All blessing must come through Him.

The guest chamber at Cana was furnished with six waterpots. “Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them to the brim” (v. 7). He who is full of grace delights to give fulness of blessing. He instantly transformed the water into wine of such excellent quality as to draw from the master of the feast the commendation: “Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now” (v. 10). What

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Christ gives is always superior to anything this world can afford. The world gives its best first, but Jesus is always giving something better.

It is interesting to observe that the first miracle of Moses was the turning of water into blood, the symbol of death and judgment. But Christ's first miracle was the turning of water into wine, the symbol of life and joy.

There was

A Distinct Purpose

in this being the first miracle, and in its being recorded in the opening of this Gospel. It sets forth the character of Christ's ministry. The day of ceremonialism had given place to the day of grace. The performing of this sign was evidence of His ability to make all things new. It also reminds us in a typical way of the joy with which the whole earth will be filled in the day of Christ's kingdom. When He is established upon His throne in Zion He will reverse the sorrowful history of man. He will fill the whole scene with peace and blessing, and the wine will not fail when He reigns.

II. THE NOBLEMAN'S SON

(ch. 4. 46-51).

Jesus was once more in Cana of Galilee, where He had made the water wine; and a certain nobleman came to Him, beseeching Him that He would come and heal his son who was sick at Capernaum. We may learn from this that earthly greatness is no defence against affliction, which, indeed, is often the means of great blessing. It was so in the case of this nobleman, for his trouble brought him to Christ. Doubtless the Lord's reply seemed strange: "Except ye shall see signs and wonders ye will not believe" (v. 48). In Israel generally this was true, "for the Jews require a sign" (1 Cor. 1. 22). This is in striking contrast with the simple Samaritans, who believed without any sign. The ruler had faith, but it was of a Jewish sort. He believed in the report of Jesus as

The Wonder-Worker.

But his faith, though weak, was real, and the Lord strengthened it. "The nobleman saith unto Him, Sir, come down ere my child die" (v. 49). He had heard, no

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doubt, of miracles wrought by Him when personally present, but he never supposed that He could as easily heal from a distance, or, if necessary, raise the dead.

Capernaum was about a day's journey from Cana where Jesus then was, but with him distance was as nothing. It was only a circumstance, and the essence of a miracle is God rising above circumstances.

"Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth" (v. 50). That was all, no sign, no appeal to the emotions, just the assurance of His spoken word, but it was enough. "And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way" (v. 50). He was satisfied that all would be well with the child. Could there be a better illustration of the simple faith which believes the promise of God and acts upon it?

He had not long to wait before he knew the blessing. "As he was now going down his servants met him, and told him, saying, Thy son liveth" (v. 51). Upon inquiry he learned that the fever left him at the very hour when Jesus spoke the word of healing in Cana. As the Creator He spoke, and it was done. He sent His

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word, and the child was healed. The man had believed without seeing; now his faith is crowned by sight.

The whole story is a graphic illustration of what faith is, and how it appropriates the gift of God. God still speaks in the Holy Scriptures, and man's great need is to have faith in His Word.

"This is again the second miracle that Jesus did, when He was come out of Judea into Galilee" (v. 54). Where He supplied the bridegroom's wine, there He healed the ruler's son, thus turning sorrow into joy for both

III. THE MAN AT THE POOL OF BETHESDA (ch. 5. 1-16).

The Lord having gone up to Jerusalem on the occasion of one of the festivals visited the pool of Bethesda, and saw there "a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water" (v. 3).

This waiting throng presents a striking picture of man in his ruined and helpless condition through sin. (1) He is "**blind**," for "the god of this world hath blinded the

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minds of them which believe not" (2 Cor. 4. 4). (2) He is "halt," or lame, for he walks according to the course of this world (Eph. 2. 2). (3) He is "withered," or paralysed, that is, utterly "without strength" (Rom. 5. 6).

These "impotent folk" were all waiting because an angel would come and stir the water, and whoever stepped in first would get healed. They had no thought in their minds that healing could ever come to them by any other means. They were not looking to Jesus, any of them. Had they not heard that He was healing the sick? We do not know. Evidently they attached great importance to the place, so they kept on waiting at the pool.

We may easily find a company of waiters still. How many are waiting for a revival, for the visit of some noted evangelist, or for a more convenient season, instead of looking to Jesus for healing and salvation now. He is always to be found wherever there is a heart that wants Him. So we find Him here where sorrow and disease reigned supreme. Christ never feasts more joyfully than when He is doing good to others.

He fixed His eye upon

The Most Helpless and Hopeless

person amongst that waiting crowd, and said to him, "Wilt thou be made whole?" (v. 6). The man's infirmity had lasted thirty-eight years, just the time of Israel's wandering in the wilderness after putting themselves under law (Deut. 2. 14). He had often tried, as well as his weak body would enable him, to get into the water, but somebody stepped in first. Hence his complaint, "I have no man when the water is troubled to put me into the pool" (v. 7). He had desires, but not strength. To will was present, but no power to perform.

The pool is typical of the Law, which required strength in the man who was to profit by it. The Law required a man to work, as the pool required a man to get into it. The impotent man needed one to save him where he was, and as he was. This Jesus was both able and willing to do. He said to Him, "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk" (v. 8). What the pool could not accomplish the Saviour accomplished instantly by His word.

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Immediately the man was made whole. He believed the word of the Lord, and acted upon it. He arose, took up his bed, and departed, "And on the same day was the Sabbath" (v. 9).

To see a man carrying his couch on the Sabbath day was a strange thing in Jerusalem. It was contrary to Jewish custom. So the Jews said to him, "It is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed" (v. 10). "He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk" (v. 11). He did not know just then who had healed him, but he knew He was somebody very wonderful. He rightly inferred that He who could work so great a miracle was supreme in things spiritual, and could set aside the religious leaders and their exactions. He afterwards told them that it was Jesus who had healed him. His testimony was simple and straightforward, and bears the stamp of sincerity. But the Jews remained in their unbelief. They did not appreciate the Saviour's goodness, but persecuted Him, and sought to slay Him because He had done these things on the Sabbath day.

IV. THE FEEDING OF THE FIVE
THOUSAND (ch. 6. 1-14).

This is the only miracle recorded in all four Gospels. In Mark 6. 52 we find that the disciples fell into distrust in a time of trial because "they considered not the miracle of the loaves." It is good for us always to remember the miracle of the loaves, or its counterpart which has taken place in our experience. If we think of what the Lord has already done for us we shall trust and not be afraid of the future.

Let us then consider the miracle of the loaves. John prefaces this miracle with the significant remark: "Now the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was at hand" (v. 4). The nearness of the Passover is noted because the sign wrought, as well as the discourse which followed, is grounded on eating and drinking. The Passover was also a type which the Lord was soon to fulfil by His death. Jesus saw a great company coming to Him. They were all hungry, and they were all poor. As a test of faith He asked Philip, "Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat? But

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He Himself knew what He would do” (vv. 5, 6). Christ is always

Grand in Emergencies.

Philip replied that two hundred pennyworth of bread would only suffice to give every one a little. Andrew, therefore, remarked that a lad was present with five barley loaves and two small fishes.

This was

Andrew's Third "Find."

In chapter 1. 41, 42 we learn that he found the Messiah, then he found his own brother Simon, and brought him to Jesus. Now he finds the lad with the loaves and fishes.

We are not told anything more about this lad in the Bible. But, in the hands of Christ, his little store of bread and fish sufficed for all. He uses little things. He has chosen weak things, and things which are despised, that no flesh should glory in His presence.

At the bidding of their great Host all the guests sat down. He soon proved that He was the One who had fed their fathers for forty years in the desert. But the

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fainting crowds must be fed through the disciples, thus giving them a share in the blessed work. So when He had given thanks He distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down. They were all filled according to the promise, "I will abundantly bless her provision, I will satisfy her poor with bread" (Psa. 132. 15). Christ always gives sufficiency. "A little" was man's measure; "as much as they would" was His. Everybody is satisfied when Jesus makes the feast. There was abundance left, for they filled twelve baskets with the fragments which remained. By feeding others the stock increases.

In the address which followed Jesus lifted the thought from material things to spiritual need, and declared, "I am the Bread of Life" (v. 35). This bread is obtained by coming to Him, believing in Him. In this chapter two Greek words are used for eat. (1) The aorist, an act past, finished. (2) The participle, an act continuing. This answers to our acceptance of Christ at first, and our continual believing in Him and communion with Him.

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Note the **seven classes of people** mentioned in this chapter: 1, the curious (v. 2); 2, the admiring (v. 14); 3, the greedy (v. 26); 4, the sceptical (v. 36); 5, the murmurers (v. 41); 6, the scoffers (v. 52); and, 7, the backsliders (v. 66).

V. THE WALK ON THE SEA (ch. 6. 15-21).

After the miracle of the loaves the people desired to make Christ King. Probably they thought it would be good to have for King one who could so easily supply their physical wants. But His crowning day had not yet come, so He refused to accept the kingdom at their hands. He therefore left them, and went up by Himself into a mountain—typical of His present position as Priest above. His disciples may have been disappointed at His withdrawal from the multitude, and His refusal to be made King. But they were soon to have a picture of His coming kingship in His ruling the raging of the sea.

When even was come they entered into a ship to cross to the other side. They

toiled at the oars but made little progress. Their passage was beset with difficulties, the night was dark, the sea was boisterous, the winds were contrary, and, worst of all, the Master was not with them. When He is away all perils become more terrible. Rowing was wearisome work in His absence.

The scene is full of suggestive meaning. It is

A Picture of the Lord's People

tossed on the restless sea of this world, and exposed to the troublesome and threatening billows of affliction while the Master is absent. But He ever liveth to make intercession for His people, and although they cannot see Him, He knows where they are. His all-seeing eyes admit of no limits. He sees the distress of His followers, and they are safe beneath His glance.

In their trouble He can come to them. He has never failed to draw near to His own in their time of need. So the disciples saw Jesus walking on the water and drawing nigh to the ship. The contrary wind which hindered their progress proved no

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obstacle to Him. He trod the threatening waves of death beneath His feet. They were afraid, but their fears were soon hushed by His assuring words: "It is I; be not afraid" (v. 20). It is His prerogative to save from fear. To be assured of His presence in affliction gives peace to the heart. They received Him into the ship, and immediately they were at the place to which they were going.

A miracle of grace was wrought on their behalf. The coming of Christ brought deliverance. "They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; these see the works of the Lord, and His wonders in the deep. He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they be quiet, so He bringeth them to their desired haven" (Psa. 107. 23-30).

"Fierce was the wild billow,
Dark was the night;
Oars laboured heavily,
Foam glimmered white;
Trembled the mariners,
Peril was nigh;
Then said the Son of God:
'PEACE! IT IS I!.'

Ridge of the mountain-wave,
Lower thy crest!
Wail of Euroclydon,
Be thou at rest!
Sorrow can never be,
Darkness must fly!
Where, saith the Light of Light,
'PEACE! IT IS I.'

Jesus, Deliverer!
Come Thou to me!
Soothe Thou my voyaging
Over life's sea!
Thou, when the storm of death
Roars sweeping by,
Whisper, O Truth of Truth,
'PEACE! IT IS I.' "

VI. THE BLIND MAN HEALED

(ch. 9. 1-7).

As the pilgrim hosts of Israel marched through the desert they were supplied with manna for their food, with water from the smitten rock for their drink, and with a pillar of fire by night for their guidance. In chapter 6 the Lord compared Himself to the first of these symbols; in chapter 7, to the second; and in chapters

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8 and 9, to the third. He is what the pillar of fire was to those desert wanderers. In the midst of the darkness the light shines, revealing at once the perils and the pathway. This is set forth in His claim: "I am the Light of the World" (v. 5), and in the illustrations used—the story of the adulterous woman and the healing of the man born blind. The story of the woman taken in adultery reveals our Lord's perfect knowledge of human hearts, and His intense hatred of sin. The scribes and Pharisees were blind to their own faults, but quick to detect the faults of others. They seem to have forgotten that the law which condemns one sin condemns all sin. The Saviour's searching words, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her," set memory and conscience to work, and they went out one by one. They could not bear the light any more than she. Her condemnation failed because there were no clean hands to stone her. Chapter 8 ends with the rejection of Christ as the Light. The Jews took up stones to cast at Him, but He hid Himself, and passed through their midst unseen.

As He passed by He saw a man who was

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blind from his birth. The disciples thought the man's blindness proved sin. They evidently regarded suffering as a mark of divine displeasure. But he was not responsible for being born blind. He was responsible for accepting or rejecting the light which Christ brought to him. He was born blind that the Son of God might have the opportunity of manifesting His power as the Light of the World by giving him sight.

He made clay, and anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and sent him to the pool of Siloam to wash. There was surely a symbolical significance attaching to

This Unusual Procedure.

Doubtless the clay symbolised our Lord's humanity, while the water was an emblem of the Holy Spirit. God was manifested in the flesh that men might be saved. By the Spirit's agency they are turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, the moment they believe the Gospel. The blind man obtained his sight by obeying the word of the Lord. He went and washed and came seeing. He was blessed in the act of obedience.

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The performing of this miracle was a witness to Christ's power to impart to men that spiritual vision which saves from sin and from eternal darkness. The man's testimony is so full and so instructive that we reserve it for a separate study in its connection with chapter 10.

VII. THE RAISING OF LAZARUS (ch. 11. 40-44).

This was one of our Lord's last and greatest miracles. John gives a detailed account of the circumstances surrounding it. For example, the interval since death and burial, the nearness of Bethany to Jerusalem, and the fact that many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary to comfort them in their grief are all carefully noted. God was ordering all for a great testimony to His Son. Nothing so displays His glory as resurrection.

The story begins with the announcement that Lazarus was sick. Sickness is the common prelude to death. No mortal is exempt from this complaint. Even Lazarus, whom Jesus loved, fell sick. But it was for the glory of God, and

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that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.

The Lord was in retirement beyond Jordan when He heard of His friend's sickness, but He abode in the place where He was till the sickness had taken its course and ended in death. How strange this conduct must have appeared to the sisters, who doubtless expected His immediate succour. But He abstained from going, not because He did not love them, but because He loved them. In this connection John is careful to state: "Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus" (v. 5). He was making all things work together for their good though they knew it not.

At last He said to His disciples: "Let us go into Judea again" (v. 7). But they warned Him that perhaps danger awaited Him. He replied, in effect, that His work was not yet done, His day not yet ended. He then told them the object of His going was to awaken Lazarus out of sleep. They mistook the sense of His words, and said, "Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well" (v. 12). But Jesus spoke not of the transient slumber of the weary,

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but of the deep sleep of death. In using this metaphor the Lord revealed

His Estimate of Death

for all who truly love Him. It is only a sleep, a blessed sleep from which they shall awake at the voice of the archangel and the trump of God.

When Jesus arrived at the place Martha met Him, and said to Him, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here my brother had not died. But I know that even now, whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee" (vv. 21, 22). The word that Martha used for "ask" is one that the Lord never used with reference to His own praying. It suggests the asking of a favour, to implore as a beggar, and is used in connection with the praying of His disciples. He used a different word, which means familiar request. His communion with God was based on His perfect equality with Him. Both words are used in chapter 16. 23. But He overlooked her mistake, and declared, "Thy brother shall rise again" (v. 23). To this she replied, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day" (v. 24). He now

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gave her a new and marvellous revelation of Himself in the memorable words, "I am the Resurrection and the Life" (v. 25). The resurrection, because dead believers will immediately arise when He comes; the life, because every one that lives and believes on Him shall have mortality swallowed up of life.

Martha now affirmed her faith in Him as the Christ, the Son of God, who should come into the world. She next called Mary her sister, secretly, saying, "The Master is come, and calleth for thee" (v. 28). What a precious word is this! What a favour that the Lord of life should personally come and call for Mary. She at once arose, and went to meet her Lord. Both her words and her tears told out the deep sorrow of her heart. When Jesus saw her weeping He groaned in the spirit, and was troubled. He revealed to her His own deep sorrow in the presence of death,

The Final Issue of Sin.

Three expressions are used to describe it. "He *groaned* in the spirit" (v. 33). "He was *troubled*" (v. 33). "Jesus *wept*" .

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(v. 35). His heart was fully alive to the sorrow as to the degradation of death.

In this chapter two different words are used for weep. The first expresses *hopeless* weeping; the second *sympathetic* weeping. The last is used in the words "Jesus wept" (v. 35). The consciousness that He carried resurrection virtue in Him, and was about to fill the home at Bethany with the joy of restored life, did not stay the current of His natural affection.

The grave of Lazarus was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. When Jesus came to the place He commanded that the stone should be taken away. To Him it presented no difficulty, but for their sakes it was removed that Lazarus might come forth. His body would be a natural one, fitted to return to his former sphere of life at Bethany. Martha protested against the removal of the stone, saying, "Lord, by this time he stinketh, for he hath been dead four days" (v. 39). The Lord had already

Restored Two Dead Persons to Life,

Jairus' daughter and the son of the widow of Nain. The one was just dead, and the

WITNESS OF HIS WORKS. 47

other on the way to burial, but in the case of Lazarus the process of decay had begun; yet with God nothing shall be impossible.

He now reminded Martha of His promise that if she would believe she would see the glory of God. Then He lifted up His eyes, and said, "Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me" (v. 41). It is important to notice the special purpose of this thanksgiving. It was for the sake of the people who stood by that they might believe that the Father had sent Him. It summons them to mark the event. His claim depended upon the issue about to be decided. The supreme moment had come. There was the open tomb with its dead occupant. Standing around were the sceptical crowd, the silent disciples, and the anxious sisters, all waiting for the next moment's action. At last He cast His command into the tomb, "Lazarus, come forth" (v. 43), and

The Great Sign was Wrought.

At the sound of His life-giving word Lazarus came forth bound about with grave clothes. "Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go" (v. 44).

This miracle is a clear illustration of

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how the Lord Jesus Christ calls to spiritual life those who are "dead in trespasses and in sins" (Eph. 2. 1). "He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (ch. 5. 24).

We may also see in the raising of Lazarus

A Picture of Israel Nationally.

They, too, have fallen under the power of death, so that they are likened in Ezekiel 37 to a valley full of dry bones. But the Lord will yet arise for their help, He will call them from their graves, and make the dry bones live.

III.

THE WITNESS OF THE
FATHER.

The Father bore witness to His Son in three ways:

1. **By sealing Him.** "Him hath God the Father sealed" (ch. 6. 27). This took place at the beginning of His public ministry. As He came up out of the waters of baptism the Spirit descended from Heaven like a dove and abode upon Him. The dove was the emblem of purity and peace, and the gift of the Holy Spirit in this manner was the Father's public approbation of Jesus. It was accompanied by a voice from the opened Heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3. 17). In this we have a striking manifestation of the Trinity. The Son here on earth, the Father speaking from Heaven, and the Holy Spirit descending—three Persons, ONE GOD.

2. **By speaking from Heaven in re-**

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sponse to His request, "Father, glorify Thy Name" (ch. 12. 28). It seemed like thunder to the crowd who heard the noise, but could not discern the meaning. In one sentence it summed up the results of His life and death. Of the former it said, "I have glorified it." Of the latter it said, "And will glorify it again" (ch. 12. 28, 29).

3. By being continually with Him, He could say, "The Father hath not left Me alone" (ch. 8. 29). His words and His works were evidence of the Father's abiding presence. Truly He was "a Man approved of God by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him" (Acts 2 22).

IV.

THE WITNESS OF THE
SCRIPTURES.

The witness of the Scriptures is frequently referred to in John's Gospel, but is specially emphasised in chapter 5. 39: "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me." This is one of the greatest statements ever Christ made. It is His own appeal to the testimony of the Scriptures concerning Himself. He lays His hand upon the entire Old Testament, from Genesis to Malachi, and says, "All these Scriptures testify of Me."

1. The Witness of the Prophets.

One line of witness is found in the prophets: "To Him give all the prophets witness" (Acts 10. 43). Hundreds of predictions find their fulfilment in Him. We can only note a few by way of illustration. For example: (1) *His Birth*. - When the curse fell upon Adam and Eve a coming

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Deliverer was promised who should bruise the serpent's head (Gen. 3. 15) Further on His descent is predicted, showing that He was to come of the seed of Abraham (Gen. 12. 3). Again, dying Israel foretold that our Lord should spring out of Judah (Gen. 40. 10). Isaiah limits His lineage to the house of David (ch. 2. 1-10), and predicts His virgin birth (ch. 9. 6, 7). Micah adds that this should take place at Bethlehem (ch. 5. 2). These predictions, written centuries before the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, were fulfilled in every detail. (2) *His Death*: Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53 describe minutely the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. If "predictions so remote in time and minute in detail" are fulfilled in Him, He must be a divine person—the Messiah.

2. The Witness of the Types.

Another line of witness is found in the types and symbols which were fulfilled in Him. The Ark, saving from the flood; the story of the Passover, the Tabernacle, its furniture, sacrifice, and worship; the smitten rock, the serpent lifted up, all symbolise the glories of the Son of God.

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“Christ is found everywhere in the Old Testament, as the scarlet line is found everywhere in the cordage of the British Navy, cut it where you will.”

To many the Old Testament is little more than a collection of Eastern stories, because they have not seen Christ in it. Once Christ is seen every line of it becomes radiant with meaning. You may have seen a card with a picture of some rural scene, and underneath the words, “Find out the face.” You hold the card this way and that way until all of a sudden you behold a face. When once you have found that, you can never look at the card again without seeing it. You only wonder you did not see it before.

The Theme of the Types

Dr. A. C. Dixon relates the following: “A friend described to me a painting which hung on the walls of his boyhood home. When you first saw it it was a beautiful landscape, with trees, streams, houses, and people; but while gazing upon it, all these beautiful things began to form into a human face. On a closer inspection you perceived that the whole picture was

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intended to give the face of Christ. The devout student of the Scriptures is constantly having experiences like this. He sees in the Bible trees of faithfulness, streams of truth, landscapes of loveliness in deed and character, but they are all so arranged in their relation to Christ as to bring out the features of His character.”

V.

THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT.

This section gives our Lord's last communications to His disciples, and closes with His prayer to the Father for them. It illustrates in many ways His perfect love and deep devotion to "His own" "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end" (ch. 13. 1).

His first act showed how He made provision for the cleansing of defilements which they had contracted by the way. He took a towel and girded Himself, and began to wash their feet. This was the work of a slave, and sets Him forth as servant of both God and man. The going out of Judas illustrates cleansing from internal defilement. Immediately after his exit Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified" (ch. 13. 31). He was glorified in the going out of evil.

The case of Judas is a very solemn one, and shows that a man may be very near Christ, yet lost. "He went out, and it was

night" (v. 30). He went out from the best company on earth—out from the place of Christ's rule, out from the place of light and blessedness, to darkness and doom.

In chapter 14 we have the antidote for all kinds of trouble—faith in God, faith in Christ and His coming again, faith in Heaven, faith in the Holy Spirit.

Chapters 15 and 16 deal with the union of Christ and His disciples under the figure of the vine and its branches, the hatred and persecution of the world, and the mission of the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit is called

The Comforter or the Paraclete,

that is, One who would undertake and carry through their cause. He would teach them all things, He would guide them into all truth, He would show them things to come, and He would abide with them for ever. The Lord showed how the Spirit would first testify to the disciples themselves in order to their being witnesses to the world. His purpose is that of glorifying Christ. "He shall glorify Me" (ch. 16. 14). "He shall testify of Me" (ch. 15 11).

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We have a complete statement of His mission to the world in chapter 16. 8-11. "He will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment." His office is to convict, but the subjects concerning which He convicts are related to the person and work of Christ "Of sin, because they believed not on Me." Sin is refusal to believe in Him (v. 9). To reject Him is fatal "Of righteousness, because I go to My Father" (v. 10). His going to the Father is the standing witness of righteousness there, not here. This is the Spirit's proof of righteousness. Man condemned and killed the righteous One, but God raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand. "Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged" (v. 11). The Spirit convinces of victory gained and judgment pronounced over the prince of this world. The world's ruler is already judged.

The great truths taught about the Holy Spirit in these chapters are illustrated in

"The Acts of the Apostles."

Look at Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost. It was a simple, straight-

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forward address, in substance a citation of Old Testament Scriptures, with their fulfilment in the death and resurrection of Christ. Christ whom they had rejected, Christ whom God had exalted, Christ through whom forgiveness of sins and every other blessing was offered. Look at the result. His hearers were convicted of sin, and converted to God. This witness is still being continued. The Spirit is continually convicting men of sin and revealing Christ to them. Spirit-filled people always delight to testify of Christ.

VI.

THE WITNESS OF CHRIST
CONCERNING HIMSELF.

Christ bore witness concerning Himself.

I. IN HIS TEACHING.

Every word He is reported to have spoken of Himself is uttered on the assumption that He is God. We shall note a few of the claims He made.

1. He Claimed Divine Attributes.

(1) OMNISCIENCE. He saw into Nathanael's heart when he was under the fig-tree (ch. 1. 48). He read the whole past life of the woman at the well, although He had never met with her before (ch. 4). He knew of the death of Lazarus, although He was many miles away from Bethany (ch. 11. 11-14). (2) OMNIPRESENCE. While down here on earth He spoke of Himself as "the Son of Man which is in Heaven" (ch. 3. 13). He healed the nobleman's son at a distance (ch. 4. 50).

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(3) OMNIPOTENCE. He claimed the power to raise His own body from the grave. He likened His body to a temple which the Jews might destroy, and which He would raise up again in three days (ch. 2. 19-21). He affirmed that He had power to lay down His life, and power to take it again (ch 10. 18). He declared that the spiritually dead should hear His voice and live, and that the hour is coming when all that are in the graves shall hear His voice and come forth. He claimed power to pronounce judgment on human character and destiny, from which there can be no appeal.

2 He Appropriated to Himself Divine Names.

In His interview with Nicodemus He designated Himself "The only begotten Son of God," thus claiming equality with God (compare ch. 3. 18 with ch. 5. 18). He calls Himself the "I AM" (ch. 8. 58), a name which implies eternal self-existence, and our Lord's use of it was an assertion of His Deity and of His identity with Jehovah (Exod. 3 14). "I AM," not "I was." "The Eternal One knows no tenses;

past and future are present to Him who is both without beginning and without end.”

3. He Demands Our Faith.

He puts faith in Himself in the same category as faith in the Father (ch. 14. 1). Belief in Him is absolutely essential to salvation. Our attitude towards Him settles for us the issues of Eternity. “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on Him” (ch. 3. 36);

II. IN HIS CHARACTER.

By this expression is meant the moral glory of His life

1 His Glories are Threefold:

Personal, official, and moral. His *personal* glory is that which belongs to Him as the Son of God. His *official* glory is that which belongs to Him as the Mediator. His personal and official glories were commonly hid as He passed through this world. But His *moral* glory could not be hid. He was perfect in all His ways.

2. Other Men have their Strong Points.

We have heard of the patience of Job, the faith of Abraham, the meekness of Moses, and the courage of Daniel. But no one ever discovers the strongest point in Christ's character, because there are no weak ones. In Him there is no unevenness; everything is in beautiful proportion. This perfect combination of virtues is the moral glory of the Son of God. His life was under the closest observation of both friends and foes, but only "grace and beauty shone in all His steps below."

We observe in Him a tenderness and a kindness never seen in any other. See Him under trial as He suffered at the hands of men (chs. 18, 19), betrayed by Judas, denied by Peter, smitten by the officers, questioned by Pilate, mocked by the soldiers. Yet no flaw of temper, no word or look of unkindness obscured the glory of His life. Every circumstance in which He was placed became only the occasion of a further revelation of His wondrous character.

3. Other Men have Failures.

Jesus had none. He never recalled a word; He never retraced a step; He never apologised. When Martha said to Him, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here my brother had not died," He does not excuse His delaying two days in the place where He was. He gives her a further revelation of the glory of His person. He said: "Thy brother shall rise again." "I am the Resurrection and the Life" (ch. 11. 21-25).

Jesus never confessed sin. He could stand before His bitterest enemies, and say, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" (ch. 8. 46). He was absolutely sinless; in life and in death faultless. As the self-witness of the Bible proves it to be inspired of God, so the character of Christ proves the reality of His claims to be "God manifest in the flesh."

III. IN HIS SELF-MANIFESTATIONS.

He revealed Himself to the world and to His disciples. To both He appeared as Life, Light, and Love.

As the well-known teacher, W. GRAHAM

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SCROGGIE, has pointed out: "This three-fold revelation enters into the substance of the whole book, and is the key to its structure."

The book may be divided into two main parts.

(1). Chapters 1-12, in which Christ manifests Himself chiefly to the world.

(2). Chapters 13-21, in which He manifests Himself chiefly to His disciples

In the first part the order is from Life to Love, but in the second part the order is from Love to Life. For example, He appears as Life to Nicodemus in chapter 3; as Light to the Samaritan woman in chapter 4; and as Love to the nobleman in chapter 4. Again, He presents Himself as Life in chapters 5-7; as Light in chapters 8, 9; and as Love in chapters 10, 11. Then He reveals Himself as Love in chapter 13; as Light in chapters 14-16; and as Life in chapter 17. Finally, Love is outraged, Light is rejected; and Life is laid down in chapters 18, 19. But He arose from the dead, and in resurrection His disciples see Him again as Love, Light, and Life in chapters 20, 21.

The self-manifestation of Jesus to the

world had two effects. Some rejected Him. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not" (ch. 1. 11). We can trace the development of their unbelief from secret murmuring to open opposition, culminating in the crucifixion. A believing remnant received Him, felt the power of His words and works, and became His witnesses.

VII.

THE WITNESS OF
VARIOUS INDIVIDUALS.

The Gospel of John repeatedly sets before us the testimony of various individuals as to the effect upon them of the claims and words of Jesus. These individuals include Andrew, Philip, Nathanael, Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman, the man born blind, Mary, Thomas, and Peter. We shall briefly note how these were won to the side of Christ, and what they said concerning Him.

1. Andrew (ch. 1. 35-41).

These verses show us that the first disciples were won, as so many have been since, by personal soul-winning effort. John the Baptist won Andrew, and Andrew in turn won his own brother Simon. He went after him, told him of his own experience, and brought him to Jesus Himself. Andrew's testimony is full of meaning. He said: "We have found the

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Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ." He had evidently been looking and hoping for Him, and now he had found Him.

MESSIAH, both in Hebrew and Greek, means the Anointed One. In the Old Testament three offices were conferred by the ceremony of anointing, namely, those of prophet, priest, and king. All these offices belong to the Lord Jesus, for He is the promised

Prophet, Priest, and King.

John's Gospel manifests Him in each of these characters: (a) As **Prophet** we find Him exercising His ministry in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and Galilee of the Gentiles. The same order which He afterwards enjoined for the evangelistic activities of the Church. (b) As **Priest** we see Him in chapters 14-17 in the holy place in intimate fellowship with His disciples, discoursing of heavenly things. Chapter 17 is the model of His present High Priestly intercession. Like the Christian course, it begins with the Cross and ends with the glory. MARTIN LUTHER said that "this marvellous chapter is

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worth all the books in the world.” (c) As **King** He appears in chapter 12. 12-15 sitting upon a young ass, according to Zechariah 9. 9, and the crowd welcome Him with “Hosanna! Blessed is the King of Israel, that cometh in the Name of the Lord.” This shall be said again by the repentant remnant of Israel who shall see Him when He comes to reign (Matt. 23. 39)

2 Philip (ch. 1 43-45).

From these verses we gather that Jesus brought Philip to Himself without any human instrumentality. Others found Jesus, but Philip was found of Him. He was the first man Jesus called to follow Him. The first to whom He used the great formula: “Follow Me.”

Philip immediately saw in Christ the One who embodied all the ideals of Moses and the prophets; the One who answered to the predictions and promises of the Old Testament Scriptures. As such he confessed Him to Nathanael: “We have found Him, of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph ” He was the Son of God

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who came to Nazareth, and only as such could He be "Jesus of Nazareth" or "Son of Joseph."

3. Nathanael (ch. 1. 46-51).

The mention of Nazareth, with its proverbial ill-repute, suggested doubt to Nathanael's mind, so he asked: "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip, though unable to solve the difficulty, showed him how to get over it. He said: "Come and see," and Nathanael took his advice; truly "a noble remedy against preconceived opinions." He saw Jesus for himself, and his doubts vanished as mists before the sun. The Lord who thus manifested Himself to his heart and conscience is confessed as "Son of God" and "King of Israel."

Jesus had already seen Nathanael when he was under the fig-tree, when he had thought himself seen by none, but the tree has never grown which could conceal a soul from His eye. In the story of Nathanael's conversion we have a picture of coming Millennial blessing. The fig-tree represents the nation, and Nathanael the remnant who shall turn to the Lord in

the last days, and confess Him as "Son of God" and "King of Israel." Then shall the promise be fulfilled: "Hereafter ye shall see Heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." Jacob's ladder was a sign of blessing beyond the limits of his own people. It was a type of Jesus, who was not only King of Israel, but Son of Man.

This chapter abounds in striking **names and titles** of our Lord. He is called the Word, the Light, the Life, the Only Begotten of the Father, the Christ, the Lamb of God, the Master, Son of God, King of Israel, and Son of Man.

.4. Nicodemus (ch. 3. 1-21).

Nicodemus is described as "a ruler of the Jews," that is, an ecclesiastical ruler, a member of the Council consisting of seventy distinguished priests, Levites, doctors, and elders. He was an admirable type of the world of men outside the kingdom, blameless in all the righteousness of the law, and irreproachable in moral character. Seeing Jesus and hearing His testimony had produced a sense of need in his heart; but knowing that the world

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would be against him, he decided to go to Jesus by night.

The Lord taught him that entrance to the kingdom comes, not through religion, nor learning, but through the new birth. "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." Man requires a new birth because he has an evil nature. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," and "They that are in the flesh cannot please God." The new birth is not a reformation of the old nature, but the imparting of a new, being "born of water and of the Spirit." Water is here used as an emblem of the Word of God, which is the Spirit's instrument in His regenerating work in the soul (1 Peter 1. 23). But the natural man, however gifted, moral, or refined, is blind to spiritual truth. So Nicodemus did not understand, and betrayed his ignorance of spiritual things by the questions he asked.

The Lord now proceeded to make the way of life more plain to him by directing his attention to the story of the brazen serpent. As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, that the bitten Israelite might look and live, even so must the Son of

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Man be lifted up. The way of life is through faith in Christ crucified; it is the way of God's providing. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (ch. 3. 16). Since these wonderful words of life were first uttered they have brought millions of mankind to trust in the Saviour, and filled them with salvation's joy.

I would with joy record my own **personal experience** as to the power of this great text. As a boy of thirteen it directed me to Christ. Its message came to me like cold water to a thirsty soul, and like good news from a far country. I saw that God *loved* and *gave*, and that I had only to *believe* and *have*. I there and then trusted in Him, and so passed from death unto life. Many years have rolled away since then, and I have still no doubt that I was made, at that tender age, the subject of an enduring conversion.

How Nicodemus himself received the message this chapter does not say, but the effect upon him may be inferred from chapters 7. 50 and 19. 39. In the first

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passage we see him standing for Jesus in the presence of the Council, putting in a plea for Him, and sharing the reproach of the rejected One. In the second passage we find him where the Lord at the first had directed him, viz., at the Cross. The death of Christ, which caused others to fear, made him bold, and with Joseph he came forward and reverently buried the sacred body. Thus grace had overcome his natural timidity, and he owns and honours the Lord, not "by night," nor in the presence of the Council only, but in broad daylight and in the presence of the world.

5 The Woman of Samaria

(ch. 4. 1-42).

We have here one of the sweetest stories of grace on record. A poor Samaritan woman is made the pattern of the workmanship of Jesus. He had chosen Nicodemus, the religious man, to show that in spite of his religion he needed new life. Now He chooses the defiled woman to show that, in spite of all her sins, she might be saved by grace, and have a well of living water in her soul. In order to reach her the Lord left Judea, the scene

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of His labours hitherto, and "He must needs go through Samaria" (v. 4). There was a must needs for every word He spoke and for every act He performed.

His love for sinners constrained Him to go that way that He might meet with the woman at the well. He knew exactly when and where to find her. "Jesus therefore, being wearied with His journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour; there cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus saith unto her, Give Me to drink" (vv. 6, 7). This is perhaps the most human of all the scenes in our Lord's life here below. He is as truly Man as God. Behold Him, a lonely traveller, worn, exhausted, thirsty, requesting a drink of water from a stranger's hand. But that Voice that said "Give Me to drink" is the same that said to the sea

"Peace, be Still!"

and there was a calm; that said to the demons, "Come out of him," and they came out; that commanded Lazarus to "come forth" from his grave, and he came forth.

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“Hear, oh, hear the wondrous story,
Let the winds and waters tell,
'Tis the Christ, the King of Glory,
Waiting at the well.”

The woman came alone to the well, her sins had separated her from the crowd. Now the disciples must go away to make room for her that she might be alone with the Lord. He was there to begin in her soul His work for Eternity; but she did not know the gift of God, nor who was speaking to her. She was occupied with her well, her waterpot, and her place of worship. How patiently and tenderly the Lord dealt with her, bringing her to long for that which only He could give. She had sought for happiness, but found misery.

All the pleasures of sin bear the stamp of death. Nothing here satisfies the heart. “Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again, but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst” (v. 14). It is the pure river of Water of Life, clear as crystal, and they who drink of it shall never thirst for the muddy waters of sin. “It shall be in him a well of water, springing up into

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everlasting life" (v. 14). It saves and satisfies. "The woman saith unto Him, Sir, give me this water that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw" (v. 15). The Lord now began to deal with her conscience. He said: "Go, call thy husband, and come hither" (v. 16). What memories that word called up! She is made to look back over all things that ever she did; to face the facts of her life

In the Presence of Her Maker and Judge.

There must be confession before forgiveness. Her life had been shameful, now she is ashamed of it. "The woman answered and said, I have no husband" (v. 17). That was true, but there was a further truth. Jesus said unto her: "Thou hast had five husbands, and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband" (v. 18). The whole dark story of the past is told.

Everything comes out in the presence of Him who is the Light of the World. She recognises Him as a prophet. Her conscience is dismayed, and she speaks of worship in order to turn the conversation. At last the point is reached where He can

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make Himself known to her sin-sick heart. She was waiting for the One who would tell her all things—the coming Messiah. “Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am He” (v. 26). The work was done. Christ was received, and the great blessing of salvation was hers.

She was now ready to witness for Him who had saved her. The revelation of Christ to her soul was a powerful stimulus to make Him known to others. She left her waterpot, the symbol of her daily toil, went off to the town, and told the men of Jesus. She said, “Come, see a Man which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?” (v. 29). She had owned Him before as a prophet, now she owns Him as the Messiah, God’s anointed One. She said, “Come!” She would go with them. She counted upon the same welcome for others as she herself had received.

It is cheering to see how God owned her simple testimony. Many believed on Him because of her word, and many more believed because of His own word, and confessed Him as “The Christ, the Saviour of the world” (v. 42).

6. The Blind Man (ch. 9).

The man who was born blind has come down through history nameless, yet more space is given to him in John's Gospel than to any other character. Great importance is attached to his testimony. The reading of it always stirs one up, imparting new life and fresh courage. The more we read and ponder it the more we feel its power. Had this man been like some people he would have kept quiet about getting his eyes opened. He might have reasoned, "It is not necessary for me to confess Christ. Why then should I say anything about it?" But God calls upon all who have been blessed through Christ to be His witnesses. This we owe to Him in praise, and to our fellowmen in love. As soon as the blind beggar received sight he began to witness for Christ. This chapter mentions three distinct circles in which he testified.

(1) The Home Circle.

To his parents (vv. 18-25). Doubtless he told them all about how his eyes were opened, but they were not prepared to admit all they knew; it would have cost

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them too much. "They feared the Jews, for the Jews had agreed already that if any man did confess that He was the Christ he should be put out of the synagogue" (v. 22). It was a serious thing to be put out of the synagogue in those days. It does not matter much now; but if a man were cast out then he was cast out of society, and even his business would suffer. So they saved themselves by saying, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind, but by what means he now seeth we know not, or who hath opened his eyes we know not" (vv. 20, 21). How much better had they stood up with their noble son and thankfully acknowledged that he received his sight from Jesus of Nazareth! Thus they might have led many others to believe in Him.

(2) The Social Circle.

To his neighbours (vv. 8-11). The neighbours were accustomed to the blind beggar, and having found him unexpectedly able to see they could not conceal their surprise and perplexity. His walk was so different and his entire expression so changed that some were in doubts as to his

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identity. "Some said, This is he; others said, He is like him; but he said, I am he" (v. 9). This settled, the next question naturally was, "How were thine eyes opened?" (v. 10) His reply was fresh and lively. He told a straightforward story as to what the Lord had done for him. "A Man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash; and I went and washed, and I received sight" (v. 11).

(3) The Religious Circle

To the Pharisees (vv. 15-17 and 24-31). When the neighbours had finished the religious leaders took up the matter. They put the man through two examinations. The first as to the facts and manner of his healing; the second as to his thoughts of his Benefactor. In both he gave no uncertain sound. His witness to Christ was most explicit. He stuck to the logic of reality—his own personal experience. "One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see" (v. 25). Neither infidel nor philosopher could persuade him out of that. The facts were certain, the

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evidence incontestible. But the Pharisees were blind to proofs. They could not bear his testimony, so they reviled him and spoke contemptibly of his Master, saying, "We know not from whence He is." The man now expressed surprise that so great a wonder should be wrought and they unable to decide from whence the power came. They could not meet his arguments, so they cast him out of the synagogue.

"Excommunication

is the usual resort of prejudiced ecclesiastics when Scripture and reason alike fail them." After he was cast out Jesus found him, talked with him, and revealed Himself more fully to him. He found it better to be outside with Christ than inside without Him. He was satisfied; he said: "Lord, I believe," and he worshipped Him. This is a good place to leave him—at Jesus' feet. We shall meet him again by and by.

As the sublime discourse on the Good Shepherd in chapter 10 grew out of the circumstances of the expulsion of the healed man because of his confession of Jesus, we must note a few points in

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connection therewith. The scribes and Pharisees are doubtless the persons Jesus has in mind in this discourse when He speaks of the "stranger," "the hireling," "the wolf," and "the thief" as the enemies of the sheep. Such they had proved themselves to be by their treatment of this man. These were the thieves and robbers who came before the Good Shepherd. The Jews had many such in their national history. Prophets who prophesied smooth things for place and pelf. They had not a true shepherd's heart. They were interested in the sheep without higher motive than their own aggrandisement. The stranger wanted them to follow him; the hireling wanted to fleece them; the wolf wanted to scatter them; the thief wanted to steal them. But what a contrast to all this is the true Shepherd! Jesus says, "I am the Good Shepherd, the Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep" (v. 11).

"When blood from a victim must flow,
This Shepherd by pity was led
To stand between us and the foe,
And willingly died in our stead."

The Fold and the Flock.

The blind man was one of Christ's sheep who got the outside place. No doubt the Jews thought that he had been cut off from safety, seeing he was outside their fold. But he was now really in safety, for he was under the personal care of the Shepherd. God owns no such thing now as a *fold*. "There shall be *one flock* and one Shepherd." All God's people are truly one. They are one family, and God is the Father; one flock, and Christ is the Shepherd; one body, and the Holy Spirit is the bond of union. There may be many folds, and there are some who would have us believe that if we do not belong to their special fold we need scarcely assume that we belong to the flock. But the one test of our being His own is that we hear His voice and follow Him.

All His sheep are free, and in this freedom they feed and rest in the good pastures which His love supplies. He leads them, gathers them, protects them, and cares for them. They may be very lame and timid sheep, but they were purchased by the Saviour's Blood because He loved

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them so. He says, "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish" (v. 28). True, they are sheep and have a tendency to wander, but their Shepherd will seek them out, even

In the Cloudy and Dark Day,

and bring them back to Himself, and they shall never perish. They have a tendency to spiritual sickness, but their Shepherd will tend them, and they shall never perish. Time tries them, and they grow old, but they shall never perish. "Never" is a long day, but it is no longer than grace will last. The rule has absolutely no exception. The whole of them shall be preserved, for He knows their number, and will never lose one. He will count them all again in that day when He brings them home at last. This chapter throughout is in harmony with the special purpose of John's Gospel to present the highest aspect of Christ's person and work. His work is that of a Substitute and Saviour, but none other than God could speak of Himself as He does. It is interesting to observe the opposite results produced by this discourse. The Jews

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sought to stone Him. But many believed on Him.

7. Martha, Mary, and Lazarus (ch. 12. 1-10).

Bethany was a sweet spot to the Son of God. There His heart found rest in the house of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus. How often after the toils and trials of the day did He retire in the evening to Bethany to enjoy the hospitality and affectionate sympathy of those He loved so well! At the beginning of the last week of His earthly life we find Him once more in the home of this well loved family. It was His last shelter before He suffered on the Cross. His foes plotted His death, but His friends gathered around Him at the social board. "There they made Him a supper" (v. 2). This was a noble tribute to give Him in face of the command of [the chief priests and Pharisees (ch. 11. 57)]. Rejected by the world, He found His place with the remnant who owned Him as Lord of life and King of glory. In this remnant we have a picture of the saints in their various character of communion with the

Lord. In Martha serving, Lazarus sitting, Mary anointing we see

Service, Communion, and Worship.

Martha loved the Lord with all her heart, and showed it by serving Him. Lazarus loved Him too, and showed it by sitting beside Him, hearing His voice and learning His ways. The world would probably never have heard of Lazarus unless the glory of God had been bound up with his sickness and death and resurrection. His voice is never heard. We have no record of anything he said, but he sat beside his Lord, the silent witness of His quickening power, and through his quiet testimony many believed on Him. Mary showed her love in a different way. She took a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus. The ointment was all the more precious to Him because her heart was with it. Her vision of Jesus was such that it constrained her to give all. Love must show itself regardless of cost. To her it was more blessed to give than to receive. But she not only gave Him her precious treasure, her personal glory was also laid at His feet. She wiped His feet

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with her hair. Such a sacrifice could not pass without being felt by others. "The house was filled with the odour of the ointment" (v. 3) A life fully consecrated has always a sweet odour.

But there was

An Objector Present.

As Judas looked upon the act of love he coolly calculated the lowest selling price of the ointment, and said, "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?" (v. 5). "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" (v. 6). Poor Judas, he had a covetous heart, and would have liked the sum added to his unlawful gain. He could not see beyond his own self-interest. His sanctimonious talk of the poor was only intended to hide his real self. He did not really care for the poor. The best friends of the poor have always been those who are the most devoted friends of Christ. The Lord appreciated Mary's whole-hearted devotion to Himself. He understood the full significance of her service, and said, "Let her alone, against

the day of my burying hath she kept this” (v. 7).

The incident sets in striking contrast the two figures of Mary, who, constrained by love, delighted to give her best, and of Judas, who, ruled by covetousness, was only eager to get.

8. Mary Magdalene (ch. 20. 1-18).

The death, burial, and resurrection of Christ are an essential part of the Gospel, and formed a chief theme of apostolic preaching. In the glad tidings proclaimed by Paul he delivered “first of all, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures” (1 Cor. 15. 3, 4). As these truths are fundamental to the Christian faith the Spirit of God has taken care that they should have adequate testimony.

In chapter 19. 23-37 we have the story of the crucifixion and a record of the witnesses of Christ’s *death*, including scribes, Pharisees, priests, Jews, Roman soldiers, also some of Christ’s friends, the three Marys, and the Apostle John.

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In connection with His *burial* we have the confession of the hitherto secret disciples, Joseph and Nicodemus.

Then in chapter 20 we have the witnesses of His *resurrection*. (1) Mary Magdalene. (2) Peter and John, who saw the trophies of His triumph over death, the linen clothes and the napkin, and were afterwards associated in proclaiming the Saviour's resurrection. Then we have the risen Lord's first and second appearance to the assembled disciples; so that the resurrection of Christ is a well-attested fact.

We shall now look more particularly at

The Testimony of Mary.

She is first mentioned in Luke 8. 2 as "Mary Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils." She had been completely possessed and dominated by Satan's power; but Christ had set her free. The Lord in thus saving her had so touched her heart with a sense of His love that He became from that moment the object of her deep affection. She loved much because she had been forgiven much. She proved the reality of her love by cleaving to Him in the time of His rejection.

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Now we see her early at the sepulchre seeking the body of her Lord, but finding the grave empty she hastened to tell Peter and John of her disappointment. She ran, her whole soul strung to its utmost with anxiety, "and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid Him" (v. 2). Again, we read "Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping" (v. 11). She is

The Picture of Inconsolable Grief.

It is the effect of the death of Christ upon a heart that really loved Him. She lingers at the spot as one bound to that tomb by the cords of faith and love.

Looking into the sepulchre she saw "two angels in white sitting, the one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain" (v. 12). A wonderful testimony to the dignity of the One whose precious body had lain there. But the angels could not compensate for the absence of His body. They asked her why she wept, and she spoke out her grief to them without fear. "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they

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have laid Him" (v. 13). "And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus" (v. 14). She had looked for Him in the grave, and when she saw Him in the garden she did not know Him.

"Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?" (v. 15). She, supposing Him to be the gardener, saith unto him, "Sir, if thou have borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away" (v. 15). This is the language of sublime affection. She measured the strength of her arms by the force of her love. It was enough.

"Mary."

Jesus could no longer refrain Himself. "He saith unto her, Mary" (v. 16). It is the oft-repeated name in His well-known voice. The work was done, the great discovery made. It was the Good Shepherd calling His own sheep by name. She was the same to Him as ever. "She turned herself, and saith unto Him, Rabboni, which is to say, Master" (v. 16). Rabboni was at once an expression of her joy and

an acknowledgment of Him as her Lord and Master.

“Rabboni.”

In this connection we cannot do better than quote the words of Dr. A. T. PIERSON: “Well might Mary Magdalene cry, with the mingled rapture of joy and tears, ‘Rabboni.’ *Rab* was a Hebrew title, meaning a great one, and applied in Jewish schools to acknowledged teachers and masters. *Rabbi* is more emphatic, ‘my master,’ and marks a higher dignity, the comparative degree. But *Rabboni* was the superlative. ‘My great master,’ most honourable of all, and applied to but seven persons, all of whom were pre-eminent in the Rabbinical schools. In that word ‘Rabboni’ Mary surrendered her very self to the authority and supremacy of her risen Lord.”

She next sought to show by her action what words failed to express, but she was checked. “Jesus saith unto her, Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father, but go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God” (v. 17). These are

Words of Incomparable Glory.

If we have read the Gospel of John aright we are prepared for ascension. There is more in it about ascension than there is about resurrection. Jesus has been speaking of going back all through it. He came from Heaven, and He must return to it. Mary is sent to the disciples with the message of sonship. First they were *servants*, then *disciples*; a little before His death, *friends*; now after His resurrection they are His *brethren*.

“Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things unto her” (v. 18). To a woman was this honour given to be the first that saw the risen Lord. “He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven devils” (Luke 8. 2). Mary now disappears, she is not mentioned again in Scripture. She disappears in the brightness of His presence.

May we love the Lord as she did. He will appear to us also and call us by name, and employ us in His blessed service.

9. Thomas (ch. 20. 24-29).

On the occasion of the risen Lord's appearances to the assembled disciples they had a striking proof of the power of His resurrection life. Jesus entered, although the doors were shut, and stood in their midst. He was still the same Jesus who had been crucified. "He showed unto them His hands and His side. Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord" (v. 20).

But Thomas was not with them when Jesus came. What could have kept him away? We cannot tell. But he was absent while members of the little gathering were holding communion with their risen Lord. Whatever kept him away, he was severely punished for his absence. He lost the first and best *sight* of his risen Master, and His first and best *benediction* of peace. He missed the first taste of the *blessing*, and abode in the darkness of unbelief, whilst the rest were filled with gladness. May we learn from his experience that it is not good to be out of fellowship with the body of believers, nor to be absent

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from the place where Jesus manifests Himself.

Thomas was accustomed to look on

The Dark Side of Things.

When Jesus proposed to go into Judea to raise Lazarus, Thomas said to his fellow-disciples: "Let us also go that we may die with Him" (ch. 11. 16). He felt sure that his Master would never leave Judea alive, and therefore determined to die with Him.

The next time Thomas speaks is when Jesus and His disciples are still in the upper room where the last Passover had just been celebrated. When the Master spoke of His impending departure Thomas said: "Lord, we know not whither Thou goest, and how can we know the way?" (ch. 14. 5). This drew from the Lord the golden sentence: "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me" (ch. 16. 2-6).

Again, in this chapter, when the other disciples said to him, "We have seen the Lord," Thomas replied, "Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the

nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe" (v. 25). He would walk by sight, not by faith.

But

"Doubting Thomas"

did not miss the next meeting of the disciples. "And after eight days again His disciples were within, and Thomas was with them" (v. 26). Jesus now suited Himself to his needs. He complied with the condition that his unbelief had laid down. "Then saith He to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands; and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into My side, and be not faithless, but believing" (v. 27). We do not read that Thomas availed himself of this invitation. It was sufficient for him to see. His unbelief fled before the visible presence of Jesus. What the disciples had failed to do in a week's reasoning Jesus did in a moment by His word. The glory of Christ broke upon him in a flood, and "Thomas answered and said unto Him,

My Lord, and My God!"

This was not a mere expression of surprise or astonishment. The words were addressed

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to Jesus Himself, and there was in them a confession of His *authority* over him, "MY LORD;" and of His *Deity*, "MY GOD." This is the highest confession of all. The name of God is expressly given to Christ in His own presence and by one of His own apostles. "It surpasses all that has been yet uttered, nor can it be surpassed by anything that ever will be uttered in earth or Heaven."

Because Thomas saw he believed. But there is a more excellent way. It is better to believe without seeing, hence the writing of this precious book. "These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through His Name" (v. 31). "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" (v. 29). "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (1 Peter 1. 8).

10. Simon Peter (ch. 21).

At the end of the previous chapter there is a formal close of the book. The incidents

of this chapter are evidently intended to reveal the permanent relation between the risen Lord and His struggling people. "Jesus showed Himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias" (v. 1), that is, the Sea of Galilee.

The Composition of the Seven Disciples

is significant: SIMON PETER and THOMAS (called Didymus), the denier and the doubter; NATHANAEL, of Cana in Galilee, whose name only appears here and in chapter 1; the SONS OF ZEBEDEE, elsewhere called "The sons of thunder;" and TWO OTHER of His disciples, unnamed, showing that the Lord has a place for undistinguished people.

They had all companied with the Master during the time of His public ministry, and were fittingly chosen to see Him together on the occasion of His last appearance. At the suggestion of Peter they went afishing, "and that night they caught nothing" (v. 3). What could have been the cause of their failure? They knew the lake well, and were experienced fishermen, yet a whole night

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of toil brought them no results. They failed because they acted in disobedience to the divine will.

At the Breaking of the Day

the Master came upon the scene. His presence at once changed everything for the disciples. He knew how to direct them, that their efforts should be successful. The risen Lord on the shore shared in the toil of His servants on the restless sea. He said to them: "Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find" (v. 6). They immediately obeyed, and enclosed "a multitude of fishes." John was the first to recognise Him; his keen eye of love knew Him to be the Lord.

When Peter heard John say "It is the Lord" (v. 7), true to his character he sprang into the sea and swam to shore, leaving the rest to drag the net as best they could. The Lord now showed His interest in their physical condition. He knew they were cold and hungry after the experiences of the night, and Himself prepared a fire and a breakfast that they might be warmed and fed. He also recognised their work, and said, "Bring of

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the fish which ye have now caught" (v. 10). Simon Peter therefore drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three; and although there were so many, yet was not the net broken.

It is interesting to compare this

"Post-Resurrection Haul"

with the first miraculous draught (Luke 5. 1-11). The correspondences and the contrasts are striking.

In both there had been a night of fruitless toil.

In both the command was given to let down the net once again.

In both obedience was followed by success.

In the one case the Master is in the boat with them; in the other He is on the shore.

In the one case the net broke; in the other it did not break.

In the one Peter said: "Depart from me;" in the other he cast himself into the sea to reach the Lord.

The one exhibits the principles of service while He is still with them; the other exhibits the principles of service when He is removed from them.

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“This is now the third time that Jesus showed Himself to His disciples, after that He was risen from the dead” (v. 14). The *first* was when He appeared to them on the evening of the resurrection day—a picture of the Church now being gathered to Himself; the *second*, when He revealed Himself to doubting Thomas—an earnest of His future revelation to Israel; and the *third*, when He made Himself known in connection with this remarkable draught of fishes—a picture of the great ingathering of souls in the Millennial age.

Public Denial—Public Confession.

Jesus now proceeded to deal with Peter. Nothing could be more touching than the tenderness and patience He manifested towards him. He had already seen the risen Lord, and was privately restored, but there had been public denial, and there must be public confession. “So then after they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me more than these?” (v. 15). The Lord waited until Peter was warmed and fed before He questioned Him.

The name “Simon, son of Jonas,”

takes us back to the time before he was a disciple. It was the name by which Jesus had addressed him when he was first brought to Him by his brother Andrew (ch. 1. 42). The Master called him by his old name, as if to remind him that he had been living the life of nature rather than of grace.

The Saviour's Love Test.

In the question, "Lovest thou Me more than these?" (v. 15) he was surely reminded of his boast that if all the others forsook Him he never would. His reply was very humble. Without mentioning the degree of his love, he said, "Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee" (v. 16). He felt that Jesus could look beneath the surface of his sin, and see that, in spite of the denial, there was a heart that was true to Him. He repeated His question a second and a third time, and received the same reply.

Thrice Peter had been warned, thrice he denied, and now thrice must he be asked if he really loves the Lord.

He had denied Him after being warned at the world's fire (ch. 18. 18). Now he

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must confess Him after being warmed at the Lord's fire.

It is interesting to note that in the two first questions the word which the Lord employs for "love" is not the same as that which appears in Peter's two first answers. The kind of love Christ asked for was spiritual, holy, heavenly. Peter spoke of a simpler, more personal, more human love. In the last inquiry Christ employed Peter's own word. He accepted his confession of love, and reinstated him in His blessed service. He gave him a threefold charge: "Feed My lambs," "Tend My sheep," "Feed My sheep" (vv. 15-17).

To Serve and to Suffer.

But Peter was not only to *serve*, he was also to *suffer*. The Lord said to Him: "When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest; but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not" (v. 18). Peter never forgot these words (see 2 Peter 1. 14). They predicted for him a violent death

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in bonds; but the Master's command to him, notwithstanding this prospect was, "Follow Me." These are the closing words of His charge. The servant was to follow his Master both in service and suffering, in life and in death.

Peter and John.

Peter now sought to make arrangements for John in the days to come. He said to Jesus, "Lord, and what shalt this man do?" (v. 21). The Lord replied, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow *thou*. Me" (v. 22). Some of the disciples interpreted these words as meaning that John should not die, but they did not convey that meaning to John himself. The phrase, "If I will," reveals the risen Christ as Lord of life and death. The later history of these two apostles proves the validity of His claim. Peter was allowed to suffer martyrdom; while John was permitted to linger here long after all his early associates were gone. He "leaned," "followed," "tarried," "testified" with the longing in his heart, "EVEN SO, COME, LORD JESUS" (Rev. 22. 20).

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Closing Words.

“And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written” (v. 25). It is well that the Gospel should close with these words. They tell us of the treasures of wisdom and knowledge yet to be possessed. So we press on with joy anticipating that time when we “shall know as we are known.”

The Sea of Galilee.

Written by the Sea of Galilee, 16th July, 1839, by
ROBERT MURRAY M'CHEYNE.

How pleasant to me thy deep blue wave,
O Sea of Galilee!
For the glorious One who came to save
Hath often stood by thee.

Fair are the lakes in the land I love,
Where pine and heather grow;
But thou hast loveliness far above
What Nature can bestow.

It is not that the wild gazelle
Comes down to drink thy tide,
But He that was pierced to save from hell
Oft wandered by thy side.

It is not that the fig-tree grows,
And palms in thy soft air,
But that Sharon's fair and bleeding Rose
Once spread its fragrance there.

Graceful around thee the mountains meet,
Thou calm reposing sea;
But, ah! far more, the beautiful feet
Of Jesus walked o'er thee.

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These days are past—Bethsaida, where?
Chorazin, where art thou?
His tent the wild Arab pitches there,
The wild reeds shade thy brow.

Tell me, ye mouldering fragments, tell,
Was the Saviour's city here?
Lifted to Heaven, has it sunk to hell,
With none to shed a tear?

Ah! would my flock from thee might learn
How days of grace will flee;
How all an offered Christ who spurn
Shall mourn at last like thee.

And was it beside this very sea,
The new-risen Saviour said
Three times to Simon, "Lovest thou Me?
My lambs and sheep then feed."

O Saviour! gone to God's right hand!
Yet the same Saviour still;
Graved on Thy heart is this lovely strand,
And every fragrant hill.

Oh, give me, Lord, by this sacred wave,
Threifold Thy love divine,
That I may feed, till I find my grave,
Thy flock—both Thine and mine.

“UNTO HIM
THAT LOVED US, AND WASHED
US FROM OUR SINS, IN HIS
OWN BLOOD, AND HATH MADE
US KINGS AND PRIESTS
UNTO GOD AND HIS FATHER;
TO HIM
BE GLORY AND DOMINION
FOR EVER AND EVER,
AMEN.”

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