

BIBLE STUDIES

"Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so" (Acts 17. 11).

THE GOSPEL AND ITS MINISTRY

STUDIES IN THE CLOSING PHASE
OF THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN
(Chapters 12 to 21)

NOTES ON THE PSALMS

VOLUME 36

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CONTENTS

STUDY SUBJECT:

STUDIES IN THE CLOSING PHASE OF THE GOSPEL BY JOHN (Chapters 12 to 21)

John 12 9-50.....	3
12 1-8, 13. 1-38.....	14
14 1-31.....	28
15 1-27.....	38
16 1-33.....	51
17 1-26.....	63
18 1-27.....	76
18 28-19. 16.....	88
19 16-37.....	100
19 38-20. 18.....	112
20 19-31.....	124
21 1-25.....	137
Editorials.....	1, 13, 25, 37, 49, 61, 73, 85, 97, 109, 121, 133
Comments.....	9, 21, 34, 45, 56, 69, 82, 93, 106, 117, 129, 143
Questions and Answers...	11, 22, 35, 46, 56, 70, 83, 95, 107, 118, 132, 144
Psalms, Notes on the.....	11, 36, 47, 57, 71, 83, 96, 107, 119
Dr. A. T. Doodson, An Appreciation.	26
Authorized and Revised Versions of the Bible compared.	86, 98
Beloved Disciple, The.	2
Daniel 11, Prophetic Character.....	27, 37, 50, 62, 134
Hebrews, The Epistle to the.	74
The Titles of the Lord Jesus in the Gospel of John.	137
Word Studies:	
"Lord" in John's Gospel.	86
"Seeing" and "Beholding".	110
"Knowing".	122

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VOLUME 36

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EDITORIAL

The twelfth chapter of John's Gospel is pervaded by a sense of deepening crisis. From the viewpoint of John's particular presentation of the Lord's ministry, it shows the curtain slowly descending as the Prophet greater than Moses utters His final warnings and appeal. Only five days before the Passover He had been acclaimed by the great multitude:

"Hosanna: Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel" (verse 13).

Yet He discerned how superficial this was, knowing full well that behind the scenes the chief priests and Pharisees were already scheming how He might be put to death; hence the frequent references to His decease, now so imminent: (verses 24, 32, 35). The sinister hardening of Israel in unbelief, as foretold by Isaiah the prophet, had developed beyond recovery. Yet in yearning entreaty "Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on Me, believeth not on Me, but on Him that sent Me" (verse 44). Within the next few verses we find compressed the essence of much which had been the burden of His ministry among Israel.

He confirmed His oneness with the Father (verse 44) and the perfect expression of the Father's character through Him (verse 45). He declared Himself to be the great Light-Giver, bringing spiritual life to all who believe on Him (verse 46). He repeated that His great purpose in coming into the world was not to judge but to save (verse 47). He showed that to reject His words was to bring condemnation in the day of judgement, implying that His word was the word of Deity (verse 48). He declared His fidelity to all that the Father had given Him to speak in His earthly ministry as Jehovah's Servant (verse 49). So these mighty truths which had been faithfully spoken to Israel throughout His ministry were finally reasserted. God had now uniquely spoken through His Son beyond all that had formerly been revealed in divers portions and in divers manners through the prophets. The unbelieving of Israel would hear that voice no more.

Yet there were some who had heard His words and treasured them. To them would be given the privilege of listening further to His words even before the sacrifice of Calvary. To them the Master's words were words of eternal life (6. 68). He had given them these words from the Father, and they had kept the word (17. 6-8). This was to be their safeguard and joy. Truly they must know a time of overwhelming sorrow: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy" (16. 20). Yet their faith would survive the crisis, from which they would emerge as joyous sharers of the triumph of His resurrection.

As we enter 1968 we too are conscious of a deepening world crisis. Since the Man of Calvary was rejected, though men may say "Peace, peace", there can be no abiding peace. So we await His return from heaven, encouraged by the promises of the word, and already aware of developing preparations of the world scene towards the time of the end.

The word of God remains our sheet-anchor amidst the storms of world change and the tumult of the nations. May our renewed study through another year, God willing, be for mutual help towards deeper devotional appreciation of the truths concerning Himself, so uniquely presented by the "disciple whom Jesus loved"! G. P. Jr.

THE BELOVED DISCIPLE

Our present studies are drawn from the writings of one who, moved by the Holy Spirit, was at the very centre of activities in the last fortnight of the Lord's life as a Man on earth. Nonetheless his writing has been assailed perhaps more than that of any other, because, unlike the synoptic Gospels, his presentation relates primarily to a description of the Lord's life in terms of His eternal Sonship and Deity:

"These are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in His name" (John 20. 31).

What reliable historical evidence is there of John's authorship? From a brief research into a wide field of evidence there would appear to be reliable historical sources to corroborate the fact that John is the "disciple which beareth witness of these things, and wrote these things" (John 21. 24). Irenaeus, who was born some twenty to thirty years after the death of the "beloved disciple", wrote as follows:

"Afterwards John, the disciple of the Lord, who also leaned upon His breast, did himself publish a Gospel".

Polycrotis, who wrote towards the close of the second century, said,

"John who reclined in the bosom of the Lord wrote as a martyr (witness) and teacher".

Furthermore Polycarp wrote that he had actually listened to the teaching of this John who was identified as the beloved disciple. An interesting statement attributed to Irenaeus that John lived on until the days of Trajan, who was Emperor from A. D. 98 until A. D. 117, would suggest that John was a relatively young man at the time of the crucifixion.

The unique description, "the disciple whom Jesus loved", indicates the close relationship between him and the Lord Jesus Christ. His faithful witness has historical value quite apart from its spiritual message. The detailed accuracy of his recording of events leads to the inclusion of material which helps to throw light on the background and motives of those who sought to destroy the Christ of God. A few examples may be of interest:

"Pilate saith unto them, Take Him yourselves, and crucify Him" (19. 6).

"The Jews cried out, saying, If thou release this Man, thou art not Caesar's friend" (19. 12).

The accusers "entered not into the palace, that they might not be defiled, but might eat the passover" (18. 28).

"The other disciple, which was known unto the high priest... brought in Peter" (18. 16).

Judas "went out straightway: and it was night" (13. 30).

May God help us to value highly this great treatise which bears the hallmark of deep sincerity and boundless love, and presents in majestic power and great profundity the coming of the Son of God to die for us.

L. H. T.

STUDIES IN THE CLOSING PHASE

OF THE GOSPEL BY JOHN

John 12. 9-50.

Mounting Tension in Jerusalem and the Climax of the Lord's Public Ministry

From Macduff. —The last week or so of the Lord's life before His crucifixion was spent in the Jerusalem—Bethany area, and the movement of Jews into Jerusalem at this time of Passover brought fresh accounts of His miracles and an upsurge of interest in Him. Knowing He was in Bethany, the people sought Him out, the more so because of the report of His raising of Lazarus, and it appears that the common people believed on Him and were beginning to think He was the coming Messiah who would rule the nation. This opinion was apparently spreading and the rulers and priests greatly feared its effect on themselves. They said, "What do we? for this Man doeth many signs. If we let Him thus alone, all men will believe on Him: and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation", so, "they took counsel that they might put Him to death" (John 11. 47, 48, 53). If the rulers were to retain their position then the object of the people's interest must be removed, and their dark intentions were apparently becoming common knowledge in Jerusalem. It appears that after the wonderful reception given to the Lord on entering Jerusalem, with all the signs of prophetic confirmation of His royal claims, public feeling abated, perhaps because He did not immediately set up His kingdom. Their faith in Him depended on their seeing in Him the power and authority of the Christ who "abideth for ever". The common people would accept a Man able to sit on the throne of David, and who possessed the miraculous power and wisdom expected of the Messiah. The rulers searched for a means of killing Him, for they saw in Him a danger to their self-aggrandisement. "They loved the glory of men more than the glory of God", even those rulers who believed in Him.

A. B. R.

From Methilr—Shortly before the Passover feast multitudes gathered at Jerusalem. When these heard that Jesus was coming they took branches of palm trees and went forth to meet Him, crying out, "Hosanna" which means "Save us". They hailed Him as the King of Israel and no doubt many of them thought that He would deliver them

from the Roman bondage. Little did they realize that the prophecy of Zechariah was being fulfilled so accurately that day (Zechariah 9. 9). Yes, He came, meek and lowly, riding on an ass's colt, yet even the disciples failed to understand. But when Jesus was glorified then they remembered that these things were written of Him. Although they proclaimed Him as King, yet in a few days the Lord Jesus was going to be crucified and their shouts would change to "Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him... We have no king but Caesar" (John 19. 15) [1]. How the world changes! but the Lord Jesus does not. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yea and for ever" (Hebrews 13. 8).

The end of John 12 records how the Lord's public ministry was drawing to a close. From John 13 onwards the Lord is speaking to His own. In verse 31 the Lord predicts that the prince of this world would be cast out: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Myself". The Lord Jesus was of course speaking about the Cross where Satan would be defeated. Although the Jews had seen many wonderful signs they still did not believe, and Isaiah's words were very true, "He hath blinded their eyes" (verse 40). Even certain of the rulers who did believe would not confess it publicly, "For they loved the glory of men more than the glory of God" (verse 43). How typical **of men** today!

David B. Reid

From Aberkenfig and Barry. —The response of the Lord to the enquiry of the Greeks in verse 23 is interesting. Did the Lord Jesus, knowing all things, refer here to the wonderful work that His death was to achieve for the outcasts of the Gentiles? (See Comment [4]). "He is our peace, who made both one, and brake down the middle wall of partition" (Ephesians 2. 14). The voice of the Father speaking from heaven, mentioned in the same paragraph, was discussed, and we wondered whether God's voice has ever been heard clearly by unbelieving men. Do the Lord's words in verse 30, "This voice hath not come for My sake, but for your sakes", mean that they should have understood the words spoken by God, or merely that the voice having spoken in reply to the Lord was sufficient to confirm that the Lord Jesus was God's Son? [2].

Consider the words of the Lord Jesus recorded in this chapter. In no other Gospel do we have this address recorded. These are perhaps the last words the Lord spoke in public. We might therefore regard these words as having a very special significance. The Saviour of men was speaking words of truth to the multitude for the last time and yet what response was there? The subject of the address is His impending death. Those who heard should have remembered His words at the end of the week. "How sayest Thou, The Son of Man must be lifted up?" they asked. Rightly they deduced from the Scriptures that the Christ has been appointed eternally. Old Testament scriptures refer so often to His eternal kingdom: "Of the increase of His government and of peace there shall be no end"; but they did not realize that first He must suffer. The suffering Christ, so clearly foretold in the Scriptures, was a mystery to them. Perhaps we should stay to examine verses 44-50, especially since these seem to be the Saviour's last words to the people. They were then able to listen quietly to Him; when they saw Him later

they were impassioned **and** wild, **and** unfit to hear His pleading words or see His gracious look. In these verses He declares His commission. He had **not** come of Himself, He had **not** spoken from Himself, He had **spoken by commandment** of the Father: **to reject Him meant** rejecting heaven's authority. This was **very** solemn indeed. Perhaps **eternity will be more bitter** for these Christ-rejecters as they **reflect upon** this final **warning** which they so callously despised. *R. C. J.*

EXTRACTS

From Birkenhead. —The **significance** of the **Lord's** lowly **entry** into Jerusalem was **not** understood by the disciples **but** when **Jesus** was glorified they **remembered** that **it was** written. The Pharisees previously were **seeking** to kill both the **Lord and Lazarus**, **and they are now** further **impressed** with the **effect** of the miracle upon the people, "**Ye** prevail nothing: lo, the world **is gone after Him**".

A prophecy concerning His death (the **seed** falling into the ground) is followed by exhortation to disciples to follow Him, **even** if it **means** persecution **and** death; **yet** there will be triumph, **as in** His resurrection (verses 20-26).

Verse 27 emphasizes the **reality** of the **Lord's** physical **suffering** [3]. There was **no question of an outward appearance to deceive** men. He sought deliverance although **submitting** Himself to the will of God. **Verse 32 contains** a further prophecy concerning His death. What is the **true meaning** of "I will **draw all men unto myself**" ? [4].

Verse 35, the **Lord Jesus speaks of** Himself as the Light. This seems almost peculiar to John's Gospel where it is introduced in the first chapter. Verses **44-50** emphasize the **Lord's** close **association** with His Father in all His earthly **ministry**. He was the **perfect Servant** revealing His Father's will to men. *R. L. Sands, R. D. Williams*

From Derby. —The **common** people were glad to see Jesus and no doubt in those **days** they were **free** to leave their daily tasks to see Him. The **resurrection of Lazarus was an embarrassment** to the chief **priests** **and** they thought their problems might be solved if they killed him.

The palm branches showed the **respect** of the **poor** people. If ever there was a **time** when the **Lord Jesus** could have **taken** the throne of Israel it was then. However humbly **and** lowly He **made** His **entrance into** Jerusalem, still His power over His **creatures** is **seen**, for He **sat serene** on an unbroken colt. The Pharisees were **very** despondent when they saw the following **Jesus** had. The Lord was troubled **because** He knew that He would **bear sin for every man**, when the **communion between** Himself **and** His Father would be broken.

A. K. Smith, G. W. Conway

From Birmingham. —The views held by the people **and** the rulers about the **Lord** varied widely, **as** widely perhaps as their status. We **consider** the attitude of the rulers generally to have **been** in accordance with the indictment of **verse 43**: "**For** they loved the glory of men **more** than the glory of God". Their **position of** authority **and** the place they occupied **gained** for them a certain **adulation** **and** glory. **Blinded** as they

were by pomp and pride, the Lord seemed to them far removed from what they thought He should be. However, many even of the rulers did believe, but did not confess it. The common people, impressed by the mighty acts and words of the Lord, seemed ready to accept His claims. Were not the rulers the instigators of all the persecution against the Lord Jesus? As we think of the dreadful climax, "Away with Him", were not the people swayed by the rulers? It is amazing that the chief priests would have put to death the man who was so miraculously raised, Lazarus.

There seems a special significance in the actions and words of the Lord due to the imminence of the Cross. Riding into Jerusalem on an ass's colt might have had a voice for many, for they cried out, "Hosanna: Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel". His ministry (verse 24) foretold His coming death at Calvary, and His words, addressed to Andrew and Philip, "He that loveth his life loseth it" (verse 25), was a shaft of light that should have penetrated the darkness of the rulers' hearts. *H. Smith*

From Melbourne, Victoria. —The raising of Lazarus from among the dead caused the common people to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ (11. 45, 12. 11). Their excitement reached a peak when, following upon the restoration of sight to the man who was born blind, Lazarus was raised from the dead. So they flocked to meet Him as He was about to enter Jerusalem and, taking branches, they cried, "Hosanna: Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel". Thus they were now in such a state of mind that they would have made Him their king.

The effect of this miracle on the leaders of Israel was to cause them to realize the temper of the common people and it brought them to the final decision that unless they acted now, the position as far as they were concerned would get out of hand, and the One they despised would be exalted by the common people.

The crisis developed swiftly after the raising of Lazarus. This was the final action which brought the chief priests to the irrevocable decision that the Lord must die. From now on they were fully committed. The murder of Lazarus was also included in their plans, as the common people flocked to see him, an object lesson of the almighty power of the despised One. We do not read if they ever carried out their plot to kill Lazarus. *P. W. A.*

From Denmark Hill, London. —The Lord was very conscious of the near ordeal of the Cross, which took place at the end of this very week. Seven aspects of His ministry are detected which have a strong bearing on the Cross, although His listeners, even the disciples, did not appreciate the meaning of the words at that time. They are: "Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die . . ." (verse 24); "What shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour" (verse 27); "Now shall the prince of this world be cast out" (verse 31); "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men . . ." (verse 32); "Yet a little is the Light among you" (verse 35); "This hour" (verse 27); and "The hour is come, that the Son of Man should be glorified" (verse 23).

We might **discuss** the **aspects** of Calvary which are involved in these **seven statements**, and note at **once** the **great** variety of the **concepts** which are involved in that one complex event. In the **same vein**, His references to the light are most instructive. He knew how soon the light would be, in one sense, put out, and yet, in another sense, a light would be lit (verses 35, 46).

The quotations from Isaiah are fascinating, in that one is from chapter 6 and the other from chapter 53, which the critics have said are by different writers. The Lord Jesus assures us they were both by Isaiah. The Dead Sea Scrolls also testify to this, *C. L. Prasher*

From Kilmarnock. —The thought was expressed that the common people mentioned in verses 9 and the multitude in 12 were different. Verse 9 refers to those who came to Bethany because of the raising of Lazarus, whereas those in verse 12 had come to the feast at Jerusalem. While the people welcomed the Son of David, the Pharisees watched in consternation as the multitude poured through the city gates. "Lo, the whole world is gone after Him" was their envious exclamation.

The request of the Greeks reminded us of the Syrophoenician woman and how the Lord dealt with her. Likewise the Lord's answer to the Greeks, although He did not grant them an interview, is full and complete [5]. The death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus is aptly set forth in the analogy of the grain of wheat (verse 24). The great work of the Cross would be accomplished by which God and the Son would be fully glorified. He directs the minds of the hearers to the view of Himself lifted up from the earth on behalf of Jew and Gentile (verse 32). How abundant will be the fruit of His sowing in death!

The Lord Jesus had many disciples but some were secret ones who, lacking in moral courage, preferred the glory of men to the glory of God. Yet some, like the ruler Nicodemus, would one day acknowledge publicly His glory.

The closing verses of John 12 mark the close of the Lord's public ministry, the next chapter deals with His ministry to His own. The words of the Lord Jesus concern man's well-being in eternity.

J. C. Watt

From Southport. —The events of John 12 fall within the last week of the Lord's earthly ministry. For some three years He had moved about Palestine dispensing kindness on every hand and teaching the true principles of heavenly rule. He had raised a man whose death was beyond dispute and this had reached the ears of the chief priests who realized that the evidence could not be denied or the miracle attributed to the power of Beelzebub. They saw the possibility of Roman intervention leading to the abolition of religious liberty and loss of political status. So the chief priests and Pharisees gathered in council and determined not only to bring about the death of Jesus but the death of Lazarus also (verse 10). The triumphal entry into Jerusalem created further dependency among the rulers. They felt the "world had gone after Him", blamed the failure of their plans on each other, and prepared themselves to accept the counsel of Caiaphas who had earlier indicated that one Man should die that the whole nation perish not.

L. Jones

From Liverpool. —The rulers and those who like them **refused** to believe **acted** similarly to Pharaoh, who resisted the will of God when confronted by evidence of His power. **God's** action was the same in **both** cases; He **hardened** the hearts of those who had hardened their own hearts **against** Him, and **confirmed** and **made** permanent the **act** of their wills **by an act** of His own will (verses 39, 40).

The primary purpose of the Lord's ministry in this passage was to prepare His disciples for His approaching death, and to point out to His hearers the immutable purposes of His earthly existence. It seems likely that the **Greeks** of verse 20 heard this address, although they are not specially mentioned as being present. Although the **Son** was **subject** to the Father **even in the words** He spoke (verse 49), yet He was still fully divine, able to **give** eternal life (10. 28). The Lord also told His hearers of His **future** position; the Word which was the Light of life would in **future** reveal and **condemn** sin, in the last day. It was **suggested** that verses 35-36 (first part) together with **verses 44-50** might be one continuous address, verses 36 (second part)—43 being John's **comments** on the unbelief of the hearers, not necessarily in chronological order [6].

P. L. Hickling

From Vancouver, B. C. —The rulers had held the people in their clutches, but the **Lord Jesus** was undermining their authority **because** the people were **attracted** to His love and grace **instead** of to their law. This was a **severe** blow to their pride. **But** there was a minority **among** the rulers who believed on Him secretly. There is always the temptation to those who acquire secular power first and then try to turn and live a godly life, to love the glory of **men** rather than the glory of God.

The common people were looking for the Messiah perhaps more than were the rulers. To them **Jesus** seemed to be the Messiah. They thought He offered them happiness and freedom and so they followed Him to rid themselves of the binding laws of the rulers. But in the crowd there were those who **came** to see Lazarus as the example of **Jesus'** power rather than to see Jesus. During the triumphal entry there were **many** caught up by the mob **excitement**. On the surface it **seemed** that the **common** people were in conflict with the rulers, but in **reality** there were **few** who would carry the conflict through. The rest could easily be aroused **again** by the rulers at their will (see Comment [1]).

7. Bell, Jr., J. Pope

From Glasgow (Parkhead). —It is a **sad indictment** of human nature that **men** who could cry "Hosanna: Blessed is He that cometh in the **name** of the Lord, **even** the King of Israel" at the beginning of the week could irrevocably reject Him at the **end** of it by saying, "Away with Him", "Crucify Him", "We will not have this **Man** to reign over us" [7], "We have **no** king **but** Caesar", and "His blood be on us, and on our children". It was **suggested** that we **must** make a reservation in our **judgement** of the **men** who cried "Hosanna to the Son of David". There would be a **steady** influx of Jews throughout the week from every nation under heaven, as at Pentecost (Acts 2), into the **city** for the celebration of the Passover, and it was these Jews who had only heard of the **fame** of the Lord **Jesus** but had **not** seen His mighty acts, together with the priests and Pharisees, who **turned** the hearts of the people away from Christ. **Left** to themselves the home-born Jews might have remained constant in their **desire** to make Him king [8],

For the Lord's ministry to have lasted three years there must have been four Passovers. The Lord's ministry began with the Passover of John 2. 13 and ended with the Passover recorded in chapters 12—19. One other Passover is mentioned in 6. 4 and there is one not mentioned. Editors have stated in *Bible Studies* that there were only three Passovers during the Lord's ministry which would make it of only two years' duration [9]. J. *Peddie*

From Portslade. —The death and raising up of Lazarus had a great bearing on the attitude of both people and rulers. This was a sign such as they were continually looking for (John 6. 2). The multitudes were easily led. We compared their attitude in verses 12-13 with their different attitude in the circumstances of the crucifixion as Psalm 69 prophesied. The rulers were concerned lest their position would be compromised and their power diminished. They were also lovers of the glory of men, and even when the Spirit of God had worked in the hearts of some of them, these would not admit it to others.

We were impressed by the answer of the Lord Jesus to the request of the Greeks to see Jesus. We concluded that this answer was given in view of the new covenant which was to be ratified by His own blood in the near future.

We also noted the trouble in the soul of the Lord Jesus (verse 27). He would appreciate the awful events which would befall Him at the Cross, consequently He could pray to His Father, "If it be possible, let this cup pass away from Me". But He knew that He came to suffer.

W. Townsend, D. Hansen

From Glasgow (Govan and Parfick). —The Pharisees looked for respect and esteem from the common people, they sought the glory of men, whereas the common people's esteem for a person depended on what the person could do for them; their affection had no real depth. This explains the conflict of views of the multitude spoken of in John 12.

The word "therefore" is repeated throughout the chapter, in connexion with actions by various people mentioned, as if to signify that a great plan was being unfolded, as we know it was, but at the same time giving a hint of finality. The words spoken by Jesus in verses 27-31 show us that His end was foremost in His mind, and the word "now" in verse 31 shows how soon this would be.

The last part of the chapter refers us to a future day when God will judge the world on His appointed day by the Man whom He has ordained.

Ernest McKee

COMMENTS

[1] **Methill.** —Care is needed in analysing the attitude of various groups of people in Israel at this juncture of the Lord's experience. It is highly improbable that those who cried "Away with Him" before the Roman praetorium were the same people who acclaimed Him as "Son of David" during His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. The evidence rather points to a consistent sympathy with the Lord Jesus by a great number of the populace but to their surprise He was escorted

out of Jerusalem **under Roman guard** for execution (Luke 23. 27-31). The chief priests had **been at pains to arrest the Lord** in midnight **secrecy and** hustle forward the legal formalities **to ensure** that the sentence was carried out early in the **day** before the general populace could appreciate what was happening. (See Matthew 21. 46 which relates to this **same** late epoch of the Lord's ministry.) It is evident that they also persuaded and stirred up the multitude gathered **before** Pilate's palace, urging them to choose **Barabbas** rather than Jesus. Unscrupulous **men** employ unscrupulous means, **and Annas and Caiaphas** were **astute** enough **to gather a crowd** which they could manipulate **to their own purpose** that day. *G. P. Jr.*

[2] **Aberkenfig and Barry.** — Nebuchadnezzar, when **an unbeliever**, heard the voice of God clearly (Daniel 4. 31). Cain **and Balaam** in their rebellion heard God speaking to them. **In** John 12. 29, most of the people present **do not seem to have been able to distinguish the words.** They sounded **to them like thunder, but they must** have appreciated that it was the voice of **God for** otherwise there would not **have been the benefit referred to by the Lord in verse 30.** *L. B.*

[3] **Birkenhead.** —The troubling of the Lord's soul in anticipation of Calvary **may include a reference** to the reality of His physical sufferings, **but would extend** also to the fearful spiritual implications of His crosswork. *G. P. Jr.*

[4] **Birkenhead.** —Verse 32 should **be interpreted in** relation to the context of the paragraph, which opens with the enquiry of certain **Greeks.** This **gives rise** to the Lord's remarkable reflections on the outcome of His death, now so imminent. **Verse 32** therefore points to the drawing of all types of **men** (e. g. **Greeks as well as Jews**) to the Christ of Calvary. *G. P. Jr.*

[5] **Kilmarnock.** —Incidents described in the Gospels **may** only include selected details **and we suggest** that although **an interview** between the **Greeks and** the Lord is not **stated, it is implied.** The words, "**And Jesus answereth them**" were spoken to Andrew **and Philip, and could well refer to the Greeks,** who would probably have followed Philip **and Andrew to the Lord.** *L. B.*

[6] **Liverpool.** —The latter part of **verse 36** together with **verse 44** **make** it clear that **Jesus** had gone away, **but on coming back again** **made a public address quite** distinct from the discussion recorded in **verses 29-36.** *L. B.*

[7] **Glasgow (Parkhead).** —Although often "**quoted**" as applying to the Lord, "We will not have this **man to reign over us**" was **in fact** spoken **by the citizens** who hated the nobleman **in the parable** (Luke 19. 14 A. V.). The **same** attitude was displayed **by the Jews to the Lord** **but there is no record of them using the words** quoted. *L. B.*

[8] **Glasgow (Parkhead).** —The suggestion that it was **visiting Jews** who **influenced** indigenous Jews against the Lord is **an interesting proposition, but it would be difficult to demonstrate its truth.** As pointed out in Comment [1], it **seems** much more likely that those who acclaimed the Lord were not among those who **asked** for His condemnation. It is also more probable that the chief priests would recruit a multitude of indigenous Jews to impress Pilate. *G. P. Jr.*

[9] **Glasgow (Parkhead)**. —See *Bible Studies*, Editorial August, 1967 where, in the second paragraph, carefully chosen words are used with this very problem in view: "Three passovers are *mentioned* (2. 13, 6. 4, 11. 55), *giving some indication* of the length of the Lord's ministry". No precise conclusion on the subject can be drawn from the information given in the Gospels except that the period must have exceeded two years. Some commentators point to evidence of a fourth Passover, but conjecture enters a good deal into the matter. We do not think it would have been impossible for the divine purpose in the Lord's ministry to have been fulfilled in two years. This may be an interesting question for further discussion **if** other contributors wish to pursue it. *L. B.*

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Question from Derby. —Are we right in thinking that being a son of light (verse 36) is the same as being a son of God?

Answer. —Here, as in many other places in Scripture, the word "son" is used metaphorically to express an outstanding attribute of the person in view (See Luke 10. 6, 16. 8; Ephesians 2. 2). Undoubtedly a son of light would also be a child of God (1 Thessalonians 5. 5) but in order to derive maximum benefit from the study of these expressions, attention ought rather to be concentrated on the particular characteristic mentioned in each case. *L. B.*

Question from Kilmarnock. —John 12. 40, does this refer to fore-ordination?

Answer. —It is suggested that the process described here is the same as that explained by Paul (Romans 1. 18-32). A man rejects God, following which God gives man up to reap the harvest of his own choice. Fore-ordination is not particularly in view here. *L. B.*

NOTES ON THE PSALMS

PSALM 55

Here is another *MASCHIL* of David on stringed instruments.

Give ear to my prayer, O God;
And hide not Thyself from my supplication.
Attend unto me, and answer me:
I am restless in my complaint, and moan; (verses 1, 2).

This psalm, though it has no heading, was written I judge, because of verses 13 and 14, where David's counsellor Ahithophel is referred to, subsequent to the revolt of Absalom against his father, when Ahithophel joined with Absalom. I notice that reference is made in the R. V. margin to 2 Samuel 15. 12 and 16. 23, and also to Psalm 41. 9, so that it has been the mind of others that the Absalom revolt lies behind the words of this psalm.

One can understand that David in his prayer asks God not to hide Himself from his supplication. He sought an answer, for he was restless. The A. V. gives "mourn". Dr. Young gives "rule", and the Hebrew word used is *Rud* which is found in Hosea 11. 12, "Judah yet ruleth with God". This Hebrew word is used only four times in the Old Testament and is rendered once to "be lord", once "rule", once "have the dominion", and once "mourn" in the A. V. But "rule" does not seem to fit into what David is saying to God. We can understand his being restless or mourning in the circumstances in which he was or mourning in his complaint and moaning or making a noise, as the A. V. puts it.

Because of the voice of the enemy,
Because of the oppression of the wicked;
For they cast iniquity upon me,
And in anger they persecute me. (verse 3)

We can understand David's great trouble as he thinks of the leaders of Israel supporting Absalom. In fact the entire twelve tribes, including Judah, his own tribe, were joined together against him. He speaks of the voice of the enemy, the oppression of the wicked, of their casting iniquity upon him, and of in anger persecuting him. There must have been many among the tribes who said many things against David. The whole rising by the tribes against David, who had done so much for them in the past, would be quite incomprehensible but for the words of the LORD through Nathan, that He would raise up evil against him in his own house, and that the very thing the LORD said would happen did happen (2 Samuel 12. 11, 12; 16. 22).

My heart is sore pained within me:
And the terrors of death are fallen upon me.
Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me,
And horror hath overwhelmed me. (verses 4, 5)

David here expresses his feelings occasioned by what he knew would befall him, his servants and the city of Jerusalem, in view of the fact that the men of Israel were after Absalom. He said to his servants, "Arise, and let us flee; for else none of us shall escape from Absalom: make speed to depart, lest he overtake us quickly, and bring down evil upon us, and smite the city with the edge of the sword" (2 Samuel 15. 13, 14). No wonder his heart was pained, for it was his own son who had risen up against him and sought his life. The terrors of death were truly upon him, and also fearfulness and trembling, and horror overwhelmed ("covered", A. V. marg.) him.

{to be continued D. V. }

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BIBLE STUDIES

"Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so" (Acts 17. 11).

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EDITORIAL

Marked differences between the fourth Gospel and the other three have been noted on several occasions in our recent studies. In this month's subject it is remarkable that whilst chapter 13, with scarcely any reference to the attendant circumstances, records how! the Lord began His long discourse with the apostles after humbling Himself to wash their feet, this act, and the major part of what He subsequently said, are not mentioned elsewhere. Conversely the institution of the Remembrance, dealt with in Matthew, Mark and Luke, is not mentioned at all by John. It has however, been suggested that verse 34 is an allusion to the Breaking of the Bread, the "new commandment" being, not "love one another", but inferentially, "This do . . . in remembrance of Me" (1 Corinthians 11. 25). This proposition can only be sustained on the basis that the words, "that ye love one another" do not constitute a commandment but describe the result of keeping one, as if the phrase read, "in order that ye love one another". But it is significant that all the well-known translations of the New Testament follow the wording of the Revised and Authorized Versions, giving the natural sense that we are commanded by the Lord to love one another. Whereas the old commandment was, "Love thy neighbour as thyself" the new commandment is, "Even as I have loved you, . . . ye also love one another".

Some scholars have attempted to formulate theories to explain the different form and content of John's Gospel, but we do not need to look beyond the verses which have often been quoted by contributors, John 20. 30, 31 to see that John's material is selected and arranged for the purpose stated in these verses. We can be quite certain that there are no contradictions between the different scriptural accounts of the Lord's life and sayings and we can be confident that John does not present a view of the Lord's character which conflicts with the remainder of Scripture. There may be difficulties in reconciling certain details, particularly in relation to the events connected with the crucifixion, but these are due to our imperfect knowledge, not to any real discrepancy in the accounts. We may have an opportunity of looking at some of these problems in later issues and suggesting possible solutions.

L. B.

STUDIES IN THE CLOSING PHASE OF THE GOSPEL BY JOHN JOHN 12. 1-8, 13. 1-38

THE BETHANY SUPPER AND THE LAST SUPPER

From Denmark Hill. —Judas Iscariot is one of the complex characters of Scripture. He is mentioned most in connexion with the betrayal of the Lord, and his actions pervade this passage. His character and motives contrast with those of the Lord and His disciples. Judas complained (12. 4-8) of the waste of the ointment **and John** comments **that** the complaint stemmed from his personal greed. Contrast here the value placed on service for the Lord by Mary, Judas and the Lord Himself. Judas had a privileged position. He was an apostle, chosen by the Lord (a) that he might be with the Lord, (b) that he might preach and (c) to have authority to cast out demons (Mark 3. 13-19). There is no reason to think that Judas was in any way less active than the other eleven. It is quite clear, however, that Jesus knew from the outset that Judas would betray Him (John 6. 64, 70, 71). The choice of him as an apostle was not a mistake, but was part of God's purpose.

Between the events of chapter 12. 8 and 13. 1, Judas went to the chief priests and offered his services, for money, as their agent in delivering Jesus to them in a discreet way that would not outrage the people (Luke 22. 3-6). Luke explains Judas' action by saying, "Satan entered into Judas"; John's comments are, "The devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot... to betray Him", and "then entered Satan into him" (13. 2, 27).

Judas shared in all that happened in the upper room. His feet were washed by the Lord, he took the broken bread and the poured cup, but his thoughts must have been very different from those of the other apostles, bringing to mind 1 Corinthians 11. 27 [1]. Contrast here the thoughts and words of the Lord with those of Judas who must have been preoccupied with his bargain with the chief priests. Although Judas was present in the upper room, Jesus made it clear that he is excluded from His remarks to the other apostles (13. 10, 11, 18). There followed the conversation in which the betrayal was mentioned, the Lord disclosing, in effect, the betrayer (verses 21-26). Yet Peter, impulsive by nature, took no action against Judas; not even his precipitate exit nor Jesus* comment on it aroused in him or the other apostles any suspicion of what was shortly to happen. The entire passage presents a contrast between the Lord Jesus, whose thoughts and actions were always for others, and Judas who sought his own. *A. C. Bishop*

From Kilmarnock. —Martha was engaged in serving the Lord but she was not troubled by it as in Luke 10. 40; it was not an irksome duty. So we should serve Him willingly, in assembly activities and in our daily lives, thinking of the exhortation of 1 John 5. 3. The part played by Lazarus reminded us of quiet times we should spend in communion with our Lord, giving us help for service and worship. Mary chose the good part as she sat at the Lord's feet (Luke 10. 42). We do not know how often she sat there, but her love for the Lord grew and was expressed in the anointing. We should value our near place in churches of God, being able to worship God in spirit and in truth through His Son.

Before supper (Passover) the devil was working in the heart of Judas (verse 2) who had already plotted with the rulers to betray the Lord (Luke 22. 3-6). The Lord knew who would betray Him, but Judas was not tempted of God (James 1. 13-15). We should seek the Lord's help in our fight against the evil one, not being self-centred like Judas but thinking of our Lord.

No doubt Peter greatly loved his Lord, but his actions in connexion with the washing of the disciples' feet would remind us that we should accept what God puts before us and not add to or try to change what He has said. In chapter 13 the Lord teaches His disciples some wonderful lessons. He firstly emphasizes the washing of regeneration, "Ye are clean, but not all", and we were reminded of Titus 3. 5. Secondly the washing reminded us of daily cleansing by confessing our sins to God (1 John 1. 7-9). What a lesson in humility is shown by their Lord and Master! Perhaps Peter thought of the Lord's humility when he wrote his epistle (1 Peter 5. 5). So we should gird ourselves with humility and **serve** one another.

Ian T. Meek

From Birmingham.—"Martha served". It was a privilege to wait on the Lord who connected service with following Him and being honoured by His Father (12. 26). Lazarus, raised from the dead, now reunited with his loved ones sat with the Lord. How close Lazarus was to the Lord as they sat eating and drinking at the same table! Mary anointed the Lord. With her heart full of praise and gratitude she expressed her feelings, using her hands and her hair.

Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, was so concerned with material gain that he never saw the true worth of the One he had followed. May we have Spirit-enlightened eyes to see the beauty and value of the despised Nazarene!

Simon Peter was a very sincere disciple. In this portion he questioned what the Lord did and said. The Lord queried what Peter was prepared to sacrifice for Him. Washing is the Lord's work (13. 8). As we considered that all the disciples' feet were washed, including those of Judas, we wondered whether it was anything else but Palestine dust that the Lord washed off their feet [2]. The thought was expressed that feet have to do with walk and that washing one another's feet is to help one another **in** our spiritual walk.

R. B. Janes

EXTRACTS

Aberkenfig and Barry.—The humility of the Lord is demonstrated in chapter 13 when He stooped down to wash the disciples' feet, reminding us of the words of 1 Peter 2. 21, "Leaving you an example, that ye should follow His steps". We are also taught to have a concern one for another, being servants one of another, having thought for one another, provoking one another unto love and good works.

In this incident the Lord also takes His disciples back in thought to Leviticus 8. 6, revealing the precious truth that when we are born again we are bathed, and need afterwards, as did Aaron and his sons, only wash our hands and feet daily at the laver (2 Corinthians 7. 1).

The Lord here reminds His disciples that a servant is not greater than his Lord; but He does not say he is lower, although we would recognize this fact. This does show that He is pleased to use servants, but they need to be humble-minded, remembering the words, "Ye did not choose Me, but I chose you". It is not, "Blessed are ye if ye know these things", but "Blessed are ye if ye do them". In service there is a wide scope and many of the humbler tasks require attention. The Psalmist could say, "I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness".

D. H. Butler, J. Butler

From Glasgow, (Parkhead). —A comparison of Matthew 26. 6-11 and Mark 14. 3-8 with John 12. 1-8 would lead one to understand that the "last supper" of Bethany was held in the house of Simon the Leper [see answers to question from Kilmarnock] where Martha, as ever, served whilst Mary reserved her attentions for the Lord Himself. From the three passages it would appear that her precious ointment was poured over His head and His feet, Mary wiping the latter with her hair. To the disciples, Judas especially, this was a waste of precious ointment whose value might have been realized and put to other uses. They apparently shared the mercenary feelings of Judas rather than the spiritual feelings of Mary, whose act brought the Lord's commendation of her, but not of them. Judas' ever-present love of money was to be his downfall. Had the other disciples realized that the Lord would never be back in Bethany they might have better understood Mary's act [3]. Whether she realized its full significance may be doubted; the Lord, however, gave her full credit. His words of gratitude were ample compensation for the reproach of the disciples.

The "last supper" of Jerusalem was held in a guest chamber, a large upper room simply furnished, with only the Lord and His disciples present. It is strange to us that the writer John makes no mention of the Remembrance. Perhaps from this omission we may learn that the feet-washing and the betrayal are to be seen, in the light of Calvary, as evidence that Jesus is the Son of God so that, believing, we may have life in His name.

J. J. P.

From Edinburgh. —The action of Mary was one of pure love and devotion to her Lord. How long had it taken her to accumulate this precious ointment worth three hundred pence? The labourers of Matthew 20. 2 had agreed to work for one penny per day, so we could say that Mary's sacrifice in money terms represented a labourer's wage for a year. In Matthew 26. 8 the disciples called this act a waste, but the Lord recognized its worth; she had spent it on the Lord. Normally servants would wash the feet *before* a meal, but we read that Jesus "riseth from supper". Some suggested that the Lord in washing the disciples' feet simply lent a special significance to the act. Others suggested that there were no servants present to wash their feet and because of the contention as to who was the greatest among them (Luke 22. 24), none of the disciples was prepared to take the lower place and wash the others' feet. Whatever the reason, the Lord girded Himself with a towel and took the place of a Servant.

There was no need for Peter to be "bathed", he had already been saved "through the washing of regeneration" (Titus 3. 5). However he did require his feet to be washed to cleanse him from the everyday

defilement of the way. In Leviticus 8. 6 we read that Moses washed or bathed Aaron and his sons. This was a once for all action never to be repeated, whereas, when they went into the tent of meeting, Aaron and his sons had to wash their hands and feet, an act which was repeated many times.

L. Burgoyne

From Birkenhead.—It is remarkable how much we are told in John's Gospel of the events of one night in the Lord's life, the night of His betrayal. His actions and words on that night bring out clearly the truth of His dual nature. When "the Word became flesh" He did not cease to be God. He took human nature into His divine nature and His incarnation in no way affected His Deity. When on earth He had a human body, a human soul and a human spirit. In His actions He was manifesting His divine nature through human activities. So, in the washing of the disciples' feet, it was no effort for Him to undertake such a lowly task. He did not regard it as an indignity and He did it unaffectedly. What He did was the outcome of what He was.

The Lord's knowledge of men and all things was perfect. He knew exactly when He was to return to His Father (13. 1); He knew all about Judas, but He did not reveal this to the other disciples; and He knew, even as He stooped to wash their feet, that one of them would betray Him. His love for the disciples was also perfect (verse 1). "Unto the end", we judge, means "to the utmost" and does not refer to any limited period of time. His love for the disciples and His desire to see them united in service to Himself and to each other led Him to wash their feet.

R. L. S.

From Melbourne.—In Martha we see a woman who loved the Lord Jesus Christ, and whose special service was to meet the material needs of her divine Visitor. Of the two sisters, Martha seemed to take the lead. Perhaps she was the elder; for she was first to meet the Lord when He came to raise Lazarus. At the supper (12. 1-8) there was perfect harmony in the Bethany family, and it is noted that Martha served; truly a great commendation.

In Mary we see one who learned at Jesus' feet. She understood more of what lay before her Lord than did most of the other disciples. It is recorded that Mary sat at Jesus' feet (Luke 10. 39); fell at His feet (John 11. 32); and here she anoints and wipes His feet (John 12. 3). Lazarus was an object lesson to all of the power of the Lord Jesus in raising him from among the dead. His life was in jeopardy because of this.

It was suggested that in the lives of these three persons can be seen the truth of Philippians 3. 10. Paul strives that "I may know Him" (the Martha experience) "and the power of His resurrection" (the Lazarus experience) "and the fellowship of His sufferings" (the Mary experience).

P. W. A.

From Methil.—We concluded that the Bethany supper was in the house of Simon the leper (Matthew 26. 6) [see answers to question from Kilmarnock]. Mary, the sister of Martha, anointed the feet of Jesus; concerning this very precious action the Lord said, "she did it to prepare Me for burial" (Matthew 26. 12). Did she ever go to the tomb? We think not. She probably had a knowledge beyond the others concerning the Lord's death (see Comment [4]).

Judas Iscariot was not clean. Unlike the other eleven disciples he had not bathed, he had not been born again. He was not saved through the washing of regeneration (Titus 3. 5). Judas was indeed a fit tool for Satan's use. In saying this we in no way exonerate him, he was a person entirely responsible for his own actions, a thief, an unclean person, and a man whose name will always be linked with the betrayal of the Lord Jesus. Judas Iscariot's destiny was determined by himself, having hanged himself. We are told in Acts 1. 25 that Judas fell away that he might go to his own place.

Neville Coomer

From Hamilton. —The miracle which Christ performed is recalled to mind as we see Lazarus, the restored to, and Christ, the Giver of life, sitting down together at meat. The heart of Lazarus must have overflowed with love towards the One who had made it possible for him to be present, a picture of the gratitude which will flow from redeemed hearts throughout eternity towards the One who has brought us from death unto life to share eternal glory with Him.

For teaching to be effective it must be supported by example (13. 14). Christ was the greatest exponent of this type of ministry (Acts 1. 1), and consequently it had a lasting effect upon the lives and hearts of the disciples. He exhorts them in verse 17 that their knowledge might be made manifest in action which is reflected by the words in James 1. 22: "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only*".

We understand that the giving of the sop (verse 26) was and still is a custom by which the host extended honour to a guest. To the last Judas accepted the kindness of the Lord without misgiving although his heart was rilled with evil toward Him. The evil in Judas serves to emphasize the eternal love of Christ. "After the sop, then entered Satan into him", and he went out into the night to commit one of the darkest deeds in history, that of betraying the Son of God.

As Christ had given to His disciples the great example of love, so He exhorted them to love one another, that men might be able to see Christ in them (13. 34, 35).

A. R. F.

From Macduff. —The two feasts were alike and yet so different. In Bethany the feast was prepared by those who loved Him. He was the Guest of honour. "They made Him a supper" (12. 2). It was no trouble to serve the One who had done so much for them. All the usual preparations had been made. Martha served and Lazarus sat with Him. Martha and Mary served in different spheres. This is surely a lesson in values; both types of service are necessary.

In verse 3 we have the lovely story of Mary anointing the feet of the Lord. It was, of course, the common procedure to wash the feet of a guest, but surely no other guest had his feet treated in such a manner. We see the Lord in an atmosphere where He was loved and respected. When Judas questioned the cost "because he was a thief" (verse 6), the Lord explained that Mary did this against His burial. Did she know this, or was she led by the Spirit? [4].

The Lord Jesus spoke of His betrayal (13. 21), and His disciples were so blind in unbelief that they could not understand. Then Satan entered into Judas (verse 27) showing us how powerful he is and the damage he can do. "It was night" (verse 30); darkness and evil are

always linked together. Perhaps it would be true to say that man himself could never have devised such a wicked plan as to deliver the Christ into the hands of murderers.

J. M. W.

From Liverpool. —Service for Christ is akin to worship being illustrated in what Mary did in pouring the ointment upon His feet and wiping them with her hair. Worship is the highest form of service, and should cost the worshipper something; the ointment was very costly. This act resulted in the house being filled with the odour of the ointment. We wondered how many times an anointing such as this took place [5]. We see that the Lord notices the little things that people do, and longs for those who will serve Him.

Which of the disciples was prepared to wash the feet of his fellows? This required a measure of humility that was apparently lacking, and so their Master and Lord taught this lesson. Overseers should be servants of all, humble enough to do service for others and for the Lord's sake. The washing of a saint's feet in the spiritual sense is a gracious correcting by one of another, and requires a great measure of grace and spirituality. No less would grace be required by the one thus needing correction, for we do not like being corrected. The Lord however commands it: "Ye also ought to wash one another's feet".

R. Harrison, A. H.

From Portslade. —It is not certain in which house the Bethany supper took place, but we noticed the difference between this incident and the one recorded in Luke 10 in which Martha was cumbered or distracted. In the spiritual sphere, as in the temporal service is necessary.

The disciples were slow to understand the teaching of the washing of the feet. Although we are clean in Christ, we still need to come to the word for day by day cleansing from the defilement of the flesh. We took warning from the life of Judas, for, although Psalm 55. 13 speaks of him as a "familiar friend", he allowed himself to be overcome by his avarice and Satan to enter into him. We should ever keep our eyes on Jesus and keep the old man in check. We noted the contrast in the characters of Judas and Peter. Judas was cool and calculating, whereas Peter was headstrong and impulsive, but with a warm nature.

D. Hansen

From Derby. —Martha served the Lord willingly. Willingness ought to be characteristic of those who know Him as Saviour. Lazarus was also there, and that he ate with them is further proof of his resurrection.

Two views were expressed as to the meaning of John 13. 20. One interpretation was that it refers to the practical receiving of a Christian, others suggested that the receiving of the Holy Spirit was in view. All were agreed that the latter portion of the verse referred to receiving the Lord Jesus and God the Father [6].

After Judas had taken the sop the devil took complete control of his actions. Simon Peter and possibly John may have understood that the Lord would be betrayed, but we do not think they realized what that involved. Simon Peter's declaration of loyalty to the Lord was soon followed by his failure. How true this so often is of us! The Lord Jesus asked him, "Wilt thou lay down thy life for Me?" Peter could not at this time, but perhaps he did later.

G. W. Conway, L. E. Faster

From Vancouver, B. C.—At the Bethany supper the Lord was served by one eager to serve. Mary gave much for the Lord. It was an individual act of doing service for the King. Martha and Lazarus show two other aspects of service, Martha in a practical way, and Lazarus by the witness of his presence.

At the Passover supper Christ is seen as the serving One and the disciples as recipients of His grace. This incident of Christ's serving shows His humility, and so these disciples were witnesses both of His honour (anointing) and humility. This humility was displayed by the washing of their feet. The disciples had already been bathed by their faith in Him, but now defilement must be taken away. Judas was an outward disciple only and so saw no necessity for being cleansed from defilement. He had hidden his real motives, being a hypocrite. Satan entered into him and he went out into the night (Again John draws a contrast between light and darkness). Christ may allow the unbeliever to continue as He did Judas, and only identify him at the very end. Jesus identified Judas as an untrue disciple by giving him the sop.

Peter was a true and devoted disciple but he could not see the necessity for Christ's humiliation in order that he could be cleansed. This incident shows us that no matter how close we are to the Lord we can still be outside the current of His will if we allow our own opinions to guide us. Peter shows unjustified self-confidence by his boast of devotion.

Chapter 13. 31, 32, mentions aspects of the Lord's glorification. Verse 31 (R. V. M.) is in the past tense, for John is looking back to the crucifixion and resurrection. Verse 32 is in the future tense and refers to Christ's position now and in the future [7]. *J. Bell Jr., J. Pope*

From Glasgow (Parfick). —Mary's bowed body betokened the attitude of her mind and heart; her actions arose out of her instructed mental attitude. Her appreciation of the Lord's purpose, so far in advance of what the other disciples understood, doubtless arose from her practice (Luke 10. 39; John 11. 2, 11. 32) of being in the disciple's true position, at the feet of the Instructor. Worship is to be with understanding (1 Corinthians 14. 15; John 4. 24) as well as in the Spirit. As the house was filled with the odour of the ointment, and all within benefitted from her action, so the Lord had pleasure and others benefitted from the behaviour of an instructed worshipper.

The avarice, hypocrisy, dishonesty and unfaithfulness of Iscariot were glaringly out of place in the upper room, as indeed these traits always are in communion. It is fitting that the son of perdition should leave before the fuller expression of communion in the institution of the Remembrance should be experienced [8]. It is of solemn importance to note that immediately the Lord offered to him the sop (John 13. 26), an action marking Iscariot as the honoured guest, and showing the Lord extending grace and love toward His betrayer, "then entered Satan into him". Iscariot had been given a last opportunity to avail himself of the Lord's offer. The "therefore" of verse 27 shows the Lord's complete mastery of the situation.

Ian Perm

From Southport. —The words of Scripture become more solemn from this point in John's Gospel. It was six days to the Passover, when the coming dread trial and crucifixion of the Lord would take place. The Lord loved that household in Bethany, but His earthly work would not permit Him to stay there, except for short periods, for every step of His path was that of the perfect Servant.

John 12. 2 depicts Martha still serving, but now without complaints about Mary, and Lazarus sitting at meat with the Lord. It was a picture of the glorious future when the Lord will be the Centre of the joy of the redeemed through all eternity.

When Mary's joy reached the highest point the moment had arrived for the use of her very precious ointment. How beautiful were those feet she anointed! The Lord will share His glory with the loved ones who serve Him. Mary has had a reward during nearly two thousand years of gospel witness; and will have a reward with the Lord in His eternal glory (Mark 14. 9).

T. Ryland

COMMENTS

[1] **Denmark Hill.** —Whether or not Judas was present at the institution of the Remembrance is a question that has been much disputed. Matthew and Mark record a conversation about the identity of the betrayer before the taking of the loaf and cup but Luke mentions a similar conversation afterwards. Matthew and Mark connect the discussion with the Lord's words, "He that dippeth with Me in the dish", Luke with the Lord's words, "The hand of him that betrayeth Me is with Me on the table", and John with the Lord dipping the sop and giving it to Judas. Since John associates the giving of the sop with the immediate departure of Judas, it may be inferred that this event took place immediately after the discussion recorded in Matthew 26. 21-25 and Mark 14. 18-21, and therefore before the institution of the Remembrance. But it could be argued that as Luke records a similar but possibly different conversation after the Last Supper, since that Gospel is a chronological account (Luke 1. 3), Judas must have been still in the upper room, and the events recorded in John 13. 21-30 fit in here.

L. B.

Too much emphasis may hardly be laid on the words "in order" (Luke 1. 3), since this does not necessarily mean an orderly sequence of detail. Some sections of Luke's gospel show evidence of groupings in a moral order rather than a chronological order. It therefore seems indicated to give greater weight to the two-fold witness of Matthew and Mark as to the actual order of events, and assume that Luke had some other reason for reversing the order. It does seem spiritually more consistent that Judas should have left the upper room before the institution of the new ordinance.

G. P. Jr.

[2] **Birmingham.** —We do not know what the physical necessity or consequences of washing the feet was, nor are we concerned. We need to pay attention to the spiritual lessons to be learned. One is the application of the Scriptures (the water of the word) to cleanse our ways. Others are dealt with in several of this month's papers.

L. B.

[3] **Parkhead.** —The supper in Bethany took place six days before the Passover and the day before the triumphal entry into Jerusalem. According to Matthew 21. 17 and Mark 11. 11, the Lord lodged in Bethany after that. *L. B.*

[4] **Macduff.** —Scripture does not afford a definite answer to this question. The apostles did not understand the Lord's clear prophecies of His death and resurrection, but Mary, with a receptive mind little affected by everyday problems, was a most likely person to understand the necessity of the crucifixion. Only the Holy Spirit could reveal this to her. *L. B.*

[5] **Liverpool.** —It is quite clear that the anointing of the Lord's feet by a sinner woman in Luke 7. 36-50 was different from the anointings described in Matthew 26, Mark 14 and John 12. It took place at an earlier phase of His ministry, and the incident was distinct in most details from the others. *G. P. Jr.*

[6] **Derby.** —"Whomsoever I send" (13. 20) are the Lord's servants sent with His words to men, who can receive or reject them. Men cannot directly of their own volition receive the Holy Spirit. He is given to, and cannot be refused by, those who are born again (Ephesians 1. 13). *L. B.*

[7] **Vancouver.** —It is helpful, when considering the term "glorified" in connexion with the Lord Jesus Christ's earthly experience, to keep in mind an aspect of His glorification which is referred to in Hebrews 2. 9: "Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour, that by the grace of God He should taste death for every man". This glory and honour was His by virtue of His perfect devotion to the Father's will, marking Him out as the only One able to undertake the work of redemption. He had been glorified in this sense, and His Father had been glorified in Him, throughout His ministry. Now as the climax of His obedience in the suffering of death was so near, the Lord could say, "And God shall glorify Him in Himself, and straightway shall He glorify Him". This remarkable statement may well embrace both the unique glorifying of the Son in His obedience unto the death of the Cross, and His afterwards being visibly glorified through resurrection or exaltation to the right hand of the Father. *G. P. Jr.*

[8] **Glasgow (Parfick).** —It is difficult to determine at what point in the proceedings in the upper room the betrayer left. Luke 22. 21 seems to suggest that it was after the institution of the Remembrance (see comment [1]), but Matthew 26. 21-25 and Mark 14. 18-21 may point to the opposite conclusion. *L. B.*

QUESTION AND ANSWER

Question from Kilmarnock. —Is the incident recorded in John 12. 1-8 the same as that in Matthew 26. 6-13 and Mark 14. 3-9?

Answers. —(a) The three records are so similar in many respects that we conclude they describe the same event. However, in Matthew 26. 6-13 and Mark 14. 3-9 we are not told the name of the woman although the householder (Simon the Leper) is named. Matthew and Mark say that the head of the Lord was anointed whereas John mentions only His feet. This difference is not necessarily evidence of two incidents, since both His head and His feet could have been anointed at the same time. This is supported by the fact that in both Matthew and Mark the Lord Himself mentions His body in connexion with the anointing. There is a chronological problem, but we take it that the records in Matthew and Mark are inserted where they are to explain what finally moved Judas to go to the chief priests.

L. B.

(b) I am inclined to the view that John 12 is a different occasion from Matthew 26 and Mark 14 for the following reasons:

(1) The supper described in John 12 was six days before the Passover (verse 1), and before the Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem on the ass's colt (12. 12-19). The supper in the house of Simon the Leper was only two days before the Passover (Matthew 26. 2; Mark 14. 1) and well after the triumphal entry (Matthew 21. 1-11; Mark 11. 1-10).

(2) Matthew and Mark mention the house of Simon the Leper, but not the presence of Lazarus and his sisters—a most remarkable omission if it were really the same incident! To read John's account without a knowledge of the supper in the house of Simon would leave a simple impression of a supper in the home of Lazarus, Martha and Mary.

(3) The *anonymous* woman of Matthew and Mark poured a cruse of exceeding precious ointment of spikenard upon His *head*, but John identifies Mary of Bethany as anointing His *feet* and wiping them with her hair.

(4) Matthew and Mark describe a general protest of indignation among the disciples in the house of Simon the Leper, but only Judas Iscariot complained in John 12.

(5) Whereas some elements of the Lord's commendation are common to both incidents, John does not record that Mary's action would be spoken of world-wide for a memorial of her.

There are great difficulties in trying to account for these differences between the two incidents and regard them as one. It is perfectly reasonable to conclude that Mary anointed His feet at a supper in her home six days before the Passover, and that four days later an unnamed woman anointed the Lord at a supper in the house of Simon the Leper.

G. P. Jr.

(c) There are admittedly chronological difficulties if we accept that the incident of John 12. 2-8 is the same as recorded in Matthew 26. 6-13 and Mark 14. 3-9, but they are capable of resolving, in a measure.

The chief difficulty arises from the statements of the time when this incident took place. Matthew 26. 2 and Mark 14. 1 seem to fix it *two days* before Passover. John 12. 1 gives the time as *six days* before. But neither Matthew nor Mark say that the supper "in Bethany" was given two days before Passover, but that the two days before Passover the following happened; —(a) Jesus predicted that He would be delivered up to be crucified after two days (Matthew 26. 1, 2), and (b) the rulers resolved that He should not be put to death at the feast (Mark 14. 1, 2). They merely state that this event took place while He was at Bethany, and that He remained there some days.

John 12. 1 gives six days before Passover as the time when He arrived in Bethany. We assume that the Lord arrived at Bethany before sunset on Friday and that He enjoyed the last Sabbath rest with His friends (Friday sunset to Saturday sunset), the very last Sabbath rest before His precious body rested in Joseph's new tomb. On that Saturday a supper was given in His honour. There remains the time difficulty of the triumphant entry into Jerusalem, which we judge took place on the Sunday after His arrival in Bethany. This entails bringing John 12. 12-19 to be in harmony with Matthew 21. 1-11 and Mark 11. 1-10 (Matthew 21. 4, 5 harmonizing with John 12. 15).

It might here be suggested that the meaning of John 12. 7 is that Mary had not sold this ointment to give the proceeds to the poor, but had kept it for the day of His burial, and she showed her devotion in anticipating His death which was indeed very near.

There are some phrases which are very similar in all three accounts: e. g., "ye have the poor always with you but Me ye have not always", and "and given to the poor". It should be noted that both Mark 14. 5 and John 12. 5 quote the exact price which might have been obtained on sale, 300 pence! Weighing all up, my opinion is that the same incident is recorded in all these accounts, one anointing at Bethany by Mary the sister of Lazarus in the home of Simon the leper on the Saturday evening before His death. *Jas. M.*

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BIBLE STUDIES

"Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so" (Acts 17. 11).

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EDITORIAL

The definition of "to prophesy", that is, to **speak** forth the counsels of God, is to edify, to comfort, and to console (1 Corinthians 14. 3). Asaph in Psalm 73. 23, 24, expressed the same thought thus: "Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel", edification; "Thou hast holden my right hand", comfort; "And afterward receive me to glory", consolation.

The English word "comfort", derivatively means "together with strength", thus indicating the outcome or result of **administering** comfort. The Greek word "*paraklesis*", mainly used in our study portion, indicates another phase of meaning, namely, "a calling to one's side", and by implication includes such meanings as "a helper, an advocate, or a comforter". The blessed Holy Spirit is thus named the Paraclete. In this age He indwells all who put their faith in Christ, and how inestimable is the comfort He ministers to those who call upon Him! The word used for "consolation" in 1 Corinthians 14. 3 is "*paramuthia*", meaning a speaking close to one, and indicates a greater degree of tenderness in the comfort administered. Surely there is "comfort in Christ" and "consolation of (the outcome of) love".

The source of all real lasting comfort is God Himself. He is "the Father of mercies and God of all comfort" (2 Corinthians 1. 3). Through Isaiah (51. 12) He declares, "I, even I, am He that comforteth you", and it is He who has the authority to say, "Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, saith your God" (40. 1).

The comfort in Christ, who is also named the Paraclete (Greek, 1 John 2. 1), was manifested in many ways by words and deeds of mercy and kindness whilst He sojourned on this earth. When the time for His return to the Father drew nigh He said to His perturbed disciples, "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another (Greek *allos*, of the same kind) Comforter, that He may be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth" (John 14. 16, 17), and "I will not leave you desolate" (John 14. 18). Thus on the day of Pentecost the Lord fulfilled His promise and sent the blessed Holy Spirit, named also the Spirit of truth, who will guide us into all the truth, who takes of the things of the Lord Jesus to minister them unto us, and brings to our remembrance what the Lord taught, and further, declares unto us the things that are to come. He glorifies the Lord Jesus. The sacred Scriptures are His treasure house, "for whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that through patience and through comfort of the Scriptures we might have hope" (Romans 15. 4). We recall in this respect the very early word in Genesis 5. 29, "He called his name Noah, saying, This same shall comfort us for our work", named in Hebrew, *nahem*, to comfort, which Mr. Vine indicates, via *menahen*, is the name given by the Hebrews to the Messiah.

There is one other avenue through which comfort can be ministered to our fellow-men. Paul reminds the Colossian church of men, his fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God, who had **been a comfort unto him** (Colossians 4. 11). The word here is interesting, "*paragoria*", which has in it the essence of soothing and solace. Vine says, "The verbal form of the word signifies medicines which allay irritation (Eng. paregoric)". We read of many such men and women in the Scriptures, of Onesiphorus, Stephanas, Fortunatus, Achaicus, and Philemon, who oft refreshed Paul; and of Paul and Silas (Acts 16. 40), of Tychicus (Colossians 4. 8) and of Timothy (1 Thessalonians 3. 2), who ministered comfort to the saints in the various churches of God. Wherefore, we, in like manner, are encouraged to comfort **one another, yea, even in the face of death, to comfort one another with the words of Scripture** (1 Thessalonians 5. 11, 4. 18).

"Now our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and God our Father which loved us and gave us *eternal* comfort and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word" (2 Thessalonians 2. 16, 17). *Jas M.*

DR. A. T. DOODSON

An Appreciation

"There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are diversities of ministrations, and the same Lord. And there are diversities of workings, but the same God, who worketh all things in all. But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit to profit withal". (1 Corinthians 12. 4-7).

This Scripture comes to mind as we put on record our sincere appreciation of the services of our dear brother, Dr. A. T. Doodson, who was called home on January 10th.

He was co-editor of *Bible Studies* from its very first number in 1933. Earlier than that he was deeply interested in *Young Men's Corner*, the forerunner of *Bible Studies*, for he fully **appreciated** the power of consistent and guided study of the Scriptures by young men. He applied his rich natural gifts to further the issue of this magazine, being the first to suggest its present title. He brought his fertile mind, guided by the Holy Spirit, and enhanced by his devotion to the Lord Jesus and love for His disciples, into the service of editing, with others, this journal. The outcome has been a regular monthly issue of treatises, discussions, criticisms and comments over a wide field of Scripture study. Co-editors freely acknowledge his wise guidance and supervision. He contributed many articles himself, for example, on the typical teaching of the Old Testament Tabernacle and on the Feasts of Jehovah.

Dr. Doodson's part in the publishing of *Bible Studies* has contributed to the forging of links of friendship between the young men of the Fellowship. He appreciated the value of these *diversities* of gifts and ministrations and of workings in others; and he was quick to note and acknowledge and encourage their further cultivation. We remember with gratitude those who have spoken unto us the word of God, and, considering the issue of their lives, we would imitate their faith.

Editors

DISCUSSION OF PROPHETIC CHARACTER IN DANIEL 11

In pursuing the exploration of Daniel 11 (see July and December issues 1967), we welcome further papers by Mr. J. L. Ferguson, and plan to publish in successive issues his four papers on the main topics proposed for discussion. The first paper is included in this issue. We would encourage other contributions to the subject, including discussion of points arising from Mr. Ferguson's papers, so that maximum benefit may be derived from interchange of thought. We would emphasize that *Bible Studies* provides the opportunity for comparing opinions and advancing arguments on this type of subject.

It is hoped to publish brethren's comments on the papers in subsequent months, and so that this may be done in an orderly way any material relating to this month's section should be sent to Mr. Martin as soon as possible. We would particularly like to hear what brethren have to say about the application of verses 20-35. Is it possible that both Antiochus Epiphanes and the antichrist are in view here? *Eds.*

DANIEL 11

(a) What part of the chapter awaits fulfilment?

The burden of Daniel 11 is described in 10. 14, in the words of the angel to Daniel, as "what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for the vision is yet for many days". It was all prophetic when it was spoken.

The vision commences with three kings in Persia, followed by a fourth who would be displaced by a mighty king of Greece, known in subsequent history as Alexander the Great. It then traces the rise and fall of successive kings of the North and of the South, finishing with the time of the end and the rise of Michael for the help of Israel in a time of trouble.

Obviously then there must be a break in the chapter somewhere. Some have seen this in verse 5, others in verse 20, others again in verse 36. Much has been written on the subject, erudite contributions by convinced scholars. The ground was also covered in *Bible Studies* in 1952, as was pointed out in the July 1967 issue. The usual differences of mind arose there also. It is most unlikely then that on this point any one solution will satisfy all.

Dr. Tregelles preferred to make the break in verse 5. It is doubtful to what extent his view would find general support today and there seems no point in pursuing it.

Mr. J. Miller has expressed the opinion held by some in the Fellowship that the break is between verses 19 and 20. He views the king of the North in verse 20 as the seventh head of the beast of Revelation 17. 10 and verse 21 to the end of the chapter as describing the antichrist. This view has the advantage of removing any doubt as to who the king of verse 36 may be, and from the point of view of an unbroken narrative from verse 21 onwards this interpretation of the position is not without internal support.

Generally speaking, the main weight of exposition makes no break in the chapter till verse 36, although at that point there is a sharp divergence of opinion as to who the king of that verse is. In support of this view it should be noted that the historical records which all acknowledge as fitting perfectly into the prophetic outline down to verse 19, continue to fit equally well into the picture of the two kings foreseen in verse 20 and in verses 21 to 32. Nor is there any indication in verse 19 that a break till the end-time is in view. In fact the king of verse 20 stands up in the stead of the king of the previous verse, indicating immediate succession as in verses 7 and 21. There would appear then to be no reason why the chapter should not be uniformly regarded as historically fulfilled from verse 2 to verse 32, in which latter verse the Maccabees may well be seen as doing exploits in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes. This is further supported by the view that verses 33 to 35 picture the afflictions of Israel down the intervening centuries, "even to the time of the end".

In connexion with L. A. W's. comments in the December 1967 issue on "the abomination that maketh desolate" reference may be made with profit to Josephus' Antiquities of the Jews, Book XII, Chap. V for a study of the close correspondence in history with this particular prophecy. He writes, "And when the king (that is Antiochus Epiphanes) had built an altar upon God's altar, he slew swine upon it, and so offered a sacrifice neither according to God's law nor the Jewish religious worship in that country", and again to the reference in 1 Maccabees 6. 7, "the abomination which he had built upon the altar that was in Jerusalem". All the way through Antiochus Epiphanes is beyond doubt presented as a very sinister prefiguring of antichrist and perhaps never more so than when he raised the abomination in the Temple area. In this connexion L. B's. comment as to the Lord's words in Matthew 24. 15 having a reference to Daniel 12. 11 rather than to 11. 31 is apposite (July 1967 page 74).

We therefore commend for further study the view held by many that in Daniel 11, from verse 36 onwards is the portion which awaits fulfilment.

J. L. F.

STUDIES IN THE CLOSING PHASE OF THE GOSPEL BY JOHN

JOHN 14. 1-31

Comforting Promises as to the Lord's Return and the Spirit's Coming

From Glasgow (Govan and Parfick). —The pronoun "your" in 14. 1 is plural, for all the disciples needed an assurance which would sustain them not only during the events which lay immediately ahead, but also throughout their earthly experience when the Lord was risen and had ascended to the Father. Their faith would be tested, and their knowledge sifted. Would they see their Lord again? Who would answer their questions when He had gone away, or assure them of the things they had been taught?

Verse 3 is a promise that the Lord will return to take His own that are in the world to be with Him in the place He has prepared. But coming unto the Father is impossible without knowing (by revelation) the Son who is the Way. The Son was going to the Father, and

promised to do what disciples ask in His name, while they through their love for Him are to do what He has commanded. He promised also that He Himself will make request of the Father. The Father is in heaven, for the Lord Jesus said to His disciples, "After this manner pray ye, Our Father, which art in heaven". In contrast to verse 3, verse 18 says, "I come unto you". This is explained in verse 23 as the Son (in whom is the Father) making His abode with the disciple, whose obedience springs from love [1].

The Spirit of truth was abiding with the disciples, and from Pentecost He would be in them. The Lord appeared to His disciples again after His resurrection. But after His ascension He would come to them and make His abode with them in their hearts, providing they observed the conditions given in verse 23. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, but those who rejected Him took their place with the prince of the world. By loving the Father the Lord Jesus kept the great commandment (Matthew 22. 37) and the prince of the world had nothing in Him. Those identified with the world cannot receive or behold the Spirit of truth, nor can the world afford the peace which the Lord gave to His own. Hence John writes in his first epistle, "Love not the world".

Eric Archibald

From Glasgow (Parkhead).—These were among the last words of the Lord to His disciples and were therefore exceedingly precious to the little band; words of divine comfort. Belief in Christ had long since taken place, except in the case of Judas, but now the Lord commands the full trust of His disciples, for although He is leaving them He is assuredly preparing and providing for them. It was generally felt that a progression of intimacy was seen: "In My Father's house are many mansions... ", "I go to prepare a place for you... ", "I come again, and will receive you unto Myself... ", "Where I am, there ye may be also". Some considered that the "Father's house" and the place being prepared were the same thing. Others felt that the former answered to the Mount Zion that is above and the latter to the new Jerusalem, the Father's house on earth being at that time on Mount Zion [2].

Thomas, who earlier had said, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him" and, it would appear, ever wished to be close to his Lord, desired to know where the Master was going. The answer of the Lord shows that the Son, coming out from God, is the Way, and the Truth and the Life.

The Greeks had asked Philip that they might see Jesus, and as Philip and others stood by the Lord the voice of the Father was heard from heaven. Now Philip in turn sought that, miraculously, the Father might be shown forth, unaware that, "In Him most perfectly expressed the Father's glories shine".

Consequent upon the ascension of Christ was the sending of the Spirit that these men and others might bear fearless witness to Christ, making and baptizing disciples and exercising the greater gifts among them. So the Lord spoke those words which make us humble as we consider their application in our case, "Greater works than these shall he do" [3].

R.

I.

Shaw

From Melbourne, Victoria. —As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so were the Lord's words to His disciples in their deep concern that He should leave them. Perhaps they saw themselves as orphans in a hostile world. They were certainly troubled with doubts and fears and only a deeper exercise of faith could help them to rest on the words, "Fear not, little flock" (Luke 12. 32). The apostle John wrote, "Perfect love casteth out fear" (1 John 4. 18, [4]).

We thought the Lord was opening up the minds of His disciples to understand things concerning His death, burial, resurrection and after events, including a future life with Himself. In the matters before us, we saw the perfect oneness of the Deity, and the perfect unity of the Trinity.

In the promise of the Holy Spirit, the need for future comfort was evident in the words, "another Comforter". Another of the like kind would be in them to console, guide, teach and keep them in the knowledge of His will all their days. W. H. F.

EXTRACTS

From Denmark Hill, London. —Judas, not Iscariot, asked, "Lord, what is come to pass that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" (verse 22). The next two verses show that the key is love to the Lord revealed in keeping His word.

In the remaining verses of this chapter (25-31) the Lord concludes by explaining the purpose of His revelation. It was told while He was still with them (verse 25), but the Holy Spirit would come, a Comforter, a Teacher who is sent by the Father, bringing to their memory things that the Lord said (verse 26). A further promise is a peace such as the world neither knows nor can give (verse 27). His going away should make the disciples rejoice as He was going the the Father (verse 28) who was greater than Himself [5]. The Lord's forethought in revealing these things was in order that when they happened the disciples would believe (verse 29). Time was getting short for such revelations, as the devil's hour was approaching (verse 30). The Lord states that the world would know that He loved the Father because He did what the Father commanded. This could be a reference to His cross-work or to His life of obedience on earth [6]. R. F. Robertson

From Derby. —The Lord Jesus gave the apostles assurance of being with Him for ever, and told them that they knew the way. Thomas and Philip were doubtful, and asked for these truths to be explained. The Lord Jesus explained that He is the Way, and that God speaks and works through Him. The words "Believe Me for the very works' sake" are a reference to the things He did while here on earth. Such works, and greater ones, will be done by His followers. Whatsoever they were to ask in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ would be given them, and they would receive the Holy Spirit, when the Lord had ascended into heaven. The obedient disciple will experience the joy of being in communion with the Lord, the Lord making His abode with him.

We should not be fearful for God is on our side and we should look for the return of the Lord Jesus. G. W. Conway

From Kilmarnock. —To eleven disciples in the upper room the way before them was going to be a way of trial, uncertainty and, on many occasions, doubt. Their Lord had intimated earlier His leaving them, but, before going, He promised a Helper for them.

It is important to note that the Lord said in verse 1, "Ye believe in God, believe also in Me", for the fulfilment of His promises rested much on their apprehending faith. He then told the disciples of an abiding place in heaven prepared by the Son of God, and of the Son of God coming for His own.

Replying to Thomas's doubts as to the way, the Lord emphasized that there is no access to the Father unless by Him (verse 6). The Lord must have been grieved when Philip said, "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us". Had not all His words, miracles and teachings shown that He was God manifest in flesh? Patiently, step by step to establish their faith, the disciples are shown by the Lord the oneness of the Father and the Son (verses 10, 11).

A further provision is made for them in the person of the Holy Spirit (verses 15, 16). He would be the Comforter (verses 16, 26) who would act as a Father to the fatherless and a Teacher to babes in the truth.

J.

M. Rankine

From Hamilton. —The Father's house is where He Himself dwells, the habitation of His holiness, the abode of His glory, and the place where His Throne is established (Deuteronomy 26. 15; 1 Kings 8. 30; Psalm 11. 4). This is the place whither the Son has ascended, and where He now abides (Mark 16. 19; 1 Peter 3. 22).

The way to the Father's house is understood not by human discovery, for the world through its wisdom knew not God (1 Corinthians 1. 21), but by divine revelation: "Thou wilt show me the path of life" (Psalm 16. 11). "Show me Thy ways, O LORD; Teach me Thy paths" (Psalm 25. 4).

This portion also reveals that the work of the Paraclete would resemble that of the Son in being sent by the Father and imparting instruction to the minds of men. But there are important differences. Jesus Christ had been sent in the Father's name as the Father's representative; the Spirit was to come in Christ's name as His Revealer.

Andrew A. Collington

From Macduff. —The Lord's promises gave great support to the disciples as they entered on the new life that would be theirs when He had gone to the Father. Not the least of His promises concerns the sending of the Holy Spirit, whom He calls "another Comforter". It would give them confidence to know that the new Comforter would be like Himself, and would bring His words to their remembrance. He would be their Teacher in their new activities in the kingdom of God and help them in their growing responsibilities. He would be with them "for ever", so they had no fear of being left without guide or direction.

The Lord offered them peace, but not as the world gives. What He gave was not to be affected by times or seasons and was theirs without measure. Their heart was not to be troubled (and they **must** have been upset at that time), and fear would not take hold of them. Terrible times were coming, but His words and promises were a bulwark of

hope to the disciples. Comforting has to do with drawing alongside, and the promises of the Lord were real and lasting. Trusting His promises and being led by the *Holy Spirit* is what makes a disciple devoted and profitable. It is to disciples He was saying, "Believe Me", and in these words is the secret of the life of faith and service.

A. B. R.

From Birmingham. —Soon the Lord was to depart and go back to His Father and so the disciples would be sad and troubled, but the Lord said they should have rejoiced because He was going to *His Father*. The Lord will not leave us orphans, but will send us another Comforter, the *Holy Spirit*, so that we can stand against the wiles of the devil. In verses 18, 19 and 28 we see that the Lord would return as the indwelling *Holy Spirit* [7].

The disciples were told by the Lord of His imminent departure and the coming of the *Holy Spirit*, so that when these things came to pass they would believe. Of course the disciples knew the way, for the Lord is the Way, and the Truth, and the Life. They had seen the Father, for they had seen and known the Son. Whatever we have need of, we find in Christ. He has gone, and we look for His return, which we hope is imminent. The Lord has not only gone and will return, but is actively engaged in preparing a place for us, so that we may dwell with Him in the mansions above.

D. P. Brown

From Methil. —In this chapter we find two great promises in the word of God.

The first great promise was linked with His imminent departure, for He said, "If I go . . . I come again". There is not a shadow of doubt that the Lord Jesus claimed to be the Son of God for He said, "In My Father's house".

"I come again" clearly indicates that He will personally come, and this agrees with 1 Thessalonians 4. 16, "The Lord Himself shall descend" and with Acts 1. 11, "This Jesus . . . shall so come". These have been words of comfort right down to the present day. The promise of the Lord's coming was made nearly two thousand years ago, and we believe we are very near to the time when the Lord will fulfil that promise which He made in the night in which He was betrayed.

In His absence from this world the Lord is preparing a place for us. The use of the salutation "Maran atha" (1 Corinthians 16. 22) by the early disciples clearly indicated that they expected Him to come at any time. They were living in the daily expectation of His return, and so should we. It is a reliable promise, for the One who gave it is the unchanging One. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today, yea and for ever" (Hebrews 13. 8). *N. G. Coomer, R. C. Surgeon*

From Edinburgh. —The chapter shows that the Father, Son and *Holy Spirit* act in complete harmony and unity. This is seen in Genes's 1 and again when this great new thing, the Church, was **being** brought into being. We note that the word "I" occurs 37 times, and the words "My", "Me", and "Mine" 36 times in these few verses.

A minority thought that "in My Father's house" must, if we are to be consistent, apply to Herod's temple (Luke 2. 49; John 2. 16). (Certainly not Herod's temple: most certainly the heavenly abode. Eds.). The disciples would perhaps understand that there were many abiding places within the temple precincts. The general opinion, however, was that "My Father's house" refers to God's dwelling place, for Herod's temple had been designated "your house" (to the Jews).

In considering the well-known words, "Ye know the Way", "I am the Way", some felt that the acceptance of salvation by a sinner was the first step in knowing the way, but it was pointed out that these words were spoken to saved and baptized disciples. We did not think the way was the same Way referred to in Acts 9. 2 but rather to the new and living Way as in Hebrews 9. 8 and 10. 20 [8]. It has often been stated, that the three words Way, Truth and Life can be likened to the doorway in the screen around the Tabernacle, the entrance to the Holy Place, and the veil across the entrance to the Most Holy Place. We would appreciate comment on this [9],
T. H.

From Vancouver, B. C.—The keynote of the chapter is found in the Lord's words, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me". He was about to leave them, but their access to the Father through Him would be ever open. We in our day can rejoice in His words, "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by Me" (verse 6).

The disciples had come to know this wonderful Person intimately, and now He was telling them that He was about to leave them. Because He loved them He wished to assure them that they would not be left alone. He and His Father would send "another Comforter". The Greek word implies another of the same kind, not another of a different kind.

The Lord frequently used the words, "I and the Father", thus emphasizing the equal relationship between the Father and the Son. When He spoke of this before the unbelieving Jews they took up stones to stone Him. Those who believed on Him could say with Peter, "Thou art the Christ, the **Son of** the living God".
J. Bell Jr., J. Pope

From Toronto, Ont—The disciples would no more associate the Father's house (verse 2) with that of John 2. 16 that is, the temple, than we would associate this verse with the house of God today. The Father's house was (1) a place of rest, (2) where the Father dwelt, (3) where the Lord was going, (4) where He would come from. Of the earthly house He could say, "Your house... desolate".

It was the view of most that the "I come" of verse 3 was distinct from that of verses 18 and 28. One view expressed was that verse 3 refers to His coming in the Person of the Holy Spirit. However, the context of the passage would seem to speak of the personal return of the Lord for His own. In verse 18 He says, "I will not leave you orphans" (R. V. M.): here the Lord is promising them another Comforter, for without His presence they were orphans indeed, exposed to the hatred of a cold and antagonistic world (15. 18) (see comment [7]).

The greater works (verse 12) we took to embrace the outworking of the purposes of God in calling out a people for Himself on the basis of His resurrection, "being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the chief corner stone" (Ephesians 2. 20).
N. K.

[1] **Glasgow (Govan and Parfick).** —Our friends have rightly distinguished between the Lord's return for His saints (14. 3) and His "coming unto" them (14. 18). It may be helpful to try and clarify a little more fully what is implied by the Lord Jesus coming unto loving and obedient disciples and making His abode with them (14. 23). That this is a conditional experience is confirmed by Paul's prayer that the Ephesians might know Christ dwelling in their hearts by faith (Ephesians 3. 17). They would experience this only as faith was daily exercised towards the Lord. Again in Revelation 3. 20 it is obvious that saints in the church at Laodicea were not realizing the blessing of communion with the indwelling Christ; they must repent and respond to Him that He might come in and sup with them.

The possibility and blessing of this experience are intimately bound up with the perpetual indwelling of the Holy Spirit (John 14. 17-18; Romans 8. 9-10) through whom it is possible for us to experience such communion with the Father and the Son (1 John 1, 3). It is not possible for these profound truths to be fully analysed. Faith rests on each statement of God's word as to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and the Father and the Son making their abode with us. The important practical lesson is that our attitude of heart towards God will govern our experience of communion with Him: "If a man love Me, he will keep My word: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and **make** Our abode with him".

G. P. Jr.

[2] **Glasgow (Parkhead).** —In John 14. 14 there is a logical progression in the argument which links the beginning of verse 2 with the end, and both with a future life with the Lord in heaven. "My Father's house" and "a place for you" cannot therefore be different places. Our understanding of this verse may be confused by the introduction of the conception of Mount Zion.

L. B.

[3] **Glasgow (Parkhead).** —The "greater works" spoken of by the Lord in 14. 12 could not have been miraculous signs such as He had done. Even the miracles wrought by the apostles in their post-resurrection experience did not exceed in wonder or power the miracles of the Lord. It can only be concluded that He was referring to the establishment and vast extension of the spiritual kingdom through the work of the apostles. The spiritual subjection of disciples to the mind of Christ is a work of great value in God's sight.

G. P. Jr.

[4] **Melbourne.** —The Context of 1 John 4. 18 relates to our hearts having lost the fear of judgement because of the perfect love of God towards us in Christ, which has begotten in us a responsive love. This is rather a different matter from such fears as surrounded the apostles on the eve of their Master's crucifixion.

G. P. Jr.

[5] **Denmark Hill.** —In seeking to understand the meaning of verse 28 we should remember the many scriptures which stress the equality of the Father and the Son (John 1. 1-4, 5. 19-29, 10. 30, 33; Colossians 1. 15, 16; Hebrews 1. 3, 8; etc.) and the many which imply it (John 8. 58; Titus 1. 3, 2. 13; 2 Peter 1. 1; etc.). This will keep us from reading into the verse more than is intended. The deep mysteries associated with the Word becoming flesh cannot be understood by our finite minds. The

subjection (not inferiority) of the Son to the Father, especially with reference to His being of the seed of David according to the flesh, may be in view here. *L. B.*

[6] **Denmark Hill.** —The whole of the Lord's life was a response to the commandment of His Father, but in the context of verse 31, the work of the Cross was immediately in view. *L. B.*

[7] **Birmingham.** —We consider that verses 18, 19, 28 do not refer to the Lord's returning as the indwelling Holy Spirit. The indwelling of the Spirit is separately referred to in verses 16, 17. The Lord was to appear to His disciples after the resurrection (verse 19); He abides with all disciples who love Him and keep His commandments (verse 18, 21, 24); He will come again at the rapture of the Church (verse 28) (see also comment [1]). *L. B.*

[8] **Edinburgh.** —Having regard to the context of John 14. 6 "the Way" cannot be limited to the aspect of truth dealt with in Hebrews 10. 20 John 14. 6 contains one of the great "I AM" utterances of the Lord, a statement of widest import declaring that only through Himself can God be approached, a basic principle which applies to the sinner in need of reconciliation, to the child of God in need of forgiveness and blessing, or to the people of God in worship. Because the Lord was speaking to saved, baptized disciples it does not follow that His words could have no wider application. *G. P. Jr.*

[9] **Edinburgh.** —Some have seen an illustration of the Lord Jesus as "the Life", "the Truth", and "the Way" (in that order) in the two screens and veil of the Mosaic Tabernacle. The Tabernacle with its ordinances of divine service was "a parable for the time now present", and we must always be careful that interpretation of any parable is governed by principles clearly stated in more direct forms of scriptural instruction. The statement of John 14. 6 must be understood from its context and relation to other scriptures which mark out the Lord uniquely as the Source of life, the Personification of truth and the One through whom alone men can be brought to the Father. Liberty may be given for the suggestive application of such a scripture in tabernacle typology, but this must not be allowed to bind our more general understanding of the main import of the verse. *G. P. Jr.*

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Question from Macduff. —John 12. 31 and 14. 30. Please explain.

Answer. —The first scripture has reference to the crucifixion, exposing men's evil thoughts (Luke 2. 35) and revealing man's true nature. In this sense it is a judgement (R. V. Margin) (i. e. the critical matter or issue on which the verdict is based) of this world. Again, in the Cross Christ brought to naught him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, so beginning the process of casting out which will be finally completed when he is cast into the lake of fire.

In John 14. 30 the Lord is emphasizing the nearness of His conflict with the adversary, making it necessary to curtail the pleasant communion of the upper room. Nevertheless, there was nothing in the holy nature of the Lord which could respond to the evil in the devil.

L. B.

Questions from Methil. —(1) Will the mansions be the permanent abode of the saints?

Answer. —Following the rapture of the Church many great events will take place in heaven and upon earth, as indicated in the book of Revelation. It may be that the saints will play some part in these events as servants of their Lord (2 Timothy 2. 12; Revelation 19. 14). It is therefore possible that we shall not permanently occupy the places prepared for us until the settled conditions of the New Jerusalem are established.

L.

B.

Question (2). Will the Comforter be with us for all eternity?

Answer. —In verse 16 the phrase "for ever" is literally "unto the age", the most common expression in the New Testament used to denote that which is enduring. It implies eternity (Hebrews 7. 17, 21, 24, 28) unless the context clearly indicates otherwise (1 Corinthians 8. 13). In this verse there is no doubt that eternity is in view; we shall ever need the help of the Holy Spirit in service and worship.

L. B.

NOTES ON THE PSALMS

PSALM 55 *Continued from page 12*

And I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove!
Then would I fly away, and be at rest.
Lo, then would I wander far off,
I would lodge in the wilderness. [Selah
I would haste me to a shelter
From the stormy wind and tempest, (verses 6, 7, 8)

However wonderful it may be to fly away from trouble, and however beautiful his words of poetry are, for him to have wings like a dove and to fly away and be at rest, wandering far off and lodging in the wilderness, he was the anointed king of Israel, and there were those who depended on him as the leader of his people. No doubt we have all some time in our lives been in the same difficulty as David, though in lesser measure. Complete cutting oneself off from God's people is not the solution and never can be. Some have tried it and at length found their mistake. It takes God to come in and deliver His tried saints. God's people should never be left till we are sure God has left them, and we must be very certain about that, and that our difficulty is not that we are reaping the consequences of our own folly. We all in days of perplexity think of hasting from the stormy wind and tempest, but there may be a word for us in the word of the LORD to Israel by the Red Sea, when Pharaoh with his horses and chariots were just behind them: "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD" (Exodus 14. 13). That day was the day of testing, the next the day of song, for "then sang Moses and the Children of Israel" (Exodus 15. 1).

J. M.

(to be continued D. V.)

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BIBLE STUDIES

"Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so" (Acts 17. 11).

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EDITORIAL

For students of the word John chapter 15 is a passage requiring careful analysis of the imagery of Scripture and the prayerful parallel examination of other scriptures dealing with the same subject. Our subject is Christian fruitbearing, and immediately we venture into this chapter, we are challenged by the parable of the Vine and the branches. Such expressions as "organic unity" and "vital union", used by some commentators, may easily lead to the commonly presented picture of the Vine and the branches as portraying Christ and the Church in the life-giving relationship effected by the faith of the sinner. The acceptance of this interpretation of John 15 led Calvin to try to overcome the difficulties of the drastic measures envisaged in verses 2 and 6, by equating "in Me" in verse 2 to "supposed to be in Me"; and to Alford's conclusion that the Vine in fact was the "visible church" with Christ as the "inclusive *Head*".

If John 15 is a picture of Christ as the Vine and the members of the Church, His body, as branches, it should be very clear that the eternal security so firmly established in such earlier passages as chapter 10. 28 is immediately re-opened to question. In fact, there is no reason whatever why the image of the vine and the branches should not be used, with all its forceful impact in terms of living connexion, about the communion and fellowship of the believer with His Lord, instead of the subject of his eternal union in the Church. The latter truth stands secure in the image of the members of the Body in living union with the Head but with no possibility of separation in view. On the theme of fruitbearing in John 15 we need look no further than the Lord's simple imperative, "Abide in me" to establish beyond doubt that the maintenance of the connexion to the source of spiritual vitality is the responsibility of the branch. The solemnity of the passage is arresting, however. Whether the "taking away" of verse 2 or the "casting into the fire" of verse 6 is a present experience or one corresponding to a judgement day action as in 1 Corinthians 3. 13 may be discussed. We cannot but envisage a very great reluctance on the part of the Divine Husbandman to discard any branch. The most meagre evidence of any of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5. 22) would surely lead *Him* eagerly to the cleansing process. It may well be concluded that the fruitbearing envisaged belongs to this life and so therefore does the possibility of rejection for fruitlessness.

J. D. T.

Discussion of Prophetic Character of Daniel II

(continued from page 28)

(b) Who is "the King" of verse 36?

It is generally agreed that "the king" of verse 36 is the dominant

personality in the end-time. Each of the three schools of thought in (a) (see last month's issue) would accept this. The second group see him as the king of the North, as described in the previous verses. The third do not agree among themselves. Most incline to the view that he is a personality quite separate from the end-time king of the North spoken of in verse 40. Others hold to the opinion that he is himself that king. Here, then, is another matter for which it will be difficult to find a solution which will be acceptable to all. On the other hand the question is vital to a proper understanding of question (c) which follows.

It is accepted that verse 36 to the end of the chapter awaits fulfilment **and** that "the king" is a ruler of the terminal years. If it be observed that his introduction is sudden and apparently unannounced, it should be borne in mind that he is unquestionably, judged by human standards, the king of the final years. It should also be remembered, as others have pointed out, that he has already appeared prominently in Daniel's prophecy, spoken of as "the little horn" in chapter 7, and again in chapter 8, the "king of fierce countenance", and as "the prince that shall come" in chapter 9. "The king" therefore in 11. 36 is an immediately recognizable and terrible character.

Throughout chapter 11 two personalities are in view, the king of the North and the king of the South. They were monarchs who ruled successively over two of the four kingdoms into which Alexander's empire was divided. The king of the North was the ruler, it is generally believed, over Syria, Assyria, Mesopotamia and the Euphrates valley, which territory was originally awarded to Seleucus. The king of the South ruled over Egypt, awarded originally to Ptolemy. These kings were inveterate enemies as viewed in verses 2 to 32, now amply confirmed by the page of history. Verse 42 shows that it will be exactly the same in the terminal years. That being so it is extremely unlikely that in verse 40 we are asked to view an end-time coalition of these two kings against a third party, "the king". Rather it would seem to indicate that the king of the North, who has dominated throughout the historical portion of the chapter, dominates also in the terminal years, repulses the **king** of the South when he pushes at him, and takes his land.

It is therefore submitted for study, that "the king" of verse 36 is the ruler in the end-time of the territory formerly governed by the kings of the North from the day when Alexander's empire was divided among his generals, that is the king over Syria, Assyria, Mesopotamia and the Euphrates valley, or such variation of it as will befit the end-time picture.

J. L. F.

Studies in the Closing Phase of the Gospel by John

John 15

Fruitbearing in a Hostile World

From Vancouver, B. C. —This chapter is not a dissertation on the characters of the Father and the Son, as the first verse might lead us to expect. Christ terms Himself the Vine and His Father the Husbandman,

but verse 2 introduces the **main** topic. This **arrangement** places the **subject matter** in order of importance. It would **seem** that the Lord **expects** His disciples to be **fruitbearers**, but He is concerned with those who are not living **up to** the required standard. The **reason** that we can be **fruitbearers** is because we **abide in Him**, and our reliance is **on the Vine** (verse 4). Verse 6 tells us what happens to the one who does not **bear fruit**: the branch is removed, a **far** more serious thing than **being cleansed** (verse 2). Such a branch is of **no more use** to the **Vine** and so the Lord does not work through him **any longer**, whereas a good branch is improved **by** cleansing.

The results of **abiding in Him** are that the disciple can **receive** whatsoever he **asks** and that the Father will **be glorified**. We are introduced in verses 9-17 to the **subject** of love. We are not servants but **friends** because the Lord chose us to work in full knowledge of His designs. It is because we are so closely linked to Him in love that the world is hostile. **Because men** hated Him they hate us, and **because** they persecuted Him they **persecute us**. The world is hostile **because** the Lord pointed out **its sin**, as does the **fruitbearer** in his gospel preaching. All this hatred is without a cause. However, the **fruitbearer** will always have the Comforter to **aid him in bearing witness**.

J. Pope, J. Bell Jr.

From Southport. —It is the **desire** of the Lord **Jesus** that every believer in Him should **bear fruit**, and by so doing glorify His Father (verse 8). In a **fruitbearing tree** the **fruit** is the produce of the branch, the branch obtaining **its** nourishment from the tree. The **tree** lives not for itself but for those to whom **its fruit brings** refreshment and life, and to **make glad** the heart of the Husbandman. This is a beautiful **image** of the **believer** abiding in Christ. He not only grows in strength, the union with the **Vine** becoming ever **surer** and firmer, he also **bears fruit**. He has the power to offer to others that of which they can eat and live. The **fruitfulness** of a disciple results from the **diligent** discharge of his **responsibility to witness** to the glory of God in the **ministry** of the gospel. We are exhorted to **be filled** with the knowledge of His will, in all spiritual wisdom and **understanding**, to walk worthily of the Lord unto all pleasing, **bearing fruit in every good work**, and **increasing in** the knowledge of God (Colossians 1. 9, 10).

God deals with the branches in the Vine. If they **bear fruit**, He **prunes and purges** them, often using sharp and painful means, so the disciple may **experience** the cutting-off of health, or comfort, or this world's goods, or the **taking away** of the **dearest** object of love, and thus **be chastened and humbled**.

This outward **purging** is very wholesome, and often **necessary** before the branch is as fruitful as it should be. But we **must not forget** that God has also an inward **purging for His branches**, a discipline and **training**, a cleansing through *His* word. *Thomas Brown*

From Derby. —If we are to **bear fruit** in this world, then we need to **abide in Christ**, having His word in our hearts. The life-giving messages come from **communing** with Him, and then we shall have the **desire to bear fruit** and we shall **be effective in our service** [1].

It is vital that love should be in evidence in an assembly. Brethren and sisters manifesting this will be showing out Christ, working together in unity, seeking to bear fruit and looking for the return of their beloved Master.

The purpose of our election is that we should bear fruit. The Lord Jesus suffered at the hands of men who had no cause to hate Him. We too may suffer persecution. Having put our trust in Christ we should not be afraid of what men can do to us (Psalm 56. 11).

Verse 24, it was thought, suggests that men were so blinded by their own importance, that when their sin was pointed out they did not believe [2].
G. W. Conway.

EXTRACTS

From Macduff. —It was suggested that this chapter has an application to those in a church of God. Fruitbearing is governed by faith in Christ; the branches are those who are saved by grace. The branch which does not bear fruit, "He (the Father) taketh it away" (verse 2). It is important to notice that these branches are never grafted on again, a sobering thought. In verse 6 we read, "They gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned", for the unfruitful branches are of use neither to God nor man. When a person is born again, his eternal salvation is assured, so it is clear that this is something different from "Church the Body" teaching.

The qualities of Christ should be seen in the fruit. The Vine and the branches are complementary to each other, necessitating a continual abiding of the branches in the Vine. The Master did not hide from His disciples the fact that they would be hated by the world. The world hated the Master without cause and will certainly hate those who confess His name. Having warned of the difficulties and pitfalls of the disciple pathway, He again gives them the promise of the Comforter, both to sustain and encourage them.
J. M. W.

From Portslade. —The object of fruitbearing is to glorify the Father, the Husbandman. One has to be in Christ (2 Corinthians 5. 17) before fruitbearing is possible, and so the disciples were clean according to His word. A further cleansing and pruning had to be endured so that the fruit could be brought to perfection. The dead wood of the vine was useless and could only be cut away and burned; it is important to appreciate that this part of the parable is confined to fruitfulness. If we are attentive to His words we shall know His will, and so receive our requests (verse 7). This is connected with fruitbearing for which we have been chosen.

Incredible as it may seem, the One whose life was luxuriant before men, resplendent with love and good works, was hated. We must suffer likewise and show the grace that He did in persecution if we would be fruitful.
W. T., D. H.

From Hamilton. —To the Jewish mind the vine was a beautiful picture of Israel's special place in the counsels of God (Jeremiah 2. 21; Psalm 80. 8). The vine spoke not only of Israel's former position but

also of fruitfulness, both natural and spiritual (Psalm 80. 9-11). But history has proved how the people of God failed to produce the fruit that God was seeking, for wherever the vine is mentioned in the Old Testament Scriptures in relation to the people of God we find the further thought of failure and degeneration (Isaiah 5. 4, Jeremiah 2. 21). In contrast to this we read the words of the Lord Jesus, "I am the true Vine" (John 15. 1). The underlying thought of this term "true" (Greek, *alēthinos*) implies that Israel had been an imperfect foreshadowing but Jesus is the true or real Vine. (Compare true Light John 1. 7-9; true Bread, John 6. 32) [3].

Matthew Carmthers

From Kilmarnock. —The usefulness of the Vine is limited to fruit-bearing, the wood being fit only for burning (Ezekiel 15. 1-6). God had earlier described Israel as the vine planted so that fruit might abound (Isaiah 5). Alas! wild grapes were the produce.

In the passage under consideration the Lord is seen as the true Vine, the Father is the Husbandman and each individual in Christ is a branch. The watchful all-seeing eye of the Husbandman is alert for evidence of fruit. Clearly the lesson is one of union with Christ. No fruit can be borne without the nourishment of vital sap supplied from the stem. The importance of abiding in Him (John 15. 4) is thus illustrated. The fruit produced is for the Husbandman; fruitbearing is not limited to the saving of souls but touches the whole life of the believer in the manifestation of the Spirit (Galatians 5. 22, 23).

Our attention was drawn to the close association of "asking" and "fruitbearing" in verses 7, 8. The meaning seems to be that all requests to God which have the purpose of more fruit to God's glory will be granted [4].

J.

C. Watt

From Birmingham. —The central theme of this chapter is that we can do nothing without the Lord. It is of the utmost importance that we abide in Him. The final word *nothing* in verse 5 demands the most earnest consideration of every disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ, for its meaning reaches into every aspect of our lives. We wondered as to the use of the word "cleanseth" by the Lord, in referring to the purging of the branches. As far as we know, there is no such modern usage of the word, yet it is very significant. The branch bears fruit and its very fruitbearing calls for purging. It is necessary for too prolific growth to be curbed, so that the vigour of the branch may be directed to better fruitbearing. So with the disciple cleansing is necessary, for otherwise his spiritual life may be misdirected and wasted. The Lord speaks of a new thing in describing those who do His will as friends, reminding us of Abraham, the "friend of God", to whom God revealed secrets. Do we love the brethren enough to die for them? It is possible to know such love only as we abide in Him.

H. Smith

From Aberkenfig and Barry. —It is worthy of note that God speaks of Israel and Judah as vines (Psalm 80. 8-11; Isaiah 5. 1-7; Jeremiah 2. 21). The conditions provided were such that the Husbandman naturally

expected fruit, but Isaiah tells us that the vine produced wild grapes. It is also stated that the vine would be trodden down, and the Psalmist speaks of it being burned with fire.

There is a vast difference between the Old Testament figures and the Vine in John 15. There is no danger of this being destroyed or damaged. We read of unfruitful branches being cut off, but the Vine, the source of all fruit, remains unblemished. See comment [3].

The Lord Jesus, the Father and the disciples stood in the same relationship as the Vine, the Husbandman and the branches. This state of things however, would not, once established, afterwards continue of itself. The condition of its permanence is continued union with Christ, from whom alone life could spring. This union, which is conditional, reveals the love of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Constancy in our relations with Christ is the great point in this chapter. He teaches the value of love for Himself and how this love will be manifested in obedience to His commandments. He speaks of the high standard of His love for us and how this should find a response in our hearts, not only in love to Christ but also to one another.

D. H. Butler

From Methil. —The taking away of the branch does not signify a life lost eternally, but a disciple who has made no progress in the things of God and has had a wasted life for Christ. The cleansed branch, however, would signify a faithful disciple, who has been cleansed by "the washing of water with the word" (Ephesians 5. 26), and has gone on well in the things of God [8]. We considered the word "abiding", and noted that it was related to victory over sin: "whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not" (1 John 3. 6).

We have been chosen in Christ and appointed to be fruitbearers for Him, and therefore we have a solemn responsibility to be ever faithful to Him "who His own self bare our sins in His body upon the tree" (1 Peter 2. 24).

Though we in our day know little of physical persecution we must, if we are true disciples, expect persecution in some form or another (2 Timothy 3. 12). Perhaps the greatest test that we experience today is the apathy of men towards God. If we allow this to affect us to such an extent that we cease to preach the word, then we will no longer be witnessing for Christ, no longer abiding in Him, and therefore no longer bearing fruit, and will become as the branch of verse 6 that is gathered for sticks and burned. (See Comment [9]). *A. R. Smith*

From Halifax, Leeds & Bradford. —We noted from the last verse of chapter 14 that the Lord and His disciples had now left the upper room and were on their way through the streets of Jerusalem towards the Garden of Gethsemane (18. 1). It might well have been that during their journey they passed by a vine or vineyard which occasioned the Lord speaking thus to them of Himself as the true Vine [5]. We are the branches. First the shoot, full of sap (the Holy Spirit) grows, developing into a branch and eventually achieving its object in bearing fruit [6]. As we abide in Christ and grow in Him, we make progress

in fruitbearing. We bear fruit (verse 2), *more* fruit (verse 2) and *much* fruit (verse 5).

It is fruit after its own kind, not fruit of bitterness and gall as the vine of Sodom (Deuteronomy 32. 32; Galatians 5. 19-21), but the fruit of the **Spirit** (Galatians 5. 22, 23).
H. R. Dodge

From Liverpool. —This chapter has in view the disciple's life in relation to his service and is conditional. It does not in any way affect his salvation from sin's penalty. "I give unto them (My sheep, v. 27) eternal life; and they shall never perish" (John 10. 28).

If men find branches on a natural vine that are not bearing fruit they take them away and cast them forth to be burned, for even the wood is of no value. Care must be taken not to over-spiritualize the illustration, which we judge the Lord used only to emphasize the uselessness of the unfruitful life of any who are not abiding in Him.

Abiding in Him consists in exercising day by day faith, continuing in prayer (verse 7), having the right motive (verse 8), continuing in His love (verse 9), keeping His commandments (verse 10), manifesting the joy of the Lord (verse 11), and loving one another (verse 12). The result will be a fruitful branch producing what is described in Galatians 5 as "the fruit of the Spirit".
J. W. Seddon

From Blackburn. —The Lord Jesus calls Himself the "true Vine", implying that Israel were but an imperfect symbol of Him. What the Lord longed Israel to be was fulfilled in the perfect life of the Lord Jesus. (See Comment [3]). He grew up before God as a tender plant, as a root out of dry ground. He flourished and brought forth fruit which was well pleasing to God His Father [7].

Disciples are pictured as branches. The branches which do not bear fruit are cut off, allowed to wither and cast into the fire. The judgement of sinners is not in view, but the disciple and his works. Hence the eternal security of the believer is not at stake. However, it may be possible for a believer to be cast aside as useless.

Love is demonstrated by self-sacrifice, and the greatest act of love is for a man to lay down his life for his friends. The Lord Jesus has His own death in view here (verse 13). He was not only going to give His life for His friends but also for His enemies (Romans 5. 6-10). Abraham was called the friend of God; he had great faith and obeyed God. The Lord Jesus calls those His friends who do the things which He commands. To them He revealed the things He had heard from His Father.

L. de Ville

From Edinburgh. —The lifelong purpose of the vine is to produce fruit, and the constant care and control of the husbandman over it is essential if it is to bear more fruit. So the Lord uses a natural illustration in speaking to His disciples. Firstly he speaks of Himself as the true Vine. The thought here is not so much the opposite of false, but real, substantial, enduring. If we would be fruitbearing branches we must prepare ourselves sufficiently to bear more fruit. It is a lifelong service. To cease bearing fruit means to be cut off from the vine and

burned. Who would desire such an end? Much better to be cleansed (verse 2) rather than suffer the severity of being cast forth as a branch. The cleansing would appear to be associated with the word of God (verse 3).

The branches of the vine are tied to a stake or trellis. So we must be prepared to be tied in service and accept discipline if we would rejoice the heart of God the Husbandman. The vine of Isaiah 5 grew wild and produced only wild grapes which brought forth the judgement of the Husbandman.

David R. Renfrew

From Birkenhead. —The Lord Jesus is the true Vine, God the Father is the Husbandman, the disciples are the branches. The only useful purpose for the vine is to bear fruit (Ezekiel 15). Pruning the branches has the effect of stimulating the flow of sap; unfruitful branches are eventually removed to avoid sap being wasted on them. Spiritually cleansing was considered to be by means of God's word and by circumstances which God may permit to come upon us. A branch cut out of the vine is useless. It is burned. A disciple severed from the true Vine is unfruitful and useless, a truly sad spectacle. By much fruitbearing is the Father glorified (verse 8).

To abide in the Vine is a work of faith. What is the fruit spoken of in this chapter? Galatians 5. 22, 23 mentions nine traits which will be present in a balanced Christian character [9].

Because the disciple is not of this world the world hates him. The Lord points out for our encouragement that He also was hated by the world and that without a cause.

R. D. Williams

From Glasgow (Parkhead). —Why, among all fruit trees did the Lord choose the vine to explain fruitbearing to His disciples? Perhaps it was because this tree bears grapes from which is ultimately produced wine which "maketh glad the heart of man". So the Spirit of Christ bears fruit in the hearts of His disciples, Godward then manward. We should, therefore, desire to be fruitful, and yet the mere wish in itself is insufficient; we should seek after it earnestly. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, so neither can we except we abide in Christ. The fruit of the Spirit, is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance (self control). These are nine precious things which rejoice the heart of the Lord.

Fred Harvey

From Denmark Hill, London. —The Husbandman is perfect, and the Vine is perfect. In the Vine there is no trace of disease or decay. Although we may be abiding in Christ and as a result bearing fruit, yet we may feel the hand of the Husbandman upon us (verse 2); "He cleanseth it". The branch needs attention and cutting back for its own good. So with us, lest we become exalted and puffed up and lose our dependence upon the Vine and die. There is a great difference between the taking away and the cleansing. Consider the dire consequences for the disciple who fails to abide in Christ. He is cast forth as a branch and is withered. A withered branch may also have an adverse effect on others, if it is not cut off. The fear of the apostle Paul was that he might become a castaway (1 Corinthians 9. 27, A. V.).

The hatred of the world is inevitable for those who love the Lord Jesus. All who follow Him can expect suffering and trial. The world rejected the Lord and the hatred shown towards Him will in a lesser measure be shown towards His followers. We do not experience suffering today as disciples did in a past day. Is the world more tolerant, or do we merge into the world, so making our path comparatively easy?

G. Sankey

COMMENTS

[1] **Derby.** —It is important to be clear about the source of our knowledge of God's will for us. We can only learn the Lord's commandments by reading the Scriptures, hence the necessity for careful Bible study. The Holy Spirit reminds us of God's word at the appropriate time and gives us an understanding as to its meaning. Divine messages do not come to us as a result of communion independently of the Scriptures.

L. B.

[2] **Derby.** —The meaning of verse 24 is that those who witnessed the miracles of the Lord and heard His words had a greater responsibility than those who did not. They had no excuse for their unbelief, they were sinners indeed.

L. B.

[3] **Hamilton.** —The parallel between Israel as the vine and the Lord Jesus as the true Vine is not clear. A closer analogy would be that between Israel as the vine and God's gathered New Covenant people as His "tilled land" (1 Corinthians 3. 9). The truth expressed by the Vine and the branches in John 15 is the dependence upon Christ of each believer if his spiritual life is to be fruitful. It is not helpful to complicate matters by relating Christ as the true Vine to Israel as an imperfect vine. In any case, whereas Christ as the Vine is perfect, disciples as branches may be far from perfect, just as there was failure in Israel's experience. So the imagery in regard to Israel as the vine is better left distinct from the imagery of John 15.

G. P. Jr.

[4] **Kilmarnock.** —The meaning suggested by our friends is doubtless included but the import of John 15 is more far-reaching than this. The two conditions of effectual prayer stated in this verse are, "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you". The disciple who is abiding in the Lord Jesus will have a right attitude of heart in prayer, and if the Lord's words are abiding in him, he will not ask contrary to the will of God.

G. P. Jr.

[5] **Halifax, Leeds and Bradford.** —It is not necessarily clear that the Lord left the Upper Room at the close of chapter 14. It seems more likely that this took place as stated in chapter 18. 1, and that the Lord's statement in 14. 31 was a preliminary to their actual departure. The long discussion of chapters 15 and 16 and the prayer of chapter 17 would have seemed more appropriate to the Upper Room than to the journey from there to Gethsemane. There might well have been a vine at hand, for example by a window of the Upper Room, from which the Lord's illustration could have been taken.

G. P. Jr.

[6] **Halifax, Leeds and Bradford.** —The parable of the vine, and all the parables, must not be given more extended meanings than the Lord's words justify. Different stages of growth, shoots or full-grown branches, are not envisaged here, simply branches bearing fruit. Our friends' development of the figure has led them to questionable conclusions, for maturity is not necessary for fruitbearing, in a spiritual sense. The newly born again believer may immediately apply to himself the truth of the Vine and the branches. *L. B.*

[7] **Blackburn.** —While this reference to the prophetic word concerning the Lord Jesus as the tender plant is precious, it has no necessary connexion with the imagery of John 15. It is important to keep different aspects of truth distinct from one another. The picture of the Lord Jesus as the true Vine should be considered within the limits of its context, and the particular line of truth which the Lord was presenting. *G. P. Jr.*

[8] **Methil.** —The washing (or laver) of water with the word in Ephesians 5. 26 is the believer's initial washing or regeneration, not a subsequent cleaning process. *G. P. Jr.*

[9] **Birkenhead.** —The fruit spoken of in John 15 may well include the Christ-like characteristics described in Galatians 5. 22, 23 as "the fruit of the Spirit", but John 15. 16 suggests that the Lord also had in view the reaching of others through witness in the gospel. *Jas. M.*

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Questions from Aberkenfig and Barry. —(1) What is the difference between, "He cleanseth it" (verse 2) and "Already ye are clean" (verse 3)?

Answer. —Verse 3 may be linked with 13. 10 where the Lord referred to the once-for-all cleansing of the believer as distinct from the day-by-day cleansing in the walk of the disciple. The apostles were already clean in this sense because of the word which the Lord had spoken to them. This was a pre-requisite to their bearing fruit as presented in the imagery of the vine and the branches. The cleansing of 15. 2 represents the dealings of the Father with the disciple in Christian experience so that fruitfulness may be increased. *G. P. Jr.*

Question (2). Who are "they" who gather up the withered branches (verse 6)?

Answer. —The latter part of verse 6 is to be taken as a straightforward description of what happens to dead branches. In the R. V., "they" is used impersonally but the A. V. has "men gather them". Attention should be concentrated, not on the gatherers, but on what is gathered. Dead branches are useless and fit only to be burned; so are dead disciples, but it is not intended that the irrevocable destruction implied by burning should be applied in detail to the unfaithful disciple. We have learned previously in our study of this Gospel that it is unwise to attempt to spiritualize some of the details contained in parables.

L. B.

Question (3). How is the hatred of the world manifested today?

Answer. —In many parts of the world today those who confess the name of Christ are openly persecuted, but in some highly civilised lands the hatred of men takes a different form. There is often callous indifference to God, His word and His people, but where opposition is shown it can take the form of silent mockery or insinuations of mental weakness in faithful disciples. Those who hold the verbal inspiration of Scripture in opposition to liberal theology, especially in connexion with the origin of man, are branded as ignorant and superstitious. These attitudes may often be harder to endure than physical persecution.

L. B.

PSALM 55 *Continued from page 36*

Destroy, O Lord, and divide their tongue:
For I have seen violence and strife in the city.
Day and night they go about it upon the walls thereof:
Iniquity also and mischief are in the midst of it.
Wickedness is in the midst thereof:

Oppression and guile depart not from her streets, (verses 9, 10, 11)

Here David tells of what was going on in his capital, **the** city of Jerusalem. The tongues of those who sided with Absalom against his father David were busy in sedition, and amongst those who were for Absalom against himself there was violence and strife, and David had seen it. The upsurge of insurrection was in evidence, for they went about day and night upon the walls; iniquity and mischief were in the midst of the city, and oppression and guile departed not from her streets. There was no security anywhere for peaceful law-abiding people. Truly the devil and his hosts were busy among the people to drive peace from the land.

For it was not an enemy that reproached me;
Then I could have borne it:
Neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me;

Then I would have hid myself from him:

But it was thou, a man mine equal,
My companion, and my familiar friend.

We took sweet counsel together,

We walked in the house of God with the throng, (verses 12, 13, 14)

The man who is referred to in these verses is, I think, undoubtedly Ahithophel, David's counsellor. We are told that "Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counsellor, from his city, even from Giloh, while he offered the sacrifices. And the conspiracy was strong; for the people increased continually with Absalom" (2 Samuel, 15. 12). It is said of Ahithophel, "The counsel of Ahithophel, which he counselled in those days, was as if a man inquired at the oracle (Hebrew, word) of God: **so** was all the counsel of Ahithophel both with David and with Absalom (2 Samuel 16. 23). When David knew that Ahitho-

phel **was** amongst the conspirators with **Absalom, he said, "O LORD, I pray** Thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness" (2 Samuel 15. 31). God answered David's **prayer**, for when Ahithophel's counsel to Absalom **was rejected** he went home, **set** his house in order **and** hanged himself" (2 Samuel 17. 14, 23). David wrote touching words about Ahithophel his counsellor, He **was a man** David's equal, his companion **and** familiar **friend** or acquaintance. They took sweet counsel together **and** walked in the house of God with the throng. **Yet, strange to say, he turned** right round **from David** to his son Absalom. **It is difficult** to understand how some **friends can** become bitter **enemies**. Ahithophel **is a type** of Judas Iscariot. See Psalm 41. 9; John 13. 18.

Let death come suddenly upon them,
 Let them go down **alive** into the pit (Sheol, Hell):
 For wickedness is **in** their dwelling, in the midst **of** them.
As for me, I will call upon God;
And the LORD shall **save** me. (verses 15, 16)

David carried out what **we are** exhorted to do, to "**pray** without upon them, **and** that they would go down alive into *Sheol* (Hell). **It** would depend on whether they were righteous or wicked when they **died**, whether they would go to the place of the blessed in *Sheol*, or to the place of **fiery** torments of the lost. What David, I think, is desiring is that his enemies would **be** removed from this earth **because** of the fearful trouble they had **caused**, for wickedness was in their dwelling, **in** the midst of them. **In** contrast to those who joined in this insurrection **we** have David calling upon God, **and** he was **sure** that the LORD would **save** him, for God answers every **prayer** He hears.

Evening, **and** morning, **and** at noonday, will I complain, **and** moan:
And He shall hear **my** voice.
 He hath redeemed **my** soul **in** peace from the battle that **was** **against** me:
 For there were **many** that strove with me.
 God shall hear, **and** answer them,
Even He that abideth of old, [Selah
 The **men** who have no changes*
 And who **fear** not God. (verses 17, 18, 19)

J. M.

(to be continued D. V.)

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BIBLE STUDIES

"Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so" (Acts 17. 11).

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EDITORIAL

Our **present area of study** is richly **expressive of the intimate relationship between Father, Son and Spirit as one God acting in perfect unity, yet each seen in distinct personality.** This is illustrated in connexion with the **sending of the Holy Spirit as promised by the Lord Jesus.**

In this month's subject is included the statement of the Lord, "I will send **Him unto you**" (16. 7). **Alongside this we may place two other statements on the same theme:** "I will pray the Father, and **He shall give you another Comforter**" (14. 16); and "The Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom **the Father will send in My Name**" (14. 26). Then shortly before **His** ascension the assurance was **renewed:** "Behold, I send forth the promise of My Father upon you" (Luke 24. 49). The apostles were to "wait for **the promise of the Father**" (Acts 1. 4). When on the **Day of Pentecost** the promise was fulfilled, **Peter** declared: "This **Jesus did God raise up** . . . and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, **He** hath poured forth this, which **ye see and hear**" (Acts 2. 32, 33).

So the mighty divine **purpose put into effect at Pentecost** is shown to **be the work of Father, Son and Spirit.** The Holy Spirit would **be uniquely sent** into the world as Convicter and Comforter. In one sense **He would be sent** forth by the Father, **but in a complementary sense He would be sent** also by the Son. The promise of the Father was **put into effect** at the request of the Son. The two **aspects** of this complex unfolding of divine counsel **are remarkably blended by the Lord Jesus in John 15. 26:** "When the Comforter **is** come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, **even the Spirit** of truth, which proceedeth **from** the Father, **He shall bear witness** of Me".

In the revelation of the Divine **Being** to human hearts there is again a complementary action on the **part of Father, Son and Spirit.** **For from Matthew 11. 27 we learn that no one knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him, while in Matthew 16. 17 the Lord makes it equally clear that only by revelation from the Father can the Son be known.** In speaking of the sending of the Spirit the Lord touched again on this **facet of truth.** The Spirit would **not speak from Himself, but** "what things soever **He shall hear, these shall He speak. . . He shall take of Mine, and shall declare it unto you** (16. 13, 14). Would the testimony of the Spirit, then, **be different from that of the Lord Jesus, who had not spoken from Himself, but from His Father (14, 10)?** By no means! **For as the Lord went on to explain in 16. 15:** "All things whatsoever the **Father** hath **are Mine:** therefore **said I, that He** taketh of Mine, and **shall declare it unto you**". Through the work of the Spirit, therefore,

Father and Son would be revealed to those believing the witness borne concerning the Son: "The Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from the Father" (16. 27).

Interwoven with the Master's comfort to the hearts of the apostles on the eve of Calvary was the warning that they would share with Him the hatred of a Christ-rejecting world. This became true in their experience. It has in some degree been reflected in the experience of loyal disciples in each succeeding generation. In the world they have had tribulation. Beyond the future boundary of this age of grace we see already threatening the dark clouds of a greater tribulation than any previously known. This month's continuing discussion on Daniel 11 brings into focus some aspects of that terrible epoch. The essential hatred of the world towards God and His Christ will then be manifested in fearful extremity. The saints of that day will doubtless derive singular comfort from the Master's words in John chapters 14 to 17. It is significant also that there will be a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit at a time of anguish when His strengthening, emboldening power will be so greatly needed (Joel 2. 28—3. 2). *G. P. Jr.*

DISCUSSION OF PROPHETIC CHARACTER OF DANIEL II

(continued from page 38)

(c) **Is the "King of the North" (verse 40) the first beast of Revelation 13?**

A closer look at this king of the north and his possible identity elsewhere in Daniel will merit study.

Daniel portrays in several ways, as noted above, the ruler who is to arise in the latter days of Gentile supremacy as seen in the image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. He depicts:

1. In chapter 7 a little horn who would arise out of the fourth beast with control "given into his hand until a time and times and half a time", and having a dominion world-wide in extent so that when it is taken from him "the kingdom and the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High". This ruler "shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High".

2. In chapter 8 he described again a "little horn", showing the time when he will arise in that part of the Roman kingdom which was formerly part of the Grecian empire. It will be in the latter time of the empire "when the transgressors are come to the full", and this ruler also will "destroy the mighty ones and the holy people". While some have seen this as prophetic of Antiochus Epiphanes, there is a strong case for viewing it as a description of the same ruler as in chapter 7, the oppressor of Israel in the end-time.

3. In chapter 9 he speaks of "the prince that shall come" who will break the covenant with Israel half-way through the week, with desolations to follow; another view, we understand, of the same ruler.

4. Then in 11. 36 to 45, we have already seen the last of the kings of the north, pursuing the same seemingly victorious way, in the same terminal years, with the same avowed purpose and in the same godless spirit as those other rulers to whom reference has just been made.

There may be a doubt in the minds of some as to whether the second of these end-time rulers is the same person as the other three, but it would be difficult to refute that one, three and four are the same person. If that is accepted, it is evident that the king of the north of **11. 40** is a ruler enjoying for a brief season world-wide recognition, a cruel oppressor of Israel, and is the Old Testament presentation of the first beast of Revelation **13**, seen there in particular as a universal ruler who makes relentless war with the saints. *J. L. F.*

STUDIES IN THE CLOSING PHASE OF THE GOSPEL BY JOHN

John 16. 1-33

Warnings and Promises

From Macduff. —The Lord Jesus in His foreknowledge warned the disciples of the future when men would persecute Christians and think they were doing God's will. This was demonstrated during the apostles' lifetime, for within a relatively short time after the Lord spoke these words Saul of Tarsus pursued those who were professing Christians and sent them to prison. The Lord, whom they had learned to love and trust, was going to leave them, but He had promised that the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, would come and dwell in them personally. He would bring to remembrance what the Lord had said and taught while with them. One of the many names of the Holy Spirit is in this portion, the Spirit of Truth. The Spirit of Truth is going to guide us into all the truth. He will not speak from Himself but is going to declare the things that are to come. The Lord Jesus told the disciples plainly what would happen to them, but they could not see what the Lord meant in the words, "A little while, and ye behold Me not, and again a little while, and ye shall see Me". Today we understand the Lord was referring to His death and resurrection which were about to take place. The Lord had many more promises and instructions to give the disciples but because of their downcast spirit He did not impart much to them about the kingdom of God until after the resurrection (Acts 1. 3). The most important promise the Lord gave His disciples was connected with prayer. If we pray aright then we shall receive, and our joy will be full. From the scattering of the eleven in the garden until the three hours of darkness on the Cross, the Lord Jesus had no human help, but His Father was with Him. During the second three hours that the LORD suffered on the Cross at the hand of His God He was altogether alone, as was the scapegoat, and it was then that He prayed the prayer of Psalm **22. 1**.

W. Johnston.

From Birkenhead. —The Lord warned His apostles of coming persecution. He had spoken of this on earlier occasions but now He referred to it in terms they would recall when it occurred. He then expressed in clear terms that He was to leave them and return to His Father. He entered into their sorrow but told them that His going away was expedient for them; it was to their advantage. To compensate them for the absence of their Master the Holy Spirit would be sent. This great event in God's dealings with men awaited His return in triumph to

the Father. The work of the Holy Spirit in the world **and** in believers **is** clearly **defined** in **verses** 8-14. This was indeed a wonderful revelation of the Spirit's work **in** the present **age**.

Towards the **end** of the chapter the Lord dwells once more on His imminent return to the Father. **In** one **sentence** He **expressed** (**verse** 28) the wonderful **scope** of His mission, whence He **came** **and** whither He was going. This **seemed** at last to **impress** the apostles **and** yet He **turned back** their confident confession on themselves. They had **yet** to learn that more than human resolves of heart were **necessary** if they were to stand against temptation. We need this lesson too. In spite of **His** knowledge of their coming failure He bequeathed to them His **peace**. **Gracious Master!**

D. Banks, D. King.

From Liverpool—"These things" (**verse** 1) **refer** to what the Lord had **been** saying to His disciples **in** the previous chapter. He proceeds to **warn** them of the things which would come to **pass** **after** his departure. They would **be put** out of the synagogues, **one** of the penalties dreaded **by** the Jews. They would **be killed** **by** those who would think that they **were** doing **service** to God. These words had their fulfilment, **as** recorded **in** the **Acts** of the Apostles, especially **in** connexion with the persecution **at** Jerusalem **by** Saul of Tarsus (**Acts** 8. 9, 26. 9-11).

The warnings **given** **by** the Lord **may** well have caused anxiety in the hearts of the disciples **at** the **time** **but** His words no doubt would later **confirm** the faith of those who **were** to **experience** trials (**verse** 4).

The question was asked, *How* was **it** expedient for them that *He* should **go** away? **One** of the reasons **suggested** was that while **Jesus** was with the disciples their sphere of service was limited to the land of **Israel**. They could not fulfil the **great** commission of **Matthew** 28. 18-20 until the Holy **Spirit** had come. The coming of the Comforter was not merely **as** a substitute **but** a sufficient recompense for the **absence** of their Lord, "another Comforter" (14. 16).

"The Truth" (**verse** 13) is **a term** applied **by** **many** in churches of **God**, to the special truth of the house of **God**, **but** some disagreed with the view [1].

G. S.

EXTRACTS

From Methil. —The Comforter **is** the Spirit of Truth and the glorious promise **is** that He will **guide us into** all the truth. We were reminded of the words in John 7. 17, "If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether **it be** of God". We conclude from these **scriptures** that **every** believer is indwelt **by** the Holy Spirit, and God's **desire** for them **is** that they should **be in** His house. **We** cannot understand the expression "limited light" used **by** men, **in view** of the scripture, "He giveth not the Spirit **by measure**" (John 3. 34). Amongst the **great** promises that the Lord **Jesus** **gave** to His disciples was the promise that they would **see Him** again in resurrection. They would have sorrow **for a short time**, **but** the joy that was to follow no one could **take** from them (**verse** 22). He also **gave** them the **assurance** that in His **absence** if they should **ask** anything of the Father, He would **give it** them **in** His **name** (see also 1 John 5. 14-15).

It seems likely to us that the words of John 16, in association with chapters 13, 14, 15 and 17, were said in the Upper Room by the Lord to His disciples. The Lord Himself sums up beautifully in the last verse of John 16, when He tells the disciples, "In the world distress ye have; but cheer ye up, I have overcome the world" (Marshall's Greek English Testament).

D. B. Reid, N. G. Coomer.

From Kilmarnock. —The time of the Lord's death was drawing rapidly nearer but He had ever before Him the trials which those whom He loved would have to face. He revealed to them the persecution which they would have to endure and which could even be the cause of their death. They had been told of these things before (Luke 6. 22) but not so fully. When they heard them their hearts were burdened. The Lord had borne the brunt of persecution but He was going to leave them and they would have to face the foe. The thought of it so filled their minds that they did not even question the Lord Jesus when He said, "Now I go unto Him that sent Me".

He then told them of the One who would come when He was gone and of the mighty works He would do in the world. The Holy Spirit was to convict men in respect of sin, righteousness and judgement. Other things He would have to reveal to them but their hearts were too heavily burdened. The Spirit's work does not end there, for He would guide them into all the truth. He speaks of things concerning Christ, not of Himself, but what He hears, as also did Christ: "I speak not from Myself" (John 14. 10). The Holy Spirit's prime object was to glorify Christ in the eyes of men.

The Lord proceeded to speak to the disciples in proverbs. He told them of His going away and of His return to them. We regarded verses 16-22 as primarily relating to His death, His ascension to His Father and return to His disciples for the space of forty days. Secondly we thought of it as a promise relating to His return for the Church the Body. The disciples' hearts would be very heavy and they would weep over the death of Him whom they loved [2].

His disciples would see Him raised when great would be their joy: they would have a joy which no one would be able to take from them. No questions would be asked then, all their doubts and fears would be put aside and they would accept every word the Lord would tell them. When He had gone back to the Father they would pray in His name and not expect Him to pray on their behalf, but He will make intercession for those who draw near unto God (Hebrews 7. 25).

Ian T. Meek.

From Aberkenfig and Barry. —Rejection of Christ as Saviour is the sin which will bring men to a lost eternity. Through Adam the whole human race is lost and needs a Saviour, but that Saviour has been provided. Had there been no Saviour they would at least have had an excuse, but now there is no reason for anyone to be lost.

Why does the Holy Spirit convict the world of righteousness because of Christ's ascension to the Father? The Lord Jesus is the Righteous and Holy One; He did no sin, but the world condemned Him to death as a wrong-doer. Now that same Person has been shown to be righteous by God because He raised Him from the dead. Because of

the resurrection, Christ's death has been shown to be appointed by God. He came to do God's will, which led Him to the Cross, and that work being finished, He has been raised. But not only has He been raised from the dead, He has been raised to heaven. It was the witness of Peter to the truth of the resurrection and ascension of the Christ which caused conviction on the day of Pentecost.

Satan was judged at Calvary; he lost his case. Christ died and was raised again. Calvary was the victory over Satan and evil, "Having put off from Himself the principalities and the powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it" (Colossians 2. 15). Through death He brought to nought him that had the power of death, that is the devil (Hebrews 2. 14). The resurrection of the Lord Jesus is proof that death has been conquered and also that all men will be judged.

R. C. Jones.

From Denmark Hill, London. —The chapter records the final warnings of the Lord Jesus to His eleven chosen disciples before He went out of that large upper room to meet His betrayer. In a very little while they were going to miss Him because of His death and His going back to heaven. The impending events were to mean sorrow and great suffering to them. The Saviour told them as much as they could bear. "Ye shall be scattered... and shall leave Me alone" (verse 32), was a statement to be fulfilled before another day had run its course. In the more distant future they were to experience being expelled from synagogues, and some would be put to death through the ignorance and unbelief of such a one as Saul. It is wonderful how the Master intersperses words of warning with cheering words and faithful promises, positively assuring them that although He was going away they would see Him again in a little while. Then their hearts would rejoice. Their joy would never be taken away by anyone.

Between His imminent ascension and future descent He was not going to leave the disciples desolate. The Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, would be their Guide to help them through life. He was also to be sent to declare and reveal little by little the events of the future, and to glorify Christ in their hearts.

Mark McKaig.

From Birmingham. —The sorrow of the disciples (verse 6) was the result of what they had just learned from the Master concerning the coming persecution and more particularly perhaps His departure from them. The role of the Holy Spirit (the great promise of the chapter) is that of Comforter, not that He would remove the causes of their sorrow. This sorrow is referred to again in verses 20, 21. Verse 22 tells of the release from this sorrow when the persecution of earth is over and the saints will be for ever united with their Lord and Master at His coming [3].

An alternative suggestion was that the sorrow that filled the disciples' hearts was because of the suffering and death that their Lord was BO shortly to know and that "remembereth no more the anguish" applies to the time when the Holy Spirit (Comforter) is come. In that connexion it was suggested that "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice" (verse 22) also refers to the coming of the Holy Spirit [4]. We shall appreciate guidance on these points.

D. H. Elson.

From Vancouver, B. C. —Words of comfort are given to the disciples in chapter 14, exhortation on testimony and witnessing in chapter 15, and they are made aware in chapter 16 of the sorrow and persecution that they would encounter after the Lord left. While He was with them they could come to Him for help with their problems. But He indicated to them that soon there would be trial and testing which could make them better men. He gave them counsel and guidance so that they might have power to overcome. However, this was not their only consolation, for the Holy Spirit was to indwell believers.

The importance of the coming of the Comforter is emphasized in verse 7 and is linked with the Lord's departure. If He did not leave, the Spirit would not come. The Holy Spirit would aid the world-wide proclamation of the gospel, whereas while the Lord was on earth He worked in a limited sphere.

The Holy Spirit today fulfills the same work in the believer as did the Master with His twelve and any other believers of that time.

7. Pope, J. Bell, Jr.

From Derby. —Saul's zeal in persecuting the early followers of the Lord Jesus illustrates the truth of verse 2 in which the Lord forewarns the disciples that these things will come to pass.

The work of the Holy Spirit is before us in verses 8-11, the three aspects of conviction stated there being essential to bring before the unbeliever his need. The Holy Spirit guides us into all the truth concerning the word of God.

The Lord Jesus came from God and was verily God the Son (verses 27, 28). When the Lord Jesus had explained this the disciples needed no more proof of His Deity. Although they believed in Him, they were to be scattered to their own homes and the Lord Jesus was going to be left alone during His trial. He was to have the comfort of His Father and we can have similar comfort in the Holy Spirit during **our trials** [5].

L. E. Foster, G. W. Conway.

From Hamilton. —The reason why the Lord Jesus had to speak to the disciples as He did was that tribulation was at hand. So long as the disciples were with the Lord Jesus the world's hostility was concentrated on Him, but when He was gone it would fall on the disciples.

Verse 7 contains one of the greatest promises ever given to the disciples, for the Lord Jesus revealed the coming of the Holy Spirit. He told them that it was expedient for Him to go, or the Comforter could not come. He had been with them in their sorrows and gave strength to them by His presence. Now the Holy Spirit would not only come, but He was to dwell in them for ever (John 14. 16, 17).

The disciples failed to understand what Christ meant by saying that after a little while they would behold Him no more, and again a little while and they would see Him. When the Lord Jesus went to the Cross He was taken away from them but they saw Him again when He appeared to them **after His** resurrection.

Isaac Gray.

COMMENTS

[1] **Liverpool.** — "The truth" embraces the whole of the revelation of God contained in the Scriptures (John 17. 17) and is centred in the Lord Jesus Christ, who is "the Way, the Truth and the Life". The finding of truth begins with being born again, the pursuit of it (1 Timothy 2, 4) brings the disciple to the house of God. Those who respond to the Holy Spirit's guidance into all the truth must necessarily find a place in the house of God, a major aspect of New Testament truth. We therefore believe that the term "the Truth"¹ may be used correctly concerning the house of God. *L. B.*

[2] **Kilmarnock.** — We do not think verses 16-22 can have any reference to the rapture of the Church. "Because I go to the Father" (verse 17) are the disciples' own words, recalling what the Lord said in verse 10, and are not necessarily connected with the "little while" of verse 16. The time when the disciples will see the Lord again and rejoice is referred to as "that day" in verses 23 and 26, a day when the disciples will ask of the Father and receive their requests; this can be no other than the present dispensation. *L. B.*

[3] **Birmingham.** — The particular cause of the sorrow experienced by the disciples in the Upper Room was the knowledge that the Lord was about to leave them in tragic circumstances. This sorrow deepened into anguish of spirit during the following three days but was completely removed when they saw the Lord in resurrection. Their joy was then full, and even persecution could not spoil it (Acts 5. 41). The sorrow mentioned in verses 6, 20 and 21 does not refer to the experience of the believer today. *L. B.*

[4] **Birmingham.** — The one-ness of the Godhead cannot be treated in this way. In verse 22 the Lord was speaking exclusively of His personal appearance to the disciples after His resurrection. *L. B.*

[5] **Derby.** — The Lord experienced the comfort of communion with His Father throughout His life, but not during the three hours of darkness on the Cross whilst He suffered for sins. It has been suggested that His prayer, "My God, My God why hast Thou forsaken Me?" implies that although God forsook Him, this did not interfere with His communion with the Father. If such were the case it would detract from the reality of the Lord's sufferings on the Cross and would have rendered unnecessary this agonized utterance. It is true that at no other time did the Lord address His Father as God, but this was the unique occasion when God, the Judge of all, was dealing with the Sin-bearer. *L. B.*

Question and Answer.

Question from Aberkenfig and Barry. — Does verse 13 apply only to what the apostles received or has it an application today?

Answer. — The Lord was here speaking primarily to the eleven about the special help they would receive from the Holy Spirit to enable them to preach the gospel and to write the New Testament, but the promises

were also for others such as Mark, Luke and Paul, not present in the Upper Room, who were to be linked in this work. The verse also has an application today in so far as the Holy Spirit takes up the inspired word and guides obedient disciples into all the truth and reveals the things which **are** to come.

L. B.

PSALM 55 *Continued from page 48*

David carried out what we are exhorted to do, to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5. 17). He did what Daniel did who "kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God" (Daniel 6. 10); so David said, "Evening, and morning, and at noonday, will I complain and moan". The word "complain" describes the kind of prayer, though a number of other English words are used in other places for the Hebrew word *siach* used here. David then speaks of how the battle went that was against him, for God redeemed his soul in peace. Absalom and his vast forces were completely routed, and Absalom himself lost his life as he fled. God heard the many Who strove against David, not their prayers, but their unworthy words and shouting, and He answered in an unmistakable way in a disastrous defeat for them. These men who set themselves against David were quite unlike David, who was a man of many trials and many changes, changes which caused him to draw near to God and to cast himself upon Him, as the psalms which he wrote show. He was ever crying to God for deliverance. Those men, who knew no such changes, feared not God. What changes David knew from the beginning of his public life, from being the musician to Saul, the victor over Goliath, and the one praised above Saul the king, to being a fugitive from Saul, dwelling in mountains, caves and woods, his life being in constant danger! His life was a life of prayer and trusting God.

He hath put forth his hands against such as were at peace with him:

He hath profaned his covenant,

His mouth was smooth as butter,

But his heart was war:

His words were softer than oil,

Yet were they drawn swords, (verses 20, 21)

No doubt we have here a reference to Absalom who had been brought from Geshur, whence he had fled after he murdered his brother Amnon (2 Samuel 13. 28, 38, 39). After the king kissed Absalom, Absalom set about stealing the hearts of the men of Israel. In so doing he was against his father who was at peace with him. Then he falsely told his father of the vow he vowed to the LORD in Hebron, that if the LORD brought him back from Geshur to Jerusalem he would serve the LORD, and David said, "Go in peace", but it was no matter of serving the LORD, but of having himself proclaimed king. He broke his covenant or agreement with his father. He was a murderer, a thief who stole the hearts of the men of Israel, and a liar. He was like in character to men of our own time who seized the reins of government, who drove millions to their death, and themselves to destruction. Absalom

was a brazen-faced liar, as most modern dictators have also been. His mouth smooth as butter, and his words as oil, but they were as drawn swords and his heart was war. David was not in doubt as to the character of his son, but his judgement was confused by his love for him. He committed a great wrong against himself in bringing Absalom back from Geshur, and he wept sore after the battle when he was told that Absalom was dead, when he said, "O my son Absalom... would God I had died for thee", for Absalom died in his sin.

Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and He shall sustain thee:

He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.

But Thou, O God, shalt bring them down into the pit of destruction:

Bloodthirsty and deceitful men shall not live out half their days;
But I will trust in Thee, (verses 22, 23)

What David did in his distress, he encouraged others to do, to cast their burden upon the LORD, who is the great Burden-bearer of His taints who trust Him, for He will not suffer the righteous to be moved. Had God not come to David's help at that time, he would certainly have been moved from being king over God's people, for the most of Israel were after Absalom. Verse 22 has been a great support for many saints who have felt their burden heavy to bear. But there is great relief in coming to God and telling all to him. David contemplates the destruction which comes to men who are out to deceive and shed the blood of other men, men who are often surrounded by strong guards themselves, but David says that such men shall not live out half their days. Have we not heard of it in our time? David falls back at the end of the psalm to speak about the way to live a life of blessedness; he says, "But I will trust in Thee". Over and over again we are encouraged in Scripture to trust in Him, and not in man, and not in ourselves.

J. M.

PSALM 56

This psalm is written about the same time and about the same circumstances as Psalm 34, when the Philistines took David in Gath, and when Abimelech the king of Gath drove him away. This is described in 1 Samuel 21. 10-15. In fleeing from Saul to Abimelech, he was "as if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him" (Amos 5. 19). His triumph over Goliath the Philistine champion and his being the chief cause of the defeat of the Philistines, also the song of victory sung by the women of Israel, were not forgotten by the Philistines. He got away from Gath by adopting the actions of a madman. This golden (MICHAM) psalm was sung to a tune the name of which was, "The silent dove of them that are afar off".

Be merciful unto me, O God; for man would swallow me up:

All the day long he fighting oppresseth me.

Mine enemies would swallow me up all the day long:

For they be many that fight proudly against me (verses 1, 2).

Having come as he thought to Gath for protection, he looks back to Saul and the men of Israel from whom he had fled, and he asks God to be merciful to him, for men would swallow him up, who all day long by fighting oppressed him. It is the day by day and all the day long oppression that wears down the spirit, and such as are so tried are apt to seek relief where it cannot be found. So was it here with David. His enemies (Hebrew *SHARER*, to observe, watch, "Mine observers", A. V. Marg.), who fought proudly against him, those that watched him, would have liked to swallow him up.

What time I am afraid,
I will put my trust in Thee.
In God I will praise His word:
In God have I put my trust, I will not be afraid;
What can flesh do unto me? (verses 3, 4).

To be afraid we have all had experience at one time or another in life, and when we are afraid we think of safety, either in a person or a place. So David said that when he was afraid, he would put his trust in God (*ELOHIM*, the triune God). "Trust" is from the Hebrew *BATACH*, to lean on or to be confident in. Here, and in verse 10, David speaks of praising God's word in God (*ELOHIM*) and in the LORD (*Jehovah*). To praise (Hebrew *HALAL*) is to show clearly as in this case, the excellencies of God's word. He said that he would do so "in God", which is an unusual expression. Then David says that he would put his trust in God, and not be afraid, and he asks, "What can flesh do unto me?" If we act wisely and with trust in God, no one can be harmful to us but ourselves. This was truly so in David's case. The one who brought trouble and destruction to king Saul was Saul himself. Trials we will have and sorrows we may know, but these will be necessary to form the character, and will be as the cutting dust to polish the gem.

All the day long they wrest my words:
All their thoughts are against me for evil.
They gather themselves together, they hide themselves,
They mark my steps,
Even as they have waited for my soul (verses 5, 6).

These statements of David are concerning the behaviour of Saul and his men who caused David and his men to seek safety in Gath. They wrested his words, they were against him for evil, they gathered together and hid themselves, they marked his steps and waited for his soul. Is it to be wondered at, that he thought his best course was to get away from it all? But all this was necessary to prepare him for the great work for God which lay ahead of him, the results of which no man ever equalled, in the revival and restoration of divine service in his time.

Shall they escape by iniquity?
In anger cast down the peoples, O God.
Thou tellest my wanderings:
Put Thou my tears into Thy bottle;
Are they not in Thy book? (verses 7, 8).

Many have thought to escape from evils by committing more evil. But that is not a way of escape, it simply adds to what they will reap later on. David asks God to cast the peoples down. God will always do that when His time arrives. "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil" (Ecclesiastes 8. 11). "Thou tellest (*CAPHAR*, to inscribe, enumerate, recount) my wanderings". God has given to us in 1 and 2 Samuel somewhat of the wanderings of His servant in the time of his rejection, but there is much more to be told, even as it will be with all the faithful. The biographies and autobiographies of saints do not contain all the record that God has kept. David asks God to put his tears in God's tear-bottle. Tears used to be valued years ago much more than they are today. In these savage, hardhearted days tears are few and valueless. But in museums tear-bottles are to be seen, some with one spout and some with two, to catch all that flowed from the emotions of women and also from men in their time. Tears are also recorded in God's book. In his epistles Paul speaks of his tears.

Then shall mine enemies turn back in the day that I call:
 This I know, that God is for me.
 In God will I praise His word:
 In the LORD will I praise His word:
 In God have I put my trust, I will not be afraid;
 What can man do unto me? (verses 9, 10, 11).

The calling of David upon God had its effect upon his enemies; whether they knew that he called upon God or not is not clear, but David believed that his calling would result in their turning back. He knew that God was for him, and that is something for us all to know. Here again we have David praising God's word in God, and he repeats also his other words of verse 4, that he would trust in God and not be afraid, because, he asks, "What can man do unto me?" Man tried his best to do him harm, even to kill him, but failed. This is ever the course to be followed by all God's saints, to trust and not be afraid.

Thy vows are upon me, O God:
 I will render thank offerings unto Thee.
 For Thou hast delivered my soul from death:
 Hast Thou not delivered my feet from falling?
 That I may walk before God
 In the light of the living (verses 12, 13).

J. M.

(to be continued D. V.)

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BIBLE STUDIES

"Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so" (Acts 17. 11).

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EDITORIAL

We should like to take this opportunity of thanking brethren who have written letters of appreciation of the subjects under discussion, or who have referred to the benefits of careful Bible study or suggested subjects for discussion or special articles. It is not possible to reply individually to these correspondents, nevertheless their letters are appreciated and any suggestions made are carefully considered, and if possible, acted upon. For instance, some brethren have asked for further comments to be made on the relative merits of the Revised and Authorized versions. We hope shortly to be able to comply with this request.

We also thank brethren generally for the great improvement in punctuality in recent months in spite of the earlier date for the submission of papers, but we are concerned that the enthusiasm shown at the beginning of the year's study has, as in previous years, waned to some extent now the middle of the year has been reached. It is necessary before starting to "build the tower" to sit down and count the cost. For the encouragement of brethren we would make honourable mention of the consistent work by several assemblies who have, without a single omission, sent in papers month by month for many years. Considering the time involved and the painstaking work required to prepare and write an article which will be of help to others, this is no small achievement and is worthy of emulation. "Be diligent in these things... continue in these things" (1 Timothy 4. 15, 16).

In this issue we publish the last of Mr. Ferguson's four articles on Daniel 11 in which he paints an absorbing picture of the last days before the coming of the Son of Man. Numerous parts drawn from many prophecies are pieced together to present a clear account of those future times. Much of the paper is of a suggestive nature and comments on difficult points and areas of possible disagreement are invited. We should be grateful if brethren would now put pen to paper and send to Mr. Martin their contributions on matters of interest in any of the four papers. Only in this way can we make progress in our study of a sphere of Scriptural teaching which is becoming increasingly important. The signs of the times are unmistakable as Israel becomes locked in a deadly struggle with the Arab nations.

L. B.

DISCUSSION OF PROPHETIC CHARACTER OF DANIEL 11

(continued from page 51)

(d) How does "the end" of verse 45 fit in with Revelation 19. 19?

It is not easy to piece together the various presentations in Scripture of the final destruction of Gentile rule by the Son of Man at His coming. It may be another of the things which the Spirit has not fully revealed. It may be on the other hand, that by means of our present enquiry, He may give us guidance as one and another contribute to the study.

The word "war" in Revelation 16. 14 ("battle" in the A. V.) may be a single encounter or a series of encounters. Provision has to be made for several major happenings:

Ezekiel 38 and 39—The northern hordes¹ attack on Israel.

Daniel 11. 44, 45—The king of the north's engagements.

Zechariah 12. 3 and 14. 2—The nations at Jerusalem.

Revelation 16. 14-16—The nations gathered at Har-Magedon.

19. 19—The beast, the kings and their armies warring against the Lamb.

We must bear in mind that the dominating ruler in the terminal years is the first beast of Revelation 13, the supreme king in what is commonly termed the revived Roman empire. We are assuming in this paper that he rises in the old northern territory awarded to Seleucus, answers to "the Assyrian" of Isaiah 30. 31 and Micah 5. 5 and is the king of Sheshac (Babylon) of Jeremiah 25. 26, having his throne there till the city is destroyed in the sovereignty of God. To him all the nations will yield at least token subjection.

We must also bear in mind, however, that according to Zechariah 14. 2 God is going to gather all nations to Jerusalem, which gathering is also spoken of in Zechariah 12. 3 and Revelation 16. 14. Nothing can prevent this gathering for "This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth" (Isaiah 14. 26), even though it may well cut right across the world authority of the man of sin.

Ezekiel 38 and 39 lie between the restoration of Israel in chapter 37 and the millennial city and temple in chapter 40 onwards. Obviously then the hordes of Gog from the uttermost parts of the north, gathering strength as they travel south, come down on Israel before the millennium. Arrogant Israel—the scornful men of Isaiah 28—hitherto enjoying safety in terms of the covenant with the prince of Daniel 9; a people hated of the nations, their "burdensome stone". But Gog's hordes fall, slain by the Almighty on the mountains of Israel.

One might deduce from this that the northern attack could be any time during the second half of the last week and is simply one of a series of encounters. But having regard to the fact that all nations are to be gathered to Jerusalem for the final conflict with the Son of Man, we suggest for study that Ezekiel 38 and 39 find their place in the one last onslaught on the holy city.

It is evident that towards the end of the seven year period all is not well within the kingdom of the beast. Daniel 11. 40 tells of trouble in Egypt and of how the king of the North gets it under control. But

while doing so "tidings out of the east and out of the north trouble him". The trouble from the north has all the appearance of the hordes of Gog coming down, and the trouble from the east may well be "the kings that come from the sunrising" (Revelation 16. 12), the armies of the Far East on the way to Armageddon.

Thus, with the forces of the ten kingdom confederacy under the beast marching north again from Egypt to pitch the battle "between the sea and the glorious holy mountain", the northern hordes spread down the mountains of Israel ready to attack, the far-eastern hosts at Armageddon, the scene is set for the nations of the world, stretched down the 1600 furlongs of Revelation 14. 20, joined together in the one common objective of Psalm 83. 4, ready to fight both the people of Israel and their defending God.

It is suggested then that the king of the north comes to his end (Daniel 11. 45) in this conflict, when the Rider on the white horse comes down and casts him alive into the lake of fire (Revelation 19. 20).

In making these brief comments on the four subjects in question nothing is put forward in the spirit of dogmatism, but rather with a view to carrying the study of them one stage further forward. Our views on the less revealed aspects of prophecy must always remain somewhat fluid. It may be that the editors will be able in due course to review the various comments of contributors for our general benefit.

J. L. Ferguson

STUDIES IN THE CLOSING PHASE OF THE GOSPEL BY JOHN JOHN CHAPTER 17

THE LORD'S INTERCESSORY PRAYER

From Methil. —This beautiful intercessory prayer by the Lord Jesus to His Father is recorded only by John. It is remarkable for its detail; we can only assume that the complete prayer was recorded (18. 1). It was a prayer on behalf of others, namely His disciples. We believe it was spoken in the upper room, and therefore not very long before He was betrayed.

The Lord well knew all that would take place in those hours that lay ahead, yet just prior to all His sufferings His thoughts of love and care were for those who would be remaining in the world He was about to leave. "The hour" (verse 1) we understood to be not a literal hour, but the time for His crosswork. In verse 4 He says, "I glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which Thou hast given Me to do". We concluded that Jesus said this as though the Cross was already an accomplished fact. We linked this with verse 11. The whole prayer was in view of His imminent departure. He was going to the Father, but He wanted His disciples protected from the evil one. The Lord was not praying for the world in general. He was specifically asking on behalf of the men whom the Father had given Him out of the world (verse 6). At the same time this prayer has a direct application for present-day disciples of the Lord Jesus (verse 20).

The Lord prays for His own; those that are His are also the Father's. Divine equality is seen in the words of verse 10. He requests that they may have His joy fulfilled in themselves. Such joy is obtained by close communion between God and His Son and the believer (1 John 1. 3, 4). It is never intended that the faith of disciples should be without joy; we are exhorted to rejoice alway (1 Thessalonians 5. 16).

Neville Coomer

From Aberkenfig and Barry. —It would seem necessary for the Lord to lay aside His glory so that He could be fully identified with man. We see for example in Exodus 34. 29, 30 that the people of Israel were afraid to come near Moses because the skin of his face shone. The disciples also were afraid when they were given a glimpse of the Lord's glory in the Mount. John and Peter both refer to the incident (John 1. 14; 2 Peter 1. 16-18) [1]. We suggest therefore that the Lord in grace hid this glory from the eyes of men so that He could live amongst them in the way He did. This glory was awaiting Him when He would take it up again. There was of course a glory in the life that He lived, the words that He spake and the mighty works which He accomplished in the Father's name (Luke 9. 43), which none but those with spiritual discernment were able to apprehend. This, however, is not referred to in verse 5.

It was asked what the Lord meant by "I pray not for the world". It was observed that the Greek word (*kasmos*) not only contemplates the unbelievers in the world, but the whole system, for the scripture says, "The whole world (*kosmos*) lieth in the evil one". It is the will of god that all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth [2].

The Lord asked the Father, "Keep them in Thy name which Thou hast given Me". His desire for His own was that they might be one, and He refers to the unity between Himself and the Father (see also verses 21-23). This is what He desires from His people today, but in the world we see amongst believers not merely disunity but absolute chaos. He said "I have given them Thy word", and it is this word of truth which will keep disciples. It was not His desire that they should live secluded lives, for He would send them forth into the world, bearing the message of eternal life. With this in view He prayed also for them that would believe through their word.

It was noted from verse 22 that there is a glory associated with being a child of God: "partakers of the divine nature". One of the joys of the Lord is that those who believe on Him will one day behold His glory and be with Him eternally. He wants us to see His glory.

J. Butler, D. H. Butler

From Portslade. —As only a third of this chapter is directly intercessional, a wider description would seem to be more accurate. The word used for pray, three times in the chapter, means to make request and is not the word usually used for intercession in the New Testament. The highest motive is to be found in this prayer, "that the Father might be glorified", and interwoven with it throughout the chapter a rich ap-

preciation of address to the Father. The characteristic phrases which are found in this chapter fit into the unique pattern of this Gospel, and the immediately preceding chapters. It is significant that they are omitted by the Synoptists.

The glory of verses 1-4 would be the glory of the accomplished work authorized by the Father resulting in the giving of eternal life. The glory in verse 5 is the glory of the Son's Deity. That the Lord should voice this in the light of Philippians 2. 6 may seem strange, but would be again qualified by, "That the Son may glorify Thee (the Father)" (verse 1). The glory of verse 22 would be the glory of perfect unity. That this glory was given is again difficult to understand [3].

In considering who are "Thine" of verses 6 and 9, some thought that it would include the 120 of Acts 1, and certainly from verse 12 we get the impression of a flock with a guardian Shepherd, but verses 24, 6, 9, 13, 20, would seem to include all believers [4].

W. T.

EXTRACTS

From Glasgow (Parkhead). —One thing that clearly emerged from our discussion of this month's study subject was how concise the Lord was and how careful in His choice of words when speaking in prayer to His Father. Three aspects of this were noted in the way the Lord addressed His Father. In communion with God the Lord addressed Him as "Father" (verse 1); in supplication for His disciples the Lord used the words "Holy Father" (verse 11); and in speaking of the world He said "righteous Father" (verse 25). We contrasted the Lord's brevity with our verbosity. Reference was made to the slipshod manner in which we often pray to God. We were reminded that this was "the Lord's prayer", a term often less aptly applied to the prayer which the Lord taught His disciples (Matthew 6. 9-13; Luke 11. 2-4).

Considered against the background of the chapter, the Lord's prayer becomes all the more poignant and passionate in its appeal, for these words were spoken on the eve of His crucifixion and should be considered in the light of the events of the next day. It was suggested that what burdened the Lord's heart on the night before His death was not so much the salvation of sinners, as what is so much in the minds of the ecumenical movement and men in general today, Christian unity [5].

In the light of the last clause of verse 23, and in view of the fact that in the person of Christ we are as near to the Father as the Son, the question was asked, "Does God love us as much as He loves His Son?" [6].

J.

Peddle

From Macduff. —In the Master's view are the dark hours when He will be wrenched away from His beloved disciples, and they will forsake Him. Thus He prays, "Holy Father, keep them in Thy name which Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, even as We are" (verse 11). The Master knows our weaknesses, and He knows the great power of the evil one, so it is most important that His disciples be knit in one, even as the Father is in the Son. It is a cheer to present-day disciples that the Lord also prayed for us (verse 20) making it our responsibility to

continue to **be one, so** that the world **may** believe. We solemnly thought how this longing for **oneness** has **not been** realized **amongst** believers **in our** day. The Lord leaves **us** with a **very** high objective: **to be** perfectly **united** in **one** so that the love wherewith the Father **loved** His **Son may be** found in **us**

Now the faithful **Lord**, His work completed, leaves His disciples. So also when **our service** for the Master is completed we know that we shall **be** with Him, **and** behold **and** share the **glory** that the Father has given Him (**verse 24**).
Jas. Mitchell

From Vancouver, B. C. —It was **suggested** that there are two **types** of glory: essential glory (the glory of **Diety** in which we **cannot** share) **and** acquired glory, **in** which we **can** share **by** works on this earth. Glory is "outshining", **and by** extension in **meaning**, "excellence" or "pre-eminence". It is also noteworthy that Christ **refers** to His work **as** glorifying the Father **and** not **as** suffering. He was looking forward to the fruits that would **be reaped** from it **and** not the **unpleasant** details of the work.

This prayer for His own is **not an** evangelical **prayer** for the lost **as** some would **suggest, but a** pleading for the welfare of His own. The sanctification of the saints (**verses 7-19**) **seem** to relate to their contact with the world. We **can ask** ourselves whether our contact with the world **is** correct, positively **and** negatively. The question has **been asked** **as** to whether the Lord was speaking this intercessory **prayer in** the capacity of High Priest or Pastor (Shepherd); **it would seem** the latter **m.**

Finally the Lord **referred** to the Father in three aspects. In **verse 1** the Lord **addressed** Him as "Father", **God's** relationship to Himself; then in **verse 11** He **says**, "Holy Father", a title showing how He **appears** to the **saints; and** in **verse 25** we hear Him addressed as "righteous Father", His character to the world.
J. Bell, Jr.

From Melbourne, Victoria. —The Lord **Jesus** Christ **prays** in John 17 in the full anticipation of the Cross. He **prays for** Himself, for the apostles **and** for those who would believe **in** Him through their word. He **ever** had the glory of **God** before Him, **and** could truly **say**, "I **do** always the things that **are** pleasing to Him" (John 8. 29), **and** received the testimony of the Father, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I **am** well pleased" (Matthew 3. 17). The **greatest act** of glorification was His work **upon** the Cross. This was the hour to which He had looked forward from eternity **past**. His **prayer**, "Glorify Thou Me" (**verse 5**), was **answered** in His resurrection **and** ascension to the throne **above**; "God, which **raised** Him **from** the dead, **and gave** Him glory" (1 Peter 1. 21); "Wherefore also God highly exalted Him" (Philippians 2. 9).

His concern was **for** His disciples who would **be** hated **by men for** His **name's** sake. They were about **to be** left in the world in **testimony, and** He **prayed** in their hearing that they might **be kept from** the evil **one**. **No one** but He knew the strength of the Adversary. **No doubt** the **memory of** that **prayer** would strengthen the apostles in later months

and years when they would be subject to the onslaught of the Adversary. The Lord says of the eleven to the Father, "They have kept Thy word". He does not mention their failures but speaks of their faithfulness.

P. W. A.

From **Derby**. —The Lord Jesus has authority over everything; He is before all things and in Him all things consist, but we learn from the Scriptures that He laid aside His glory and came to earth to be born in humble circumstances. He exhibited no outward glory visible to men generally. The hour was now come for the Father to glorify the Son that the Son in turn might glorify the Father.

It is evident from His prayer that He wanted all believers to be one as He and the Father were one. Also He would like us to experience the joy that He experienced with the Father. We can have this joy through leading a sanctified life.

L. E. Foster, G. W. Conway

From **Birmingham**. —The Lord said concerning the apostles, "I have given them Thy word" (verse 14), and we were reminded that this not only refers to the gospel (which must be the first step) but to the whole truth of God's word. "Sanctify them in the truth: Thy word is truth". The Lord commended the disciples in saying "They have kept Thy word".

This prayer also expresses the desire of the Lord for the unity of believers. Before there can be unity there must be love, personal love for our Lord, for our love for the Lord has its reflection in our love to each other and in our unity. We cannot be truly obedient if we do not love the Lord. Our testimony depends on our love and unity, as expressed in the Lord's prayer for unity, "that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me". For the great example given us is suggested by the Lord's words, "That they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me" (verse 21) and, "The love wherewith Thou lovedst Me may be in them" (verse 26).

D. P. Brown

From **Denmark Hill, London**. —The prayer was made in the upper room after the Passover Supper. Hence it was made before Calvary, but its themes assume Calvary is past. Its purpose was to help those who would testify to God's glory after He was gone, firstly the then present disciples and later those who would believe in God through their word.

The disciples in the world should not be divided, but a perfect unity, just as there existed in the Godhead. This unity cannot be thought of as being expressed in the Body of Christ, otherwise we would be suggesting that the Lord prayed for the unity of that which is necessarily a perfect unity. The only other "whole" which is found in Scriptures relating to the disciples of Jesus in the world is the house of God, composed of the Churches of God. Hence it is clear that it is this unity for which the Lord is praying. Many devout and loveable Christians fail their Lord by opposing this truth.

While He was with them, Jesus kept all the disciples except Judas, who was destined to betray the Lord. Although He has gone to heaven. His keeping power has not changed, and if there is departure from Him, it is not because He has failed, for He has made every provision; the fault lies only with those who depart.

C. L. Prasher

From Kilmarnock. —Paul asked, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine or nakedness, or peril or sword?" (Romans 8. 35). The writer to the Hebrews seems to answer, "Wherefore also He is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Hebrews 7. 25).

With the full knowledge of all that lay before Him, including the dark hours of Calvary, the Lord Jesus Christ intercedes with God His Father, not only for the eleven disciples but for all disciples who would follow.

The endearing words "Father" and "O Father" (verses 1, 5) show the intimacy of the Father and the Son. The Lord's desire was that He should now be glorified as He had glorified the Father (verses 4, 5) and that in the giving of eternal life the name of the only true God would be made known [8]. With the cross-work viewed as accomplished the Lord desired the restoration of His eternal glory.

Judas had no part in the intercessions of the Lord. He was the "son of perdition" (verse 12). He was lost to the Great Shepherd and would perish.

J.

M. Rankine

From Liverpool. —This prayer of the Lord to His Father stresses His overriding concern for the glory of His Father. The words "glory" and "glorify" are used in several different, although connected, senses. In verses 1 and 4 "glorify" could be understood as "give honour to", but in verse 5 it seems to imply the rising to glory which took place at Christ's ascension. Verse 10 appears to mean that Christ's glory was shown out through His disciples. "Glory" in verse 5 refers to the exalted, praiseworthy position due to a Person of the Godhead, but in verse 22 it cannot have this meaning. We suggest that here the word refers to the revelation of the divine attributes which creates unity among men.

The disciples to whom the Lord manifested His glory are viewed as the gift of the Father to the Son; the choice of the disciples is looked at from the divine point of view, discounting any actions of their own wills. The Lord prays for the preservation, sanctification, unification and glorification of His disciples, and all subsequent believers. We considered that in verses 21-23 the Lord was praying for a visible unity of disciples on earth, as an expression of the unity of the Father and the Son, since He Himself was to ensure the unity of the Church, the Body. If this is so, it appears that this part of the prayer was not answered in the affirmative [9].

P. L. Hickling

From Hamilton. —Many are the occasions when the Lord prayed to His Father, but few instances are recorded where the content of the prayer is revealed. If the prayer was uttered aloud, then we can conclude that as well as being a prayer of intercession, it was the Lord's desire to give instruction and comfort to the men whom He was about to leave.

The path of the disciple should be marked by progress, and this was apparent in the eleven. When Christ came into their midst their know-

ledge of God was limited to an outward understanding. Christ taught them the things which He had received from the Father (verse 8). The disciples not only received His words but kept and cherished them. Their knowledge of God as the Father involved a knowledge of the Son of God. This they received by faith.

Although Christ did not include the world in His prayer, this by no means put a limit to the extent of His love, but because He was about to leave His disciples it was necessary that He should intercede for them before His Father in order that they might receive strength to fulfil the work for which they had been prepared.

To have removed the disciples from a scene of opposition would have seemed best in human eyes, but for them, as for their Lord, conflict was the condition of victory. It was Christ's desire that they should go into the world to preach the gospel to all nations, that through them the influence of Christ would be felt and that many might experience the blessings of union with Christ.

A. R. F.

COMMENTS

[1] **Aberkenfig and Barry.** —Whereas 2 Peter 1. 16-18 specifically refers to the Mount of Transfiguration, I am disposed to think that John 1. 14 has a wider application in the sense of John 2. 11.

G. P. Jr.

[2] **Aberkenfig and Barry.** —Our friends have touched an important point in distinguishing the different shades of meaning between the "world" of men and women whom God longs to save, and the "world" as the ordered system of human affairs in alienation from God (Ephesians 2. 2) and directed by the prince of the world (John 12. 31). The Greek word *kosmos* is used frequently in the latter sense.

G. P. Jr.

[3] **Portslade.** —Philippians 2. 6 concerns the meekness of Christ and His self-emptying in accomplishing the work of redemption. John 17. 5 shows that one of the things He surrendered was his heavenly glory. In chapter 17 He looks forward to the restoration of this glory.

L. B.

[4] **Portslade.** —From verse 6 to verse 19 the Lord had the eleven apostles particularly in view, and other men who had received the words of the Lord Jesus as given by the Father (verse 8) and who had kept His word (verse 6). They had withstood the world's hatred (verse 14). The Lord had sent them forth to testify (verse 18). Much of this could not apply to all believers. From verse 20 there follows His longing that believers might be one in unity before the world. Verse 24 anticipates the ultimate glory with Christ which we know will be the portion of all believers, but the main burden of the whole prayer is for the spiritual strengthening and unity of faithful disciples.

G. P. Jr.

[5] **Glasgow (Parkhead).** —Our friends probably do not intend to imply that the godly unity desired by the Lord has any resemblance to the spurious unity of the ecumenical movement but we feel the point should be made clear.

L. B.

[6] **Glasgow** (Parkhead). —John 3. 16 supplies the answer to this question; God's love is perfect, whatever its object. Nevertheless the latter part of John 17. 23 concerns the quality of God's love rather than its degree. The Greek word used here is *agapao*, Christian love, which is "not an impulse from the feelings, it does not always run with the natural inclinations, nor does it spend itself only upon those for whom some affinity is discovered" (Hogg and Vine). L. B.

[7] **Vancouver**. —The Lord Jesus was not a priest while on earth (Hebrews 8. 4). It was after His resurrection that He became a High Priest after the order of Melchizedek. His prayer should not therefore be regarded as a priestly exercise in that sense, although parts of the prayer may include similar elements to those associated with the Lord's present priestly ministry. G. P. Jr.

[8] **Kilmarnock**. —The meaning of verse 3 is rather that the new life of the believer is such that along its eternal course there accrues an ever increasing knowledge of the Father and the Son, endowing it with spiritual quality. L. B.

[9] **Liverpool**. —Was there not an affirmative answer to this prayer of the Lord Jesus in the initial unity of the great majority of believers in apostolic times? As in other dispensations the divine ideal for God's people was later shattered by human failure, but the prayer of John 17 reveals the Lord's desire for the present age, and this found remarkable expression in the first century. G. P. Jr.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Question from Liverpool. —Does the phrase, "Which Thou hast given Me" in verses 11 and 12 refer to "Thy name" (signifying the power of God) or to "these" and "them" as in the authorized version?

Answer. —The Greek text used for the Authorized version differs in a few minor respects from that used by the Revisers. John 17. 11, 12 are instances of this, but most scholars prefer the R. V. reading here. L. B.

Question from Kilmarnock. —Were the disciples present during the prayer of John 17?

Answer. —John 16. 33 and 18. 1 both indicate that the Lord was with the eleven. Interposed between these two verses is chapter 17, in which the Lord addresses the Father as though He were alone, but we have no reason to believe that the disciples actually left the upper room before their Master; in fact such a move would have been unlikely, for they feared the Jewish authorities too much to venture forth on their own. L. B.

Question from Portslade and Aberkenfig and Barry. —What is "Thy name which thou hast given Me" (verses 11 and 12)?

Answer. —It seems to me that the name of God uniquely revealed through the Lord Jesus to the apostles was that of "Father". As Dr. Luxmoore's beautiful hymn puts it,

"Christ, who redeemed us from sin and the Fall,
Taught us this God as our Father to call"

(Hymn 199. P. H. S. S.)

This was in contrast to the names of God familiarly used in the light of Old Covenant revelation. God gave this Name to the Lord Jesus in the sense that it was given to Him to teach the disciples to call God their Father, just as the name "I am" was given to Moses to pass on to Israel (Exodus 3. 14). In this name, expressing God's tender personal interest and care, the Master had kept the disciples while with them (Matthew 6. 31-32, 10. 28-29, **18. 14**).
G. P. Jr.

Question from Aberkenfig and Barry. —Is there any significance in the use by the Lord of the words, Father, Holy Father and Righteous Father?

Answer. —Each different appellation carried its own teaching, dues to this are given in the papers from Glasgow (Parkhead) and Vancouver,
L. B.

Question from Birmingham. —When and to whom does the Lord give the glory which the Father has given Him (verse 22)?

Answer. —This must refer to the moral glory displayed by the Lord on earth, His love, grace, humility, holiness and truth which in measure are found in true disciples, and will enable them to be together in divine unity.
L. B.

PSALM 56 *Continued from page 60*

"Thy vows" are not something that God has vowed, I judge, but something that the psalmist vowed. I take it that what is said here, in verse 12, is **the** same as what is said Psalm **50. 14**. The **vows made** to God were upon him, and he would render thanks offerings (not peace offerings in that sense, Leviticus 7. 11, 12), but offerings of thanksgiving to God. As David escaped from Gath he could speak of God delivering his soul from death, and his feet from falling, and this was in order that he might walk before God in the light of the living, that is the
J. M.

PSALM 57

This is another golden (*MICHTAM*) psalm, set to *AL-TASHHETH*, Destroy not, to which Psalm 58, 59 and 75 are also set. It is concerning the time when David fled from Saul in the cave. Some conclude that this is the cave of Adullam (1 Samuel 22. 1), but it may be the cave in the wilderness of En-gedi, when Saul pursued David with three thousand men and he entered the cave where David and his men were (1 Samuel 24. 1-3). I think it is the latter cave, not the former.

Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me;
For my soul taketh refuge in Thee;
Yea, in the shadow of Thy wings will I take refuge,
Until these calamities be overpast.
I will cry unto God Most High;
Unto God that performeth all things for me (verses 1, 2).

The words of this psalm fit the trying experience of David and his men in the innermost part of the cave in En-gedi, and Saul in the outermost part of it, and his three thousand men surrounding it. He called on God to be merciful to him in Gath in the previous psalm when he was in a Philistine stronghold, but he seemed to be in the power of his enemy in the cave. Even if he had killed Saul as he lay asleep, as his men suggested, this would not have saved them from Saul's three thousand men. God had mercy on him and was his Refuge, for in the shadow of His wings he had taken refuge, as Ruth his great-grandmother had done before him (Ruth 2. 12). He cried to God Most High whose priest Melchizedek met Abraham and strengthened and blessed him in the years of long ago (Genesis 14. 18-20), and this God was the One who performed all things for David.

He shall send from heaven, and save me,
 When he that would swallow me up reproacheth; [Selah
 God shall send forth His mercy and His truth.
 My soul is among lions;
 I lie among them that are set on fire,
 Even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows,
 And their tongue a sharp sword (verses 3, 4).

David believed that God would send from heaven and save him, for Saul seemed about to swallow him up. But he looked to God to send forth mercy and truth, for "Mercy and truth preserve the king: and his throne is upholden by mercy" (Proverbs 20. 28); and "mercy and truth shall be to them that devise good" (Proverbs 14. 22). Mercy and truth issued from the Mercy-seat and the Ark of the Covenant to God's people, and the answer to these is Christ. As mercy and truth met in the Holy of Holies of old (Psalm 85. 10), so they met in Christ, as we sometimes sing,

"Mercy and truth unite,
 Oh 'tis a wondrous sight;
 All sights above."

Even so David looked for mercy and truth reaching him. The following words, in verse 4, could not have more vividly and forcefully described Saul and his men.

J. M.

(to be continued D. V.)

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BIBLE STUDIES

"Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so" (Acts 17. 11)

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EDITORIAL

Of Annas, **the very rich Sadducee** (so wrongly **named** in that **his name means "merciful"**), **six sons and one son-in-law** held the office of high priest, **at the caprice of the Roman conquerors**. **Caiaphas** must **have been a most astute man**, for **he held the office longer than any other in that century of change** (from A. D. **18 to 36**). **Annas**, who had **been high priest, did not lose the dignity of the name** when he **was deposed** (compare John **18** verse 13 with **verse 19, and Acts 4. 6**). He also **kept many of the privileges, such as a seat in the Sanhedrin, with the authority and influence that belonged to one in the highest place: hence the power of the "kindred of the high priest" (Acts 4. 6).**

The **last mention** of the Pharisees **in the trial of the Lord Jesus** occurs **in John 18. 3**. Henceforth the inveterate **and powerful foes of the Lord were the chief priests**. **In the Synoptists' account** the chief **priests** are mentioned **by the Lord Himself for the first time just after Peter's great declaration at Caesarea Philippi (Matthew 16. 21; Mark 8. 31; Luke 9. 22); and there the Lord foretold that they would accomplish His death.**

Christ, God's elect High Priest, stood alone before Caiaphas, the wicked high **priest of a heathen ruler's promotion!** **He** had no friend to plead **His cause**, nor was **He** allowed witnesses, and no charge was formulated. **He was being tried for a crime that had yet to be discovered.** **It was a travesty of justice that the charge later raised was based on the inaccurate report that He said, "I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days".**

We fain would draw a veil over the succeeding events at that council meeting: men spitting on Immanuel's face, the mockery, the beating and the blindfolding, and the sarcasm in the taunt, "Prophecy unto us, Thou Christ: who is he that struck Thee?" (Matthew 26. 68). The **dark night** looked down upon **two men in the court below, one driven by fearless remorse and the burning stain of innocent blood on his conscience, seeking awful consolation in death, and the other, moved by that calm look of divine love, seeking repentance in gushing tears.**

Jas Martin

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

This Epistle is written to Hebrews who had a place in God's spiritual house of this dispensation. The writer's object is to set before these saints the better things associated with the new covenant, and to do this he makes many comparisons and contrasts with the old covenant and references to the Pentateuch, wherein were found the law and promises which formed the basis of the old covenant.

The opening words of the epistle link the speakings of God in the present day in His Son with His speakings in the past through the prophets. Much of the Pentateuch is prefaced with the words, "and the LORD spake unto Moses, saying..." In Deuteronomy 34, 10 we read, "And there hath not arisen a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face". Yet to us God speaks in His Son, the impress of His substance, Heir of all things, Maker of heaven and earth. Before Him the glory of Moses waxes dim. Indeed the Lord is better than the angels. There is none to compare with Him. Creation (Genesis 1 and 2) is shown to be the work of Christ. The created things will perish one day, but Christ will continue because He is eternal. In contrast to His deity described in chapter 1, His humanity is beautifully portrayed in chapter 2. The dominion given to Adam in the garden of Eden which was subsequently curtailed because of his sin, will find its fullest expression in a coming day in the Son of Man, who was made a little lower than the angels and knew the suffering of death. He partook of flesh and blood, because it was by this means that He would become the Author of our salvation.

Our Great High Priest

The main theme in the first part of the epistle is the High Priesthood of our Lord Jesus Christ. In Israel under the old covenant, the high priest occupied a unique and vital office in the divine service of the people, and this is no less true under the new covenant. Aaron, the first to occupy the office of high priest, was chosen from among the people and appointed for the people in things pertaining to God. He had experience of the brick kilns of Egypt and could thus sympathize with the people and bring their needs to the LORD. Our Great High Priest has also lived on earth and known sorrow and temptation in the days of His flesh. In 5, 7 we read of His strong crying and tears, which were associated with His earthly experience, and also with the suffering of death. He was made perfect through sufferings and is thus eminently fitted to sympathize with the needs of His people.

Like Aaron, our Lord Jesus was made a Priest by divine appointment. In contrast to Aaron however He has been made a Priest after the order of Melchizedek, a Gentile priest who had no connexion with the nation of the covenant except to succour Abraham in time of dire need. Melchizedek was both king and priest. The lack of reference to his genealogy and his death is used to denote the continuity of his priesthood. Indeed he is spoken of as being made like unto the Son of God, though he was indeed a man and subject to death like other men. Melchizedek's greatness is seen in the tribute Abraham paid to

him, and in the fact that he blessed Abraham; the less was blessed of the better. Thus the priesthood of the Lord is an eternal priesthood and is not subject to the limitations of death experienced by Aaron and his sons. The Lord's appointment to this office is by the oath of God which is immutable.

His Sacrifice

Not only is our Lord Jesus our High Priest but He is also our Sacrifice for sins. The yearly sacrifice made on the day of atonement and the innumerable daily sacrifices for the sins of individuals (10. 1-4) could never take away sins; these sacrifices were a shadow of the great Sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ which would for ever take away sin. "Once at the end of the ages hath He been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (9. 26).

The Sanctuary

In chapter 8 our thoughts are directed to the heavenly sanctuary into which the Lord Jesus has entered and where He ministers as Great High Priest seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens. The writer compared this sanctuary with the tabernacle in the wilderness which is stated to be a copy and shadow of heavenly things. Details of the tabernacle are given in Exodus 25 to 31, and Moses had to ensure that everything was made according to the pattern he had seen in the mount. The service associated with this earthly tabernacle was a divine service; but the high priest was permitted to enter into the Holy of Holies only once in the year and not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the errors of the people. Leviticus 16 gives details of the method of approach on the day of atonement. The significance of this is shown in 9. 8, "the way into the holy place hath not yet been made manifest" while the first tabernacle was standing.

In contrast to the high priest's entrance into the holies in the past, our Lord Jesus has entered into heaven itself, the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, through His own blood, which availed for the cleansing of the heavenly things and the consciences of His people. While the high priest's offering in the past was continual, the Lord's one offering has put away sin for ever.

In 8. 3 we read, "Every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is necessary that this High Priest also have somewhat to offer". This is where God's people have an unspeakable privilege to fill the hands of our Great High Priest. Not only so, but a way of access has been dedicated for us, a new and living way, through the veil, that is His flesh; and we may enter with boldness into the holies by the blood of Jesus. Do we appreciate the significance of this?

In chapter 12 we have further revelation of the place to which God's people of this dispensation are come. This is contrasted with Sinai **and** the occasion of the giving of the law when the thunders and lightnings and smoke and the voice of God brought terror to the hearts

of the people of Israel. We "are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem..." (12. 18-24).

The New Covenant

These Hebrews were the people of God, not because of the covenant God made through Moses, but because of the new covenant of which our Lord Jesus was Mediator. The old covenant entered into by the people of Israel was conditional on their obedience to the words of the LORD. On acceptance of His words they were sprinkled with the blood of calves and goats. Similarly, the tabernacle and the vessels of the ministry were also sprinkled with the blood. The new covenant has been brought into being through the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, and it is through obedience to His word we are numbered with the people of God.

Conclusion

The privileges and responsibilities associated with the house of God are great and wonderful, but there is always the danger of these being lost through disobedience to the words of the Lord. The record of Israel's failure to enter into the rest of God is brought before us in chapters 3 and 4 with the warning that we fall not after the same example of disobedience. Let us avail ourselves of the help our Great High Priest can afford us in time of temptation, and draw near to the throne to receive mercy and find grace. *I. Renfrew*

STUDIES IN THE CLOSING PHASE OF THE GOSPEL BY JOHN

JOHN 18. 1-27

Arrest in Gethsemane and examination by the Jewish Leaders

From Denmark Hill.—The arrest of the Lord Jesus was planned to be done quietly, and according to the religious leaders in Jerusalem it was not to be done during the Passover (Matthew 26. 5). However, when Judas unexpectedly offered his services to betray the Christ, they moved with remarkable speed. The betrayal, mock trial, crucifixion, and burial all took place within twenty four hours.

The thought of keeping thirty pieces of silver all to himself was enough for Judas. He had let money come first, even before the Master, in the Bethany home (John 12. 5). Yet there were moments when Judas was given opportunity to withdraw from doing the vilest of deeds, even in the garden, when the Lord Jesus spoke causing him and his accomplices to fall backward. But no, Judas stood up again, and gave the signal for the Victim to be bound and delivered up. He had done his job and earned his wages. His love for money was the cause of his downfall.

Simon Peter's temperament was such that he made rash promises which in his own strength he could never possibly keep. He was so impetuous that although at one moment he was fast asleep, the next he was wielding his sword in desperate defence of his Master. His bravery was high yet it had its limits. He ran away with the rest of the disciples,

but to his credit he came back, following afar off, to view his beloved Master's end. In many of his actions he displayed the weakness of the flesh, yet by the Lord's help he overcame.

Annas and his son-in-law Caiaphas were both high priests (Luke 3. 2) although according to secular history (see Edersheim) they also served as high priests at different times. Annas held the pontificate first for nine years, was deposed and was succeeded by others, of whom the fourth was his son-in-law Caiaphas, but Annas still continued to preside over the Sanhedrin (Acts 4. 6). The religious arrangements in those days were far away from the order of the Aaronic priesthood under which the high priest could only be succeeded on his death (Numbers 20. 26, 28) [1].

Annas must have wielded great power, even after being deposed, because he was the first religious leader to interview Jesus after the betrayal. The Lord showed respect and meekness in His hour of oppression, even when many false witnesses could not agree together.

Mark McKaig

From Birmingham. —A simple explanation of the motives of Judas Iscariot is that he was an unsaved man. Chosen by the unerring hand of the Lord to company with Himself and the eleven, he witnessed the mighty signs and wonders, participated in the experiences of others, shared in the Lord's friendship and yet remained unmoved. He never could say like Peter, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God". Simon Peter, that warm-hearted disciple, loved the Lord. Yet we trace in some of his actions the evidence of the natural man. We contrast his sincere declaration of love for the Lord and his unhappy failure in the court of the high priest. His zeal in wielding the sword and his base denial both alike speak of the resources of the flesh. A change came upon all the disciples with the advent of the indwelling Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

The Jews had evidently introduced a custom contrary to the law of Moses, the high priest being changed from year to year by decree, instead of his priesthood being terminated by death (John 11. 49). Annas appeared to be the retiring high priest (see comment [1]).

H. Smith

From Kilmarnock. —The places mentioned in John 18 reminded us of the experiences of David the king on the occasion of his flight from Jerusalem, when Absalom rebelled against him (2 Samuel 15. 23). David's Son and David's Lord crossed the same brook Kidron with His disciples but in circumstances more poignant by far. They then entered the garden of Gethsemane. Judas and Peter are the two of the twelve who stand out prominently in the scenes in the garden. Judas, who had often been to Gethsemane, came for the last time. It was to lift up his heel against the Master in exchange for paltry remuneration. The love of money was the deciding influence with Judas who reckoned material things were of paramount importance.

Peter showed his usual impetuosity, also his devotion to the Lord, but seems to have forgotten the power of the Lord Jesus which had been previously manifested, when at His word the enemies fell back-

ward. Peter's sword-stroke and its sequel teach us the folly of giving way to rage and violence when taunted or persecuted for the sake of the Name. Yet in Peter's action we also see the result of his earlier declaration of love for his Master.

It seems evident that both Annas and Caiaphas executed the office of high priest. There is the indication that Caiaphas was acting high priest that year, with Annas in close attendance (John 18. 13). Annas is also named high priest (verse 19). In later days the office was held by Annas (Acts 4. 6) whereas in earlier days the office was regarded as a joint one (Luke 3. 2) (See comment [1]).

The Lord Jesus was first led to Annas (verse 19-24). As the case of the Lord Jesus merited more than a single opinion, Annas sent Him to Caiaphas who as high priest was leader of the council. Caiaphas had given counsel to the Jews that it was expedient that one man should **die** for the people.

J.

C. Watt

EXTRACTS

From Glasgow (Parkhead). —Annas was a former high priest who was still influential and seemed to act as a kind of first secretary to his son-in-law, Caiaphas, the high priest. Perhaps he filtered the enquiries made of Caiaphas, passing on only those thought worthy of the high priest's personal attention. The official relationship of these men is obscure, but in practice they are seen as acting in close concert. Caiaphas, however, had a standing which gave him influence with the Romans (see Comment [1]).

In questioning the Lord Jesus, Annas was aiming at securing a charge of sedition against Rome. In order to substantiate this charge, he required evidence that the Lord taught people to disregard the authority of Rome and that He was the leader of a movement with this declared intent. Hence he asked the Lord Jesus of His disciples. The Lord did not answer this question but referred Annas to His past public statements. These were matters of fact of which there was ample evidence in existence. Finding he was getting into difficulties, Annas referred the Lord to Caiaphas. After a brief and biased examination in the presence of false witnesses Caiaphas brought Him before the Council, who referred Him to Pilate.

J. J. P.

From Macduff. —John gives no record of the passionate prayers of our Lord in Gethsemane. It is plain that Judas expected to find the Lord there. Judas acted as guide to the men of the chief priests and elders and we feel it must have been on the second time of the Lord's asking, "Whom seek ye?" that Judas kissed Him. We wondered why the men armed with weapons to take an unarmed man "went backward, and fell to the ground" at the Lord's words, "I am He" [2].

Peter's violent defence of His Lord in the garden was condemned by the Lord, and when Malchus was healed Peter was offended and went away [3]. He feared for his life now. His interest in what happened to His Lord made him follow the crowd, but his spirits were low and the bitter experience of denying the Lord resulted.

Suggested order of trials of the Lord

(1) Before Annas. This was a preliminary examination. Annas asked "of His disciples, and of His teaching" (John 18. 12, 13, 19-24).

(2) Before Caiaphas, the reigning high priest, who had chief priests, elders and chief scribes present. They were seeking evidence to put Him to death, using false witness. Eventually they settled on charging Him as a blasphemer (Matthew 26. 57-68; Mark 14. 53). This took place in the middle of the night, and the Lord was then apparently delivered to men who made sport of Him for what remained of the night (Luke 22. 63-65).

(3) Early in the morning, the high priest and elders of the people convened an official Council (the Sanhedrin), when the decision of the night before was officially confirmed (Matthew 27. 1; Mark 15. 1; Luke 22. 66-71).

(4) Before Pilate, the governor (Matthew 27; Mark 15; Luke 23; John 18. 29—19. 6).

(5) Before Herod (Luke 23. 6-12).

(6) Returned to Pilate (Luke 23. 11).

A. B. R.

From Aberkenfig and Barry. —Judas had a covetous nature and his greed for money led him to betray his Master. We suggest that, having witnessed the mighty power of the Lord Jesus and having previously seen him escape unscathed from the mob (Luke 4. 30), Judas may have thought that Jesus would again escape. This may explain his action in endeavouring to give back the money.

The action of Peter in cutting off the ear of Malchus is connected with his words in John 13. 37, "I will lay down my life for Thee". Peter's sad denial is in contrast to his courage in the garden. It may be that while able to stand physical hostility he could not bear reproach and humiliation. However, he showed his love for the Lord by being in the forecourt when others had fled (see Comment [3]).

Both Annas and Caiaphas hated Christ and were determined to bring about His death. Caiaphas, in order to bring a charge against Him, adjured Him (to lay under the obligation of an oath) by the living God to say whether He was the Christ. Jesus acknowledged this and promised to reappear gloriously in the clouds. Caiaphas appealed to the scribes and elders, "What think ye?" He was responsible with them for giving judgement yet wanted them to give the verdict. Blind though both of these men were, in wondrous grace Jesus answered them in a manner **befitting** their office.

Ian French, Colin Jones, B. V. F.

From Birkenhead. —Judas seems to have been ruled by the love of money, and in his case it led to evil thoughts and actions. Amongst the disciples he was treasurer (John 13. 29). He let his passions so grip him that he was soon afterwards planning to betray the Lord to His enemies. In passing, it is interesting to note that Jesus, knowing all that was being plotted against Him, did not change His timetable or movements to avoid the confrontation. It is to be noted that the repentance of Judas was not the repentance that is unto life (see discussion, B. S. April 1959).

Peter often spoke and **acted** without thinking. In the **garden** he jumped to the **aid** of His **Master** by using a sword. However, when **Peter** was **trying** to follow the course of the trial, **Satan** got the upper hand and **Peter** fell badly. **Fear no doubt** possessed him as one and another **taxed** him as to his relationship to the **Man under** trial. Then as the **cock** crew, **Peter remembered** the words of the Lord. Their eyes met as the Lord **turned** to look on him, and **Peter** went out and wept bitterly (**Luke** 22. 60-62).

As far as can be ascertained, **Annas** was appointed high priest in AD. 6 and deposed in AD. 15. In the **New Testament** he is still referred to as holding office after this date. It was suggested that although the Romans deposed high priests, the Jews **regarded** it as a life office. Alternatively since Caiaphas was son-in-law to **Annas**, then **Annas** would have **great** personal influence in the conduct of the trial. In **Luke** 3. 2 both names are mentioned linked to a singular noun (see **Comment** [1]).

R. D. Williams

From Vancouver. —**Judas** had thrown in his lot with the soldiers and was **standing** with them (**verse** 5). **Luke** tells us that **Judas** went before them. It would seem he had gained a place of importance by doing what he did, as well as monetary remuneration [4]. In earlier days perhaps **Judas** had the idea that he would receive a place of prominence in this world by being with the Lord. But this hope had vanished now that the Lord was to be captured. **Judas** thought it was **necessary** to use **deceit** and force to capture Him; but when **Jesus** revealed himself as the "I AM" (**verse** 6), he along with others, fell backward. **Judas** had been to the **garden** before with the Lord and he **knew** that the Lord went there for prayer. He had no respect for the Lord. In **verse** 9 we read about **Jesus** not losing one of those His Father had given Him. **Judas** could not have been included among these, for he was lost. He was prepared to **remain** the friend of **Jesus** as long as he could get something out of it for himself.

J.

Bell, Jr.

From Methil. —The Lord **did** not **avoid** or **resist** being taken in the **garden** for He **intended** to drink the cup which the Father had **given** Him (**John** 18. 11). Only **Peter** took any definite action. Yet his action was misguided, for no **servant** of the Lord should use force. Despite the **meekness** of the Lord **Jesus**, they **seized** Him and bound Him and He was led to **Annas** first.

When **Jesus** was taken, **Peter** followed at a distance. **John** was known to the high priest and this enabled him to **gain** entrance for himself and **Peter** into the court. **Peter**, confronted with a straight **question** from a **maid**, denied His Lord. We are reminded of the proverb, "The fear of man bringeth a snare" (**Proverbs** 29, 25).

R. C. Surgeon, N. G. Coomer

From Southport. —The Lord was taken from "prison and from judgement". The **treatment** of the Lord was not only **against** the perfect law of God, as **enunciated** by **Moses** and the prophets, but **against** the traditions of the Jews in regard to trials and judgements. The time of the **first** section of the trial of the Lord was **not** according to the law for no one was to be tried before daybreak. Evil men work in the night.

Judas precipitated the arrest of the Lord, and caused His death at the Passover. The Jews had purposed to defer dealing with the Lord until the Passover was past. So the Lord was made "our Passover", in fulfilment of type and prophecy; Mark 14. 2 shows clearly how God overruled, even in the crime of Calvary.

This was the end of a dispensation for God's people. The truth and the work of God could never be carried on during this dispensation by human might or power. The truth needs not sword nor power, but the Spirit of God, to prosecute it.

T. Rylance

From Glasgow (Govan and Parfick). —The pre-determined pathway of the Lord is emphasized in this chapter. Its course was known to the Lord Jesus. The actions of Peter showed how little he knew of the mind of the One who came to this hour with a single purpose which He completely carried through. His voice alone overcame the vaunted power of men armed with staves and spears; they fell to the ground.

It would appear from a comparison with the other gospel records that Annas and Caiaphas lived in the same locality, their houses perhaps separated by a courtyard. Peter never forgot the look the Master gave him as he stood warming himself at the fire. That look brought home to Peter his sin. Shame and remorse overcame him and he wept.

Ernest McKee

From Derby. —Judas, being one of the disciples, knew the garden of Gethsemane very well. He also knew that Jesus would be there on this occasion and he was determined to betray Him. Judas took a band of soldiers with him, and also officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees who were armed with weapons, and carried lanterns and torches because of the darkness. Out of the darkness the Lord appeared and asked "Whom seek ye?" They answered Him, and He said, "I am He". It was said with such calmness and authority that they staggered backwards.

Peter was ready to die for his Master who said, "Put up your sword", for the Lord Jesus has set Himself to drink the cup which the Father had given Him. Peter would be regarded as a brave man today in such a situation, but we notice that when he was almost alone he denied the Lord three times. Yet in the circumstances in which Peter was at the time we think that we might have denied Him too. He was probably afraid of losing his life (see comment [3]). When the Lord was asked about His teaching He told them to go and ask those who heard Him speak, for He declared unto them that He never taught anything **in secret.**

D. C. Willis, G. W. Conway

From Edinburgh. —It was evident that the Lord's followers were prepared to fight, especially Peter, although the Lord had no thought of combat: "The cup which the Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" (verse 11). So they seized Jesus and bound Him (verse 12), as if by so doing they would master His power over them. Little did they realize that they would have had no power over Him except it were given from above. We understand that Annas had been deposed from the high priesthood by Valerius Gratus, Pilat's predecessor as

procurator, but continued to exercise control from the background. This was probably an informal inquiry at Annas' house. Nevertheless it seems that Annas and Caiaphas were acting in joint responsibility (Luke 3. 2). The trial before Annas took place at night. The trial before Caiaphas was in the morning [5].

It is evident from Scripture that Satan had endeavoured to shatter Peter's faith. Thus it was necessary that the Lord should make supplication for him that his faith should not fail (Luke 22. 31, 32). We marvelled at the Lord's concern over Peter's denial in His own hour of sorrow.

David B. Renfrew

COMMENTS

[1] **Denmark Hill.** —It has been suggested that at this time the Romans recognized Caiaphas as high priest, having deposed Annas, but the Jews, in deference to the law of Moses, still regarded Annas as occupying the office, thus explaining the linking of the two names. John 11. 49 and 18. 13 may not indicate a yearly tenure of office but that in the fateful year of the Crucifixion, Caiaphas was high priest.

L. B.

[2] **Macduff.** —There is insufficient detail on which to base an unqualified analysis of this incident. Those who came to arrest the Lord were awestruck in His presence, "and went backward, and fell to the ground". This was probably designed by the Lord to underline for us the fact that He was deliberately about to yield Himself to their power. It is possible that the implication of His reply as to the "I AM" of Deity would be grasped by certain of His captors.

G. P. Jr.

[3] **Macduff.** —There does not appear to be any hint in Scripture that Peter was offended at the Lord's rebuke. His reactions at that critical moment followed naturally from his failure to appreciate the purpose of the Lord's suffering and death. The lesson of Matthew 16. 21-25 had not even yet been grasped. Peter had been as good as his word in readiness to risk his life in defence of the Master. Then came the bewildering command to refrain from combat, followed by the Lord's submission to His captors. The Lord's attitude was contrary to all that Peter had expected, leaving him confused and afraid. So like the other disciples he left the Lord Jesus and fled.

G. P. Jr.

[4] **Vancouver.** —In the darkness Judas must of necessity have taken the lead in order to show the way. Far from having a place of importance among the soldiers, they probably despised him for being a traitor, even though the situation was advantageous to them and the authorities.

L. B.

[5] **Edinburgh.** —It was the official condemnation by the Sanhedrin that took place early in the morning (Matthew 27. 1; Mark 15. 1; Luke 22. 66). It would seem that the trial before Caiaphas preceded the last denial by Peter, which took place just before cock-crow (early dawn). The paper from Macduff gives a useful summary of events for consideration.

L. B.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Question from Aberkenfig and Barry. —We would like help as to whether the words of the Lord (verses 19-23) were addressed to Annas or Caiaphas.

Answer. —See paper from Macduff, suggesting that these verses refer to a preliminary investigation by Annas. The fact that Annas was still regarded as high priest despite his official deposition by the Romans could explain the reference in verse 19. While this point may not be altogether free from doubt it does seem clear that in verse 24 the Lord was sent by the interrogators of verses 19-23 to Caiaphas. Taking everything into consideration, therefore, it seems the most reasonable interpretation to regard this passage as an investigation by Annas.

G. P. Jr.

Question from Kilmarnock. —In John 19. 11 is the Lord Jesus referring to Judas or Caiaphas?

Answer. —Judas delivered the Lord to the Jews but Caiaphas delivered Him to Pilate, so that the direct reference here is to Caiaphas, the high priest.

L. B.

Question from Glasgow (Govan and Partick). —Luke 22. 36. If in this verse the purse, wallet, cloke and sword are metaphorical what do they speak of?

Answer. —Luke 22. 35-38 is a difficult passage, but it does not seem to me that the explanation is made easier by regarding these items of equipment as metaphorical. They were certainly literal in His instructions to the twelve and to the seventy (see Luke 9. 3; 10. 4). The apostles were shortly to be sent on a world-wide ministry in circumstances quite different from these obtaining within the narrow confines of Israel. The Lord was anticipating this. I am disposed to the view that the Lord Jesus drew attention to the availability of the swords (Luke 22. 38) having in mind that through the lesson of Gethsemane's garden (Matthew 26. 52) disciples of this age would have abiding instruction.

G. P. Jr.

They are definitely not metaphorical. Verses 36-38 should be read in the light of verse 35. If the disciples had fully appreciated the Lord's point in verse 35 they would have dispensed with swords and instead would have relied upon the Lord.

J. B.

PSALM 57 *Continued from page 72*

Be Thou exalted, O God, above the heavens;
Let Thy glory be above all the earth (verse 5).

How quickly David turns from unworthy and malignant men to the praise of God! Prayer and praise are intermingled in his psalms like the mixture of the sweet spices of the incense and the anointing oil. His life bore the sweet fragrance of the house of God. This should be true of us all.

They have prepared a net for my steps;

My soul is bowed down:

They have digged a pit before me;

They are fallen into the midst thereof themselves (verse 6).
[Selah

David in these words thinks **first** of the evil work of Saul **and** his **men**, because of which his soul was bowed down. When Saul had gone from the **En-gedi cave** and his **men** were on the move elsewhere, David **came** out with the **skirt** of Saul's robe **in** his hand, which **was** proof enough that he could have killed Saul **if** he had wished. Saul **said**, **as** he wept, "Thou **art** more righteous than **I**: for thou hast rendered unto **me** good, whereas **I** have rendered unto thee evil.... Behold, I know that thou shalt surely **be** king, **and** that the kingdom of Israel shall **be** established **in** thine hand" (1 Samuel 24. 16-20.) **Saul went** home, but **David** and his **men** **gat** them **up** into the hold.

My heart is fixed, O God, **my heart is fixed**:

I will **sing**, **yea**, I will **sing** praises.

Awake up, **my glory**; awake, psaltery and harp:

I myself will **awake** right early.

I will give thanks unto Thee, O Lord, among the peoples:

I will **sing praises** unto Thee among the nations.

For Thy **mercy is great** unto the heavens,

And Thy truth **unto** the skies.

Be Thou exalted, O God, above the heavens;

Let Thy glory **be** above the earth (verses 7-11).

Despite the **fact** that David's soul was among the lions, **a term** by which he **describes** the **fierce** character of his **enemies**, **yet** his heart was fixed to **sing** praises unto God. **In** our **case** how often have **our enemies** and the **facts** of life hushed our hearts and our voices **in praises** to our God! **But** note **in David's case** he would **sing His praises**; they **were** not merely whispers of the inward voice of the heart **but** his **praise** was **in** the voice of song, accompanied with his glory, that **is**, his highly musical voice, **and** with psaltery **and** harp, for he was evidently **a man** of **music** to the fingertips. He would also awake early when the **sun** was shedding **its** musical light over the **skies**, the **time** **in** the morn when the **birds** of song **burst** into the gladness **of** the light of day.

J. M.

(to be continued D. V.)

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BIBLE STUDIES

"Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, *in* that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so" (Acts 17. 11).

VOLUME

36

AUGUST, 1968

EDITORIAL

The judicial confrontation of Pilate the Roman governor and Jesus Christ the Son of God is not only **unique** historically **but** involves a **brief** and **dramatic** presentation of **many facets** of the relationship **between God and man His creature**. Central throughout is the incomparably **majestic figure** of the Christ of God. Written **large in flaming** letters across that early morning Jerusalem **scene** could well **have been** the words of **Psalm 2**, "**Yet I have set My King** upon My holy hill of Zion".

Thus, besides the lines of study suggested for this month in the syllabus, and which so many study groups have dealt with most helpfully, the narrative of the trial of Jesus before Pontius Pilate brings to a sharp focus many important truths. It does so in such an arresting way that it may be suggested to students that here is an admirable starting point for an analysis of some of these truths as they are presented in Scripture. Radiating from this rare gem of inspired history are lines of truth both numerous and precious. Consider John 18. 37 and 37 as the centre of a study of the Kingship of the Lord Jesus; or verses 36 and 37 as the basis of an examination of the essential nature of the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ (Revelation 11. 15), and the form and expression of that kingdom in different periods of human history. Can a more telling focal point be found for the endless human quest after truth, than the governor's appeal, "What is truth?" Men and women, before Pilate and since, have been arriving at wrong answers to this, the wrong question. When sought outside a Person, the eternal Word, the quest for the truth is eternally elusive. Then consider the matter of authority, (John 19. 10, 11), a subject of absorbing interest and rich instruction, authority as supremely and ultimately vested entirely in God, yet delegated to man in creation, in human government, in matters ecclesiastical and in other spheres; the theme can be traced on from Pilate's hall to a Galilean mountain and a triumphant outreach based on the all-authority of the Man of Calvary. Take judgement as a topic; and here of all places is focused the tragedy of miserable little man in all his imagined importance, passing judgement on the One from whose face heaven and earth will flee away. Similarly, the matter of the outworking of Gentile power hinges in some respects on the events of our study subject this month. Pilate as representative of the power of Rome is face to face with the personal Antitype of the stone "cut out without hands" of Daniel 2. 34. Linked with this is the fresh Jewish rejection of the Messiah and the times of the Gentiles broadening out into the fulness of the Gentiles (Romans 11. 25).

Thus a multitude of lines of truth is drawn together in a setting of tremendous pathos in the scene before us. As our adoring vision is thus drawn ever more directly to the dominating central figure of the Lord, let us not miss anything of the sheer courage and towering nobility of the glorious Sufferer, His perfection of patience, and His lovely lowliness.

J. D. T.

Some Occurrences of the word "Lord" in John's Gospel

Kurios, properly an adjective, signifying having power or authority, is used as a noun (Vine). It is interesting to note its many occurrences at the end of the Gospel by John, where individual experiences are recorded in detail.

Mary Magdalene said to Peter and John, "They have taken away the Lord" (20. 2), but to the angels she said, "They have taken away my Lord" (verse 13), emphasizing her personal love for the Lord Jesus. A woman was the first in transgression, and now a woman was first to see the Lord in resurrection.

"The disciples therefore were glad, when they saw the Lord" (20. 20). All the disciples except Thomas saw the Lord on the resurrection day. Thomas had made a statement (verse 25), but there was a touching scene and a thrilling confession from Thomas when a week later the Lord said, "Reach hither thy finger". Thomas said, "My Lord and my God!"

The enchanting scene in the early morning at the sea of Tiberias thrills us. In the dim light John recognized Him and said, "It is the Lord" (21. 7), and "none of the disciples durst inquire of Him, Who art Thou? knowing that it was the Lord" (verse 12).

The closing references are interesting. The Lord's questions to Peter drew from him the affirmation, "Yea, Lord; Thou knowest that I love Thee" (verses 15, 16). The question asked for the third time brought the lovely profession, "Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee". How Peter proved his love to the Lord in his martyrdom! His love will be honoured in the foundation of the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21. 14). Our personal love to the Lord will doubtless have its own individual reward in eternity. Let us meditate on the rewards of Revelation 2. 17 and 3. 12. The white stone is a sign of favour from the Lord. A pillar carries weight, in this case weights of glory **and** honour.

T. R.

The Authorized and Revised Versions Compared

When the Revised version of the New Testament was first published in 1881 it was vigorously criticised by some scholars, foremost of whom was Dean Burgon. His main line of attack was against the Greek text produced by Westcott and Hort which was used to some extent by the Revisers. Burgon held that the Authorized Version, in regard both to the Greek text used and its translation, was the subject of a unique divine care which constituted it the true word of God, and although admitting to some slight defects, he considered that it could not be superseded by any other version. He was able to expose weaknesses in Westcott and Hort's work but, for reasons which will be seen later,

these actually had little effect upon the final form of the revision. In modern times Bishop D. A. Thompson, editor of "Bible League Quarterly", and Mr. E. F. Hills, an American theological scholar, both firm believers in the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, have attacked the Revised Version from a similar standpoint. They contend also that it is marred by the influence of scholars with modernist leanings. There may be some truth in these criticisms, but we believe that the many improvements greatly outweigh the few deficiencies in the Revised Version, making it the best available. We propose to examine the subject in greater detail under three headings, (a) The Hebrew and Greek Texts, (b) Accuracy of Translation, (c) Language.

(a) The Hebrew and Greek Texts

Little comment is needed with regard to the Hebrew text of the Old Testament, for it is based upon the Massoretic text, the traditional text to which practically all known manuscripts conform. The recently discovered Dead Sea Scrolls, dating back to A. D. 70 or perhaps earlier, confirm the accuracy of the text lying behind the Old Testament in both **the Revised and Authorized versions.** In the case of the New Testament the situation is quite different. The translators of the King James Version used the Greek text known as the *Textus Receptus* which had been prepared by Erasmus in 1516 using the few manuscripts available at that time. It was revised by Erasmus himself and others in the years that followed until the invention of printing, when it came into general use. It was therefore the obvious choice of the scholars commissioned by King James to prepare the new version which was first published in 1611. During the following 250 years a great number of more ancient Greek manuscripts became available to scholars, and the process of textual criticism (the attempt to recover the exact form of the original writings) was developed. Much labour was expended on collating and comparing these manuscripts and eventually Westcott and Hort constructed a Greek text which they held to be more accurate than any existing text. It was published in 1881, a few months after the publication of the Revised New Testament. Westcott and Hort were members of the company responsible for the revision, so that their work undoubtedly had an influence on the final result. The revisers have been accused of allowing the two scholars to foist their new Greek text upon the company but this allegation was strongly refuted by the chairman, Bishop Ellicott, in these words, "... in the end we decided for ourselves. For it must not be forgotten that we had an eminent colleague (Dr. Scrivener) who took a very different view... to that of Westcott and Hort and never failed... to express it". In Bishop Ellicott's opinion the company was a very competent body to whose independent judgement the settlement of difficult critical questions could be safely committed. Some of Westcott and Hort's views on textual criticism are not accepted today, and in fact many readings advocated by them were either rejected by the revisers or given a place in the margin.

The Revisers' preface to the New Testament (the whole of which should be read carefully) makes it clear that no attempt was made to arrive at a completely new Greek text; it was mainly a question of deciding between the rival claims of various readings in passages where the English translation might be affected. That the painstaking work of

these scholars has borne fruit may be confirmed by students prepared to compare the two versions in the following places:

(1) Where the Revised Version omits passages found in the Authorized Version because of lack of support in the Greek manuscripts: — Matthew 6. 13; Mark 9. 29; Luke 11. 2; John 5. 4; Acts 8. 37; 1 Corinthians 6. 20; Ephesians 5. 30; 1 John 5. 7, 8; Revelation 21. 24.

(2) Where corrections in the text were found necessary: — Matthew 6. 1, 19. 17; Mark 6. 20; Luke 1. 78, 5. 39; John 13. 2; Acts 9. 31; Romans 5. 1; Hebrews 10. 34.

(3) Where the Revised Version restores words omitted from the Authorized: — John 19. 3; 1 Thessalonians 4. 1; 1 John 3. 1.

There are other variations attributable to textual differences in addition to the ones quoted, but, in relation to the whole of the New Testament, the total difference is not great and no Scriptural doctrine is affected.

L. B.

(to be continued, D. V.)

STUDIES IN THE CLOSING PHASE OF THE GOSPEL BY JOHN

JOHN 18. 28—19. 16

Trial before Pontius Pilate

From Glasgow, Parkhead. —In considering the physical sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ we should have regard to the wearying effect of being led to various people and places, involving the journey across Jerusalem at least twice. For the most part He was ruthlessly bound. They bound the One who had come to bring liberty to the captive. Here is the answer to the shadow of Samson being bound with the new ropes and being led, in apparent weakness, to the border of Philistia where he wrought by his strength a mighty slaughter. Not only was there physical suffering but also physical shame. The Lord was stripped of His garments during the period of mockery. Out of it all Pilate and Herod became friends. The Jews stood outside the palace in order that the sanctification required for the Passover festival might be observed, unaware that the great Antitype of the Passover sacrifice was before them, One who could stand the scrutiny of the ten to fourteen day period, One who "did no sin" and "knew no sin"; there was no sin in Him.

The questioning of the Lord by Pilate seems trivial and half-hearted compared with the deep, searching word of reply by the Christ [1]. We suggest that in verses 36, 37 there is the relationship of the kingdom, the subjects and the rule as seen in "the truth". (This suggestion is hardly defensible if the Lord was referring to His eternal kingdom. See comment [5]). Pilate's dual objective was to gain favour with the Jews and maintain a cordial relationship with Rome. His weakness is obvious. He was influenced by the desire to maintain peace and thus to obviate any internal uprising against the world power. Satan was his master.

R. I. S.

From Vancouver, B. C. —Pilate's actions during the trial of Jesus were influenced by conflicting motives. The trial was a battle of wits. Both Pilate and the Jews tried to have the blame for the crucifixion laid at

the other's feet. Pilate would have to please the Jews to avoid a riot. Jesus had done nothing contrary to Roman law so Pilate gave the Jews authority to judge Him as an evildoer by Jewish law. This would have served Pilate's purpose, but the Jews put him in a difficulty by saying that he was being disloyal to Rome, since Jesus had said He was a King. Pilate questioned Jesus and found that His kingdom is not of his purpose. The scourging, he thought, was enough punishment and this world. So Pilate was once again relieved, thinking he had achieved would serve as a warning to the Lord. But the Jews made another attempt; they said Jesus claimed to be the Son of God. When Pilate heard this he was afraid. Jesus told Pilate that he would have no power except from above. However, despite his fear of the gods, Pilate was carried away by his own pride and greed for power. He said that he had power to release Jesus. The Pharisees finally ended his vacillation by saying that if he released Jesus he would not be Caesar's friend. At this point Pilate sat on the judgement-seat, for his mind was made up. He ordered the crucifixion. But Pilate taunted the Jews by saying, "Behold, your King", knowing that the Jews had won their point.

J. Bell, Jr.

From Derby. —Jesus was taken from Caiaphas to Pilate's palace, but because of the Passover the Jews would not enter with Him. From what we read of Pilate he seemed to be a forthright man. He went out of the palace and asked, "What accusation bring ye against this Man?" The Jews said that they would not have brought Him to Pilate if He were not an evil-doer. Pilate did not want to be troubled about the matter. "Take Him yourselves and judge Him", he replied. The Jews said, "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death". Obviously they were intent on having Him put to death, no matter how it was accomplished. The Lord Jesus suffered under the Roman soldiers, firstly by the Roman whip, then the crown of thorns and finally mockery. Pilate again pleaded for Him and brought Him before the people. But when they saw Him they were filled with hatred, and they were instant with their cries for crucifixion. Pilate said, "Take Him yourselves"; "I find no crime in Him". But the Jews said that He should die because He said He was the Son of God. When Pilate heard this he was even more afraid and went again to question Jesus. Pilate again sought to release Him, but the Jews said to him, "If thou release this Man, thou art not Caesar's friend". The people rejected their King and pretended to be loyal subjects of Caesar.

D. C. Willis, G. W. Conway

EXTRACTS

From Macduff. —Pilate was reluctant to judge the Lord, for although he thought Him guilty of some crime against the law of Moses, of which he had no knowledge, Pilate realized He was not a danger to the state. It would appear that Pilate was convinced of the Prisoner's innocence, and he told the people so. The judge pronounced the prisoner's innocence but the Jewish accusers cried for death by crucifixion. They insisted that the Lord was guilty of blasphemy and that He should die. By the Law of Moses the guilty person must be stoned,

but the Jews claimed they were not allowed to put anyone to death. Yet perhaps only a year later they stoned Stephen to death without a qualm [2].

Pilate was a man of some perception, and he knew why they wanted this Man put to death. He knew that the chief priests had delivered Him up because of envy (Mark 15. 10). Since Pilate had washed his hands of the matter who was responsible for the death of Christ? "Him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay" (Acts 2. 23). The Jews were seemingly responsible for this vile act, and their own words condemned them, "His blood be on us, and on our children" (Matthew 27. 25) [3]. **J. M. W.**

From Cardiff. —Pontius Pilate was convinced of the innocence of the Lord Jesus Christ and he expressed this time after time. Nevertheless, if he were to act upon what he believed to be true it would mean the release of the Lord. Great pressure was put upon him and his actions were influenced by a desire to please the crowd and to retain the friendship of Caesar. He therefore sacrificed what he truly believed in order to achieve these ends. Such weakness is characteristic of many who are prepared to forfeit what they know to be true from the word of God in order to gain popularity with their fellow-men and friendship with the world (James 4. 4; 1 John 2. 15).

The Lord Jesus reminded Pilate that he would have no power against Him except it were given him from above (19. 11). Romans 13. 1 tells us that "there is no power but of God". Luke's report of the Lord's appearing before Pilate contains the question of the governor as to whether Jesus was a Galilaean. Has this remark any connexion with the great bloodshed referred to in Luke 13. 1? [4]. *C. V. Dodge*

From Portslade. —The charges brought at the beginning of the proceedings against the Lord, and recorded in Luke 23. 2-5, are omitted in John. In John 19. 7 a charge that He made Himself the Son of God seems to be in keeping with the unique character of John's Gospel. Verses 33-38 of chapter 18 are unique to John. That they are not in Matthew would perhaps suggest that in the Lord's words, (My kingdom) refer to the kingdom of God [5]. This charge that He made Himself the Son of God may have been made in the climax of the drama, or it may have been a calculated move to weaken an uneasy, unwilling tool of their evil devices.

There are two words for scourging and two methods of scourging, one with rods, the other with leathern thongs weighted with jagged pieces of bone and lead. There were two purposes in scourging, examination or as a preliminary to crucifixion [6]. After scourging, abuse and mockery, the profound dignity of the Lord's answer to Pilate is noteworthy (19. 11). There was no sign of weakness; the glory of the Son of God shone forth.

The apparent difficulty as to time that arises in a comparison of John 19. 14 with Matthew 27. 45 seems to be insoluble. Could it be a copying error in a later manuscript? [7]. *W. T.*

From Denmark Hill. —Unless the Jewish leaders were fairly sure that Pilate would endorse the findings of their own court and condemn Jesus to death (for he alone could), it seems unlikely that they would ever have arrested Him. Early in the morning they brought to Pilate their Prisoner, duly condemned, for the death sentence to be passed, only to find that Pilate insisted on a full trial himself. In accordance with Roman custom he asked for the accusation (18. 29). Instead of a reasoned reply the astounded priests were resentful and argued that Pilate should accept their judgement (18. 30). He had previously committed enough political blunders by his tactless behaviour to know that one more would probably mean his downfall. So, although trying to shift the responsibility by washing his hands, he passed judgement and the Son of God was condemned to be crucified.

Why did Pilate decide not to take the easy path and ratify the decision of the chief priests as he had almost certainly promised that he would? Why embark on the full trial and why insist repeatedly, in the face of growing opposition, on the innocence of the Prisoner, all so uncharacteristic of him? Whatever his reasons, in the sovereignty of God, the many apparently fortuitous circumstances resulted in the crucifixion of the Lord, and the fulfilment of Scripture.

A. C. Bishop

From Southport. —Whilst all four Gospels contain the good tidings of Jesus Christ, the first three give a general view of the Lord's life and teaching but the fourth is more doctrinal in character. In consequence many additional details are given by John of the trial before Pilate and his efforts to secure the release of the Lord. Pilate knew that it was out of envy that the scribes had brought the Lord to him and he was convinced of His innocence. Although he told the Lord he had authority to crucify Him, this was only human authority, but unknown to him he was dealing with the Son of God.

Pilate was afraid of the Jews, so the proceedings became a mock trial; he gave the multitudes their choice, Barabbas. He delivered Jesus to be crucified and publicly washed his hands in a futile effort to absolve himself from responsibility. Peter on the day of Pentecost emphasized the guilt of the Jews, accusing them of denying before Pilate the Holy and Righteous One and choosing a murderer instead (Acts 3. 13-15).

Edgar Hodson

From Methil. —Despite his prominent position, Pilate was a weak character, and not at all just. He could find no fault at all in the Lord Jesus, yet this thrice repeated conclusion still did not ensure the release of an entirely innocent Man. Pilate would rather be the friend of Caesar (John 19. 12) and he wished to content the multitude, so he released Barabbas and delivered Jesus to be crucified (Mark 15. 15). Pilate repeatedly attempted to pass the responsibility to the Jews (John 18. 31; 19. 6), and even sent Jesus to Herod who was also in Jerusalem at the time. The Jews wanted His blood, and nothing less would satisfy them. "And all the people answered and said, His blood be on us, and on our children" (Matthew 27. 25).

From an examination of Matthew 27. 28, Mark 15. 16, 17, Luke 23. 11, and John 19. 2 we conclude that the Lord Jesus was clothed in royal apparel and mocked on two occasions, once by Herod with his

soldiers and again by the soldiers of the governor. Scarlet (Matthew) and purple (Mark and John) are, we understand, interchangeable terms for the **same** colour [9].

Neville Coomer

From Glasgow (Parfick). —John is the only Gospel-writer who explicitly states that events at Golgotha were fulfilments of Old Testament Scriptures. Since he himself was present (John 19. 26, 35) there is a twofold witness of the events. The tenor of the passage is reminiscent of the early chapters of the Acts, in which scriptures are repeatedly quoted as evidence of the validity of the claims of the apostles. John's manner is thus in keeping with his theme (John 20. 31). In addition to the witness value is the fact that events happening in fulfilment of Scripture describe the operation of divine forces in the field of human activity. This is particularly highlighted by the emphatic sequence of "therefores" in this chapter which show the inevitability of the achievement of the divine will.

We marvel at the way in which divine decrees were brought to pass, even in the midst of human rejection of the Christ. Although carrying out the determinate counsel of God, the enemies of the Lord were throughout entirely responsible, and will one day give an account of their actions.

Ian Penn

From Aberkenfig and Barry. —John's account of the trial is the longest, reckoning by the number of verses. Following his usual custom he records conversations in detail. The dialogues between the Lord and Pilate reveal the character of the Prisoner, also His Deity. Pilate was impressed by the stature of the Man before him, and he was determined to release Him. John alone records the refusal of the Jews to enter into the Praetorium in case of defilement. How they strained out the gnat and swallowed the camel! Murder was in their hearts and before they kept the Passover their hands were stained with innocent blood, but this did not worry them. Matthew's account alone records the plea by Pilate's wife. Luke's account refers to the visit to Herod, does not refer to the scourging, but states that Herod's soldiers mocked the Lord. It is Luke who makes clear that the main accusation against the Lord was that He had declared Himself King, which was treason against Caesar. John includes this charge at the end of his account.

R. C. J.

(Aberkenfig and Barry have submitted a detailed tabulated comparison of the four accounts of the trial. We are sorry that owing to lack of space it is not possible to print it. Eds.)

From Kilmarnock. —In comparison with the other writers John gives the most detailed account of the trial and of the discourse between the Lord and Pilate. The outstanding question is that which is recorded in all four Gospels, "Art Thou the King of the Jews?" Pilate could have had the Lord put to death for this claim alone. John records the conversation concerning the Lord's kingdom, that it is not of this world, for if it were, His servants would fight. Pilate, probably not understanding the full meaning of what the Lord said, was satisfied that He had done nothing worthy of death, so he decided to release Him. Perhaps Pilate realized that this Man was very different from other persons he had had to judge.

Pilate sought to appease the mob by releasing Barabbas and having the Lord scourged, but it was to no avail. His wife also had told him to have nothing to do with this righteous Man (Matthew 27. 19). Pilate was troubled in his mind as to what he should do. He knew the Lord was guilty of no crime and that He was far above His accusers in character. When he heard the accusation, "He made Himself the Son of God", he found himself in a difficult position and was greatly troubled **in** mind.

Ian T. Meek

From Birmingham. —We note in comparing John's account of the trial with those of the other Gospel-writers that he is the only one that gives details of Pilate's efforts to release Jesus after he had scourged Him. Other records declare that the soldiers scourged Him, placed the crown of thorns upon Him, and led Him out to be crucified, whereas John gives us these events more fully.

It would appear that Pilate was in no doubt at any time in the proceedings as to the Lord's innocence. In the light of this it is hard to understand what caused Pilate to order the cruel scourging, especially in view of his repeated efforts to release Jesus afterwards, the last attempt being intended as an unconditional release. Was the scourging intended to drag the truth from the Prisoner, or was Pilate by this time just half-way to complying with the Jews' wishes? [8].

D. H. Elson

From Melbourne, Victoria. —Pilate was in a dilemma and asked what was the Jews' accusation against Jesus. He was torn between four influences: (1) his uncertainty as to who Jesus really was, (2) his own responsibility to Rome, as the accusation brought by the Jews was not sufficient to justify the execution of Jesus, (3) his love of popularity and his desire to placate the Jews, and (4) his wife's plea that he should have nothing to do with the judgement of Jesus.

The Jews were not permitted to put anyone to death without the approval of the Roman governor. Pilate stated after examining Jesus, "I find no crime in Him", and to the leaders of the Jews he said, "Take Him yourselves and crucify Him". They wanted the execution carried out urgently for the sabbath was near. They may also have thought that the common people might demand His release if the sentence were not carried out swiftly. Pilate brought Him out before them all, scourged and crowned with the crown of thorns. He had been alone with the band (or cohort) of Roman soldiers which consisted of about 600 men and had suffered their cruel beatings and mockery, yet "He opened not His mouth".

P. W. A.

COMMENTS

[1] **Glasgow, Parkhead.** —We do not think the epithets trivia? and half-hearted are justified in relation to Pilate's questions. He was of course over-shadowed in every way by the Lord, but such questions as, "Art Thou the King of the Jews?" and "Whence art Thou?", went to the root of the problem that was facing Pilate. He feared that the future of his career depended on his ability to placate the Jewish leaders, and his conduct of the proceedings demonstrates an intense anxiety; no half-heartedness was evident.

L. B.

[2] **Macduff.** —The Jews' claim that they had no authority to put Christ to death was true as far as the Roman law was concerned. They may have been able to disregard it on occasions as our friends suggest, but it seemed to suit their purpose to lay the responsibility for the Lord's death on someone else, for He had become a public figure for whom many had a great affection. There is evidence that the spirit of rebellion against Rome was growing among the Jews during this period. Hence the strong military guard needed for Paul a few years later (Acts 23. 23, 24). Finally came the open rebellion of A. D. 66 followed by the divinely prophesied destruction of Jerusalem in A. D. 70. Against this background it can be understood that what the Jews dared not do when they arrested the Lord was politically possible at the trial of Stephen. *L. B.*

[3] **Macduff.** —Does not Psalm 2. 2, 3 give the true answer to this question? The prophecy is quoted in Acts 4. 25, 26 with a comment in verses 27 and 28, making it clear that the rulers and the people of the Jewish and Gentile nations all had some responsibility for the death of the Lord. *L. B.*

[4] **Cardiff.** —Any connexion between Luke 23. 6, 7, and 13. 1 would be indirect. Pilate's foul murder of the Galileans was one of his many political blunders which the Jews knew well how to exploit to their own advantage. The story of his misrule had reached Rome, and his career was in danger at the time of the trial of the Lord. This made him desperate to avoid offending the Jews again, so that he was glad to seize on an excuse to transfer the responsibility to Herod. *L. B.*

[5] **Portslade.** —This is an interesting point. Presumably by the "kingdom of God" our friends refer to the spiritual kingdom composed of New Testament churches of God. If so, it is rather questionable to base an interpretation on the ground that the passage is not found in Matthew's Gospel, for Matthew does introduce this aspect of the kingdom of God in chapter 21. 43. In connexion with the kingdom of God as expressed in churches of God, it is the Lordship of Christ rather than His Kingship which is characteristically emphasized. His Kingship relates rather to His Messiahship towards Israel and His ultimate millennial reign over the nations. I therefore suggest that His statement to Pilate in John 18. 36 referred to the heavenly origin and character of His eternal kingdom, which does not depend upon human conflict to establish or support it (Daniel 2. 44; Luke 1. 32, 33). *G. P. Jr.*

[6] **Portslade.** —In Matthew 27. 27-31 and Mark 15. 16-20 the scourging and mockery by the Roman soldiers are introduced as the climax of the proceedings at the Praetorium, following Pilate's sentence of crucifixion. John elaborates the final phase of the proceedings in much greater detail, showing Pilate's eleventh hour attempts to persuade the Jewish leaders to acquiesce in the release of the Lord Jesus. What political danger could there be in a "King" so powerless and ridiculed? Did the fearful scourging and thorn crown not satisfy those who wished to punish the Nazarene? John's account develops this aspect of the trial in clear perspective. *G. P. Jr.*

[7] **Portslade.** —This is a difficulty that has troubled many. Mr. James Martin has given us some notes on the reckoning of time in John's Gospel (Bible Studies 1967 p. 39) in which a solution is suggested. If John, writing in a Roman city after the fall of Jerusalem, adopted Roman time which is similar to ours, his reckoning would appear to differ from the remainder of Scripture, where eastern time is used, counting the hours from dawn (6 a. m.) instead of midnight. So the end of the trial at the sixth hour actually took place at 6 a. m., our time, whereas Matthew's mention of the sixth hour (the beginning of the three hours of darkness, Matthew 27. 45) refers to twelve noon. These times fit in quite well with the chronology of the crucifixion day. It should be pointed out that some scholars do not accept this explanation but we would be very reluctant to admit that there may be a copyist's error. L. B.

[8] **Birmingham.** —Scourging was used by the Romans as a method of interrogation, with the object of extracting a confession (Acts 22. 24-29). It may be that Pilate also wished to content the mob, hoping that such cruel punishment would satisfy the Jews' animosity towards the Prisoner and he would thus avoid having to pronounce the death sentence (Luke 23. 16). L. B.

[9] **Methil.** —Herod's soldiers clothed the Lord in "gorgeous (shining white)... apparel" (Luke 23. 11). The same Greek words are used to describe the "bright apparel" of the man who stood before Cornelius (Acts 10. 30). White was the *royal* colour amongst the Hebrews, thus displaying the sarcasm and insult from the Jewish point of view. Matthew 27. 28, Mark 15. 17 and John 19. 2 are parallel accounts of the cruelty and insult shown later in the trial by Pilate's soldiers. In Matthew, the colour is *kokkinos*, purple, a colour derived from the cochineal insect. In Mark, it is *porphura* (with 'robe' understood), a purple dye extracted from certain shell fish; in John, *porphureos*, an adjective qualifying himation, a garment. Beyond all doubt the garment used was a scarlet military cloak. The Roman soldiers insulted the Lord by supplying Him with the mock insignia of a king... a crown, but of thorns, a sceptre, but a reed, and a soldier's scarlet robe, but not one of the Roman 'imperial purple', fit for a king. Jas. M.

QUESTION AND ANSWER

Question from Glasgow (Parfick). — It seems to be implied in Hymn 17 (P. H. S. S.) verse 1 that the unbroken legs of the Lord (John 19. 32, 36) represent the members who know no sufferings, in contrast to the Head. Has the parallel thought expressed in the hymn any Scriptural basis?

Answer. —This suggestion arises from a confusion of types, Christ as the Passover Lamb and Christ as the Head of the Church, the Body. It is vital to the correct understanding of Scripture that the interpretation of types should be kept within the bounds of what Scripture permits. Mixing two types together and deriving fanciful interpretations may lead to error. We are quite sure the hymn-writer had no such thought as is suggested when he wrote this beautiful verse. The two parts of the

verse use two different figures to emphasize similar thoughts about the atoning death of Christ and the blessings we derive from it. *L. B.*

This question arises from a faulty reading of the hymn, the fault lying with the reader and not the writer. *J. B.*

PSALM 57 *Continued from page 84*

David would see himself giving thanks, not in some quiet corner, but among the people, and singing praises among the nations. This is clearly seen in Psalm 100, when the voice of joy and gladness will rise to the true God, when they also will turn their faces towards Zion and come into His presence with singing.

God has given mankind much cause for thanksgiving and praise, for His mercy is great unto the heavens and His truth unto the skies. The exaltation of God above the heavens and His glory above all the earth are things that will be seen and acknowledged by men, when the darkness and fogs of untruth have disappeared; when the Sun of righteousness will appear with healing in His wings. Then the prince of darkness will be chained and cast into the abyss for 1, 000 years. Men will then be freed from the bonds with which he bound them. *J. M.*

PSALM 58

This is another golden psalm of David. There is no indication in the heading when or under what circumstances it was written.

Do ye indeed in silence speak righteousness?

Do ye judge uprightly, O ye sons of men?

Yea, in heart ye work wickedness;

Ye weigh out the violence of your hands in the earth (verses 1, 2).

This seems to be a psalm which is not limited to the wicked of Israel, of whom at times there were not a few, but to the sons of men in general. In that respect it is like Psalm 49, which is to all the inhabitants of the world. The Hebrew word *ELEM* is derived from *A LAM*, which means to be tongue-tied, hence, to be dumb. It is not the word "congregation" as in the A. V. Can the silent or dumb speak righteousness? Alas, the men who should speak righteousness today are dumb, silent. Then the further question is asked, "Do ye judge uprightly?" Here again the answer must be, No. Instead, in heart men work wickedness, and weigh out the violence with their hands. Men make great efforts towards education, spending millions in their enterprise, but are things moral and spiritual getting better? The answer must be, No, again.

J. M.

(to be continued D. V.)

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BIBLE STUDIES

"Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so" (Acts 17: 11)

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EDITORIAL

Our study this month **brings us** to Calvary, focal point of God's **great** redemptive purpose towards **man**. It was Paul who wrote of **man's** natural outlook that "the natural **man** **receiveth** not the **things** of the Spirit of God: for **they are** foolishness unto him" (1 Corinthians 2: 14). There is **stark** contrast **between unregenerate man's attitude** to the **suffering Man** of Calvary **and** the teaching of the **Spirit** that in Christ God was there reconciling the world unto Himself.

Hence the **striking** paradox of 1 Corinthians 1: 25: "The foolishness of God **is** wiser than **men**; and the weakness of God **is** stronger than men". The literal force of the verse **is** that the "foolish thing" of God **is** wiser than men, and the "**weak** thing" of God **is** stronger than men. The apostle's words were meticulously chosen **as** guided **by** the **Spirit**. **As Vine** shows, **it is** not the noun *moria* (foolishness) which **is used**, **but** the adjective *moros*, so **signifying** "not foolishness as a personal quality, **but** adjectivally that which **is** considered **by** the ignorant **as** a foolish policy or mode of dealing". **In** a similar **sense** the adjective *asthenes* (**weak**) **is used** instead **of** the noun *asthenia* (weakness). To unanointed **eyes** the Cross indeed **appeared** foolish **and** without strength **as** a **means** of salvation. To the **Jew** the thought of a Messiah **crucified** was deeply **repugnant**, **and** became a stumbling block, an offence. To the Gentile **it** was foolishness (verse 23).

Yet it pleased **God** "through the foolishness of the preaching to **save** them that believe"; **not** through a foolish **manner** of preaching, **but** through the foolishness of the "thing preached". The **great** spiritual and mental endowments of Paul **and** others **ensured** a masterly presentation of the **great** evangel, **but** the essential content of their **message** was a **crucified** Christ. This **was** the "thing preached" which appeared to **many** as foolishness, until **by** the light of revelation they saw how perfectly **it met** their **sinner** need. Then they realized the force of Christ **as** the power of God **and** the wisdom of God; **dynamic** power to **effect** their deliverance from **sin**, **and** wisdom **beyond** all human conception to **devise means** **by** which banished **ones** could **be** reconciled to God. **It is** the "word of the Cross" which becomes unto **us** who **are being** saved the power of God.

In approaching Corinth Paul had felt burdened to know nothing among the people **save Jesus Christ** **and** Him crucified. This theme he would **seek grace** to **present** in demonstration of the **Spirit** **and** of power. The need for a similar **burden** today **remains** unchanged, **and** our further devotional **study** of the crucifixion should **find its** fresh outworking in proclamation **to** others **of** these deathless truths. *G. P. Jr.*

The Authorized and Revised Versions compared (*continued*)**(b) Accuracy of Translation**

Some passages in the Old Testament tend to be rather obscure as rendered in the Authorized Version but the revisers have succeeded in making the meaning far clearer. Examples of improved renderings can be found in, Exodus 32. 25; Deuteronomy 18. 10, 29; 19; Job 8. 13, 41. 25; Psalm 2. 12, 16. 2, 37. 3, 67. 6; Proverbs 18. 24; Ecclesiastes 5. 14; Isaiah 13. 22, 17. 9, 53. 8, 54. 8. Bishop Ellicot said that the Revised translation of the Old Testament is not only faithful and thorough but often rises to a very high level of poetic utterance.

In the long interval between the publication of the two versions there was a steady advance by scholars in the understanding of the ancient languages, so that the revisers were far better equipped than were their predecessors to arrive at the right sense in difficult passages. For instance, the rendering of the Greek imperfect tense is usually more accurate in the Revised Version. A clear instance is found in Acts 26. 11 where "I compelled them to blaspheme" in the Authorized Version becomes "I strove to make them blaspheme" in the Revised, which conveys a quite different meaning. Greek students also draw attention to the improvement in the translation of the aorist tense, for instance, "then were all dead" (2 Corinthians 5. 14 A. V.) becomes "therefore all died" (R. V.). There are also a great number of instances where wrong prepositions have been corrected in the Revised Version. In Philipians 2. 10, "at the name of Jesus" is now "in the name of Jesus", which has a different implication. Such changes may seem small, and indeed they have been criticized as being petty and unnecessary by supporters of the Authorized Version, particularly as one of the rules under which the revisers worked was that they should introduce as few alterations as possible consistent with faithfulness. Bible students can appreciate, however, that every word is important in helping towards an accurate understanding of the meaning of Scripture; any who will take the time to compare the two versions word by word will find a great number of variations, slight and otherwise, which in aggregate contribute to a more faithful rendering.

Serious criticisms have been made of doctrinal bias in the Revised Version but it is doubtful whether they can be generally substantiated. Of the few possible exceptions we would mention the translation of 2 Timothy 3. 16 where, it is alleged, the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures is denied. Many well-known Greek scholars maintain that the Revised Version is wrong in this passage and it is significant that the Revised Standard Version reverts here to a wording similar to the Authorized, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God". This is undoubtedly correct. Another similar instance is the rendering of Galatians 2. 16. Here the Revised Version reads "a man is not justified by the works of the law, save through faith in Jesus Christ". The Authorized Version has "but" instead of "save", which is doctrinally correct, for the Scriptures teach quite clearly that righteousness is not through the law (Galatians 2. 21). In both these cases Greek scholars maintain that the words in the original will bear either translation equally well, but the choice depends upon a correct understanding of the context. Soundness of doctrine is therefore essential in a trans-

lator of the Scriptures and we are bound to admit that some of the Revisers had shortcomings in this respect. Mr. H. Elson wrote these apt words in *Needed Truth*, 1934, page 53, "In many passages [of the Scriptures] translators are faced with an alternative where spiritual knowledge of the doctrine of God in general will alone enable them to choose the right word and convey the true sense and meaning".

Another aspect of translation is the treatment in similar contexts of the same word in the original. The Authorized Version translators prided themselves upon the use of synonyms to provide variety in the reading, but this policy has obscured the true meaning of many passages, particularly where it would seem that the Holy Spirit has caused a word to be repeated for emphasis. The well-known case is quoted of the frequent use of the word "straightway" in Mark (Revised Version) to translate the **Greek** word *euthus* whereas the Authorized Version confuses the reader with the variations "forthwith", "immediately" and "as soon as". Compare also the translation of Matthew 25. 46 in the two versions. The use in the Authorized of different words, "everlasting" and "eternal" to represent the same Greek word used twice in the same sentence is misleading. In spite of the obvious improvement obtained by the Revisers in many such instances, they have been accused of a slavish adherence to the principle that the same Greek word should everywhere be rendered by the same English word. That this is an unjust criticism can be easily verified by referring to Vine's Dictionary of New Testament Words or to a good concordance. To take a simple example, *agalliasis*, exuberant joy, is translated "gladness" in Luke 1. 14, Acts 2. 46 and Hebrews 1. 9, but "joy" in Luke 1. 44 and "exceeding joy" in Jude 24. It would be fairer to say that the Revisers, by being reasonably consistent in the rendering of the same Greek word, have helped the ordinary English reader to obtain a closer understanding of the original words than the Authorized Version provides.

(c) Language

The Authorized Version has been justly described as the noblest monument of English prose. In the 16th and 17th centuries the English language had achieved a power and purity unparalleled in its history, and the fifty-four men who translated the King James Version were well able to maintain the high standard of their day. The resulting version endeared itself to English speaking people in such a way that its words were soon on everybody's lips, and many quotations from it are still in general use. The attractive rhythm of the prose commends itself to the ear and makes memorizing comparatively easy. External qualities are often more appreciated than intrinsic worth so that the Revised Version has never replaced the version of 1611 in popular esteem although it is generally more accurate. The revisers rated accuracy of translation as of supreme importance, but by adhering closely to the literal meaning of the Greek they have lost some of the superb beauty of the older version; nevertheless the literary standard of their work is very high.

In conclusion we quote the opinion of a Mr. H. Dennett who, with the help of experienced colleagues, compared in over thirty versions scores of carefully selected passages involving matters of doctrine,

distinction of synonyms and the rendering of difficult phrases, and checked thousands of references. In his booklet "Students' Guide to Versions of the New Testament and of Concordances" he says, "There is hardly a paragraph, and certainly not a page on which a worthwhile correction of the Authorized Version is not to be found. In the majority of the numerous representative passages referred to . . . the Revised Version takes the student nearer to the original meaning than does the Authorized". He goes on to say "Anything to which man puts his hand contains blemishes, even the work of translating the Holy Scriptures, and it would be foolish to pretend that there is none in the Revised Version, but there are few indeed compared with those in almost any other version available to the student today".

Mr. J. C. Radcliffe wrote a series of articles entitled "Why the Revised Version?" in *Needed Truth* 1934. Students interested in the subject should endeavour to borrow this volume; the articles deal with the controversy in an instructive and readable manner. L. B.

STUDIES IN THE CLOSING PHASE OF THE GOSPEL BY JOHN

JOHN 19. 16-37

The Crucifixion

From Macduff. —This account was by an eye-witness (verse 35) who stood at the Cross from the crucifixion until the Lords' body was taken from the Cross. Such a sight being the frequent experience of the four soldiers, we can hardly imagine them sympathetic about the Lord's crucifixion. Some of us did wonder if they parted His garments among themselves as mementos of this wonderful Man; or did they take the Lord's effects for selling? [1]. The Lord's coat being of rare design, they did not want to damage it, and settled ownership by casting lots. This all took place to fulfil Scripture (Psalm 22. 18).

Mary, the Lord's mother, along with the other women, was within speaking distance of the Lord while He was on the Cross, and the Lord said to His mother, "Behold, thy son!", referring to John; and to John, "Behold, thy mother"! John records four sayings on the Cross, two in the daylight and two in the darkness. The first two were spoken to His mother and John. Later He said "I thirst", and they gave Him vinegar, which He took. Knowing there was one other Scripture to be fulfilled, He said, "It is finished", before giving up His spirit. There remained the prophecy of His piercing, and this was fulfilled in a remarkable way. To hasten death the soldiers broke the legs of the malefactors, but when they came to Jesus they found He was dead already. There was no need to break His legs, and perhaps feeling deprived of sport, one plunged a spear into His side and forth came John, "Behold, thy mother!". John records four sayings on the Cross, blood and water, all in accordance with the Scriptures [2].

W. Johnston

From Edinburgh. —It is quite evident from John's Gospel that the apostle had a full knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures which prophesied the Lord's death. Four times he uses such prophecies; in respect of the Lord's garments (verse 24), His thirst (verse 28), His bones (verse 36), and finally His piercing (verse 37). The other Gospel

writers do not mention these Scriptures. Luke records the words of the Lord Jesus, ". . . how that all things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and the Prophets, and the Psalms, concerning Me" (24. 44). The fulfilled prophecies recorded by John are taken in turn from the Psalms, the Law, and the Prophets: "And when they had fulfilled all things that were written of Him, they took Him down from the tree, and laid Him in a tomb" (Acts 13. 29).

In his Gospel John presents Christ as Son of God. This fact explains certain differences in the account of the crucifixion as compared with the other Gospel narratives. John relates that "He went out, bearing the Cross for Himself. . ." (verse 17), whereas all the other Gospels mention Simon of Cyrene as being compelled to bear His Cross. He also omits certain important incidents which occur during the time of the crucifixion recorded in the other Gospels: the railing and mocking of the crowd; the darkness over the land; the veil of the temple being rent; the tombs opened; bodies of the saints raised; the centurion's conversion. The time of darkness is not referred to. John's presentation being of the divine light of Deity associated with the Lord, where darkness has no place.

John relates to us the full title on the Cross, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews" (verse 19) and alone of the Gospel writers records the chief priests' reaction to it, and Pilate's reply to them (verse 22). They were strange words to have come from a man who such a short time before had wavered over his verdict on the Christ. But we surely see here the will of God coming to pass, for "this title therefore read many of the Jews: . . . and it was written in Hebrew, and in Latin, and in Greek" (verse 20).
L. Burgoyne

From Hamilton. —John's appeal to fulfilled prophecy emphasizes the truth that the sufferings of the Messiah had been foreshown. The phrase, "that the scripture might be fulfilled" (John 19. 24, 36) suggests, not simply the isolated fulfilling of a particular item in the scriptural picture, but the perfect completion of the whole prophetic image.

The first example of this is the manner in which the soldiers dealt with the clothes of the Lord. "They parted My garments among them, and upon My vesture did they cast lots" (verse 24, Psalm 22. 18). Each of the soldiers took what article he needed or fancied, while for that large seamless robe that was worn over all, they cast lots, being unwilling to tear it. All this fulfilled the scripture. As the Lord saw these men heartlessly dividing among themselves His last few possessions, He had the comfort of knowing that the Scriptures were being fulfilled, albeit unknown to those who were participating in its completion.

The last act which John sees as fulfilment of prophecy is the omission in the case of our Lord of that terrible but common mode of terminating the life of the crucified ones, the breaking of their legs. "A bone of Him shall not be broken" (verse 36). When one of the soldiers pierced the side of Jesus he did it, perhaps out of a sense of duty to prove that Jesus was truly dead and his task was finished, yet unknowingly this Roman soldier was an instrument used by God that the Scriptures might be fulfilled. Here we can discern the wisdom and the love of our God, for we see the cross-work of the Lord Jesus as

according to God's purpose. Peter said, "Him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay" (Acts 2. 23).

Matthew Carruthers

EXTRACTS

From Sydney, Australia. —After having endured a false trial in which were ignored all the precepts and doctrines of justice, after having mockery, humiliation and suffering laid on Him by sinful men, our Lord was made to set out bearing His own Cross to the place called Golgotha, outside Jerusalem's city walls. On the Cross He was to complete the work which His Father had sent Him to do, and to fulfil to the last jot and tittle those prophecies which are recorded concerning Him. Several are fulfilled in this portion of John's Gospel. As we study these prophecies and their fulfilment by the Lord Jesus, we perceive that God surely watches over His word to perform it. The beloved apostle John brings before us details not recorded by the other Gospel writers. We are told in verse 20 that the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city, also that the title was written in Hebrew, Latin and Greek.

Verse 23 tells of there being four soldiers, also that His coat was "without seam, woven from the top throughout". In verse 30 we read, "He bowed His head". Only John tells us of this.

In the record of John, we have revealed to us in more detail the events and conversation of our Lord prior to His death. As He was suspended by cruel spikes on that Cross, as His body was racked with the pain of His suffering, from His parched throat we hear, not in a whisper but in a loud voice, "It is finished": finished the work that saves.

Gordon J. Munday

From Vancouver, B. C. —John's account of the crucifixion is rich in detail. This could perhaps be explained by his watchful vigil beneath the Cross. John says that Jesus went out bearing His own Cross, while the three synoptists say that He was led out. John is giving emphasis to the Lord taking the outside place Himself. Pilate delivered Jesus for the will of the Jews to be carried out by his soldiers. He was also responsible for writing the superscription. John alone says that the sign above Jesus said, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews", perhaps showing Pilate's desire to emphasize the Manhood of Christ [3]. John tells us the superscription was written in three languages, for all to read. He also is the only one to relate that the chief priests complained. Perhaps he had inside contacts to hear of this and so he would be one of the few to know how the Jews were trying to cover up the real truth. Naturally enough, John tells us of the Lord commissioning him to care for His mother; he is the only one to say he has been witness of the events and his witness is true. *J. Bell, Jr.*

From Aberkenfig and Barry. —It would appear from John's account that he was not present at the Cross all the time. He probably took Mary away soon after the Lord's words in verses 26 and 27. John makes no mention of Simon of Cyrene but says, Jesus "went out,

bearing the Cross for Himself". Nor does he record the wine mingled with gall being offered to the Lord, the darkness from the sixth hour to the ninth hour, the cry "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani", or the veil of the Temple being rent. On the other hand John alone mentions the following: 1. That the title was written in Hebrew, Latin and Greek; he also gives a fuller title than the other writers, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews". This is important, indicating clearly who He was. 2. The request of the chief priests to have the title altered, which Pilate refused to do. 3. The coat without seam, explaining why the soldiers divided some of His garments but cast lots for the coat. 4. The fact that Mary the mother of Jesus was standing by the Cross and how the Lord commended His mother to John. The other women mentioned are referred to by other Gospel writers but as standing afar off. 5. That Jesus cried, "I thirst". 6. The breaking of the legs of the malefactors and the piercing of the Lord Jesus with the spear.

D. H. Butler

From Denmark Hill. —In spite of the Lord's dire extremity in the terrible physical suffering of the Cross and the previous ill treatment received, the Lord's tender care for His mother shows wonderfully His love to her and the disciple whom He loved. Two short statements to both parties made them aware of the new relationship to one another. No pleading or command seem to be suggested, only a statement of fact. It is suggested that verse 27 is idiomatic, saying in effect that from that moment of time Mary, the mother of the Lord, became part of John's household (see Comment [9]). Some may take it literally that the disciple John took Mary to his own home and then came back to witness the end. It would appear from verse 35 that he was present at the very end and it is not unreasonable to suppose he and Mary were present during all the dreadful hours of the Lord's suffering on the Cross. It is no surprise that John recorded this incident, being so personally involved in what happened.

Students are divided as to whether the "blood and water" (verse 34) can be explained by natural causes. It certainly made a profound impression on John who witnessed this savage act on the part of the soldier. He explains in verse 36 why the Lord received different treatment from that shown to the others in verse 32. Is the reference in 1 John 5. 6, 8 an allusion to these tremendous happenings, in that it witnessed in a most powerful way the reality of Christ's death and sacrifice for all **mankind?** [4].

R. F. Robertson

From Methil. —There were certain Jews who thought that Pilate had chosen the wrong words, and asked him to alter them, but he answered simply, "What I have written I have written". We concluded that the Roman law was similar to that of the Medes and Persians so that it was more than Pilate dare do to alter what had been written (Daniel 6. 8) [5].

There were many faithful women who stood by John the beloved disciple as they witnessed those terrible experiences of the Lord. Jesus, looking down from the Cross said to His mother, "Woman, behold, thy son!" and to John, "Behold, thy mother!". Though John says that he took her unto his own home, we felt that from that hour John assumed responsibility for the care of Mary, and that they both

remained until the end when Jesus gave up His spirit, but Matthew 27. 55 indicates that the women later retired to witness the incidents from afar.

While all of the synoptic writers refer to the three hours of darkness, John completely omits this incident, though he is the only writer who states that the sponge containing vinegar was placed upon hyssop, while Matthew states that it was a reed that was used. We wondered what the significance of hyssop is here [6]. While verse 30 says that the Lord received the vinegar we agreed that He tasted, though He would not drink (see Luke 22. 18) [7].

We considered Zechariah's prophecy that men will look on Him whom they pierced (12. 10). John in Revelation refers to the return of the Lord when every eye shall see Him, including those who pierced Him, **and** all the earth will mourn (Revelation 1. 7). *A. R. Smith*

From Birkenhead. —After the scourging, the Lord was made to suffer further by carrying His Cross. Isaac taking the wood to the sacrifice on mount Moriah was thought to be a type of this. Pilate may have felt defeated when the Jews crucified the Man he wanted to set free, so that their request for an alteration in the title on the Cross brought a curt refusal. Pilate saw the Lord to be more than an ordinary man but the chief priests made it abundantly clear that they absolutely rejected His claim to kingship. We had a difficulty in verse 25 as to whether His mother's sister and Mary the wife of Clopas, were identical. Although this seemed likely from grammatical construction the name clash between two sisters seems to discount the possibility [8]. Some thought the notable omission by John of the hours of darkness signified that the apostle took Mary to his home as instructed by the Lord and returned after the darkness. However as we do not know whether at this time any of the disciples had a fixed home: and noting that home is in italics, some thought that "own protection" is the meaning intended and thus the above explanation **seems** unlikely [9]. *T. J. Sands*

From Birmingham. —John's appeal to fulfilled prophecy was very important in proving that Jesus was the coming Messiah, that men might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. It also serves to weld together the Old and New Testaments, and testifies to the truth of both.

John's mention of the words of the Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross, spoken to His mother, "Woman, behold, thy son!" and to John, "Behold, thy mother!", shows the very intimate relationship John had with his Lord.

Jesus, even though He was suffering on the Cross, cared for His earthly mother and also fulfilled the law in honouring His mother.

D. P. Brown

From Derby. —The Jews disowned the Lord Jesus Christ by asking Pilate to alter the superscription in such a way as to question its truth. Even though He had suffered very much, He still had a concern for those around Him, and His compassion and love for His mother is seen in His utterances in verses 26 and 27. The Lord was in full

control, for when all things were done He said, "It is finished", and He yielded up His Spirit.

The Jews had delivered up an innocent Man, yet they were concerned that the sabbath should not be defiled. They were engrossed in their religious ceremonies, and yet their hearts were really far from being obedient to God.

L. E. Foster, G. W. Conway

From Southport. —We learn from John that Christ carried the Cross for Himself, whilst we find in Matthew, Mark and Luke, that it became necessary to impress Simon of Cyrene to bear His load. All four Gospels record that He was crucified between two malefactors.

John gives the full title that Pilate wrote, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews". The Jews were offended at the title, because it seemed to imply that they had accepted that Christ was King by right, yet by the title itself, and by his adherence to it, Pilate proclaimed Christ as King.

The title above the Cross was written in Hebrew, Greek and Latin, which made it intelligible to all. In Hebrew the oracles of God were recorded; in Greek the learning of the philosophers; and in Latin the laws of the empire. In each of these Christ is proclaimed King, God so ordering it that the words should be written in the three most widely known tongues. We noticed that all the Gospel writers speak of the soldiers casting lots for the Lord's coat but John alone explains the reason for casting lots, namely, that the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout.

Thomas Brown

From Kilmarnock. —Their work of crucifixion completed, the soldiers turned their attention to the Lord's garments. They divided them amongst themselves, with the exception of His coat or tunic, which could have been the skilled work of some of the womenfolk who ministered to the Lord. That a prediction so specific as Psalm 22. 18, which distinguishes one piece of clothing from the others, was fulfilled to the letter is indeed a great wonder to us, especially as the garments were not divided up by friends or even enemies, but by an independent party of heathen soldiers who had no knowledge of such a prophecy.

Prophecy was again fulfilled when, with the knowledge that His work was about to be completed, the Lord cried, "I thirst". He experienced the natural consequences of extreme anguish as would other men, and His body was exhausted with suffering. In answer to His cry they gave Him vinegar to drink (Psalm 69. 21).

Every imaginable indignity had been permitted up to the moment of death, but men were not allowed to mutilate the body of the Lord further by breaking His legs. Nonetheless the certainty of the Lord's death must be demonstrated. The unseen hand of God allowed a soldier to pierce His side and thus also bring about the fulfilment of the prophecy that "a bone of Him shall not be broken", and "They shall look on Him whom they pierced" (verses 36, 37).

J. M. Rankine

COMMENTS

[1] **Macduff.** —It is said that the soldiers were entitled to appropriate the victim's garments as a matter of routine. In this case God overruled the **custom** to fulfil His word. *G. P. Jr.*

[2] **Macduff.** —According to historians, when it was necessary to hasten the death of the victim of crucifixion, the legs were first broken and then the side was pierced with a sword or spear. In the case of the Lord the soldier's action was probably routine and not actuated by spite. *L. B.*

[3] **Vancouver.** —It is not easy to trace Pilate's motives for the striking wording of the superscription but we cannot agree that he had any desire to advertise the truth concerning the Lord Jesus. It is more likely that he wished to annoy the Jews, who had succeeded in their plot to destroy the Lord, much to Pilate's displeasure. This was the only way left open to him to obtain some measure of vengeance. The Jew's urgent petition shows that he was successful. *L. B.*

The reason why Pilate wrote what he did write was because he was in God's hands (John 19. 11). *J. B.*

[4] **Denmark Hill**—We consider that 1 John 5. 6, 8 has to do with the Lord's baptism and death. There does not seem to be any connexion between this scripture and John 19. 34. *L. B.*

[5] **Methil.** —If Pilate's superscription had been legally unalterable, the Jews would have known this and used other tactics. He had been forced to change his mind about the condemnation of the Lord and he had no intention of relenting on this point. See comments [3]. *L. B.*

[6] **Methil.** —Hyssop is an eastern plant with stiff stems, making it useful for a number of practical purposes. There is no need to look for any other significance in the fact that it is mentioned in connexion with the crucifixion. The stiff stem of the plant might also be called a reed, hence the different word used in the other Gospels. *L. B.*

[1] **Methil.** —Matthew 27. 34 refers to the offer of wine and gall at the beginning of the Crucifixion. The Lord refused this as it was intended to lessen the pain. John 19. 28-30, on the other hand describes how the Lord drank the vinegar given Him by a soldier to quench His thirst. It was perhaps necessary that His parched throat should be moistened to enable Him to utter the cry, "It is finished" before His death. In Luke 22. 18 the Lord was probably referring exclusively to wine. Matthew 26. 29 suggests that this is so: "*this fruit of the vine*". *L. B.*

[8] **Birkenhead.** —It is true that the sentence as it stands would lead one to suppose that there were two sisters, both named Mary. However, *it* has been suggested that Clopas was the brother of Joseph the husband of Mary, the Lord's mother, so that these two Marys would actually be sisters-in-law, a relationship which presumably could be

described by the Greek word *adelphē* which is here translated "sister".

L. B.

[9] Birkenhead. —According to the Greek, "to His own things": that is to say that Mary was, from then on, to be provided for as a rightful sharer **in** John's means.

J. B.

Question and Answer

Question from Macduff. —"Ye were redeemed... with precious blood". What part has the blood of Christ, when pierced, in this? He was already dead and it cannot be said of this that the life was in the blood.

Answer. —Leviticus 17. 11 tells us that the life of the flesh is in the blood. This means that blood maintains life, not that blood has the intrinsic property of life as the question seems to assume. Furthermore Leviticus 17. 14 indicates that an animal's blood is equivalent to its life. Similarly, references to the shedding of a man's blood have the broad significance of violent death, actual pouring out of blood is not necessarily in view; for instance Genesis 9. 6 must be a condemnation of all violence, not only that which involves the actual shedding of blood. This Old Testament background helps us to understand the implication of the New Testament references to the blood of Christ. It is His atoning death which is in view in such scriptures as Romans 3. 25, 5. 9; Ephesians 1. 7. The death of the Lord Jesus Christ is of infinite value to His Father and to us, it is also anti-typical of the Pass-lamb, so Peter was led of the Spirit to speak of redemption as being "with precious blood, as of a lamb... even the blood of Christ".

L. B.

PSALM 58 *Continued from page 96*

The wicked are estranged from the womb:
 They go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.
 Their poison is like the poison of a serpent:
 They are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear;
 Which hearkeneth not to the voice of charmers.
 Charming never so wisely (verses 3, 4, 5).

The wicked (Hebrew *RASHFI*, such as are morally wrong or actively bad) are estranged (profane) from the womb. This is true of all of Adam's race, but there are those who are repentant of their state and actions and are forgiven, and consequently changed in their attitude towards God and men. But such as are unrepentant go on becoming worse and worse, and these are they whom David describes in those verses. They speak lies, they are poisonous as a serpent, and refuse

to listen as the deaf adder, and refuse the voice of any charmer who would tell them of the preciousness of Christ and the blessedness of sins forgiven.

Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth:
 Break out the great teeth of the young lions, O LORD.
 Let them melt away as water that runneth apace:
 When he aimeth his arrows, let them be as though they were
 cut off.

Let them be as a snail which melteth and passeth away:
 Like the untimely birth of a woman, that hath not seen the sun.
 (verses 6, 7, 8).

Here David asks God to deal with those that are wicked, actively bad. He asks God to break their teeth, and as in the breaking of the great teeth of young lions, so may the wicked do less harm than they would otherwise do. He asks that they may melt away like running water, and that his armed arrows may be as though they were cut off; that they may be like a melting snail, and as an untimely birth. David's thought is that the wicked may be limited in their power for evil and rendered useless in the harm they would otherwise do.

Before your pots can feel the thorns,
 He shall take them away with a whirlwind, the green and the
 burning alike.

The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance:
 He shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked.
 So that men shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous:
 Verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth (9, 10, 11).

What is meant in verse 9 is a pot being boiled with thorns. The wicked are viewed as the thorns, and before they can be of any useful effect, the whirlwind comes and takes them away, the green and the burning alike. Thus God deals with the wicked, and the righteous rejoices when he sees God's vengeance on the wicked. Figuratively he washes his feet in the blood of the wicked, for he is glad to see this harmful and useless man removed. Thus there is a recourse for the righteous, and, very manifestly, there is a God that judgeth in the earth. Men reap what they sow. J. M.

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BIBLE STUDIES

"Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so" (Acts 17. 11)

VOLUME 36

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EDITORIAL

There can be few instances in Scripture of devotion so constant in the face of adverse circumstances as that of the women of Galilee. They had been healed of various afflictions by the Lord and now they followed Him throughout the cities and villages of Israel, sustaining the little band of disciples with creature comforts paid for out of their own pockets (Luke 8. 1-3). They remained with the Lord on His journey to Jerusalem although it was obvious that danger lay ahead causing even the twelve to be reluctant to go (John 11. 7, 8, 16). The Lord went on in front of the company while the disciples were continually lagging fearfully behind (Mark 10. 32) but the women were there, constant even in danger. In Luke 23. 49 a word is used which emphasizes their faithfulness. It is *sunakotautheo*, to follow along with. Many times in the New Testament disciples are said to follow (*akoloutheo*) the Lord but the strengthened form of the verb is used only three times. The thought is accurately expressed in the Revised Version by the phrase "followed with" but the significance of the small word "with" should not be overlooked.

Until the crucifixion the women were in the background, scarcely mentioned in the gospel story, **but** serving faithfully **and** inconspicuously, an indispensable part of the "little flock". At Golgotha the men, apart from John, were cowed and ineffective but the women were together, watching from a distance (Mark 15. 40, 41). From that company at least two, Mary Magdalene and Mary the wife of Clopas were drawn close to the foot of the Cross in the Lord's last hours (John 19. 25). There they must have remained, to be joined by the others when Joseph of Arimathaea came with the linen cloth and with the help of Nicodemus buried the Lord. They watched as sorrowfully the two secret disciples carried the Lord to the nearby tomb and they observed carefully as the body was laid in its place (Luke 23. 55). Their actions were concerted and purposeful; there was still work to be done for the One whom they loved so much; the body must be anointed with more spices and ointments. These they purchased and prepared until the Sabbath put an end to further labour.

They resumed their work at the earliest possible moment; it was still dark on that first day of the week as they wended their way back to the tomb to do, as they thought, their last service for their Master. Dawn was breaking as they reached the tomb and found the stone rolled away. Little wonder that the Lord gave to Mary Magdalene and her friends the honour of being the first to see Him in resurrection. They were steadfastly faithful when others, through adversity and discouragement, were heedless of the needs of the moment. If men who are in the forefront fail, the Lord will find others to step into their place to fulfil His purposes and receive their reward.

L. B.

WORDS FOR SEEING AND BEHOLDING IN THE GOSPEL
ACCORDING TO JOHN

Blepo. The use of the word *blepo* in John 5. 19 is unique, since this is the only instance in the Gospel according to John where its subject is the Son of God and not simply an ordinary man. Originally the word was related to the noun *blepharon*, which means an eyelid. Hence is signified a single look, or glance. A gradual shift from look to see is observed in the history of the Greek *blepo* (Buck, Dictionary of European Synonyms). In its primary application in the Gospel according to John, it is used of physical looking, or having the power of sight. Yet the Lord Jesus invests the word with a spiritual significance in John 9. 39, "that they which see may become blind", where the purpose is not to deprive men of physical sight, but to bring home to those who claimed spiritual sight their real state of darkness, while affording spiritual sight to those who had previously lacked it. Thus the word is here used in a new context; the miracle which first of all wrought a physical transformation in the man, and then proceeded to a working of faith in him, formed the background to a spiritual lesson.

Besides meaning "to have the power of sight" it was observed above that the word *blepo* can also mean "see" in the sense of 'looking'. In John 5. 19 the physical sense of the word would perhaps present the picture of one who looks to the actions of a father and so learns a craft (as the word *para* suggests in 8. 38). But in fact the word is applied to the Son whose actions corresponded in every way with the will and working of the Father. Apart from this instance, *blepo* in the sense of looking is associated with a particular mood or moment, the impact of sense-perception. For example, Mary Magdalene notes the stone (20. 1), and the other disciple notes the linen cloths lying (verse 5).

Theaomai. In John 6. 5 the Lord lifted up His eyes (which was what He had told His disciples to do, John 4. 35) and beheld. Whereas it originally meant wonder, this word *theaomai* came to mean 'gaze at' and then behold. It is related to *theatron*, theatre for dramatic performances or other shows. The element of "wonder" gradually dropped out of the word *theaomai*, but certain elements of the original connotation may remain. For example, in its later use *theaomai* often includes the idea of watching a spectacle, as in *theatron*. It is known that the word *theatron* could be used of the Roman amphitheatres. This use goes with the idea of a crowd watching or a crowd being watched; the view of a spectator, whether viewing attentively, beholding with enjoyment, looking on with admiration, or contemplating spiritually. It concentrates on the action of beholding, and indicates a careful, deliberate vision which interprets its objects. Great must have been the scope of the vision wherewith the Master beheld His first two followers (1. 38). In John 1. 14 the word speaks of contemplating the glory of God. The perfect tense is used in 1. 32 because the testimony of the vision still remains.

Theoreo (behold) was used of reviewing soldiers in an official capacity, so that in general it is used of one who looks at a thing with interest and for a purpose, denoting careful observation of details. When used of bodily vision it assumes that the object is actually present. When used of perception by the mind or spirit it is to notice or

find on the basis of what one has seen or heard. In 12. 19 the Pharisees used the word behold (*theoreo*) to draw attention to the clear evidence that the world had gone after Him.

Theoreo is more frequent in John and Acts than elsewhere in the New Testament. At the outset of the Gospel according to John it is mainly used of a beholding which gives rise to perplexity in accounting for the circumstances observed; as in the case of the woman who says in 4. 19 "Sir, I perceive that Thou art a Prophet", or the disciples who beheld Jesus walking on the water and were afraid.

In 12. 45 the word *theoreo* takes on a higher meaning from the context, which is speaking of beholding in a spirit of belief. This is also the setting of 6. 40 where the beholding is associated with believing. In 14. 17 *theoreo* indicates spiritual perception. This is possible only where there is faith. In 14. 19 the world's beholding with material vision is contrasted with the beholding by faith which the disciples will exercise when the bodily presence of the Lord is removed. It is because of the contrast that *theoreo* has taken a higher meaning.

In chapter 20, after the glance which the other disciple took at the linen swathing bands, Peter ventures into the tomb and there beholds (*theoreo*) (verse 6) with closer and steadfast contemplation, yet still in perplexity. Similarly Mary beholds first the two angels, then Jesus, but still without recognition (verse 12).

Opsomai. The word *opsomai* in 16. 16 (shall see) is found only in the future tense, though in a sense physical in 1. 39, 19. 37, it is associated elsewhere with spiritual promise, and a perception or experience which depends on faith. The promise of seeing (1. 39, 1. 50, 1. 51, 11. 40) leads up to a promise of being seen (16. 22).

Eidon. The word *eidon* (I saw) is found only in the aorist tense. Related to a knowledge which is immediate and perceptive, this word is used on different levels. It can denote seeing with the bodily eye (18. 26); or personal observation as a basis for deduction (6. 24); or seeing in a vision (12. 41); or grasping the significance of a situation by personal observation, as in 20. 8, where the verb seems to imply that he saw the truth of the resurrection.

As the aorist tense of *blepo* is not found in the Gospel according to John, mere usage dictates that *eidon* and its moods should sometimes denote seeing with the outward eye. In 21. 21 it means to look on. In ordinary usage of the word "see" can be observed also in the subjunctive, 20. 29 it is contrasted with faith, which is the result of hearing. This where the keynote is a reluctance to believe without a personal confirmation by visible evidence; as for example in 4. 48, 6. 30, 12. 9, 12. 40, 20. 25.

But in 3. 3, where the infinitive is used, the verb indicates spiritual perception, and in 12. 21 a desire to form a personal contact. In the same way, where the participle appears to be used literally of perception by sight (5. 6, 11. 31, 32, 19. 26, 20. 20) an element of appreciation of a person's circumstances may be discerned.

The imperative is found in the phrase "come and see" (1. 46, 4. 29, 11. 34) where the object of seeing is inferred by the hearers from the matter under consideration. The seeing indicates verifying with one's own eyes as in 20. 27.

Heoraka (I have seen) is in the perfect tense. In the Gospel according to John this word is used of true vision, where for example in John 1. 18 it denotes direct knowledge of the Father. Only the Son has this knowledge directly (6. 46), but He reveals it to His own (3. 11). The perfect tense indicates a permanent result, namely the ability to bear witness (19. 35). In 1. 34 the perfect tense is used because the results of the seeing and the testimony remain.

In 3. 32 this word is used to describe the immediate knowledge of heavenly things which the Son had when He was with the Father. While the Jews of that day were reproached for not having seen the Father through their study of the Scriptures or the testimony of the Son (5. 37), it was evidently possible for them to realize something of the character of the Lord Jesus and still refuse His claims (6. 36, 15. 24). This is not such a full knowledge as is indicated by the word in 14. 9. In 20. 18 Mary reached this true vision only after she was addressed by name. In 20. 29 there is a contrast firstly between belief by touching and belief by seeing (where *heoraka* is used) and secondly between belief by seeing and belief by hearing (where *eidon* is used).

In the Gospel according to John the perfect tense of *horao* is the only tense of *horao* used except for one instance of the imperfect tense in 6. 2. The total absence of the present tense is remarkable. Its durative aspect is conveyed by the perfect *heoraka*, and its physical application by the words *blepo* and *theoreo*.

The multitude who saw the signs in 6. 2 did not have a clear or abiding grasp of their true significance, as the sequel to the miracle shows (6. 26). Nevertheless, they were filled with wonder as they looked intently on the signs which the Lord did.

Four other words are used:

Emblepo—John 1. 36, 42 (look on).

Anablepo—John 9. 11, 15, 18 (receive sight).

Noeo—John 12. 40 (perceive).

Parakupto—John 20. 5, 11 (stoop down and look in).

Eric Archibald

NOTE: Brother Archibald has produced a comprehensive table showing every occurrence in John of the words dealt with in this article and giving the translation as found in the Revised, Authorised and New English versions. Another table gives the tenses and moods of these occurrences. Any who would like to have a copy of these tables should write to Mr. James Martin.

STUDIES IN THE CLOSING PHASE OF THE GOSPEL BY JOHN

John 19. 38—20. 18

From Birmingham. —We found considerable difficulty in piecing together the events in the four Gospels concerning the resurrection morning. Jesus appeared first to Mary (Mark 16. 9), all other appearances being subsequent to that. It is significant that Jesus said to her, "Touch

Me not; for I am not yet ascended unto the Father" (John 20. 17). But in Matthew 28. 9 we are told that as the Lord Jesus met the women on their way to tell the disciples, they took hold of His feet, and worshipped Him (see comment [5]). It would seem that in between the two events the Lord made an ascension to His Father, prior to His final ascension. In each Gospel account where the rolling away of the stone is recorded, Mary Magdalene is mentioned as being at the tomb very early on the first day of the week just as dawn was breaking. Although it appears from John 20 that she visited the tomb alone, we suggest that with her were the other Mary and the other women, all of whom had carefully observed the laying to rest of the body, and spices were prepared. When the women ran to tell the disciples of the empty tomb, Mary appears to have run to tell Peter and John and to have returned with them. After they had gone, Mary tarried and saw the Lord. Then the Lord was manifested to the other women. *H. Smith*

From Denmark Hill. —Matthew, Mark and Luke do not mention Nicodemus; John does, why? [1]. The first three writers seem to suggest that the anointing and burial was a lone effort on the part of Joseph. They do not deny what Nicodemus did, although they do not mention it. John's detail cannot be ignored, "**so they** took the body of Jesus".

When we come to the account of the resurrection morning, Matthew, Mark and Luke state that more than one woman came to the tomb whereas John mentions only Mary Magdalene. It is hard to decide whether Mary Magdalene went alone first to the tomb or was accompanied by others. It appears that John's record provides the fuller detail, yet it does not disagree with the testimony of Matthew, Mark and Luke [2].

Matthew states one angel was at the tomb, Luke mentions two angels, whereas Mark describes "a young man sitting on the right side". John seems to differ, But we would suggest that the two angels were not present when Peter entered the tomb. They only appeared when the disciples had returned home and Mary was alone, upon which the outstanding discourse between Mary and her Master took place.

Matthew, Mark and Luke agree that the angels instructed the women that the message be taken to the disciples that the Lord had risen. John does not refer to this but testifies that he was one of them that ran to the tomb. Luke simply states that Peter ran to the tomb. The conclusion to be drawn seems to be that Joseph and Nicodemus helped each other in the placing of the Lord's body in the tomb. Possibly Nicodemus also helped in the placing of the stone against the tomb.

G. Sankey.

From Methil. —The resurrection of the Lord Jesus took place very early on the first day of the week (Matthew 28. 2-4). There was an earthquake at His death (Matthew 27. 54) and another earthquake at His resurrection (Matthew 28. 2). It was probably dark when the women set out for the tomb. John says, "While it was yet dark", Luke, "at early dawn", Matthew, "as it began to dawn", Mark, "when the sun was risen" [10]. By the time of their arrival at the tomb the sun was risen, and they would see that the stone had been rolled away.

The women, among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had discussed on the way "Who shall roll us away the stone?". Having seen the open tomb, Mary Magdalene returned in haste to tell Peter and John. Meanwhile the other women entered into the tomb and found not the body of the Lord Jesus (Luke 24. 3). They were then told by two men, "He is not here, but is risen". So they departed.

When Mary said, "We know not where they have laid Him", Peter and John both ran to the tomb, John arriving first. He looked in, but did not enter at once, but Peter ran and entered right in and saw the careful order and position of the linen cloths [3]. John then entered and he saw and believed (John 20. 8). He believed the resurrection of the Lord, for up to that moment he had not understood the Scripture [4]. Both disciples returned to their home.

Mary Magdalene went to the tomb again and was weeping when she also saw two angels. She told them she was looking for the body of her Lord. What joy was hers when the supposed gardener showed Himself to her as the resurrected Lord by one word, "Mary"! This He did before returning to heaven and so He warned her not to touch Him. His God and Father must have the first embrace [5]. Even so, "He appeared first to Mary Magdalene" (Mark 16. 9).

Neville Coomer

EXTRACTS

From Macduff. —It would seem that Joseph was the only man concerned about the body of Jesus, and about where it would be laid. Alone he pleaded with Pilate for the precious body of his Master, and after receiving permission, he was met at the Cross by Nicodemus, who helped Joseph to take the body from the Cross and put it in the tomb. It would seem they buried Him hurriedly, for "the Sabbath drew on".

On the first day of the week the Saviour triumphed and rose by His own power from the tomb [6]. There was an earthquake and the angel of the Lord rolled away the stone, so that men could see He was risen. Early in the morning, a small band of women could be seen in the gloom, going to the tomb with their spices. They wondered who would roll the stone away, but as they drew near they could see that it was already rolled away. It was thought that some of the women went to tell Peter and John that someone had taken the body away while others went nearer and looked into the tomb and saw the angel who told them that the Lord was now risen. Peter and John would be on their way to the tomb by this time, but on their arrival, they looked in and went away sorrowing to their homes [7]. *Jas. Mitchell*

From Vancouver B. C. —Luke tells us that Joseph of Arimathaea went to Pilate to ask for the body of the Lord Jesus. On being satisfied that Jesus was really dead, Pilate gave Joseph authority to take the body. Mark tells us that Joseph took the linen cloth that he had bought and made his way to Calvary. Here he himself took the body down but Nicodemus arrived on the scene at this point with myrrh and aloes. The two men bound the body of Jesus in the linen with the spices, probably at the tomb near Calvary. Two of the women who had been

at the Cross, the two **Marys**, seem to have followed the **men** to the tomb. They were the only two who saw Joseph and Nicodemus roll the stone in place over the mouth of the tomb [8]. It is noteworthy again that none of the eleven disciples was there. *J. Bell, Jr.*

Glasgow (Parkhead). —In this crisis as in all others that have arisen, God had His men prepared by Himself in secret. Joseph of Arimathaea, though a secret disciple, and Nicodemus appear on the page of Scripture as men of highest integrity of character, prepared to act boldly in the carrying out of the work for which they had been raised up. With what tenderness and care they would take the Lord's body down, then wind around it the linen cloth with the costly spices and lay it in Joseph's new tomb. The Lord was truly with the rich in His death, as Isaiah the prophet predicted.

Mary Magdalene, who had with a sorrowful heart beheld the place where they laid the Lord's body, returned to the tomb on the first day of the week at early dawn. What glad surprise was to fill her heart as a reward! She saw an empty tomb and was entrusted with the message of His resurrection to His disciples. The Lord appeared to her as she stood and wept. Her cup of joy was indeed full. The disciples were slow to respond, even after the visit of Peter and John to the empty tomb. The answer to this seems to be found in verse 9 of John 20, "For as yet they knew not the scripture, that He must rise again from the dead". Mary's vigil at the tomb of her Lord was rewarded by an interview with her risen Redeemer, to whom Mary exclaimed "Rabboni". Had He not delayed His ascension to the Father to gladden her devoted heart? *R. Shaw*

From Derby. —Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus, who had both been secret disciples, now stood openly for the Lord. Joseph asked for His body. Both these men must have been wealthy because the Lord was laid in Joseph's new tomb, which was in a garden outside the city wall, and Nicodemus brought costly myrrh and aloes. They thought nothing was too good for the Lord.

Mary Magdalene was eager to be at the tomb early, for even when it was still dark she made her way there. But seeing the stone rolled away she ran and found Simon Peter and the disciple whom Jesus loved, John. The other three Gospels say that there were three women, and two angels appeared to them when they looked into the empty tomb. They were told to tell the other disciples. Luke says that they told the disciples and Peter went to the tomb to look. The others did not believe them.

John refers to the two angels who appeared to Mary, possibly to comfort her and set her mind at rest. Turning away from the tomb she saw a Man and asked Him where He had put the body of Jesus. Only the mention of her name by the Lord was needed to prove to Mary who it was; she answered, "Rabboni", owning him as Lord.

D. Clarke Willis, G. W. Conway

From Birkenhead. —The account commences when even was come on the day before the sabbath (Mark 16. 2). It was then that Joseph of Arimathaea, a disciple of Jesus, a councillor of honourable estate, a good man and a righteous, went and asked Pilate for the body of Jesus.

Pilate marvelled that Jesus was dead so soon (Mark), and had the fact checked by the centurion before granting the request. Mark states that it was a corpse (lifeless body) thus confirming that death had taken place.

Joseph took down the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth which he had bought (Mark). The body was then laid in his own new tomb, hewn out in the rock (Matthew 27. 60). This was in a garden near where the crucifixion had taken place (John 19. 42). No-one else had lain in this tomb (Luke 23. 53). Joseph rolled a stone to the door of the tomb and departed. Watching all this were the women who beheld both where and how Jesus' body was laid. According to John's account Nicodemus also was present at this time, having brought spices to use in the binding of the body. Cloths are mentioned here, causing us to wonder whether a separate event is reported here from that of Joseph's apparently lone action in the other three Gospels [9].

Matthew reports the anxiety of the chief priests and Pharisees to thwart the resurrection, and the elaborate steps they took to this end. Luke reports that the women were engaged in the preparation of further spices and ointments to be used as soon as the sabbath day was past.

R. D. Williams

From **Aberkenfig and Barry**. —Pilate granted the body of the Lord to Joseph of Arimathaea, who evidently took Him down from the Cross (Mark 15. 46) and assisted by Nicodemus laid Him in a tomb. Because of the Preparation there was little time to bury the Lord. This may be why the women mentioned in Luke 23. 55 saw "how His body was laid" and returned to prepare spices and ointments, although Nicodemus and Joseph had already anointed the body and bound it in linen cloths with spices. They evidently intended to do this work of love more carefully.

We cannot be certain of the sequence of events on the resurrection morning; we suggest the following. When Mary Magdalene and the other Mary and others came to anoint the Lord's body they were told by the angel that He was risen. Mary Magdalene later followed Peter and John to the tomb and when they had returned to their homes the Lord appeared to her but would not allow her to touch Him (see comment [5]).

B. V. French

From **Portslade**. —It appears that there was not much time for Joseph and Nicodemus to bury the Lord in a manner such as they would have wished. As Joseph's own tomb was nigh at hand there they laid Him. Here we see the overruling hand of God that His word should be fulfilled, "and with the rich in His death" (Isaiah 53. 9). Not for Him the common grave of a criminal who had been punished for his deeds.

We had difficulty in reconciling the accounts of the movements of the women after the resurrection. It is clear however that several women watched where and how the body was laid and came early on the first day of the week to complete the burying in a fitting manner of one greatly loved. Here John's Gospel differs from the others in that it **mentions** only Mary Magdalene.

W. Tawnsend, D. Hansen

From **Kilmarnock**. —John especially mentions Mary Magdalene as being one of the witnesses of the resurrection. She came to the tomb while it was yet dark (John 20. 1). Matthew says she was accompanied

by other women, and this is supported by Mark and Luke. Matthew also particularly names the other Mary, the mother of James and Josés. Mark agrees with this and increases the number to three, including Salome. Luke also mentions Joanna, so we conclude that at least four female disciples journeyed together. They saw the stone rolled away from the tomb so Mary Magdalene left the other women and ran to tell Peter and John (John 20. 1, 2). The other women in the meantime entered the tomb and met the two angels (Luke 24. 4). In fright the women went from the tomb, then John arrived followed by Peter. Something about the linen cloths attracted the attention of Peter and John. Of the latter it is said, "he saw and believed". It is difficult to understand what it was that John believed; some were of the opinion that he saw the evidence in the tomb and believed the word of Mary. The other view was that John believed of a truth that Jesus was indeed the Son of God. At this time they still did not know the scripture that *He should rise again from the dead* (see comment [4]). *J. C. Watt*

COMMENTS

[1] **Denmark Hill.** —This is principally a question of the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the selection of matter best suited for the purpose in view (John 20. 30, 31). From a human standpoint the Gospel writers would need to be tactful in mentioning incidents involving persons still alive at the time of writing. John wrote much later than the others and so would be less hampered by this restriction. *L. B.*

[2] **Denmark Hill.** —The evidence is clearly in favour of the view that a group of women came early to the tomb on the morning of the resurrection. Luke 23. 55, 24. 1 speaks of "the women, which had come with Him out of Galilee" as a corporate group. Mark 16. 1 names Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome. That John focuses attention on the experience of Mary Magdalene does not discount the information given by the synoptic writers that her initial visit to the tomb that morning was in company with others. *G. P. Jr.*

[3] **Methil.** —What caused Peter to go home, wondering (Luke 24. 12) and John to believe (John 20. 8)? They must have seen something in the tomb which made a great impression on their minds. An orderly arrangement of the grave clothes would not, we suggest, have any special significance. It has been suggested that the resurrected body of the Lord had passed through the grave clothes, leaving them undisturbed, thus unmistakably demonstrating the resurrection to the two disciples. This would be consistent with the manner of the Lord's appearing to the disciples in a closed room and would explain the way in which Peter and John behaved at the tomb and immediately afterwards. *L. B.*

[4] **Methil.** —It would seem that the sight of the grave clothes (see comment [3]) and perhaps also the memory of the raising of Lazarus caused John to understand that the Lord had risen from the dead. We suggest that verse 9 means that even then the significance of the fulfilment of Scripture had not dawned upon him. *L. B.*

[5] **Methil.** —Some commentators think that Mary had already grasped the Lord when He said, "Touch Me not", for the translation could equally well be "Take not hold on Me" as in the Revised Version Margin, or "Do not hold Me" (R. S. V.). *L. B.*

[6] Macduff. —It is true that the Lord said, "I lay down My life, that I may take it again... I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again" (John 10. 17-18). From this viewpoint it is true that He rose from the tomb by His own power. Yet it is significant that in the great majority of scriptures touching the Lord's resurrection emphasis is given to the fact that God raised Him from the dead (see Acts 2. 24 and numerous references from it). It is always wise to follow the emphasis given by the general tenor of Scripture in matters of this kind. *G. P. Jr.*

[7] Macduff. —Were Peter and John among those who mourned and wept as Mary Magdalene arrived with the news of the resurrection (Mark 16. 10)? We think not. They had gone to the tomb earlier (John 20. 1-10), had seen the strange sight of the linen cloths and napkin (see comment [3]) and had then returned home (not to the other disciples). John "believed" and Peter "wondered". They may have been mystified, but hope was beginning to dawn, dispelling sorrow from their hearts. *L. B.*

[8] Vancouver. —The fact that only the two Marys are mentioned by name does not prove they were alone. According to Luke (23. 55) the women who came with the Lord out of Galilee were there. These included the mother of the sons of Zebedee and many others (Matthew 27. 55, 56). *L. B.*

[9] **Birkenhead.** —As our friends suggest, it would seem that Joseph at first acted on his own. He took the body down and wrapped it in the cloth he had brought. Then Nicodemus came with a large supply of myrrh and aloes and together they completed the preparation of the Lord's body for burial. It is probable that someone had also to supply additional cloths for the completion of the work. *G. P. Jr.*

[10] **Methil.** —Much of the difficulty in reconciling the time-records of events in the Gospels, especially at this period of the Lord's death and resurrection, is due to forgetting that the evangelists describe contemporaneous actions of several groups of people, who are acting separately at this time. There were the women from Galilee, and other women from Bethany and Jerusalem. We suggest that there could be a slight margin of time between these time-phrases. *Jas. M.*

QUESTION AND ANSWER

Question from Derby. —Why is it that Mary did not recognize the Lord?

Answer. —Mary was not expecting to see the risen Lord, and her eyes were filled with tears. John 20. 14 does not seem to convey any thought of Mary looking into the Lord's face, only that she saw *His* form, so

that it is hardly surprising that she did not recognize Him. The two disciples on the way to Emmaus and those fishing on lake Tiberias had similar experiences. The Lord may also have intentionally withheld recognition as on the journey to Emmaus (Luke 24. 16). **L. B.**

PSALM 59

Here we have another golden (MICHAM) psalm of David's deliverance, when Saul sent messengers to slay David in his house (1 Samuel 19. 11, 12), and Michal his wife told him to flee or he would be slain next day. So he escaped by night through the window.

Deliver me from mine enemies, O my God:
Set me on high from them that rise up against me.
Deliver me from the workers of iniquity,
And save me from the bloodthirsty men (verses 1, 2).

David had done nothing but good to Saul and to his kingdom, but the fierce jealousy of Saul, stirred up by the evil spirit which came upon him, when the women of Israel sang one to another,

"Saul hath slain his thousands,
And David his ten thousands",

greatly displeased him, and he said, "What can he have more but the kingdom?" He would murder David and so remove his rival. Thus David calls on God for deliverance from his enemies. He asked to be set on high from them, from the workers of iniquity and from those who thirsted for his blood.

For, lo, they lie in wait for my soul;
The mighty gather themselves together against me:
Not for my transgression, nor for my sin, O LORD.
They run and prepare themselves without my fault:
Awake Thou to help me, and behold (verses 3, 4).

He speaks to the LORD of those that wait for his soul, and gather themselves together against him: not because of any transgression or sin he had done, they run and prepare themselves without any fault in him. He asks God to awake and to help him, and to behold, to see what he said was true and what they did was wrong. What David says is borne out by his story in 1 Samuel.

Even Thou, O LORD God of hosts, the God of Israel,
Arise to visit all the heathen (nations):
Be not merciful to any wicked transgressors (verse 5). [Selah.

Some have written against David for calling for retribution upon wicked transgressors in the light of the teaching of Christ, that His disciples were to love their enemies, and to pray for those that despitefully used them. These fail to appreciate the difference between the dispensations of law and grace, and fail also to see that the LORD is a Judge as well as a Saviour. At present He is a Saviour, but when He comes again He will be a Judge who will render to every man according to his works. Some will go away into eternal punishment, and the righteous into eternal life (Matthew 25, 46). Even now the wicked heathen, and those that refuse to repent, when they die go to hell, and those who are born again, and so are righteous through faith, go to heaven, to be with Christ.

They **return at** evening, they **make a noise** like a dog,
And go round about the city.
 Behold, they belch **out** with their mouth;
 Swords **are in** their lips:
For who, **say** they, doth hear? (**verses 6, 7**).

This is how **David** viewed Saul's **men** who would have **murdered** him **if** they could. They evidently were a **noisy** low crowd, **and** usually **murderers are** of that class. Their inward thought **is**, no one hears; **but** God both hears **and** sees.

But Thou, O LORD, shalt laugh **at** them;
 Thou shalt have all the heathen in derision.
 O **my** Strength, **I** will wait upon Thee:
 For **God** is **my** high tower.
 The God **of my** mercy shall **prevent me**:
God shall let **me** see **my** desire **upon mine** enemies
 (**verses 8, 9, 10**).

God is sometimes spoken of as laughing **at men** in their **wicked** folly. In Proverb **1. 26**, He **says** of those who would not listen to Him, **and set at** nought His counsel, "I also will laugh **in the day of your** calamity; I will mock when your **fear** cometh". **And** Psalm 2. **4, says**, "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the LORD shall have them in derision". **After** all, what **can man** possibly do **against** One who **is** almighty? Nothing! **Men may** afflict the righteous for a time, **as Saul did to David, and this caused David to cry and plead** with God **for** protection, **as he did** often, **and as** he does here. He calls God his Strength **and** his high Tower (a cliff or lofty place). He **asks** God, the God of his **mercy, to prevent** (precede, not to hinder, according to the modern **use** of the word) him. God did let him **see his desire upon** his enemies. **Murray McCheyne** wrote,

"When **I** hear the wicked call
 On the **rocks and** hills to fall,
 When **I** hear them **start and** shrink
 On **the fiery** deluge **brink**;
 Then Lord, shall I fully know,
Not till then, how much I owe".

J. M.

(*to be continued D. V.*)

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"Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so" (Acts 17. 11)

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EDITORIAL

The truth of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is basic to our Christian faith. Hence it is strengthening, in these last two months of our study, to contemplate what the beloved apostle John records in his Gospel concerning the evidences of eye-witnesses of this fundamental historical fact. For, like Paul in his masterly chapter on the resurrection of the body (1 Corinthians 15), we can say, "It Christ hath not been raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins... If in this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all men most pitiable" (1 Corinthians 15. 17, 19). Rejoicingly and triumphantly we can say, "But now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of them that are asleep".

The resurrection of Christ was the central theme of the apostles* preaching, as is evidenced in the Acts of the Apostles. From the very beginning of the apostles taking up the task of the Great Commission (Matthew 28. 19, 20), prophecies were adduced from the Old Testament Scriptures that pointed to this great triumphant event, and accumulated evidences were produced from those who had seen Christ in His resurrected body and had listened to His teaching in those forty days of intensive tuition between His resurrection and His ascension to the Father (Acts 1. 1-11).

In meditating on the many great blessings that have accrued to believers we would concentrate on three precious promises made by the Lord before His death, the fulfilment of which definitely depended upon His being raised from the dead in power.

Firstly, we consider His promise to send the Comforter, the blessed Holy Spirit (John 14. 16, 17; 15. 26; 16. 7). It was expedient that He should leave His disciples, and return to the Father, in order to fulfil this promise. This entailed the anguish of Gethsemane, the ignominy of Gabbatha, and the pain of Golgotha, and His glorious resurrection and ascension to the Father. This promise found its fulfilment on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), when the blessed Holy Spirit descended to endure with divine power Christ's witnesses in their proclamation of the gospel. He is still in this world convicting and comforting and teaching men, and sealing those who accept Christ as Saviour. The second promise was made at Caesarea Philippi. To the Lord's question, "But who say ye that I am?" Peter answered and said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God". Whereupon the Lord said those momentous words, "I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter (petros, a piece of rock) and upon this rock (petra, Himself) I will build My Church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it". Matthew tells us that "From that time began Jesus to shew unto His disciples, how that He must... be killed, and the third day be raised up" (Matthew 16. 21). This Church, named in Scripture elsewhere "the Church which is His

Body", He still is building, **and** will go on building until **every member** is added. Then He will come **to claim and present her "to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing"** (Ephesians 5. 27), a trophy of His triumphant resurrection.

This **brings us to the third promise, made by the Lord shortly after the last Passover and the institution of the Remembrance of Himself.** He **said** to His disciples, "I go to **prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also"** (John 14. 2-4). This promise has **been** the blessed hope of believers down through the centuries. "But **forget not** this one thing, beloved, that one **day is** with the Lord **as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.** The Lord **is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness"** (2 Peter 3. 8, 9). **As assuredly as the Lord has fulfilled the first promise and is fulfilling the second, so assuredly will He in His own good time fulfil the third promise.** How confident He was of **His own resurrection, even in His darkest hours!** "**Remember Jesus Christ risen from the dead"** (2 Timothy 2. 8).
Jas. M.

WORDS FOR KNOWING IN THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN

John 7. 27, 8. 55, 13. 7, 14. 7, 21. 17 are **verses in each of which the word 'know' is used twice in our English Bible, but the Greek in fact has two words for 'know'.** For **instance, in John 7. 27 the Revised Version says, "Howbeit we know this Man whence He is: but when the Christ cometh, no one knoweth whence He is". "We know" is from the Greek word *oida*, whereas 'knoweth' is from the Greek word *ginosko*.** The **same is true of the other verses mentioned above: two different words for 'knowing' are used in the Greek.**

In classical Greek the word *oida* meant 'to know by reflection', whereas *ginosko* meant 'to know by observation'. The distinction was **made between knowledge by mental perception (*oida*) and knowledge which is founded on one's experience (*ginosko*).**

This distinction was **less marked in the Greek of New Testament times, so that slight differences in the phrasing of a sentence might influence the choice of one word or the other.** But with **regard to the word *horao*, we have already noticed that in the Gospel according to John, the present tense is never used, whereas the perfect is frequent.** The **present tense was common in the writings of that age.** It follows that **in the Gospel according to John, we cannot rule out deliberate choice with regard to the use of words.**

In 21. 17 the evangelist **used the verb *oida*, closely followed by *ginosko*, where both verbs mean 'thou knowest'. *Oida* refers to the Lord's absolute knowledge, His divine insight into all things, *ginosko* to His feeling and understanding of Peter's love, "Thou recognizest that I love Thee".**

In 7. 27 *oida* is used in the popular sense 'know all about', which implies awareness and identification. Their claim in the full sense of *oida* is false, **but its responsibility is urged upon them in verse 28, where *oida* occurs four times.** They wish to avoid this responsibility, and deny such knowledge in 9. 29. In contrast *ginosko* means "to know", whether by coming to know it in the Scriptures or by realizing it in the course of experience.

In 8. 55 "Ye have not known Him" is the perfect tense of *ginosko*, but "I know Him" is *oida*. The word *ginosko* denotes the progressive knowledge which men gain through revelation. The perfect tense implies the result of their past opportunity. When negated it is not a matter of falling short of perfect understanding, but means "ye have had no understanding of Him". In the same verse, *oida* refers to the immediate essential knowledge, which the Son has of the Father.

In 13. 7 'Thou hast no knowledge of' (*oida*) is contrasted with "Thou shalt understand" (*ginosko*). Only in verse 12 do the disciples begin to recognize or come to know the meaning of what has been done.

In 14. 7 "If ye had known Me" (*ginosko*) means "If ye had come to know Me" i. e., learned to understand Me. "Ye would have known My Father also" (*oida*) means "ye would also have had absolute knowledge of My Father". The present tense of *ginosko* which follows indicates a constant growth in understanding. From that point they learn to know the Father in the Son.

In 8. 19 the Lord is using the true sense of *oida*. In this sense those Pharisees knew neither the Son nor the Father. In the words "If ye had known Me" (*oida*) He is taking up their claim of 7. 27, which they later wished to deny (9. 29). If their claim had been true, they would have had absolute knowledge (*oida*) of the Father.

It is worth noting also the difference between the aorist of *ginosko* and the present tense. The phrase "that the world may know" in 14. 31 contains the aorist tense of *ginosko*. The purpose of the work which He was about to accomplish by the death of the Cross, was that the world should "learn once and for all" His love and obedience toward the Father. On the other hand in 17. 23 the same phrase contains the present tense of *ginosko*, but this time it means that the world may "gradually learn". It was the Lord's desire that from the unity of disciples the world would come to know that the Father loved them even as He loved the Son, whom He sent forth into the world.

In 10. 38 the phrase "that ye may know and understand" contains both the aorist and the present of *ginosko*. By placing confidence in Him through His works they attain to knowledge of His oneness with the Father. Here the aorist denotes the gaining of this knowledge. The present expresses the process of growth as they "advance in their understanding" of it.

This knowledge (*gnosis*) is not merely the intellectual knowledge or erudition that is dissociated from action. It is the personal experience of true disciples and finds expression in their manner of living. *Oida* denotes direct insight, an inward and true conviction. E. Archibald

Note: With regard to these words for knowing in the above article, brother E. Archibald has produced a table showing the way in which translators have handled these words in the R. V., A. V., and N. E. translations. Another table gives the tenses and moods of these occurrences. Any who would like to have a copy of these tables should write to Mr. James Martin, 8 Venning Avenue, Bear Cross, Bournemouth.

STUDIES IN THE CLOSING PHASE OF THE GOSPEL BY JOHN
JOHN 20. 19-31

From Vancouver B. C. —Many have tried to put forth reasons as to why the Lord said in verse 17, "Touch Me not". First, the word in the original is perhaps better translated "cling" than "touch". In other words, the Lord was not denying the privilege to Mary of proving His corporeal reality, nor was He rebuking Mary for worshipping Him, nor would her touch hinder His glorification. The reason is stated: because He had not yet ascended to the Father. It would seem that Mary now thought that Jesus had returned for good. Mary seemed to think only of the Lord's humanity and thought little of the work that had yet to be completed after His ascension. This is confirmed by Jesus telling Mary to go to His brethren and dispel any similar ideas: they must realize that the Lord's ascension must take place or nothing further could be done. He also gave them a new assurance that God is not only His God and Father but theirs also [1]. J. *Bell, Jr.*

From Sydney N. S. W. —Much had transpired during the first day after the Lord's resurrection. Mary Magdalene, Joanna and Mary (mother of James) had seen the Lord [2]. The two disciples on their way to Emmaus had seen Him also. When the disciples who were with Him during His last days were told the things that had occurred they disbelieved (Luke 24. 11). The Lord's resurrection was the last thing they had expected. At the time of His trial and persecutions, they had forsaken Him and fled (Matthew 26. 56). When the Lord appeared in their midst they were terrified, thinking Him to be a spirit (Luke 24. 36, 37). Hence His words of assurance in verse 39, "See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself". We read in Mark 16. 14 that the Lord "upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen Him after He was risen".

In John 20. 22 we read, "He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Spirit". It would be wrong to assume that the Lord was giving the Holy Spirit to the disciples on that occasion, for we know from God's word that the Holy Spirit was not given until the day of Pentecost, after the Lord had ascended to His Father. We know from John 14. 17 that the Holy Spirit was to be with them and would be in them. It would seem the Lord was expressing His desire for them that they should have the Comforter whom He promised. In Acts 2. 14 we read how the Holy Spirit came to them: "When the day of Pentecost was now come (verse 1) . . . they were all Holy Spirit" (verse 4).

Although not present, the Lord knew that Thomas had said "Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails" (John 20. 25). When He appeared to them a second time He said to Thomas, "Reach hither thy finger, and see My hands . . . and be not faithless, but believing". It is through Thomas that we know that the Lord was nailed to the Cross, although Psalm 22. 16 tells us, "They pierced My hands and My feet".

Gordon J. Munday

From Southport. —Our Lord first appeared to Mary Magdalene, then to Joanna, Mary the mother of James and others who, after being at the tomb, were returning to the other disciples when Jesus drew near

to them in the way. He instructed them to go to Galilee **and tell** His brethren of His resurrection. (Matthew 28. 10; Luke 24. 10) (See Comment [2]). Two of the disciples were travelling to Emmaus, discussing between themselves what had been happening in Jerusalem when Jesus joined Himself to them. They did not recognize Him, but on reaching Emmaus He sat with them and when He took the bread and blessed it their eyes were opened and they realized who was in their midst. Jesus then vanished from their sight (Luke 24. 13-35). The two **disciples** returned to Jerusalem, and finding the disciples gathered together learned that they too knew positively that the Lord was risen because He had also appeared to Peter, presumably before those at Emmaus (Luke 24. 34; 1 Corinthians 15. 5). Whilst they were telling of their various experiences He appeared unto them all, greeted them, and showed to them His hands and His side. Thomas was not there (John 20. 24).

On the eighth day the disciples, including Thomas, were gathered together when our Lord appeared to them again. Thomas believed when Jesus showed him His hands and His side (John 20. 27, 28). Our Lord appeared to His disciples yet again on the mountain appointed by Him, where He gave them the Great Commission (Matthew 28. 19, 20). Jesus further appeared to His disciples at the Sea of Tiberias (John 21. 1-24) and was seen by more than five hundred brethren at once (1 Corinthians 15. 6). He also appeared to James and then to all the apostles (1 Corinthians 15. 7). The final appearance was to Paul **after His** ascension (1 Corinthians 15. 8). *Brian Scott*

EXTRACTS

From Derby. —After appearing to Mary the Lord appeared to two disciples, one of whom was named Cleopas, according to Luke's Gospel. Mark just mentions "two of them, as they walked, on their way into the country". After the Lord had appeared to them the two went that very hour to tell the others. While they were telling the disciples the things that had happened to them, the Lord appeared. It was thought that Mark 16. 14 and John 20. 19 as well as Luke 24. 36 referred to one incident. On the next appearing of the Lord to the disciples, Thomas was with them and he was given the opportunity of doing that which he had desired (verse 25). Sorrow and shame must have filled his heart as he saw the marks in the Lord's hands and His side. Thomas would never doubt again.

In breathing on them and saying, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit", the Lord was preparing the disciples for the coming of the Holy Spirit on the **day** of Pentecost. *L. Foster, G. W. Conway*

From Denmark Hill. —Piecing together the information given in the four Gospels, Acts 1 and 1 Corinthians 15, it would seem that ten appearances are recorded. Acts 1. 3 would indicate that it is likely that the Lord appeared many more times than those recorded. The Lord appeared: —

1. To Mary Magdalene [3].
2. To Peter (Luke 24. 34, 1 Corinthians 15. 5) on the first day of the week in Jerusalem. No details are given of this appearing. John 20. 8

says that John "saw and believed" when he ran to the tomb and the next verse makes it clear that it was the resurrection that he believed. Could it be that Peter was not convinced by the circumstantial evidence of the contents of the tomb and needed a special revelation? It was certainly important in the Lord's future plan for Peter that he should be very fully convinced of this great truth [4].

3. To two on the way to Emmaus (Mark 16. 12, Luke 24. 13-33).
 4. To the apostles, Thomas not being present (John 20. 19-23, 1 Corinthians 15. 5).

5. To the apostles, Thomas now being present (John 20. 24-29).

6. To five hundred brethren at once (1 Corinthians 15. 6).

This was most likely to have been in Galilee where they had been to meet the Lord, because it would seem unlikely that 500 would have been able to gather in Jerusalem because of the hostility of the Jews. This was an important gathering from the aspect of testimony to the fact of the resurrection.

7. To James, the brother of the Lord (1 Corinthians 15. 7).

8. To the apostles on the Sea of Galilee (John 21. 1-23).

9. To the apostles on the appointed mountain in Galilee (Matthew 28. 16-20). This was the occasion on which He gave the apostles the Great Commission.

10. To the apostles in Jerusalem on the Mount of Olives (Acts 1. 4-11). This was the final appearing before He departed to leave them to carry on His work.

C. L. Prasher

From Macduff. —When the Lord appeared to Mary Magdalene in the garden He had not then ascended to His Father and forbade her to touch Him. We have no information about how the Lord spent the morning of His resurrection to that moment, but He must have gone to His Father immediately after. He met the women later (Matthew 28. 9, 10) when they had presumably returned to the garden after telling their message to the disciples.

He then met the two on the road to Emmaus, and while one of these is named Cleopas we do not think the other was Simon Peter, although it must have been just before or after this that the Lord appeared to Simon. It was most gracious of the Lord to seek a special meeting with Peter, so soon after his betrayal of his Lord. On the evening of that eventful first day the Lord appeared to the disciples and we noted the difference in the numbers of the apostles in the three scriptures. John 20. 24 says Thomas was not there, making ten (for Judas was dead). Luke 24. 33 says "the eleven", and we wondered if this number took account of Matthias (Acts 1. 26) but excluded Thomas [5]. One week after the resurrection the Lord appeared to His disciples again in Jerusalem. This time Thomas was there, and there may have been others there too. His other appearances, always to disciples and never to unbelievers, were at Galilee except for the time when He left His Galilaean followers at Olivet (Acts 1. 8-11). He appeared to seven at Tiberias when they were fishing, and to James, presumably the Lord's brother. From the order in 1 Corinthians 15 the appearing to "above 500 brethren at once" seems to have been in Galilee. There was a company of Galilaean followers at Olivet when He left them, and we wondered if this could be the 500 incident [6]. We understand that the reference

to sins to be forgiven and retained applies to discipline within the churches of God, and not outside this circle of apostolic responsibility.

A. B. R.

From Liverpool. —There was nothing mysterious, we suggest, or of special significance in the words of the Lord to Mary, "Touch Me not", but they merely indicate that the Lord was about to ascend unto His Father and did not want to be detained. It was noted that the Lord had not hitherto referred to His disciples as "My brethren", this relationship being linked with His work of redemption now accomplished at Calvary. "For which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren" (Hebrews 2. 10, 11). [15].

Verse 22 says, "He breathed on them". This, it was suggested, was a symbolic action, as in Genesis 2. 7 [7]. Some questioned whether in fact the Holy Spirit was given to the disciples at this time. Others believed that the Spirit was given but if so did Thomas, who was absent, receive the gift and was this the permanent reception of John 7. 39? Did they receive the Holy Spirit again on the day of Pentecost? (Acts 2. 4) [8].

What are we to understand from the Lord's statement in verse 23? Was this authority given to the apostles related in any way to the preaching of the gospel to sinners? Some seemed to think so, but others disagreed with this view. Was not the Lord referring, in fact, to discipline within a church of God? [9]. Attention was drawn to the Lord's statements in Matthew 16. 19 and 18. 18, in connexion with this verse. "What things soever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and what things soever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven".

G. S.

From Glasgow (Parkhead). —The manner of the Lord's appearing to His disciples after His resurrection suggested to us that His body had undergone a change at the resurrection. Before His death the Lord subjected Himself to human limitations, as when He sat by the well at Sychar wearied from His long journey. After His resurrection He conveyed Himself from place to place, manifesting Himself to His disciples, passing through walls and doors as if they had not been there. Was it a change in the Lord's body, or an exercise of divine power, or both, that enabled the Lord to rise through the grave clothes and leave them undisturbed? [10].

At this point we came upon a problem in our attempt to follow the events of the resurrection morning in a logical sequence; when did the Lord go to Upper Sheol to visit the spirits in prison? [11]. When He ascended on high He led captivity captive, taking with Him those Old Testament saints accounted worthy to attain to the age of Messiah.

The time factor in the events of the first Lord's Day also created problems, for example, when did the Lord rise, and how long was He in the tomb? It was generally thought that the resurrection occurred much earlier than the disciples anticipated, and we could not reconcile the Lord's prophetic words of Matthew 12. 40 with the actual time He was in the tomb [12].

The Lord must have met Mary soon after He rose from among the dead. The mighty Victor of Calvary over death, hell and the grave

must present Himself before His Father as the First-fruits of an accomplished work, but here is a poor broken-hearted, loyal disciple in dire need of succour, and the Lord whose heart had been broken so shortly before (Psalm 22. 14) knew exactly what Mary was passing through at that moment. How marvellous of the gracious Lord to stop to meet Mary on His way to meet His Father in heaven! It shows how much His disciples mean to Him. Mary's first impulse was to prostrate herself in worship at His feet, but the Lord uttered that majestic declaration, "Touch Me not". The time which elapsed on earth while He was in heaven must have been about nine hours, for after a two-hour journey to Emmaus with Cleopas and his companion the day was far spent [13]. So concluded one of the most momentous and eventful days in history. Some time during that day the Lord met Peter (Luke 24. 34), and eight days later He met Thomas in company with the other disciples (John 20. 26).

J. Peddie

From Methil. —In Matthew 28. 16, we are told that eleven disciples went into Galilee, while 1 Corinthians 15. 5 refers to "the twelve". This is because Paul was looking back on the incident and would have included Matthias in the number (Acts 1. 21-26) (see Comment [5]).

When Paul wrote to the Corinthian saints and reminded them of the glorious fact of the resurrection, he made no mention of women. We believe this is because it was the men who were to be public witnesses, testifying to the truth of the resurrection, and many of them were to die doing this very thing (1 Corinthians 4. 9-13).

The Holy Spirit did not permanently indwell the disciples until the day of Pentecost. So the words of the Lord Jesus were in anticipation of the Spirit's coming. It is under the guiding and control of the Holy Spirit that sins would be forgiven or retained by the disciples in church. The first church of God was at Jerusalem. The practical application of this church government is seen in Matthew 18. 15-20.

David Reid, Neville Coomer

From Edinburgh. —We concluded that in John 20. 17 the Lord was in course of fulfilling Psalm 68. 18 as quoted in Ephesians 4. 8, but, at that moment He had not ascended to the Father. He bore on His person the marks of Calvary which marked Him out as the Kinsman-Redeemer and therefore He linked Himself with His brethren. The deep truths stated in this the first message on resurrection ground were that (a) He might have brethren and (b) the Father might have children. John 1 speaks of the Only Begotten but Romans teaches us about the First-Begotten. So in accordance with Psalm 22. 22 the Lord speaks about My God and your God, My Father and your Father, (see comment [15]).

Verse 23 must be read in the context of verse 22 and the sending of the Holy Spirit. Words of similar import had already been spoken (Matthew 18. 15-18) and they had to do with church truths. Before "sent ones" (verse 21) could forgive or retain sins, the individual concerned would have received or rejected the word of the Holy Spirit. If the former, his sins would have been forgiven by God and therefore must also be forgiven by the church. If the latter, in the act of retaining his sins the disciples were finalizing on earth that which had already taken place in the spiritual realm (See Comment [9]). The formal act by the church was the logical outcome. Thus, whether in receiving into

Fellowship, or putting away in church discipline, there is a very serious responsibility to ensure that action is being taken in the fear of the Lord and in accordance with His revealed will. *T. H.*

From Birmingham. —The Lord appeared first to Mary at the tomb, then to the women on the way to Jerusalem, then to Peter, then to the two on the road to Emmaus, then in the upper room to the "eleven", but minus Thomas and plus the Emmaus two, making twelve in all, then in the upper room seven days later with Thomas present. It was conceded that there may well have been others present in the upper room on both occasions, the women for instance. The first five appearances all occurred on the same day and are therefore linked in some scriptures as one, together with the second upper room appearance, which was complementary to the first and was for Thomas's benefit. Later the disciples met the Lord in Galilee and were given the Great Commission, a mountain-top experience, doubtless. There was a question raised as to whether the appearances by the sea of Tiberias and on the mountain in Galilee are the same. It was pointed out, however, that the scene was different, the message was different, and the disciples' condition was different; this latter factor would support the view that some time elapsed between the two appearances.

Appearings to Saul and Stephen are recorded, but it was felt that these were by way of visions and not physical appearances [14].

D. H. Elson

From Glasgow (Govan and Partick). —We understand that the ascending to the Father in John 20. 17 is the fulfilment of Psalm 24. 7-10. It is clear from Acts 1. 5, 8 that the coming of the Holy Spirit did not happen immediately after the resurrection, but the disciples had to tarry in Jerusalem and wait for the promise of the Father. One wonders then about the words in John 20. 22, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit". Is this a command which was fulfilled only at Pentecost? The Greek aorist imperative can equally well refer to an immediate fulfilment or a delayed one, for example Luke 6. 23, "Rejoice in that day". An alternative is to regard this "receiving" as distinct from baptism in the Holy Spirit (See Comment [8] in favour of the former view). In that case it would belong to the period of forty days, and it would bring home to the disciples their responsibility to make known His teaching in their behaviour one toward the other, showing peace and forgiveness. He indeed had given a great example by His death and resurrection, no longer to live unto themselves. The great debt paid, they were free to forgive. Elisha requested a double portion of Elijah's spirit. So the Lord desired to impart the favour of the Spirit to infuse wise guidance into their **service**.

Eric Archibald

COMMENTS

[1] **Vancouver.** —The Lord did not say "*Our* God and *our* Father" as that would be inaccurate. "He who is the Father is Father of Christ and Father of men in different ways; of Christ by nature, of men by grace" (Westcott). *L. B.*

[2] **Sydney**—It is clear that Mary Magdalene first saw the Lord that day (Mark 16. 9, John 20. 18). If we assume that Matthew specialized on the experience of Mary Magdalene and "the other Mary" (28. 1) (presumably Mary the mother of James and Joses, by comparison with Mark 16. 1 and Luke 24. 10) it seems probable that this Mary was included in the context of Matthew 28. 9. It is possible also that Joanna was present on that occasion, although Matthew does not say so. It could equally be suggested that Salome may have been there (Mark 16. 1). *G. P. Jr.*

[3] **Denmark Hill.** —As several contributors have suggested, it seems clear that Matthew 28. 9 must be regarded as an appearing separate from the first appearing to Mary Magdalene. Admittedly there are difficulties in determining just where and when the Matthew 28. 9 appearances took place, and who exactly would have been present, but see comment [2] on this latter point. *G. P. Jr.*

[4] **Denmark Hill.** —There is no evidence that Peter found more difficulty than the other disciples in accepting the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. It is far more likely that the Lord wished to see him in private and reassure him of forgiveness and restoration. *L. B.*

[5] **Macduff.** —"The eleven" is a title used six times in the New Testament in a collective sense of the company of apostles remaining after Judas was dead. The fact that Thomas was absent on one occasion does not affect the validity of the title. Matthias may have been present but would not at that time be reckoned as one of the apostles. *L. B.*

[6] **Macduff.** —It is suggested in the Denmark Hill paper that the hostility of the Jews in Jerusalem would have rendered such a meeting there difficult. A further point is that public attention would have been drawn to 500 people being led by the Lord out of the gates of Jerusalem and up the mount of Olives. It was an essential feature of all the appearances of the Lord that they were only to believers. *L. B.*

[7] **Liverpool.** —The comparison with Genesis 2. 7 seems open to question. The breathing into Adam's nostrils was not "symbolic". By this means Adam received life, but the apostles had received new spiritual life, through believing in the Lord Jesus as the Son of God, long before the incident of John 20. 22. *G. P. Jr.*

[8] **Liverpool.** —The gift of the Holy Spirit mentioned in John 7. 39 was the indwelling of the Spirit in all believers, which began at Pentecost. Up to that time the Holy Spirit was with the apostles (John 14. 17), giving them spiritual understanding. The Lord's words in John 20. 22 seem to have been in anticipation of Pentecost. Although Thomas missed a great deal by his absence from the upper room, this was a promise which applied to him as much as to the other apostles. *L. B.*

[9] **Liverpool.** —"It is God that justifieth" (Romans 8. 33), and the sinner's forgiveness when he puts saving faith in the Lord Jesus as alone between God and the individual concerned. Matthew 18. 18 and

John 20. 23 must therefore refer to a different aspect of forgiveness. It is significant that in both passages the verbal form is in the second person *plural*, admitting the thought of a corporate act by a group of people. In Matthew 18. 18 a local church is clearly in view. In John 20. 23 the Lord was speaking to the apostles in the light of responsibility they would share in association with churches of God, shortly to be established. We therefore believe that "ecclesiastical forgiveness" is referred to in both these Scriptures. Matthew 16. 19 was addressed to Peter (in the singular), the forgiveness of sins was not mentioned, and the Lord was more probably referring to Peter's personal privilege of opening the door of faith, first to the Jew (Acts 2) and later to the Gentiles (Acts 10).

G. P. Jr.

[10] **Parkhead.** —Ephesians 1. 19, 20 leaves no doubt as to the exercise of divine power in relation to the Lord's resurrection. As to the question of a post-resurrection change in the Lord's body, we have very limited data on which to base firm assumptions. Some have seen significance in the Lord's omission of any reference to blood in Luke 24. 39, "A spirit hath not *flesh and bones*, as ye behold Me having". At the best this is a most inconclusive argument. Such scriptures as John 6. 20, 21 and 8. 59 ("was hidden" R. V. M.) remind us that even before His death the Lord exceptionally used His divine power to hide Himself or in transferring from place to place. It is perhaps wiser to leave the possibility of certain physical modifications in the Lord's resurrection body as among the "secret things" yet unrevealed. We may rest absolutely on the assurance that it is the "*Man, Christ Jesus*" (1 Timothy 2. 5) who lives before God's face for us, and that "in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead *bodily*" (Colossians 2. 9).

G. P. Jr.

[11] **Parkhead.** —We would understand that the Lord's soul was in Upper Sheol from the time He died until His resurrection (Psalm 16. 10). Would not "the Spirits in prison" be in Lower Sheol, if our friends are interpreting 1 Peter 3. 19 as a personal visitation by our Lord Jesus to preach to those who had perished in the deluge of Noah's day? The difficulties of accepting this interpretation of 1 Peter 3. 19, and a useful alternative for consideration, are helpfully dealt with in 1959 Bible Studies, pages 163-4 (reproduced in volume of Mr. J. Miller's Notes on Epistles—James to Jude—pages 40-41).

G. P. Jr.

[12] **Parkhead.** —Since God has not disclosed the precise moment of the Lord's resurrection this point remains debatable. As to Matthew 12. 40 several alternative explanations have been attempted. Some suggest that the Lord's words lend weight to the view that the crucifixion must have taken place on the Thursday (or even the Wednesday) instead of the Friday. (For some discussion on this point, see Bible Studies 1963, pages 54, 55, and related comments, also 1964 pages 17-19). Others have been satisfied to regard Matthew 12. 40 as a very general comparison with Jonah's experience.

G. P. Jr.

[13] **Parkhead.** —Following the Lord's initial appearance to Mary Magdalene we have the appearance of Matthew 28. 9, so it is difficult to see how a period of nine hours is arrived at. Speculation of this kind, especially in connexion with the deep mysteries of the Lord's resurrection and ascension to heaven, are perhaps better avoided.

L. B.

[14] **Birmingham.** —A vision may be a manifestation of something non-existent at the time, as in the instances of Peter's vision of the vessel let down from heaven (Acts 10. 9-20), but the vision of angels at the tomb consisted of real angels (Luke 24. 23) and the Lord was actually present with Moses and Elijah on the Mount of transfiguration when the disciples saw the vision (Matthew 17. 9). Paul terms the **Lord's** appearance to him on the Damascus road a vision (Acts 26. 19) but in 1 Corinthians 15 he ranks it as a proof of resurrection together with all the other appearances to the disciples. It therefore does not seem appropriate in the case of the Lord's post-resurrection appearances to attempt to differentiate between a vision and a real manifestation. *L. B.*

[15] **Liverpool.** —We are not brethren of the Lord's in the sense of His brothers. We are brethren in relation to one another, and we **are** the Lord's. So the Lord says, "My brethren" as Possessor of those who are brothers (as having one Father). *J. B.*

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Questions from Derby. —(1) Please explain John 20. 23.

Answer. —As some contributors have said, this verse has to do with the matter of discipline in churches of God. This is in the hands of the churches as guided by overseers. For instance, for certain kinds of sin a man must be excommunicated (1 Corinthians 5) and his sins would be retained. 2 Corinthians 2. 1-11 deals with the restoration of the same man, now repentant; his sins were forgiven (See also comment [9]). *L. B.*

Question (2). —Was the appearing on the mountain of Galilee prior to the Tiberias incident?

Answer. —The appearance by the sea of Tiberias was the third time the risen Lord had been manifested to His disciples (John 21. 14), that is, it was the third appearance to the disciples as a group. The two previous ones were in Jerusalem on the resurrection day (20. 19) and a week later (20. 26), so that the meeting on the mountain of Galilee must have been later than the fishing expedition. It may be that the exact time and place of the mountain meeting had been fixed beforehand, but Peter decided to occupy the time of waiting by returning to his old occupation. The Lord made use of the incident to impart further instruction to the apostles before giving them the Great Commission. *L. B.*

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BIBLE STUDIES

"Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so" (Acts 17. 11)

VOLUME 36

DECEMBER, 1968

EDITORIAL

Although some critics have speculated about John Chapter 21 being a later addition to the Gospel, this explanation becomes unnecessary when we consider that the immediate post-resurrection appearances reach a climax in Thomas's confession, and lead naturally to a general statement on the principal purpose of 'this book', to bring to a confession of belief in Jesus as the Son of God.

Chapter 21, mainly for the instruction of the disciples, recounts the Lord's third appearance to them, and we cannot be sure how soon this occurred after those closely associated with the resurrection morning. We have a unique glimpse of the forty-day period of 'speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God' (Acts 1. 3), which so often we wish we could penetrate and share with the apostles. Have we in fact preserved for us here by the Holy Spirit the cardinal lesson of the kingdom; concerning the only motive power which will make the kingdom strong; personal love for the Master?

The early verses of chapter 21 seem clearly to contain a gentle rebuke by the Lord to these fishers of men about the efforts of the night. Again gently, but nonetheless pointedly, the Lord reverts to 'Simon' to address the man destined to the honour of a death like his Lord's. Did the Lord expect, or hope to hear, from Peter *agapao*—the love that gives itself up for another, rather than *phileo*—the love that gives itself up to another; the positively directed love of deep appreciation of its object, rather than the more passive, though trusting and constant, affection? It would seem clear that He did, yet who but feels intensely with Peter the agony of recent memories; memories which no doubt restrained him from further expression of the devotion which had evaporated so tragically? (John 13. 37). Then the Lord, who for the present Himself accepted and used *phileo* in His third and last question, made plain to His grieved disciple that the *agapao* love would yet be required, and would be clearly evidenced in Peter's martyrdom.

Many years later, having faithfully discharged his responsibility to the lambs and sheep, the apostle was to write, "The elders therefore among you I exhort, who am a fellow-elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ... Tend the flock of God which is among you..." (1 Peter 5. 1, 2). Did Peter stand in memory before the Chief Shepherd by the lapping waters of the sea of Tiberias? Thus the closing message of the Gospel by John passes down to us against the background of the mature Christian experience of its main original recipient. J. D. T.

It is with a deep sense of thankfulness to God that we complete a further year's study. Helpful contributions have flowed in steadily throughout the year from assemblies in the United Kingdom, Canada and Australia and we thank brethren for their continuing faithfulness in this service. We believe that the labours of brethren in connexion with **Bible Studies** are extremely valuable in the building up of the saints and the maintenance of Fellowship-wide links between assemblies.

A poet has referred to the fourth Gospel as "John's simple page". Our experience has been that although the evangelist welds simple words into short sentences the truths stated are often so profound as to baffle human understanding. In some issues the number of editors' comments has testified to the difficulty of the subjects dealt with but we have frequently been unable to do more than indicate the directions in which solutions may be found and indeed we have often had to lay down the pen and admit, "We do not know". Nevertheless we pursue our studies encouraged by the Lord's own words, 'The Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things' (14. 26). *Eds.*

THE PROPHETIC CHARACTER OF DANIEL 11. A REVIEW

Taking into account the various suggestions put forward in this discussion it is possible now to review our study to date as follows:

(a) **What part of the chapter awaits fulfilment?**

See previous contributions from J. L. F. (March 1968), L. A. W. (Dec. 1968) and L. B. (July, 1967); also discussion on pages 115-116 of 1952 Bible Studies.

1. The main point of debate is whether verses 20 to 35 were fulfilled in the era of Antiochus Epiphanes, or whether these verses await fulfilment (or further application) in the future.

2. It seems unnecessarily to complicate matters by placing the "break" between fulfilled and unfulfilled (or partially fulfilled) prophecy at the end of verse 19. More logically the break should be made at the end of verse 20, because from the beginning of verse 21 the prophecy continues to deal with the same character as the northern king.

3. The remarkable correspondence between the detail of verses 21 to 35 and the course of events in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes is impressive, and lends strong weight to the view that there should be an application of the prophecy to that period.

4. Nevertheless there are features of the prophecy which point towards its primary application at the time of the end, the earlier application being therefore secondary and anticipatory. This method of prophetic revelation is applicable in other contexts, similar historical events occurring at different epochs being presented as virtually identical. For instance the siege of Jerusalem (A. D. 70) is clearly in view in the Lord's prophecy about the destruction of the Temple in Luke 21. 5-24 (compare also the account in Matthew 24). Yet at the time of the end there will be a duplication of similar circumstances, and the prophecy embraces also that later situation with its sequel in the coming of the Son of Man.

5. Points which suggest the necessity of applying verses 21-35 to the time of the end, as well as to the era of Antiochus, include the following:

(i) the ruler introduced at verse 21 (one of the line of northern kings) appears to continue on through the rest of the chapter. The character and policies of Antiochus as seen in verses 21-35 will be closely paralleled by the king of the north at the time of the end, but the experiences of the latter are further developed in verses 36-45.

(ii) the dominating figure of verses 21-35 is seen to have similar characteristics and policies to "the king" of verses 36-45. From insignificant beginnings (verse 21) the development of his power by deceit and expanding military strength is traced through to verse 29. Verses 30 to 35 focus attention on the critical effect of his indignation against the faithful of Israel. Then from verse 36 follows his further self-glorification and military conquests.

(iii) It is asking too much to divorce the "abomination that maketh desolate" of 11. 31 from the Lord's allusions in Matthew 24. 15 and Mark 13. 14. The reference to the abomination that maketh desolate in Daniel 12. 11 merely looks back to the event of 11. 31 and adds information about a period of time dated from that event. The act of Antiochus referred to by Josephus would shock the religious conscience of Jews at that time. But the Lord's words do seem to demand an application of 11. 31 to the future exaltation of the man of sin against all that is called God or that is worshipped, a defiance expressed by his sitting in the temple of God and setting himself forth as God.

(iv) Some difficulty is also raised by the proposal that verses 32 to 35 are of general application to the centuries of Israel's experience from Antiochus until the end time. It is not characteristic of Daniel's prophecies to include references to the present dispensation. Also the verses would more fittingly describe a particular period of crisis than Israel's long centuries of chequered experience. There is a situation presenting divided loyalties among Israel, some being seduced by flatteries, others remaining faithful to God's covenant. This did apply during the era of Maccabean struggles and will equally apply during the final struggle against Antichrist.

(b) Who is the "King" of verse 36?—See contribution from J. L. F. (April, 1968)

There is a good deal to support the suggestion that "the king" of verse 36 is the ruler of the northern power (Syria and associates) which is represented through so much of Daniel 11 as in opposition to the southern power (Egypt and associates). It seems clear that the perspective of this chapter is designed to show that this grouping of Middle East power blocks, which has been so significant in earlier phases of history, will be a pronounced feature of the political situation at the end-time also.

Some have thought that verse 40 depicts the kings of the north and south assailing a third party, "the king" of verse 36. This assault upon a common foe would be out of character with the usual attitude of the kings of the north and south towards each other. It seems more in harmony with the context to read verse 40 as a conflict between these two powers:

- (i) "At the time of the end shall the king of the south contend with him" (with the king of the north)...
- (ii) "And the king of the north shall come against him" (the king of the south) "like a whirlwind... ships... "
- (iii) "and he" (king of the north) "shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass through".

(c) **Is the King of the North (verse 40) the first beast of Revelation 13?**—See contribution from J. L. F. (May, 1968)

The case for regarding the king of the north as the first beast of Revelation 13 is quite weighty. For it has been shown: —

- (i) that certain notable characteristics of the first beast of Revelation 13 are seen in the king of the north (Daniel 11. 36-40), such as overweening pride and dominant military power;
- (ii) that the end-time ruler marked out by these fearful characteristics may be identified as emerging from "the north"¹⁵ (in relation to Israel), from one of the areas associated with the northern power block.

(d) **How does 'the end' of verse 45 fit in with Revelation 19. 19-20?**

—See contribution from J. L. F. (June, 1968)

There appears to be a large measure of agreement with the conclusion that the king of the north (Daniel 11. 45) comes to his end when the Rider on the white horse comes down and casts him into the lake of fire. J. L. F. proposes a possible co-ordination of events leading towards that climax. In his submission, fulfilment of Ezekiel 38 and 39 is seen to dovetail with other military movements towards the end of Daniel's seventieth week, resulting in the nations of the world being gathered to make war against Israel and her Messiah. This is a fascinating area of study, and points for discussion inevitably arise. For instance: —

1. Do not such scriptures as Revelation 13. 4, 7 and 2 Thessalonians 2. 9 indicate that Antichrist will have such dominant military power in the second half of the week that opposition to his authority is unlikely?

2. Is the fact that the invasion described in Ezekiel 38 and 39 is recorded between chapters 37 and 40 really an adequate basis on which to fix the timing of that momentous event?

3. Would not Egypt be part of the ten-kingdom confederacy, if this is to be based on the former Roman Empire, or even "such variation of it as will befit the end-time picture"?

Conclusion:

This review may serve to summarize the result of our consideration of the problem of Daniel 11 so far as it has gone, but further contributions will be welcomed, if the Lord will. **G. P. Jr.**

Mr. Ferguson's comments on the three questions at the end of the foregoing article are as follows:

1. I think the very fact that tidings from north and east worry the world ruler shows that there are rumblings in his kingdom, quite accepting the fact of the hitherto undisputed world domination he has enjoyed.

The strange thing is that the ruler of the Ten becomes the acknowledged dictator of the world.

2. Where else can we set the Gog invasion? Suppose it were put in the first half of the week, their burial takes place in the day of the Lord's renown and glory. That could hardly be said of any period in the seven years, and not till it is over.

3. While Egypt might well reappear in the final ten, it is evident even today that North and South in the Arab world will not coalesce for long.

The Titles of the Lord Jesus in the Gospel of John

It is often said that Matthew presents the Lord as King, Mark as Servant, Luke as Son of Mary and John as Son of God. In a closer look at John's Gospel, however, the comparison does not by any means exhaust the presentations which are apparent, for there are at least twenty five titles of the Lord which are referred to.

The Holy Spirit through the writer uses the titles, the Word, the only begotten Son, the Son and the Son of Man. The Lord speaks of Himself as, I AM, the Light of the World, the Bread of Life or the Living Bread, the Door, the Way, the Truth, the Life, the True Vine, the Good Shepherd, the Resurrection and the Son of Man. His disciples or witnesses call Him the Lamb of God, the King of Israel, the Son of God, the Christ, the Master, the Lord, and Rabbi. The world in general knew Him as Jesus of Nazareth, but also used the following titles, the King of the Jews, the Prophet and the Christ.

It is particularly noticeable that throughout the Gospel the Lord's own claims in relation to the world are being brought before us. These are usually prefaced by those glorious words "I AM", words which cannot be gainsaid, and against which the charge of blasphemy is meaningless. They reflect the Lord's testimony to the world in the widest sense, for example, the Light of the World, the Bread of Life, the Way, the Truth, the Life, the Resurrection, The Door. The Good Shepherd, the True Vine, although primarily used of His relationship to Israel, nevertheless, through Israel, reached out to all the world. Each of them is capable of quite independent study and has a vital importance for all men today.

It is our solemn responsibility to know the Lord intimately, to appreciate His attributes and to represent Him to the world. In this we have the continual help of the indwelling Spirit of whom the Lord promised, "He shall take of Mine and reveal it unto you". We therefore would do well to look closely at these matters and, in believing faith be able like Thomas to exclaim, "My Lord and my God". *W. A. Park*

STUDIES IN THE CLOSING PHASE OF THE GOSPEL BY JOHN JOHN 21

The **Appearing at Tiberias** and the ensuing Discourse

From Kilmarnock.—The last recorded words of the Lord in John's Gospel, directed to Peter, were intended to remain with him and ground him in faith and truth throughout the rest of his life.

We in like manner should take these words to ourselves as, like the disciples in verse 3, we tend to do service under human leadership and self-will with barren results, or like Peter in verse 21 concern ourselves about what others do, instead of remembering that, since we put trust in Him our paths should be directed by His will, and no matter what befalls others, follow Him.

Looking more closely at the scene on the shores of the sea of Tiberias we can see the fruitful results of a Christ-directed service: a multitude of fish were caught when the nets were cast on the right side of the ship. Our behaviour should be such that we shall not be ashamed to look into His eyes at His coming. As we reflect on verse 9, which details the provision already made by the Lord, we think of His words in Luke 22. 35, "When I sent you forth without purse, and wallet, and shoes, lacked ye anything?" and the words of Paul to the Philippians (4. 19), "And my God shall fulfil every need of yours according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus".

There was a difference of opinion on verse 15 as to whether the Lord meant the fish or the disciples. Most thought that the Lord meant the fish, which in Peter's case implied early associations [1].

Throughout his Spirit-inspired narrative of the Lord's works the beloved disciple John keeps in the background, faithfully bearing a true witness to all that has taken place since "the Word become flesh and dwelt among us . . . full of grace and truth". John, we believe, was content with devout service in the background. *J. M. Rankine*

From Derby. —Peter must have been grieved that the Lord asked him the third time, using Peter's word concerning love: yet no doubt he looked back to his past experiences and realized that Jesus knew all things. Perhaps the memory of denying the Lord thrice still gave Peter feelings of remorse, especially, as the Lord had foretold his failure and he had said that he was ready to lay down his life. It was understood that the exhortation to tend and feed the sheep was to encourage Peter to do that which the Lord said to him earlier, "Stablish thy brethren" (Luke 22. 32).

Verse eighteen seemed to establish the fact that Peter's earlier promise to lay down his life would eventually become a reality because he was going to obey the Lord who said, "Follow Me".

G. W. Conway, L. Foster

From Aberkenfig and Barry. —John's Gospel ends in a remarkable way; in chapter 20 the writing seems to be finished and the apostle draws together the threads of the story, states his aim in writing and gives the appearance of concluding. Then as though he had an after-thought he pens another chapter, almost as an appendix. This chapter follows the pattern of former chapters, portraying the Son of God and His deep interest in His disciples [6]. The apostle whom Jesus loved frequently records in detail the long conversations between the Saviour and individuals, and this chapter is no exception.

It would seem that Peter was wrong to go fishing. The Lord had clearly called him and the other disciples from fishing when they met Him by the sea of Galilee (Matthew 4. 18-22). Had Peter forgotten His Lord? Satan had gained the victory over Peter in his denial and was,

perhaps, still causing Peter to dwell upon his own failure and persuading him that he was unacceptable to the Master. The denial had brought an estrangement between Peter and his Lord which possibly was not yet finally overcome [2]. Certain features about Peter's behaviour seem very strange. To return to fishing after the Lord had called him from it might be explained by the fact that Satan was gaining the victory, but in the light of the overwhelming evidence that the Person on the shore was the Lord, the fact that Peter did not recognize Him seems inexplicable. He had toiled all night on a previous occasion and had seen the Lord's power demonstrated; here was a repetition of that miracle, but Peter did not seem to recall it. It needed John to tell him that it was the Lord [3].

The number of fishes has to some people a spiritual significance; numbers in Scripture do have meanings but the number is given here because the fishes were large and it would be customary to count them. In the earlier miracle the fishes were most likely small and would be reckoned by weight: it was sufficient to record a great multitude to show how the Lord's power had worked.

R. C. J.

EXTRACTS

From Sydney. —Some of the disciples went out fishing with Simon Peter but a whole night's toil proved unavailing. The coming of dawn found them tired and hungry, nor was their frustration relieved when they had to answer "No" to the voice of the Lord calling to them from the shore and asking them whether they had made a catch. There was, however, a note of authority in His voice, and they responded readily when He told them to cast the net once again and promised them success (verse 6). The result was the netting of a shoal of fish, which when counted numbered one hundred and fifty three, but without the net being rent (verse 11). The experience must have reminded the disciples of an earlier incident, though on that occasion the nets were breaking and the boat began to sink (Luke 5. 6, 7). The disciples strained to see who it was that had sent them this miraculous draught of fish. The beloved disciple John was the first to recognize Him (verse 7). But it was Peter who was most eager to go as quickly as possible to the Saviour, and he snatched his cloak and plunged into the water, for they were only a hundred yards from the shore (verse 8.) His recent disloyalty was still upon his conscience and the penetrating gaze of his Master was still fresh in his memory (Luke 22. 61).

Gordon J. Munday

From Macduff. —This chapter opens with the incident of Peter and some other disciples fishing. It would appear that this was the third occasion that he had been fishing (Matthew 4; Luke 5). In the incident in Luke 5, Peter confesses his sinful condition (verse 8), as if perhaps he had a conscience about having returned to the fishing. In Matthew 28, we read of the Lord instructing the women to tell His disciples to go into Galilee, and there they would see Him. This was perhaps their obedience to that commandment, but when the Lord called they were unprepared for His call, and He had to make Himself known to them. Not only did Peter err, but he drew others away with him. The Lord

asked if they had enough to meet their need, and they admitted their lack of food. The Lord was able to meet their needs, and meet it fully. He provided fish (not theirs, since they were still bringing them ashore). Again we see the Master as Lord of all, by His every word He was able to do for them what they could not do for themselves, in supplying the fish.

The Lord's words "Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me more than these?" were thought by some, to refer to the fishes (see comment [1]). Fishermen are greatly attracted by the thought of fish waiting to be caught. The main lesson concerns the choice of master: a heavenly Master or an earthly master. Many are prepared to acknowledge Christ, but few are prepared to submit to His service. Twice the Lord said to Peter, "Lovest thou Me?" Twice Peter replied that he had a regard for the Lord. On the third occasion, the Lord asked Peter, "Lovest thou Me", to which Peter could answer in the positive. In the first two instances, the word used is *agapao* (deep love) on the third occasion the word *phileo* is used, (friendly, having a regard). Peter was given the opportunity to confess his love to his Lord, but he did not come up to standard of Christ's love, and he could see no further than the earthly idea of love. J. M. W.

From Vancouver, B. C. —Chapter 21 is divided into three parts, the Lord's final appearing to His disciples as recorded in John, His personal dealing with Peter, and a statement of the veracity of the writings. Verses 24 and 25 were possibly not written in the original text by John as the person and number of the verb are different (verse 24) indicating a different author. Nevertheless, these verses serve to draw John's Gospel to a conclusion, in that some other elders have verified all he has said [4].

The Lord's appearance by the sea of Tiberias is of some importance. First it is a further proof of the resurrection. His appearance was to the disciples whom He first encountered in His ministry. Nathanael, James, John and Peter, serving to connect John 1 with John 21. Thomas the doubter was also present. These moments were spent by the Lord with His disciples in order that He could impress on them all the truths He had taught them. The miracle of the Lord in this chapter is reminiscent of His other miracles and directs the reader's mind to them all. His characteristic love and provision for others and His attractive personality are again shown here. J. Bell, Jr.

From Melbourne. —It was suggested that the Gospel had been concluded in chapter 20, and the portion known as chapter 21 was added as supplementary thereto. Without doubt the writer is John himself. (See comment [6]).

John was of a different temperament from Peter. Quiet and loving loyalty to his Lord and Master characterized him. He kept in the background; there was no impetuosity displayed in any of his actions. He refers to himself at least four times as "the disciple whom Jesus loved" and at the conclusion of this appendix (if this suggestion be correct) refers to himself again simply as "the disciple which beareth witness of these things, and wrote these things". He it was who leaned on the Lord's breast during supper (John 13. 23-25). When others had forsaken the Lord and fled, John remained near Him and was present at

the court of the high priest (18. 16). John stood by the Cross (19. 26). John was the first who saw the empty tomb and believed (20 4). John was the first to recognize the Lord on the beach at Tiberias (21. 7). It was appropriate he should be the one to whom the Lord in His dying hour should commit the care of His mother, and that one who had been so near and dear to the Lord should be chosen to express in such a deep sense the love of God to man, both in the Gospel bearing his name, and in his epistles. It is he who tells us that "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life". Again it is he who tells us, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another" (1 John 4. 10, 11).

T. W. Fullerton

From Birmingham. —The disciples were spiritually low, so they went fishing, something that they probably had not done since the Lord called them to follow Him. Peter was leader at this time and this characteristic of Peter would be used later to the glory of God.

They toiled all night and caught nothing; how often may we be toiling and at the end of it we see nothing for our labours. If it is not of the Lord, our labour is in vain. Yet at the bidding of the Lord, and with very little labour, the disciples caught 153 fishes. We notice the care of the Lord, knowing the need of His disciples to eat. He prepared breakfast for them and invited them to come and eat. Though most of us need to follow our daily task to provide for ourselves and families, we should be ever conscious of the Lord's provision and never confident in ourselves.

In considering the words that the Lord said to Peter, we wondered what "more than these" referred to. We were of the opinion that "these" (verse 15) referred to the fish, but we also considered the possibility that what the Lord was saying was, "Simon, son of John, lovest Me more than the other disciples love Me?" Reference to Matthew 26. 33 and Mark 14. 29 seem to confirm this view and would explain why Peter did not openly claim to love the Lord more than "these", but said, "Yea Lord, Thou knowest that I fondly love Thee" (See Comment [1]).

D. P. Brown

From Denmark Hill. —Verses 2 and 3 remind us of the beginning of the Gospel. Eight disciples were gathered together and as a result of Peter's prompting responded to the call of the sea. Peter's "I go a fishing" might indicate a feeling within him that all that had been gained was now lost, the Master being no longer with them. Probably there lay deep in the heart of John the thought that they had not been forsaken by the Master. John in his second chapter gives to us the call of some of the disciples and chapter 21 mentions some of these same men. Much had happened in between; sorrow, trial and difficulty mingled with joy and happiness had been the lot of the disciples. Probably they did not regret the experience that they had passed through, it must have tempered them and helped them to show grace to each other and to those with whom they came in contact.

John's exclamation "It is the Lord" shows that his nearness led to early recognition of the Master. Our nearness to Him will allow us

readily to see His working with us. John recognizes, but Peter acts (he casts himself into the sea).
G. Sankey

From Southport. —The close of the Gospel by John is in striking contrast to those of the Synoptists. Here it is intensely individualistic, whereas the other three accounts are collective. The characteristics of the Lord portrayed by John are maintained right to the end. No direct reference is ever made by the Lord to His sufferings. His concern was for His loved ones. He was soon to leave, and the great work they were destined to do. Peter was still the same impetuous leader, making mistakes, through which the others were taught correctly by the unerring Lord. John, the same devoted one, was caused by the Holy Spirit to write his own short testimony of his attachment to his Lord (verse 7).

The chapter contains many lessons which the Lord was teaching His apostles. Earlier He had spent 40 days teaching the doctrines of the kingdom of God. What days those must have been! (Acts 1. 3) [5].

T. Rylance

From Methil. —The Lord Jesus appeared to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias, this was the third appearance since His resurrection. There were seven disciples present on this occasion two of them are not named, the other five were apostles. That night Peter had said, "I go a fishing", to which the others replied, "We also come with Thee". Peter's strong will led the others astray and to a fruitless night's toil. They had not learned the lesson from the previous incident when the Lord had said to Peter, "Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men", and they left all and followed Him (Luke 5. 10, 11).

At daybreak the Lord Jesus stood on the beach, but the disciples did not recognize Him. John was the first to realize it was the Lord. The miracle of the multitude of fishes caught as a result of obeying the Lord's command must have convinced him. On reaching the shore, they counted one hundred and fifty three fish, yet the net was not broken. By this time all the disciples knew it was the Lord, so none of them enquired, "Who art Thou"?

The Lord told Peter what his life work should be, "Feed My lambs", that is, those young in the faith. Because Peter loved the Lord he was to feed His lambs. "Tend My sheep", means helping those in the disciple pathway, helping them to walk and giving Scriptural guidance (2 Timothy 3. 16; 1 Peter 5. 2; Luke 22. 32). "Feed My Sheep", involves ministry of the word, feeding saints from the word of God (1 Thessalonians 2. 13; Acts 20. 28). If Peter loved the Lord he would feed His sheep. If we would be useful in the Master's service and reliable in feeding and tending the Lord's sheep, we must love the Saviour.

N. G. Coomer, R. C. Surgeon

From Glasgow (Govan and Parfick). —Each sign prior to the resurrection showed that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and those who, having seen them, believed, have life in His Name. But John selected and recorded these miracles so that men of other times and places may have life, for "blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" (20. 29). When the disciple whom Jesus loved had seen the sign of the laden fish-nets, he recognized the Man on the shore as the

Lord, and so the last chapter of John's account expresses in action his aim in recording additional signs: that we may realize the Lord's identity through His deeds.

Matthew ends his Gospel with the disciples' commission concerning the world, since he treats of the One from the kingly line through whom all the nations of the earth are to be blessed, but John describes how the Son of God charged His apostles with regard to the Flock and left an example of the Chief Shepherd's care. For though He made His appointment for the mountain, He sought out those strayed followers on the sea; thus it is that, both doing and teaching, He fulfilled His promise in John 17. 26. By providing for their natural needs He rebuked them for turning aside from their new duties to the Flock to feed themselves. We can learn how to furnish spiritual food if like the men in the boat we render ourselves instruments in His hands.

Martin Archibald

COMMENTS

[1] Kilmarnock. —We would suggest that the Lord and Peter were probably walking ahead of the rest of the company (21. 20), so that the conversation would be private and no embarrassment would be caused by references to other disciples. The use of the word *agapao*, the special word denoting Christian love, must indicate that "these" refers to people rather than to material things. The Lord was probably in effect saying to Peter, "Are you still prepared to assert, as you did before your denial, that your love exceeds that of the other disciples?"

L. B.

[2] Aberkenfig and Barry. —Possibly Peter and his companions were undergoing a test of patience rather than of faithfulness. The Lord had promised to meet them on a mountain of Galilee (Matthew 28. 16) but apparently as yet had given no instructions as to public witness. This period was to be used for learning (Acts 1. 3) and quiet meditation in preparation for the arduous days ahead. If any note of censure can be detected in the Lord's words to Peter, it was of the very mildest kind.

L. B.

There was no estrangement between Peter and his Lord: there may still have lingered in Peter's breast remorse (Matthew 26. 75). *J. B.*

[3] Aberkenfig and Barry. —Peter was not expecting to see the Lord, so that in common with the other disciples, he failed to recognize the Lord's voice, not seeing His face in the dim light of early morning. He was a man of action and was probably too engrossed in the task of getting the fish ashore to give thought to the unusual circumstances. But he was not slow to take in the significance of the situation and to act appropriately when the hint came from John.

L. B.

[4] Vancouver. —Many theories as to the authorship of verses 24 and 25 have been put forward, but we can see no difficulty in attributing them to John himself. His oblique method of making personal references, although unusual in modern writing, is nevertheless a feature of the fourth Gospel (13. 23, 18. 15, 16, 19. 26, 35, 20. 2, 21. 7, 20). "We

know" (verse 24) may indicate that John wrote the Gospel with the encouragement and fellowship of other brethren, who joined with him in certifying their confidence in its accuracy. *L. B.*

[5] **Southport.** —Acts 1. 3 does not necessarily imply that the whole of the forty days before the ascension was occupied with teaching. It rather means that during the period there were a number of occasions when instruction was imparted. The recorded teaching sessions were: the conversation on the journey to Emmaus, the first and eighth days in the upper room, the conversation in this month's study and the meetings on the mountain of Galilee and on Olivet. Some of these appearances were prior to the events of chapter 21 and some after. *L. B.*

I am of the opinion that the Lord must have taught His apostles on other occasions than the "teaching sessions" noted above, very much that was needed for Pentecost and after. *J. B.*

[6] **Aberkenfig and Barry.** —Chapter 20 rounds off the general gospel message. Chapter 21 is no supplement. It is the last phase of the Lord's work on earth, and is specially for disciples. *J. B.*

QUESTION AND ANSWER

Question from Melbourne. —Please explain the meaning of the words, "I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that should be written".

Answer. —One contributor describes the statement as hyperbole, a figure of speech depending upon exaggeration to secure emphasis. We would suggest that such a device can have little place in the word of God and is not the explanation of this passage. The majority of things that men do are of no significance spiritually, so that their lives can be recorded in few words. But every action, every word of the Son of God was important, every moment of His life was spent in the service of His Father. A detailed account of such a life would be almost limitless. *L. B.*

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