

Bible Studies

A magazine for the exploration of the Word of God (Acts 17)

**A STUDY OF THE LORD'S
UPPER ROOM MINISTRY**

VOLUME 49

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Bible Studies

A magazine for the exploration of the Word of God (Acts 17. 11)

EDITORIAL

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Our study of the Lord's Upper Room Ministry on which we embark in this issue, must in the will of God, prove a soul-stirring experience. Like the disciples on the Emmaus road, our hearts cannot fail to burn, as together we examine the teaching of our blessed Master. Editors welcome all contributors and study groups who are sharing our exercise. To those contributing to Bible Studies for the first time, we send a special greeting. Our prayer is that, by our fellowship in study, we may be a help to each other.

The contemplation of the inauguration of the Remembrance has touched us all, as together we have considered the moving symbolism of the broken bread and poured cup. The central place of this ordinance among the services of the churches of God cannot be too frequently stressed, associated as it is with our entrance into the holies. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, as great Priest over the house of God, we offer our sacrifice of praise, 'the fruit of lips which make confession to His name ' (Heb. 13: 15). This is a privilege to treasure, just as His 'This do' is a command to obey.

ft. L

THE REMEMBRANCE (Matt. 26: 26-29; Mark 14: 22-25; Luke 22: 14-23)

From Birkenhead: From the scriptures relating to our subject we saw the institution, by the Lord Jesus Christ, of what we refer to as the Remembrance. The term 'Remembrance' is not one which appears in the scriptures, the phrase most commonly used being 'the breaking of bread'.

The purpose of the thanksgiving for the bread and wine is to focus the attention of the assembly on the person of Christ (His incarnation and atoning death).

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It was impressed upon us not only that we are commanded to take the bread and the wine, but that we are to recognize the deep significance behind our actions. Jesus Christ authorised that these should be done *UNTO* a remembrance of Him. It can be said, therefore, that the breaking of bread and the taking of wine and the associated thanksgiving are to stir our memories, and the worship which follows, or proceeds, from that is to God for His Son. The keeping of the Remembrance is part of our holy priesthood service and the occasion of our entry into the holies.

In Luke's account of the institution of the Remembrance we noted that two cups were mentioned and it seems that in keeping the Passover the Jews used three or four cups in all. However, our discussion led to the suggestion that the cups referred to in Luke 22: 17 and 20 were one and the same [see comment 10]

What is clear is that the Lord Jesus used the Passover as the basis for the command which we have received in this dispensation.

We were pleased to confirm that three gospel narratives gave clear instruction as to the purpose for which the Lord Jesus established the Remembrance and that it separated us from those under the Old Covenant. It is clear from 1 Cor. 11: 23 that Paul received instruction from the Lord and passed this on to the Corinthian saints and we are therefore further enlightened on the matter from the epistle.

The loaf used at the Passover would be unleavened but we noted from the references to the breaking of bread by the New Testament churches that the Greek word used did not specify unleavened bread.

There were three discussion points:

1. Was Judas present at the institution of the Remembrance? [Comment 1]
2. Did the Lord Jesus partake of the bread and wine instituting the Remembrance? [Comment 2]
3. To whom is the Remembrance a proclamation (1 Cor. 11:26)? [Comment 3]

R. D. Williams, R. C. Halpin

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From Cowdenbeath: The Lord said to Israel, The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof (Mat. 21: 43). Their redemption had begun with the Passover ceremony in Egypt one of the three set feasts later ordained for Israel to keep every year, following their constitution as a kingdom of priests unto God (Deut. 16: 16). The Passover was to be a remembrance; a remembrance of *their* bond-service and of *their* full deliverance (Exod. 12: 26-27).

The Lord was 'born under the law' (Gal. 4: 4) and He kept the passover. Unleavened bread was present and wine for the cups. (Some authorities report that there were four cups in Jewish houses at Passover time, the fourth being described as the cup of joy or blessing - cf. 1 Cor. 10: 16). What was to follow during supper was something new and intensely significant. For this the Lord used things that were basic to daily life - bread and wine.

God had spoken to men previously through human instrumentality. Now He had spoken fully and finally in Son. The incarnate Christ was to accomplish God's reconciliatory purposes without which there could never be acceptance before God. Christ is central to all God's dealings with men and so the act of remembrance changes in significance. 'Our passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ'. Remembrance is now no longer of our state and what we once were. He has said, 'This do in remembrance of Me' (Luke 22: 19), 'How precious! Of the blessed spirit it is written, 'He shall... bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you', (John 14: 26) but more precious than the words is the Person. It is 'remembrance of Me'.

The importance of the passover is identified by Israel's calendar as given by God. This month shall be unto you the beginning of months' (Ex. 12: 2). We believe that Acts 20: 7 makes clear the importance of the service of collective worship, out of which flows all our service for God. The flame is the Remembrance, resulting in softened hearts fit for service. The true worshippers worship in spirit and truth. The hearts of the disciples were to become sad as He reminded them of His departure and of the way in which it would take place. First of all He gave them this precious act of remembrance and the promise of the Comforter. In

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truth, there could be written over the door of the upper room those words, 'Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end' (John 13: 1).

R. I. Shaw

From Derby: There are three direct accounts of the Remembrance though all four gospels include the last Passover supper. Matthew and John were eyewitnesses, though with quite different outlooks. Mark and Luke were not present but researched the matter (see for example Luke 1: 1-4). Later, Paul on the basis of personal revelation gave his account (1 Cor. 11: 23-26) [Comment 4].

Matthew Mark and Luke all show that the Lord chose the location of the last supper and Luke reveals that it was punctually kept and that the Lord revealed its special significance forthwith. He said 'With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer' (Luke 22: 15).

Luke 22: 16 is puzzling because Matt. 26: 23 and Mark 14: 18-20 show that the Lord ate of the passover meal [Comment 5]. It may be that the references to the fruit of the vine in Matt. 26: 29 and Mark show that the Lord did not take the normal wine on that occasion [Comment 6].

Matt. 26: 26 and Mark 14: 22 show that the bread was taken during the meal and blessed by giving thanks [Comment 7]. All three accounts have the clear statement 'This is my body'. We are confident that this is symbolic language but behind the symbolism there is a reality. Paul makes this point in 1 Cor. 10: 16 and 11: 29. We find instruction to the disciples and so to us for the act of remembrance in Luke 22: 19 and Cor. 11: 24.

Matt. 26: 28 brings in the thought of the blood of the covenant, shed for remission of sins for many and Mark 14: 24 accords with this though it does not mention the remission of sins. Luke 22: 20 shows this as the New Covenant and it seems clear that here is the end of the passover and the beginning of a new institution.

The disciples kept the breaking of bread from very early times, as shown by Acts 2: 42. Later in Acts 20: 7 there is given an indication that they did so on the first day of the week.

N. Bramfitt, G. W. Conway

From Douglas, Isle of Man: Service as a holy priesthood, when we as God's people gather to remember our Lord Jesus Christ on the first day of the week, is the highest form of service which can be rendered to our God.

The Remembrance was instituted by our Saviour because He knew how very prone we are to forget. It is possible for us as individuals to remember Him and His great work at Calvary, but the Remembrance as instituted in the upper room is a collective thing and must be carried out at the appointed time, and the appointed place (Acts 20: 7). When gathered together in this way, the actual Breaking of the Bread must be recognized as the first and all-important action in our gathering.

When the Lord instituted the Remembrance only He in that upper room knew what was before Him, the agonies of Gethsemane, the loneliness as all forsook Him, the mocking, the scourging and above all the loneliness of dark Calvary, forsaken by His God. These things were very much in His mind and it is these things He wished His people to remember.

It is a common thing to hear the Remembrance referred to by God's people as the 'morning meeting'. This, we felt, detracts from the solemnity of the occasion. We do not just go to a meeting, we go to God as at no other time in the week, and we go to speak of His Son. We do not ask God for anything. We give of our praise, worship and thanksgiving, that God may receive His portion from His people. If only we could cultivate the habit of referring to our gathering as going to God we would appreciate more the awesome and glorious privilege which is ours as God's people, of entering the presence of a thrice-holy God.

J. R. Turner

From Hamilton, Scotland: In studying the prescribed reading one is soon made aware of the greater length of Luke's account; ten verses compared with four verses in both Matthew and Mark. However, as one scrutinizes Luke's gospel it becomes evident that he draws a broader picture, giving us an insight into the mind and heart of the Lord Jesus Christ in a unique way. 'With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer' (Luke 22:

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15). Less revealing, but surely of some significance, are the words of Luke 22: 14, 'And when the hour was come He sat down and the apostles with Him'.

Luke also focuses our attention on the prophecy and its fulfillment in the kingdom of God, 'I will not eat it until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God' (Luke 22: 16), 'until the kingdom of God shall come' (Luke 22: 18).

Luke is largely taken up with a prelude to ' The Remembrance, but his contribution to the promulgation of The Remembrance' is essential.

- i) 'When He had given thanks' v. 19
- ii) 'in like manner' v. 20
- iii) 'new' v. 20

Neither Matthew nor Mark supply the above information.

The three Gospels accounts reveal the work of the Holy Spirit in guarding the simplicity and order of The Remembrance'. Thus, Mat. 26: 22, Mark 14: 22 and Luke 22: 19 all contain:

- i) 'took bread'
- ii) 'break it'
- iii) 'this is my body'

A further feature to be noted is the agreement between Matthew and Mark - Luke omits:

- i) 'as they were eating'
- ii) (When He had) blessed
- iii) take (ye) (Matt. 26: 26; Mark 14: 22)

The Holy Spirit has clearly laid down the essential order and meaning of The Remembrance'. It is imperative that we continue to guard the simplicity and divine order and not diminish in any way the force of the words of the Lord Jesus Christ:

This is My body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of Me' (Luke 22: 19).

M. Carruthers

From Leeds: The Lord Jesus Christ used the Remembrance to mark the setting up of a new order, breaking with the Law of Moses and the sacrifice of the Temple and opening up a way in which His disciples could approach God, remembering their Lord and Master. In the three Gospel narratives, and in Paul's later revelation (1 Cor.

1: 23-34) we have set out in simplicity and clarity the way in which those of the Way should remember Christ [see Comment 4], He was well aware of the pressures of life which could so easily break down the early enthusiasm of the disciples and He knew also that Satan would attack His flock unceasingly. Without any elaborate ritual, forsaking the richness of the Passover feast He was able to speak to His disciples about what would come to pass and how they were to act afterwards.

It is worth noting that the Holy Spirit, in guiding the Gospel writers, used particular words, for example, the Greek word for ordinary bread rather than that for unleavened bread. Although there would have been no leaven in Israel at the Passover, the word used tells disciples of all ages that ordinary, easily obtainable bread is sufficient. Care should be observed in separating the various cups taken as part of the Passover feast from the cup the Lord took when describing the blood poured out.

That the Lord should say to the apostles 'Do this in remembrance of Me' would bring many thoughts of remembrance to them, of Christ the Healer, Teacher, Saviour and King. So often we can remember only His death and resurrection in our coming to the table. His life is there also for us to remember, in glorious detail traced out by the Gospel writers.

Our holy priesthood service before God revolves around Christ and His actions here on earth. The disciples, drawn into tightly knit groups, often as a result of persecution, were able uniquely to draw on the memories of the apostles. We have the writings of both New and Old Testament to turn to in our appreciation of Christ, our great High Priest. As a holy priesthood, we serve in a spiritual house.

P. Jefferson

From Liverpool: This term 'Remembrance' comes from the phrase (Luke 22: 19 and 1 Cor. 11: 25) 'do this in remembrance of Me' which refers to the time when the Lord Jesus broke bread with his disciples in the Upper Room. Of the four Gospels, Luke's seems to be the fullest account, while John did not record it, even though he was with the others at the time (John 13: 23). As Luke is the only

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Gospel writer to **include the phrase** mentioned above, **was there** any significance in **this?** [Comment 8]. It was thought **that we** do not **get a full picture** of the occasion from **just one gospel**, **but** need to look **at them all**. The accounts are complementary. Omissions in **the other gospels** do not **detract** from **Luke's** account.

Every Sunday?

1 Cor. 16 1-2 shows **the importance** of **the first day** of **the week** in **the early churches** Acts 20: 7 shows **that the time** when Christians in **the churches** of God got together to break bread. 'Continued steadfastly' (Acts 2: 42) **gives the idea** of regularity and consistency **with regard to the occurrence of the Remembrance**. It can **be concluded that the first day of the week was the regular time for the occasion**.

Acts 20 can **be construed** to mean **that the Remembrance did not take place** until **night time** (verse 8 indicated there were **lamps** in **the room** - could they **have been lit as it was dark?**) [Comment 9]. Circumstances may **have kept Paul** and others from carrying out **the Remembrance until the evening**, **but it was thought that it should be carried out at the start of the day rather than the end of it**.

Reason for its institution

As humans we are prone to forget how good God **has** been to **us** (like the children of **Israel** in **the wilderness** - Ex. 14: 11-12). **The Remembrance is a reminder of what God has done for us through Christ**. **This idea** of remembering **was foreshadowed in Deut. 26: 1-10**. In coming to God **there was a remembering and appreciation of what He had done in the past**. [Comment 11].

Was Judas at the first Remembrance?

John 13: 30 indicates **that Judas left the others after the Passover meal** (see **Luke 22: 14-18**) **but before the Remembrance began**. **The bread referred to was part of the Passover meal** (see v. 26). **John 13: 18** does not refer to **the Remembrance feast but to the times when the Lord Jesus had shared a meal with Judas, the same as the usage in Acts 2: 46**.

Self-Examination called for

1 Cor. 11: 27-30 calls for self-examination before the Remembrance, when we must confess any sins we know of to the Lord and sort out any relationships with our brothers and sisters that are not what they should be. It is not advocating that we should not go to the Remembrance if we are not in the right condition. Rather, we must examine ourselves, get ourselves right with God and then go to the Remembrance. This idea of being right with God and our fellow men before coming to the Remembrance was spoken about by the Lord Jesus (see Matt. 5: 23-24), in principle.

P. Barrett

From Melbourne: During the three years of the earthly ministry of the Lord, His disciples were gradually instructed, as they were able to bear it, in things pertaining to the kingdom of God which should govern their relationship with the world and with one another. Their earliest hopes evidently were that Israel's Messiah had arrived to restore the kingdom to Israel, and that they would be amongst His followers who would proclaim the advent of the kingdom, and be appointed to places of responsibility therein. But as time passed, it became evident that the leaders of Israel, the scribes, Pharisees and teachers of the law were not prepared to recognize Him, even though His works testified to the fact that He was unique among all the prophets who had arisen in Israel. Carefully and progressively He was instructing and preparing them, not for an immediately honoured place in the kingdom, but for a place of rejection with Him and eventually His death at the hands of lawless men; preparing them for present disappointment.

Sorrowfully they prepared the passover in the place made ready. While eating, the Lord took a loaf (a small loaf or cake, composed of flour and water, and baked, in shape either oblong or round, and about as thick as the thumb - Vine) and said This is my body which is for you: this do in remembrance of Me. In like manner also the cup, after supper, saying, This cup is the New Covenant in my blood: this do, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as ye eat this bread and drink the cup ye proclaim

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the Lord's death till He come', (1 Cor. 11: 24-26). It is evident that what was to be done in remembrance was the 'taking' and 'breaking' of the bread; likewise the 'taking' and 'pouring out' of the cup by someone of the assembled company on behalf of all. While the 'eating' and 'drinking' by all was a proclamation of the Lord's death until He come.

This appears to be the first time that His disciples are introduced to the New Covenant by a vivid portrayal of the death of the Victim, the Lord Himself. He was now to take the place of the introductory sacrifice of Exodus 24: 5-8, by which the Old Covenant was inaugurated. This was intended to be the great ordinance for the people of the New Covenant, who in apostolic times were gathered into churches of God, to be the dwelling place of God on earth; the place of divine service. This was intended to be the great continual reminder to His people of the divine love which led the eternal Son, as the Lamb of God to die the death of the cross for human sin. It was not only to remind them continually of redemption, but also of how He died to bring a sinning (although redeemed) people into the holiest of all, not only in future eternal ages, but here and now as worshippers.

D. McFarlane, 7. VV. Fullerton

From Methil: We approached the study with several questions.

- 1) 'Drink ye all of it' (Matt. 26: 27). Did this mean they were to drink all the wine until none of it was left?
- 2) Was Judas at the Remembrance?
- 3) Did the Lord Jesus eat this Passover?
- 4) Do the loaf and cup become the actual body and blood of the Lord?
- 5) When do we keep the Remembrance?

Our answers were as follows: -

- 1) 'Drink ye all of it' does not mean that we are required to finish the contents of the cup but as it says in Mark 'and they all drank of it'? *ALL* were to partake, not all of *it* was to be drunk.

- 2) **We do not think that Judas was present at the institution of the Remembrance. Although John does not record the Remembrance in His gospel account, He states quite clearly that Judas went out *straightway* after having received the sop which was part of the Passover meal (John 13). The words of comfort which appear in John 14 and subsequent chapters were ministered by the Lord to His disciples after they had kept the first Remembrance. No such comfortable words could be said to Judas. How then do we explain the statement in Luke 22: 21 The hand of him that betrayeth Me is with Me on the table'? We do not think that the Lord Jesus meant that Judas was literally and physically at the table with Him at that point in time, but that by way of exclamation, here was His own familiar friend who had been constantly at His table* *now* in the process of betraying Him!**
- 3) **We believe that the Lord Jesus did eat the last Passover. 'With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer' (Luke 22: 15). Yet in the following verse He says, 'I say unto you I will not eat it until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God'. Surely He means I will not eat it *again* until it be fulfilled.**
- 4) **With regard to the loaf, this is an emblem or symbol representing His body, but it never changes to become His body, nor does the cup change and become His blood. He was there with them in His body; the bread and wine He chose as symbols of that body with which to remember Him. They are material aids to our faith.**
- 5) **The Remembrance is kept on the first day of the week and no other meeting should take place before it. When we are gathered together to keep the Remembrance it is to *break bread*, so this is the very first thing that we do at that gathering. There should not be any hymns or 'build up'**

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before the breaking of the bread; it takes first place (Acts 20: 7).

N. Coomer

From Nottingham: Although it is John who, through the Holy Spirit's guidance, records for us most of the Upper Room ministry, it is interesting to note that he does not record the institution of the breaking of the bread. We learn of the Lord's desire that we should do this in (unto a) remembrance of Him from Luke. It is not a matter only of remembering the Lord for anyone who loves Him will surely do this many times each day. The breaking of the bread was a definite service which was to be held as a feast or festival of remembrance. Matthew and Mark also relate the actions of the Lord and His words in taking the loaf and cup. Along with the relative passages in the gospels we read 1 Cor. 11: 23-29. Here Paul shows that the Lord confirmed to him the action the Master took on the night of His betrayal, and some of the teaching involved.

In considering this aspect of the Upper Room ministry we thought also of some of the details given in the gospels leading up to the time the Lord spent there with His disciples. It was an unusual and distinctive sign He gave to them when He instructed them to follow a man bearing a pitcher of water. Also they were told that there would be an upper room furnished and ready (Mark 14: 15). The last word seems to have significance and it may be there had been prior arrangements made which are not revealed to us in the Scriptures. It is thought by some students that the Greek text of Matt. 26: 18 implies that the man was known to the Lord and the Lord to Him.

The accounts in the synoptic gospels vary but are not irreconcilable. Bearing in mind the teaching of 1 Cor. 11, Matthew and Mark seem to present the exact order in which the Lord took the loaf and cup while Luke gives us what might be termed as the moral order. The question arises as to whether or not the cup referred to in Luke 22: 17 is the same cup and relates to the same action as that in verse 20. Many think this is so and, if so, why does Luke refer to the cup first and then to the bread? [Comment 10].

It is instructive to contemplate the different characters of the men who partook of the loaf and the cup. Impetuous warm-hearted Peter was there and so was John, the one who was so close to the Lord. There were others about whom we know a little and some of whom we know the name only. But God knows how He used these servants of His after this sad and momentous night. Was Judas Iscariot there? A comparison of the various accounts does not give a definite answer. Luke 22: 19-23 implies he was there and John tells us that Judas left after receiving the sop (John 13: 30). A comparison with Matthew's account would imply Judas was not there. It is suggested, therefore, that Judas was not there when the Lord instituted the breaking of the bread.

So far as the written record is concerned, the Lord said only a little to His disciples when He instituted the feast (festival) of remembrance. But what He did say is highly significant. Of the loaf He said, 'This is my body which is given for you' (Luke 22: 19), and of the cup, 'This is my blood of the covenant' (Matt. 26: 28). Clearly the loaf and cup were symbols, for the Lord was in His body when He spoke these words. Matthew and Mark speak of the blood being shed, i. e. poured out (Matt. 26: 28 Mark 14: 24) while Luke speaks of the wine, the symbol, which we consider was poured out from one vessel into another and of which the disciples partook.

R. Hickling

From Vancouver B. C: The Lord and His disciples met that evening in order that they might keep the Passover, the details of which were given by God for the purpose of remembering Israel's redemption from Egypt. The Remembrance was instituted by the Lord Himself and His injunction to the disciples was, 'This do in remembrance of Me'. (Luke 22: 19), and 1 Cor. 11: 25 states the duration of His command 'Till He come'.

The bread and wine were not purchased for the purpose of the Remembrance. Both Matthew and Mark state that it was 'As they were eating' the passover. No doubt the loaf and cup were on the table. We note that in the three gospels when the word 'bread' is used, all have 'loaf in the margin'. There is no specification of any particular kind of bread -

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leavened or unleavened, brown or white. It is 'a loaf. The same was true of the wine. He used what was on the table. Scripture does not say whether old or new. The Lord gave thanks for each of the emblems individually as each has a significance of its own. No doubt the disciples would wonder what He meant when He said of the loaf, This is My body', and of the wine, This is My blood'. However, they had heard the Master say of Himself, 'I am the Door', 'I am the Living Bread', etc. and they would need to appreciate the spiritual significance. In less than twenty four hours they would grasp the fact of His blood poured out. How sad to think of those who teach that they partake literally of His body and blood.

When Paul was writing to the Corinthians his purpose was that they might be exercised about their condition spiritually when they came together. Each must examine himself when coming into the presence of our God that we may be worthy to draw near. After we have remembered our Lord through the loaf and the cup, our hearts are filled with thanksgiving, praise and worship and we are able as a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

J. Bell

COMMENTS

- 1. (Birkenhead):** See answer to Question 1 (from Melbourne).
- 2. (Birkenhead):** That the Lord Jesus shared the Pass-over Feast with His disciples is clear (Luke 22: 15), but the new Feast He was introducing was 'in remembrance of Me' (Luke 22: 19). 'Drink ye all of it' (Matt. 26: 27) indicates that the partakers were the disciples, *not* the Lord.
- 3. (Birkenhead):** The Greek word used in 1 Cor. 11: 26 carries the thought of a public proclamation. The Remembrance is a declaration to all who will witness it of the death of the Lord Jesus.
- 4. (Derby):** 1 Corinthians is later than the gospels in its placing in the New Testament. By date it is an earlier record.

5. **(Derby):** Luke 22: 16 refers to a time future to that at which the Lord was speaking. The word 'henceforth' could be understood here, as it appears in the parallel v. 18

6. **(Derby):** I doubt if the meaning here suggested can be read into these verses. Rather, the Lord is emphasizing that the Passover, with its remembrance of Israel's deliverance from Egypt, is coming to an end.

7. **(Derby):** Do not the words, 'As they were eating' signify that the Lord brought the Passover Feast to a close by instituting the new Feast of Remembrance?

8. **(Liverpool):** It is doubtful if any significance can be read into the fact that Luke, alone of the gospel writers, quotes the command, 'This do in remembrance of Me'. Paul also recorded it (1 Cor. 11: 25).

9. **(Liverpool):** Two explanations may be given for the fact that the Remembrance in Troas (Acts 20: 7-12) was obviously kept in the evening:

- i) As suggested in this contribution, the circumstances implicit in living and working in an area in which the Lord's day was not recognized may well have prevented the disciples from gathering until evening.
- ii) The Jewish day ran from 6 p. m. to 6 p. m. Thus, what we regard as Saturday evening would be for them the beginning of the first day of the week.

10. **(Nottingham):** I cannot see that Luke 22: 17 refers to the same action as v. 20. V. 18 would appear to mark the end of the Passover Feast, and v. 19 the institution of the new Feast of Remembrance.

R. L

11. **(Liverpool):** See the first paragraph of the Nottingham paper. The significance goes beyond the concept of remembering.

J. K. D. J.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. **From Melbourne:** Was Judas present when the Lord instituted the Remembrance?

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The record given in the synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) does not make it absolutely clear whether or not Judas had left the upper room before the Lord Jesus instituted the Remembrance. However, John 13: 30 tells us that, having received the sop, Judas went out straightway and this, taken in conjunction with Matt. 26: 23-25, leads us to conclude that Judas was not present when the Lord Jesus gave the bread and wine to His own.

2. From Melbourne: What do we understand was meant when the Lord said, 'One of you is a devil?' (John 6: 70).

Judas was an unregenerate man, the 'son of perdition' (John 17: 12). He was of the devil, displayed his characteristics and was under his control. See John 13: 2, 27.

3. From Melbourne: When, do we understand, is the time of entrance into the holies? When the brother who is the doorkeeper, takes his seat, should not there be a short period of waiting and meditation ere someone goes forward to take the loaf?

Our entrance into the holies is, we understand, associated with the keeping of the Remembrance. From this flows the praise and worship which is the service of the holy priesthood (1 Pet. 2: 5). This is the highest service of the people of God, and must be approached with the utmost reverence. A short period, during which our spirits may be suitably quieted, is in order, but we should also guard against the danger of undue delay due to lack of exercise.

4. From Nottingham: Please compare the reading of Matt. 26: 29 with Mark 14: 25 and Luke 22: 18 noting particularly the reference in Matthew to *This* fruit of the vine compared with *The* fruit of the vine in Mark and 'until that day when I drink it new *with you* in my Father's kingdom' in Matthew and the exclusion of the words 'with you' in Mark. Is it considered that there is any special significance in these differences?

I have never regarded these textual differences as having any special significance. R. L

Bible Studies

A magazine for the exploration of the Word of God (Acts 17. 11)

EDITORIAL

8102

The apostle John is the only one of the gospel writers to give us an account of the feet-washing that preceded the institution of the Remembrance. Looking back in old age to the scenes of his early manhood he recalls the events of the night of the betrayal with remarkable clarity. The Lord's actions that night rebuked the pride in the hearts of the disciples, and taught them once again that true greatness is achieved through humility and condescension to lowly service. The Lord is ever the perfect example. He was their Master and their Lord, yet He willingly stooped to lowly service for them and then exhorted them to do the same for one another. We too need to lay the lesson to heart. 'It is enough for the disciple that he be as his Master, and the servant as his Lord' (Mat. 10: 25).

J. K. D. J.

'MY PEOPLE' or NOT MY PEOPLE'

In issues 8007 - 8009 inclusive, the question, 'When did the Northern Ten-Tribe Kingdom lose its place as part of Jehovah's people?' was examined. The following stimulating contribution to the debate has been made by Mr. L. Burrows, Kingston-upon-Thames. Further comment on this topic will be welcomed.

The People of God

'I will be their God, and they shall be My people' was a great promise conditionally given to both Israel and God's New Testament people (Lev. 26: 3, 12; 2 Cor. 6: 14-18). The scriptures referred to indicate a parallelism between the constitutions of the people of God in the two dispensations, but the suggestion that 'this parallel holds good only in broad principle' deserves close examination. This article seeks, in particular, to answer the question -

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'Is the term, "the people of God", applied in any sense to Israel in virtue of the Abrahamic covenants?'

The unconditional covenants of promise **given** to Abraham and confirmed to **Isaac and Jacob** were, briefly, **that their descendants would become a great nation and inherit the land of Canaan for a possession, and to Abraham God said, 'In thy Seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed'. At no time prior to the days of Moses did God promise to acknowledge Israel as the people of God.** The phrase, **'My people'** first occurs in **Ex. 3: 7** when God is contemplating Israel's **release** from bondage to **serve Him in the wilderness.** To Pharaoh **He** says through Moses, **'Let My people go, that they may hold a feast unto Me in the wilderness' (5: 1).** When God was about to bring upon Egypt **the plagues which would culminate in the Exodus, He** recalls **His** promises to Abraham and **adds a new one: 'And I will take you to Me for a people, and I will be to you a God' (6: 1-8).** It should be noted that **the repeated demand to Pharaoh to 'Let My people go' was not in order that they might enter into their inheritance, as might have been expected if that title depended on the Abrahamic covenants, but that 'they may serve Me' (8: 1).** In fact Israel's service of worship **began in the wilderness long before the entrance into Canaan.**

Exodus **19: 5-8** and **24: 3-8** describe **the** recognition of **Israel as the people of God** upon their undertaking to obey **the Law, and Deut. 26: 16-19 stresses that God's acceptance of Israel as His people depended upon their recognition of Him as their God and on their keeping His commandments.** These scriptures point to a **unique link between the Law at Sinai and Israel's formally becoming God's people, based on their promise to keep the Law.** In contrast, **the promises to Abraham were not through the law, but through the righteousness of faith (Rom. 4: 13).**

It is suggested that there is indeed a parallel between **the mention of the people of God before Sinai and the institution of the people of God In the New Testament.** Before Calvary **the Lord Jesus spoke to His disciples about the imminence of the kingdom of God (Matt. 21: 43; Luke 12: 32).** Again, **God was able to call Israel His people before Sinai because of divine choice (Deut. 7: 7); similarly believers in churches of God to whom Peter wrote are called, 'elect**

(chosen, RSV)... according to the foreknowledge of God the Father' (1 Pet. 1: 1, 2) and, 'a people for God's own possession' (2: 9).

What scriptural support is there for the term 'My people' being used in relation to the Abrahamic covenants?

L. Burrows

The following comment is offered in response to the final question raised in this paper.

See Ex. 6: 3 - 8. In Ex. 6: 7, God promised to take Israel to Him for a people. Although it is certainly true that He gave them His covenant at Sinai, was this not a consequence of the earlier covenant mentioned in v. 4?

P. L. H.

CARING FOR OTHERS (John 13: 1-17)

From Birkenhead: Our discussion recognized a change in the direction of the Lord's teaching from this point in John's gospel. The teaching now takes the form of ministry and teaching directed towards 'His Own'. The opening verses imply that, with the end of His earthly life in view, the Lord wished to impart to His disciples a lesson which would have both practical and spiritual application, and in the giving of which would be His own supreme example of humility.

It was noted that the Lord loved 'His own which were in the world' and we considered the meaning of this statement. Reference to 'the end' did not refer to time, but to the limit, or rather the limitless extent of His love. We also accepted the suggestion that the love of the Lord for His people was not love prompted by the excellence of its objects but rather love which was known in the action it prompted - God gave His Son - this was the love which was part of the nature of God.

We looked in some detail at the Lord's action in the washing of the apostles' feet in an attempt to discover the teaching, the apostles' reaction and the lesson for today. Although this was an act which was customary in those times, it is clear that for whatever reason none of those present undertook this action, but the Lord, in doing so Himself, adopted a position of humility which was recognized

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by those whose **feet He washed** [Comment 1]. In **the full** knowledge of **His** relationship to **them He** sought to impress upon **them the** need to deny **self** in **service** to others. From Peter's reaction **it would appear that the disciples did** not understand **the** deeper meaning behind **the** action.

Having recognized **that the** reference to being '**bathed**' would mean in our terms salvation, **we attempted** to **assess the** significance of feet-washing. **It was** clear **that it is** necessary to recognize daily defilement and to **be** cleansed from **this, but we** were undecided in **what** way it would **be** possible in a spiritual sense to **wash** one another's feet.

The presence of **Judas at the time** of **the** Lord's action **gave rise** to several thoughts. **It would appear that** although **Judas** Iscariot **was** one chosen by **the** Lord, **he had** not **placed faith** in **Him as** others **had**, and **the** Lord's **full** knowledge of **this** and of **the** presence of **the devil** among **His** followers lends a greater significance to **the** love and **the** humility of **the** Lord in continuing in **His** actions.

We considered how **the** apostles, looking **back** on **these** events **after the death** of **the** Lord Jesus, could **see His** actions in **perspective**, and would **realise the deeper** meaning of **His** teaching and **death, which** may **have eluded them** at **the** time.

R. C. Hatpin, A. Hyland

From Birmingham: **We** thank God for **His** care, so beautifully **exemplified** in God our Saviour; **as ever** in keeping **with His** character, **He** condescended to things **that are** lowly. **He** showed **Himself to be great, first** and above **His** fellows, for **He** stood in **the midst** as one **that** serves.

His care **was** always of a **practical** nature, **delivered** exactly **where it was** needed, and contrasts so sharply **with the weak** and sometimes ineffectual **care we** often display. **The** kindness of **Titus 3: 4** means '**usefulness** (Strong) and **there is** nothing more caring than showing ourselves **useful as we see** perfectly in our Lord. **We** thank James for **his** warnings concerning **the** impotence of saying to **the** poor, '**I wish you well**' **but** doing nothing about **this** physical needs (**Jas. 2: 16**, N. I. V.) [Comment 7].

We felt **sure their feet did** need washing from **the** defilement of **the** dusty roads, and how **much we all** need to **be** **taught the** profound **truth that he** who is **greatest shall be** least.

In this humble act of washing He taught of Him who would humble Himself unto death, whereby they can experience and know the washing of regeneration, that once-and-for-all cleansing, effected by the word on our lives (**Eph. 5: 26**, John 3: 5, 15: 3, 1 Pet. 1: 23). The disciples were all clean but one - Judas, who was unregenerate - the others had all been bathed completely and made clean by the Word (v. 10). But in spite of our once-and-for-all cleansing, there is still the need for daily cleansing - daily confession - which secures our forgiveness: 'If we confess our sins He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1: 9).

Quite a sharp division arose in our group over v. 14, where our Lord says 'Ye also ought to wash one another's feet' when one brother suggested that as well as the Lord's example in humbleness and service there might also be the thought of the saints exercising a spirit of forgiveness one to another (Eph. 4: 32). Others felt quite strongly that there was no thought of this at all [Comment 2].

As the Lord washed the disciples' feet, He shows that only He can cleanse from sin, and forgiveness must also have been granted (1 John 1: 19). The Lord says in effect, 'Do as I have done', meaning, among other things, as He forgave - so should we. But cleansing of sin is something we cannot do for one another, though forgiving one another is. This caused some long lively debate and we should appreciate comment of editors on this [Comment 3]

From Cowdenbeath: Peter never forgot the lesson of the feet-washing. 1 Pet. 5: 5 is inspired, through the Spirit, by Peter's remembrance of this gracious act of his Master, devoted to His own.

Scripture tells us that 'Jesus, knowing... loved', and, 'Jesus, knowing... riseth' (vv. 1-4). The mind of the Lord as He approached the cross is very important. His was no martyr's death but a steady movement in divine authority towards that purpose for which He had come as Man. The devil put into the heart of Judas to betray Him, but by the Father's appointment He had the supreme authority. The resultant victory and resurrection were already secure in the divine plan. 'He came forth from God and goeth unto God'.

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Shining out is His love for His own. Such was its measure that, whatever that hour demanded, He saw it through. 'Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end' (*eis telos* - to perfection, to completion).

The manifestation of His care for His own is striking. The towel girt about the loins is the eastern badge of slavery. The One who should be arrayed in majesty is girded, in the lowest place of service possible. Indeed, students will note that in v. 14 the Lord transposes the words of His statement in v. 13, to emphasize that the One with supreme authority has so acted towards them. 'Ye call me Master, and Lord... If I then, the Lord and the Master, have washed your feet...'

What we see we rarely forget and there can be little doubt that this incident deeply impressed the hearts of the disciples. This, surely, would be their inspiration for their love and care for each other, and so it should be for us today.

R. I. Shaw

From Derby: The apostle John puts his account into perspective by stating that the Lord's actions were taken in the light of His unique knowledge. He knew that His time was come for departure and that He had total power; and He was aware of His existence from eternity past to eternity future.

Here the Lord teaches by means of His actions. He takes the lowly attitude of humble service in the washing of the disciples' feet, even though in v. 13 He still claims His Lordship. This deliberate taking of the humble position applies to the whole of His earthly life. This is explained with great beauty of expression in Phil. 2: 5-8.

Probably all the disciples were astonished at the Lord's action, but it fell to Peter to indicate the apparent incongruity of the Lord's action with his relationship to the Lord. On an earlier occasion he had said, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God' (Mat. 16: 16). John 13: 8-10 indicates the need for a once-for-all cleansing by the Lord Jesus and also a day-by-day cleansing.

With the task completed, the Lord sat down and explained the lesson. Already v. 13 has been noted but it is worth

mentioning again. Here the alternative of Teacher' for 'Master' can be taken, so making very clear the additional claim to Lordship. This is emphasized by the clause 'for so I am' and also by His putting the two titles in reverse order in v. 14.

The disciples are told to follow the Lord's example. It is unlikely that He actually wanted them to wash each other's feet. Rather He would mean that they were to perform humble services. There are those who feel - because of the Lord's reference to cleansing - that this includes the kindly pointing out of shortcomings, or even sins. If this be so, then the one who does the pointing out needs to take very special care. He must be sure of his motives, remembering the Lord's illustration of the mote and the beam in Mat 7: 1-5.

Whatever may be the explanation, the command to follow the example is emphasized in v. 16., while v. 17 explains that the following of the Lord's example is a source of blessing.

N. Bramfitt, G. W. Conway

From Hayes: The Lord's love to the uttermost is the key to all in this portion. Who else in the circumstances would have done what he did? The circumstances heightened His action and are clear from the statements, 'knowing that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father', and 'knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He came forth from God, and goeth unto God'. Though about to go through such a terrible experience of suffering - the pain, the sorrow, the humiliation of the cross, desertion by these very men, betrayal by one, denial by another, and to be forsaken by God - and aware of the authority which was and would be His, His thoughts were for them, and He performed this lowly service, the washing of their feet. Earlier the disciples had been arguing about who was greatest. How it must have saddened the Lord that this was on their minds! Probably one of *them* ought to have performed this service. While true greatness is seen in His action, His true humanity is brought out by the graphic description of it.

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Two lessons may be learned from this. One is about spiritual cleansing. Believers are clean because they have trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ but still prone to sin, they need daily cleansing for service. John speaks of this in his first letter: 'If we confess our sins. He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness' (1 John 1: 9). The other lesson is that the care for others and the humility which characterised Him should characterise His disciples. If the Lord and Master did this, they should be prepared to perform humble services both physical and spiritual for each other. He had been in the midst of them as one that served. So it was to be with them. He had taught them much, but knowledge was not sufficient. It must be translated into actions. Peter learned this lesson and taught it to others: 'all of you gird yourselves with humility, to serve one another' (1 Pet. 5: 5). This refers to many things needed to help one another in the Christian pathway. The failures of the disciples show they were men of like passions with us, yet God was able to use them mightily.

J. A. H. Robertson

From Leeds: The Lord Jesus Christ is an example each should follow and His care shown here is simple to understand but so difficult to practise. During the Passover several washings are undertaken, so no great thought would be provoked when the Lord first commenced His work. His object was to show the Apostles how they should act in love and care for their fellows. It seems reasonable to say that as the Lord was talking to His own then what He was saying was directed first and foremost to His own people then and today. It also had a secondary purpose, an attempt against all odds to deflect Judas from his treachery [Comment 6]. The symbolism involved comes over into later New Testament writings, where we read on several occasions, notably 1 Cor. 6: 11, of washing and sanctification.

Christ was aware of His destiny and He knew His hour was come; but still in love and care He taught the Apostles. Our awareness of His love can only lighten our work for Him as it did for the Apostles. The Lord's role as a servant, so often portrayed in Isaiah, is seen here also as

a warning to those who would follow Him, never to assume greatness. His final injunction in Mat. 28 clearly follows on from His work and life on earth.

Paul writes in 1 Tim. 5 about how he saw things in the churches and how they should be caring and sharing. Reading John and the letter to Timothy, it would seem that the lesson had not been fully learnt, but was appreciated. It is as vital today in churches of God that the same Christ-like care and affection be shown by all to all. If we link the Lord washing the feet of the disciples with our position, washed in the blood of Christ, accepting the humility of servants and the humiliation of the cross, we can only ask for greater grace to accept the lesson and work out its ideal [see Comment 5].

P. M. Jefferson, J. Gardner

From Liverpool:

The Context (v. 1) Before arriving at the upper room two significant events had taken place: (1) the request of John and James for positions of authority in heaven [Comment 4]. (Mk. 10: 35-40) (2) a dispute among the indignant disciples as a result of this, over which of them was the greatest (Mk. 10: 41, Luke 22: 24). Bearing these two things in mind it is obvious why no-one was prepared to take the servant's job and wash the feet.

Remembering that Calvary was so close, it is amazing to realize that Jesus should still think of the welfare of his disciples at this time. The knowledge of His imminent crucifixion did not discourage Him from teaching His disciples further (vv. 1, 3 cf. 17: 1).

The Action (vv. 2-5) When the group arrived there was already there a bowl, a towel and a jug of water, but no servant - a role which the disciples were not prepared to take. The Lord set the example by doing this menial yet important task. He did not rebuke them, nor did He use boiling water! This humble and kind act of the Lord was in direct contrast to the attitude of pride and selfishness held by the disciples, even more so in the case of Judas.

We have in vv. 4 and 5 a faint picture of what the Lord had already done - leaving the throne of heaven, laying aside His glory and becoming a human being, taking the form of a servant (see Phil. 2: 5-8).

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Peter's Reaction (vv. 6: 11) As the Lord came to wash Peter's feet perhaps by now his conscience had been pricked and he thought it wrong that the Lord should do this for him, so he refused. Peter missed the point of the Lord's exercise completely, though he did learn later on (1 Pet. 2: 21, 22; 5: 5, 6) that humility and service go together. We took 'you have no part in me' (R. S. V.) to refer to service rather than salvation; hence the Lord's reply to Peter (v. 10). One who is bathed is a saved disciple who needs to experience the daily cleansing from the defilement of sin, and the washing of the disciples feet refers to the disciples 'walk'. Jesus' Knowledge of the situation is again shown in His statement that not all were clean - a reference to Judas. Had Judas been bathed? [No-Eds].

The Lesson (vv. 12-17) Obviously humility in service - now made mandatory for disciples of the Lord Jesus (v. 15). After such a significant act the Lord did not show any pride in what He had done but 'resumed His place' and carried on as before. This lesson was not merely spiritual but also literal in content, and such practice was continued by the early Christians (cf. 1 Tim. 5: 10). Caring for others needs commitment, and will result in the comfort of others - the disciples must have felt better afterwards. In our service comparisons should not be made with each other, as pride can creep in; rather let us compare ourselves with the example of Jesus, leaving no room for pride.

P. G. Barrett, D. J. Webster

From Melbourne: The simple and humble actions of the Lord in the upper room were characteristic of the days of His sojourn among men, and a pattern and example to His followers both then and now. It is profitable to read often and ponder upon the portion under review, so that the pattern of the Master which is summarized herein may in some degree be impressed upon our spirits.

It was customary in Palestine and adjacent lands to do as Abraham did as recorded in Gen. 18, which over the centuries continued to be an indication of welcome and an act of courtesy towards travellers and guests. One of the first acts was to bring a basin of water and a towel, so that the traveller over the dusty roads might have the

opportunity of refreshing himself by washing the feet. But here the Lord did more, as He took a towel, girding Himself therewith, and commenced to wash the feet of His disciples, thus exemplifying the fact that the Son of man had come, not to be ministered unto, but to minister. His heart was moved by deep compassion as He foresaw the years ahead and saw what was hidden from their eyes. He looked far beyond His own sorrows to the trials that they would endure for His Name's sake, combined with unknown sorrows and temptations. They did not then understand that He was setting them an example, so that they might follow His steps by a similar principle of love in their behaviour one towards another. He had washed the feet of Peter, who vehemently protested, in effect, Thou shalt never wash *my* feet, and yet would in a few hours just as vehemently protest to His Master's enemies, 'I know not the Man'. He had washed the feet of Judas, who was to sell Him for thirty pieces of silver; He had washed the feet of all the disciples, who a little later forsook Him in fear and fled.

He was far removed in principle and action from the thoughts and motives which activated men in general. Thoughts of that which lay before Him had no effect upon the One who was 'full of grace and truth'. His thoughts were thoughts of love and tenderness towards all His loved and His own, notwithstanding their failures, even although they wounded Him by some of their actions. He longed that they might have some of that forbearance with one another, which He had manifested to them, and a replica in some measure of the care one for another with which He had cared for them. His disciples would ever, while remaining here, look back to that upper room, and at times of tension would remember the words of the Lord. He set for us an example that in His absence there might be consideration one for another.

G. Munday, J. W. Fullerton

From Methil: John 13 records the events of the Lord's last night on the earth, yet on His mind was His care for others, although He knew His betrayal by Judas was imminent. Was Judas responsible for his actions? Luke 22: 3-6 shows that he went away deliberately, communed with the Chief

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Priest and Officers, agreed with them and looked for an opportunity. Later Satan entered into Him. Judas' mind was already made up. He was a bent man from the beginning, and a ready tool for Satan to use. He came to the passover having already planned to betray the Lord that night.

Against this background of betrayal we have the One who came from God and was again going back to God, rising from supper in order to wash the disciples' feet. He who was omniscient was demonstrating by His lowly actions what He required His disciples also to do. In the laying aside of His garments we see in its fulness the laying aside of His life, and in the taking of the towel He showed an exemplary act of lowliness as the servant. He must have noticed that no-one had done this service when they came in. In Luke 7 He rebuked Simon for not washing His feet on that occasion. He had given them all the opportunity to do it, especially Peter and John who had been sent to prepare for the Passover. They even followed a man with a pitcher of water! Yet none of the disciples was willing to do this service of feet-washing. The Lord tells them He is their Master and Lord and that He had set them an example and, therefore, they ought also to wash one another's feet.

Feet-washing can be a word of encouragement, a quiet word of correction, or sometimes the clearing up of a difficulty. Feet can sometimes be very tender and sensitive so that tremendous care is required. For us to walk in a daily association with the Lord there must of necessity be a daily washing, otherwise we have no part with Him.

D. 6. *Reid*

From Nottingham: The Scriptures show clearly there never has been and never will be one who cared for others as did our Lord Jesus Christ. As we have noted in an earlier study His compassion is seen particularly as the time of the cross drew nearer. He loved His own to the end (John 13: 1) and, as the R. V. margin shows, the expression used in the original here has the sense of 'to the uttermost' and can be translated 'completely'. The words 'His own' are interesting and should be compared with John 1: 11. He came to His own

people but they mostly rejected Him; these faithful few were His and the recipients of His love. But there was one there in the upper room who had not accepted Him. Even so, the Lord loved him, but Judas preferred earthly gain.

Caring for others and the humility this often involves is demonstrated forcibly by the Lord in the washing of the disciples' feet. He drew their attention to the example He set (13: 15, 16). The day was coming when the eleven and other chosen ones would have to wash the disciples' feet, not literally, but in humility helping and caring for the little flock.

There was another lesson for them to learn there in that room under the shadow of the cross. They had to be taught that those who were bathed (*louo*, to wash the whole body), need only wash (*nipto*, to wash part of the body), their feet. The R. V. margin comments that 'save' and 'his feet' are omitted by certain authorities. Even if we accept the omission of these words the principle established is not altered.

A picture of the gospel emerges from the incident of the feet-washing. The verb *tithemi* translated 'layeth aside' in John 13: 4 is the same as that used in reference to the 'laying down' of the life of the Good Shepherd. The washing of the feet was an individual matter; each was to experience it for himself and so is the new birth [Comment 5].

Peter resisted the Lord's attempt to wash his feet (John 13: 8), and here we seem to have a picture of man who by nature resists the Saviour and the Spirit.

The full significance of the Lord's act was not understood by Peter or, no doubt, the other disciples at the time, but he is told 'thou shalt understand hereafter'. According to Vine the word 'hereafter' translates a phrase meaning 'after these things' and we think this refers mainly to the cross and all that was involved there. If man is to live he must forsake his own efforts and accept that which is done for him. This was a lesson which Peter would, no doubt, remember in later years as he served his Master.

R. Hickling

From Vancouver, B. C.: As we are to be obedient (v. 14), we must understand what He is doing (v. 7).

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The menial task of refreshing the feet of guests was, and is, a customary feature of parched and arid lands (Luke 7: 44). Although water was sometimes provided for the visitor (Gen. 43: 24), servants often performed the chore; yet true self-abasement is recognized in Abigail's case. As only Christ, ever our example, manifested His humiliation conquering sin, nothing less than complete self-sacrifice is what our Lord requires. His lowliness in kneeling before filth, girt as a slave, Paul imitated (1 Cor. 15: 9; Eph. 3: 8). Impetuous Peter's confusion of state with standing vividly conveys the grace needed to bear the washing. How much more to perform the act itself. Yet only by this humbling ourselves can we be lifted up.

Without the usual passover traditions dictating who was to serve the family, the preceding argument of Luke 22: 24 is answered by Him who came not to be served. Service precedes glory. Christ's example in suffering (1 Pet. 2: 21) can recommend the social humiliation and mental degradation necessary to spiritual exaltation. Without this spirit of humility the Lord's ministry becomes a worldly institution, a title of pride and not a simple work of faith and labour of love.

The 'bathing' is completed by God; the 'washing' is our aspect. To those in the world defilement is inevitable and the water of the word, applied by the Holy Spirit, washes, even as we thereby are to wash ourselves (Ps. 119: 9). As the priest, initially bathed, must wash his feet at each service engagement to have communion, so we must be washed.

The reference here, however, is concerned with washing one another. Spirit-filled ministry as well as private conversation and even example can provide refreshment and guidance (Ps. 23: 3). It is certainly not judgement of defilement in view. The word of God deals morally, producing self-judgement and confession. 1 John 1: 9 implies this cleansing. Love alone, applied in the spirit of meekness, has the power to draw us back to Christ (2 Cor. 2: 8). He loved them unto the end.

D. Cleveland

COMMENTS

1. **(Birkenhead):** The disciples were not in the right state of mind to do this lowly service. They had been arguing

among themselves as to who should be the greatest among them (Mk. 10: 41-45; Lk. 22: 24-27).

2. **(Birmingham):** I think that the Lord's main purpose in acting as He did was to give His own a lesson in humility and to teach them to have a concern and a care for one another. He also indicated that the washing had a spiritual application [see Comment 3]. In relation to fellowship and service we are called upon to forgive (*charizomai* - be gracious to one another) (Eph. 4: 32; Col. 3: 13) but I am doubtful about this being clearly implied in V. 15.

3. **(Birmingham):** Two washings are referred to by the Lord in v. 10. The Old Testament counterparts of these are to be found in Lev. 8: 6 and in Ex. 30: 19, 20. The first was done for the priests once only, the second they did for themselves and they had to repeat the process again and again. The first washing is the 'washing of regeneration and is likened to the bathing of the whole body and it takes place when we are saved (Titus 3: 5; Heb. 10: 22). This cleansing, which is the work of the Lord Jesus, never needs to be repeated; it makes us 'clean every whit'. The second washing, that of the feet, must be repeated again and again because of recurring defilement. This speaks of a day by day cleansing which is our responsibility. We are ever conscious of sin and failure in our lives and of the harmful effect of unclean and defiling influences around us. This does not affect the validity of our once-for-all cleansing, but it affects our lives in respect of communion and service. The believer deals with sin in his life by confessing known sin to obtain forgiveness and the restoration of communion. He does this in the knowledge that all sins, past, and present and future, have been atoned for by the death of Christ (1 John 1: 7). He cleanses himself from defilement through recourse to the Scriptures. The water of the word has the power to cleanse us from the defilement caused by our contact with a world defiled by sin and that which results from the flesh within us (Psa. **119: 9**). See also answer to question from Birkenhead.

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4. (Liverpool): The request of James and John was for places of honour in the Lord's earthly kingdom (see Mat. 20: 21). Their minds were filled with visions of the Lord's Messianic reign which they thought was imminent (Luke 19: 11).
5. (Nottingham): Of course the experience of the new birth relates more closely to the bathing that our friends draw attention to earlier in their paper. The feet-washing had to be repeated again and again.
6. (Leeds): Is this so? Was the betrayal not necessary for the fulfilment of Scripture (Mat. 26: 56; John 13: 18)?
7. (**Birmingham**): Although it is true that the word *chrestotes*, translated 'kindness' in Tit. 3: 4, has its root in *chraomai*, 'to use', it is not used to signify 'usefulness' of people, but of things. When used of people, 'goodness' or 'kindness' is the appropriate rendering.

J. K. D. J.

P. L. H.

QUESTION AND ANSWER

From **Birkenhead**: Is the action and instruction (**v. 14**) of washing one another's feet to be given a spiritual application in these days, or does it only have the practical application of humbling oneself in service to others?

The Lord, v. 14, was specifically exhorting the disciples to be willing and ready to serve one another. This is how Peter viewed it (1 Pet. 5).

The reference to feet-washing in v. 10 has clearly a spiritual application to our lives day by day that we each need to attend to. In view of this, some contributors have seen a possible spiritual application to the Lord's words in v. 14 also. It is true that public, or private ministry of the word of God may be used by the Spirit of God to cleanse from defilement those who hear it. It has also been emphasized by contributors that great care must be taken by anyone who attempts to do this specifically; it must be done in a spirit of meekness and in all humility.

J. K. D. J.

Bible Studies

A magazine for the exploration of the Word of God (Acts 17. 11)

EDITORIAL

8103

Few scriptures illustrate the weakness of human nature more forcefully than the passage considered in this month's study. The twelve disciples had been the constant companions of the Lord Jesus for about three years; they had seen His miracles, heard His teaching and experienced His love. If holy company and conversation could make man God-like one would have expected it here. But the Lord knew that one of those whom He had chosen would only be hardened by what he saw; Judas never acknowledged Jesus as Lord and Saviour and each new act of grace confirmed him in his rejection. Judas was like Pharaoh (Rom. 9: 17, 18), raised up to be an instrument of 'the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God' (Acts 2: 23); yet his depravity was his own depravity and was the more reprehensible because of the opportunity he had to know the truth of the Saviour's claims.

Judas showed where the natural man ends, in rejecting Christ, but the other disciples, Peter in particular, showed how the weakness of the natural man is still present, in the believer. Peter really loved the Lord and his resolutions were genuine, but he had not the strength to keep them. He failed in the test, but his repentance was genuine too, and the Lord's prayer that his faith should not fail was answered. We are thankful that the Lord still shows the same love and forbearance towards us today. We can see too much of ourselves in Peter, but we know that 'if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and He is the propitiation for our sins'.

P. L. H.

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GROWING INTO A HOLY TEMPLE: Eph. 2: 21, 22

When the apostle says in Eph. 2: 21, '... each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord', what does he mean by the word translated 'groweth'? It cannot be, 'Think of the Churches of God as a whole, and they become in theory a temple'. Such a sense would be unique in the New Testament, since every use of the word elsewhere implies increase or development, as in the following:

'Consider the lilies, how they grow... ' (Luke 12: 27), or 'the chief priests... were much perplexed... where unto this would grow' (Acts 5: 24), or 'He that supplieth seed to the sower and bread for food shall... increase the fruits of your righteousness' (2 Cor. 9: 10). Even in Acts 19: 20, 'So mightily grew the word of the Lord, and prevailed', the expression 'grew' is not merely pictorial, but means that the effects of the Word spread more widely and grew stronger.

Surely, however, the sense in Eph. 2 is not 'increase in extent', as though there had to be a particular, or a considerable, number of churches before they would form a temple. Nor could it be 'increase in maturity'. For verse 22 describes the situation of the Ephesian saints at the time of writing: they were builded together for a habitation of God, so Ephesus and the other assemblies did also form a holy temple, even although Paul was appealing in the the same letter to the saints to attain 'unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ' (4: 13).

Rather, the vision of the growing temple is the apostle's description of what he had seen happen as each new church was planted in those days. The words of the new Life came to another town, and when men and women turned to the Lord, and the apostles taught carefully, there became apparent in that place also the divine pattern that first emerged in Jerusalem in Acts 2. So the growth in our verse is the multiplying of God's centres for His service according to the New Covenant. In the teaching of Eph. 2 we can sense the deep satisfaction of the Lord's servant, writing as an ambassador in chains, but seeing with spiritual vision the possibilities open to a fresh gathering of

believers so **taught as to be** conformed to **the** original design. Saints who **gave themselves to be builded** together **thus, would be able** to draw on **the** material support and spiritual encouragement of those in **the** assemblies already planted; communicating and governed by methods divinely planned, and, **as** they matured, enabled to contribute in return to **a** testimony **that** day by day expressed **the truth that Christ is Lord in disciple** hearts.

So **the** church in Jerusalem, **that** from **the** beginning **was** itself **'temple** of God' (1 Cor. 3: 16), **was** very soon joined by other churches in **Judea** in **the** first months after Pentecost. **Each** growth-point **was still** part of **a** single **temple** in **the** Lord. They were united by being sanctified in **the** truth. **Let us** not **leave the** close of Eph. 2 without noticing in whom **this** development always **takes place**. Verses 20-22 read: 'Being **built** upon **the** foundation of **the** apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus **Himself** being **the chief** corner stone: in whom **each several** building, fitly **framed** together, groweth into **a** holy **temple** in **the** Lord; in whom ye also **are builded** together for **a** habitation of God in **the** Spirit'. **It is Christ** Jesus in whom **the** building **is framed** together and grows. Surely 'in **the** Lord' **refers to the same** Person and **makes the same** point **with this** difference, **that the** apostle **draws** our attention to **the** importance of recognizing **that Christ is Lord, else these** things could not obtain. When **Christ is** owned as Lord, God **will take up** His habitation in **His temple**. **The Spirit dwells** in **the** believer as **a** Comforter, **but a** holy **temple** in **which** God may **dwell** in **His Spirit is** formed by **redeemed** souls who **are builded** together in **the** Lord.

Those who belong to **that Church which the** Lord Jesus is building **treasure the** knowledge of **the secure place** they **have** in Christ. Can **we** also **remember that** our building **must be** of **a** quality worthy of our Lord? Then our **aim** will **be** to care for **the** development in ourselves, and in others of God's building, of **the spiritual life that will let Christ abide** in **us**, and so may **draw** others to join **us** in acknowledging **Him as** Lord. *M. Archibald*

Note: (1) This article follows almost entirely the R. V. text, 'each several building'. The rendering 'the whole

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building', or 'all the building', however, is also possible, even if there is no article ('the') in the best attested text. See (Moulton and) Turner, *A Grammar of NT. Greek*, 111, 200.

(2) It will be seen from the above comments on 'groweth' that the N. I. V. translation 'rises to become' is hardly justified to render what is the common Greek word for 'grow'.

M. A.

LOVE AND TREACHERY (John 13: 18-38)

From Birkenhead: We faced the question of why the Lord chose Judas. Some maintain that the choice was unwise but we considered this view to be untenable. All that occurred in the Lord's life and ministry was in accord with the 'determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God', who cannot err. The choice and history of Judas must be viewed in the context of divine sovereignty which does not contravene human responsibility. The betrayal by Judas was an integral part of the Lord's passion, and His citation (v. 18) of the prophecy in Ps. 41 before its fulfillment was designed to prepare the eleven for the treachery of their fellow-apostle.

The Master's gracious encouragement of His apostles when He was so near the climax of His mission was noted. As always He devoted Himself to the service of others. Much of His upper-room ministry was designed to prepare the eleven for the vital role they were to play following His ascension to the Father. The assurance He gave in v. 20 would be recalled by them in coming days.

The details given in vv. 21-30 present a vivid word-picture of the Lord's naming of Judas as the traitor. We conclude that Judas had made an arrangement with the chief priests before he attended the supper, and that the thirty pieces of silver were already in his possession. The final impetus to complete his treachery is given in the phrase, 'And after the sop, then entered Satan into him'. This was the point of no return. One can visualize him slinking out with devilish determination. The final detail, 'and it was night', completes the sombre canvas.

We spent some time discussing the significance of the title 'Son of Man' which the Lord so often used in referring to Himself. The following helpful comments were quoted, 'It does not merely assert His real incorporation with our kind. It exalts Him indefinitely above us all as the true representative, the ideal, the pattern Man. His human life does justice to the idea of Humanity. He is the archetypal Man' (Liddon). 'As Son of God He is the only and perfect expression of Godhood: as Son of Man He is the only and perfect expression of manhood... His work on earth is the perfect explanation of the meaning of the creation of man' (Alford).

In emphasizing the brevity of the time He would be with them in the flesh, the Lord addressed His apostles by the endearing term 'little children'. This was further evidence of His deep love for them. That love was the bond of His relationship with His own, and was to be the ideal to which they must aspire in their attitude the one to the other. This would mark them out as His disciples in a world of hatred and sham (Titus 3: 3).

In contrast to the cold calculating treachery of Judas, Peter's devotion to his Master, although uttered in exaggerated terms, was none the less unfeigned. The lesson he had yet to learn was that self-confidence and self-resolve would not be sufficient if he was to witness faithfully to His beloved Lord. This is a lesson we all need reminding of. In Peter's case the circumstances of his failure would be a restraining memory for the rest of his days. This is discernable in his epistles. His genuine repentance and full forgiveness are on record for our encouragement.

A. E. Sands, R. D. Williams

From Cowdenbeath: We have, expressed here in John ch. 13, love and treachery in great measure. Treachery' is defined as 'a violation of faith especially by secret desertion of the cause to which one professes allegiance'.

Our hearts are moved when we consider the Lord's grief despite which He showed such affection for His own. At the grave of Lazarus He 'was troubled'. There, the effects of sin caused Him distress and He 'troubled Himself' (John 11: 33 R. V. M.). Here, however, we have the deepest

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depths of trouble as He fully realised what was to take place and Scripture records **that He** was troubled in the spirit (John 13: 21). **He** could be silent no longer on the matter and 'testified' to the betrayal.

The giving of the sop in eastern countries is a sign of friendship and up to the last the Master gave Judas opportunity to turn from his wickedness. Although Judas was poised between the friendship of His Lord and the leadership of Satan, he had already made his choice. He had let Satan in. What a contrast with John 14: 23! The Lord said, 'That thou doest, do quickly'. This reminds us of the word to Pharaoh in Ex. 10: 29. Evil expelled, must now co-operate in the purposes of God. The scene, then, is the departure of an alien heart while another reclines in the bosom of the Lord.

Despite the awfulness of the hour the great tenderness of the Master's heart is remarkable. 'Little children' is an endearing expression which recognizes danger. For the disciples, His departure was to be a sad occasion, but their mutual love would bind them together. By way of commandment He instructed them that, seeing He had loved them during His ministry, that love would provide the inspiration for their love for one another. The badge of their discipleship was to be neither creed nor clothing, hymn nor ritual. It was to be love for one another. This is the final test of discipleship.

When Peter said that he would lay down his life for the Master he never said a finer word, but the Lord knew Peter better than he knew himself, a salutary lesson for us all.

R. I. Shaw

From Derby: One can only be treacherous to a friend. It is sad in human relationships when one is betrayed. When Ahithophel left David and conspired with Absalom, David lamented: 'Yea mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted ... hath lifted up his heel against me', (Ps. 41: 9). Also 'For it was not an enemy that reproached me... ' (Ps. 55: 12-14). David's suffering was only a shadow of what the Lord suffered because He knew the end from the beginning. He knew the iniquity that was in Judas (**Acts 1: 16**) **but** He showed love to him contrn-

ually. He appealed to him through the washing of the feet and even gave him the sop which was usually given to the honoured guest. During all this time Judas was able to control his facial expression so that not one disciple was able to guess that he was the betrayer. In the garden Judas was given an opportunity to repent when Jesus said, 'Whom seek ye?' (John 18: 4), but Satan had entered into him (John 13: 27) and Judas chose to serve Satan. The mutual love between God and Christ has been there since before the creation of the world. God loved us so much that he wanted the whole world to be saved (Mat. 28: 19). We see this great love in action at the cross when the Lord Jesus was willing to endure the hatred of men and be forsaken by His Father. We must show love to those who are near to us and to those who hate us and seek to tell them about the Lord. We must love our brother because God so loved us (1 John 4: 11); because he is the brother for whose sake Christ died (1 Cor. 8: 11); and because we can see Christ in him (Mat. 25: 40). During the supper the Lord Jesus said He was giving His disciples a new commandment (John 13: 34-35). Only as we obey this new command to love will men know that we are His disciples.

G. W. Conway

From **Hayes**: There were no surprises in our Lord's life. He knew whom He had chosen, even Judas. The disciples had been together over three years, therefore they must have known each other very well by this time. Yet there is no indication that Judas was regarded as an outcast by the rest. In fact he was entrusted with the money-matters for the group. The Lord Jesus loved all His disciples, including Judas, and was troubled in spirit by thinking of his betrayal by him (v. 21). None of the other disciples had any idea that it was Judas who would betray Him, which surely says something about his role in the group.

Jesus never at any time accused Judas in front of, or to the knowledge of the other disciples. The 'dipping of the sop' followed by the word 'What thou doest do quickly' (Mat 26: 23 and John 13: 26, 27) indicate two methods of detection of the traitor: dipping with Him in the dish and His dipping the sop and giving to the traitor.

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The method in John 13: 26 was possibly only given to John and Peter, Jesus gave Judas the dipped sop which was supposed to be an Eastern custom showing special friendship to one of the guests. The Lord's love remained towards Judas, despite knowing of his intended betrayal.

V. 27 was the end for Judas, when he allowed Satan to enter into him and then left the company. It seems incredible that having been in the company of the Lord for so long, heard His teaching and witnessed His example, he could walk away. It brings home the power of Satan, who can move man's free will for evil rather than good.

In our discussion some considered that the Lord did not allow Satan to sift Peter as wheat but others thought that the challenge to Peter in the courtyard was Satan sifting Peter [Comment 1]. The prayer of the Lord brought about repentance and recovery. We do not read that the Lord prayed for Judas at this time. His pre-meditated treachery led Judas to that terrible moment when Satan entered into him.

The departure of Judas signified the time in which the Lord committed Himself to His death, yet the glorification of the Son was already manifested by His words and works (John 2: 11). God would glorify Him in His death.

D. King

From **Leeds**: The Lord Jesus is our example in all things pertaining to God. He has given us an example (John 13: 15) and so we should do even as He has done. The example of love, as expressed by the Lord, is supreme. He has shown that 'greater love' (John **15: 13**) and as His disciples we should love one another, 'as I have loved you' (John 15: 12). He says that this is a new commandment That you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another', (John 13: 34 R. S. V.).

The test of our discipleship is in our love for one another not merely in word but in action, in deed and in truth (1 John 3: 17-23).

Jesus **came** to serve and to give His life a ransom for all; **His disciples** must also **be** His servants. It was the Lord **who** stooped (bowed Himself) to wash the disciples' feet; **it was** an **act** of loving care.

In the mighty stoop of the 'Righteous Servant' (Is. 53: 11) to Calvary (**Phil. 2: 5-8**), God commended His own love to mankind (Rom. 5: 8).

When **the** Lord was anointed by Mary (John 12: 1-8) (an **act** of love indeed), it was an evidence of Mary's love and **that** Mary cared, **but** in the case of Judas, the Lord knowing **that it was he** who should betray Him (John 13: 11) knew **that** it was even then in the heart of Judas **not** to **care** (John 12: 6) and so not to love. Judas seemed to **have received** a position of trust amongst the disciples in **that he** carried their money and it was prophetically written of **him** (**Ps. 41: 9**) that he was 'mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted'.

The Lord knew all along that one of them would betray **Him** and **it** greatly troubled His spirit (John 13: 21) and He told **His disciples** of the act of betrayal before it actually happened, so that they might believe that 'I am He' (John 13: 19).

How **sad that a** kiss, an act signifying trust, the one for the other, should **be the** token act of betrayal by Judas (Luke 22: 48) who was 'guide to them that took Jesus' (**Acts 1: 16**). *G. Grierson, H. R. Dodge*

From Liverpool: If **a** friend deliberately turns against one **it would be** natural for one to be shocked and very upset **because it would be** so unexpected. However, if one knew about it beforehand one would isolate oneself from the would-be-betrayer, **thus** preparing oneself so that when **the time came** one would not **be** shocked, or so upset. **But it was suggested that** when the Lord Jesus was faced **with such** circumstances His reaction was unusual.

It is clear (**Ps. 41: 9**, quoted in v. 18) that Jesus was **well aware** of the betrayal a long time beforehand, but He continued to associate with, and love Judas right until **the last** moment. **This is** borne out in the way the Lord

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dipped some bread in **the** soup and **gave** it to **Judas**; a **Jewish** custom signifying a **special** relationship between **the** two people involved.

From **v. 21** **the** Lord **was** obviously very **upset** when **the** time for **the** betrayal came. 'When Jesus **had thus said**, **He was** troubled in **the** spirit, ' **thus** implying **He** had not prepared **Himself** for **the** treachery [Comment 2]. **It was suggested that at this time He would be** troubled for two main reasons:

(i) **He was** looking forward and could **see all that He** would endure in **the** next **few** hours, (ii) Having shown **deep** love for Judas over **he past three** years, **He was saddened to see** how Judas could **just** turn **his back** on **Him**, demonstrating **the** total depravity of **human** nature.

This night **was** one **which the disciples** would vividly remember. An **air** of tension **is created which seems** to become more intense **as the night wears on**. **It would be remembered as 'the night in which He was betrayed'** (1 Cor. 11: 23).

It was suggested that although Jesus knew of **the** betrayal and **His arrest well** beforehand, **He knew that His disciples** would **be** shocked and **perhaps** their faith shaken if they knew about **it**, and so **He kept it** from **them** until **the last** moment, **perhaps** also giving Judas time to change **his** mind. When **he** eventually told **His disciples** (v. 21) they **were suprised**, but they **did** not **seem** to understand **what He was** talking about. **It was suggested that the events of vv. 24-27 were a private affair** between **Peter, John and the Lord Jesus**. **This is borne out by the fact that nobody knew why Judas had left the room (vv. 28-30).**

As soon as Judas had left the room the atmosphere became more relaxed and **the Lord Jesus seemed to have** more freedom to **speak to His disciples**. **Since He** would shortly **be** taken from **them the Lord took the opportunity to inform His disciples that He was leaving them (v. 33)**. **Since He** could no longer remain to **be the example to all men He left His disciples a new commandment by which they might be recognized as His disciples** and so **be examples**

to all men (vv. 34-35). 'A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another'.

It was pointed out that the presence of such love is very scarce today and it is only by close communion with Christ that it may be achieved. S. Seddon

From Melbourne: In the portion under consideration we find examples of the outworking of both love and treachery. In the consideration of the principle of love, we try to understand something of its meaning, and of how the Lord Himself, His disciples, and others demonstrated it.

From the Old Testament we can possibly learn but little of that which is conveyed to us in the New, save that we see it in action in the characters of David and Jonathan, Ruth and Naomi, and others. The law of the Lord as given by Moses was summarized by the Lord Jesus in the definition given to the Pharisees (Mat. 22: 37-40), and the observation thereof as evidence of love to God and man. But we must turn to the proclamation and teaching of the Gospel in order to understand what God would convey to us by the word as it is used in the New Testament.

A very striking and touching example of divine love to man is found in the prayer of the Lord Jesus when on the cross, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do'.

The disciples whom He had called unto Him, He loved unto the end; they reciprocated that love with theirs. It is not for us to try to define the degree thereof, but some light is shed upon this question by incidents recorded in the Gospels, and we are caused to realize that they were men of like passions and failings with ourselves. Peter in his impetuous way affirmed that he would never deny his Master; and this but a few hours before he fearfully said, 'I know not the man' (Mat. 26: 72). Likewise also they had all stated, yet together with Peter, they forsook Him and fled. It has often been pointed out how the Lord, after His resurrection, gently reminded Peter of His self-

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confidence in His own loving way, when He appeared unto them by the sea of Tiberias (John 21): addressing Peter the Lord twice repeats the gentle query, 'Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me?', using the word *agapao*, and Peter replies, 'Yea, Lord; Thou knowest that I love Thee', but using the word *phileo*, (I fondly love Thee). The third time the Lord asks the question, but coming down to Peter's level, 'Lovest thou Me?' (Do you fondly love Me), and Peter was grieved and replied, 'Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I (fondly) love Thee'. In a few years Peter was to follow in the steps of his Master, and for his Master's sake. Who will say that in the death that Peter died he had not risen to the heights of love which he was afraid of avowing by the sea of Tiberias?

In the case of Judas, the question may arise in the minds of some, 'Did Judas ever love the Lord?'. We believe the answer is in the negative. Judas had the bag, and took what he wanted out of that which was put therein, for he was a thief. From the beginning the Lord knew who would betray Him, but He never revealed it to others until that last Passover night. The treachery of Judas was foretold in the words 'Mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against Me' (Ps. 41: 9). There are mysteries in this which the human mind cannot fathom. It would appear to us that over the years that Judas had permitted a dislike for the Lord to develop until the moment when Satan entered into him, his will and personality were completely given over to the arch-enemy of God and Man. Satan looked upon the Lord as his rival to the kingdoms of earth, and to Judas, his will completely dominated by Satanic power, the immediate gain of thirty pieces of silver eclipsed all other issues. *G. Munday, T. W. Fullerton*

From Methil: In studying this subject we considered first the love that the Lord displayed, not only to His disciples, including Judas Iscariot, who was shortly to betray Him, but to all with whom He came in contact.

By comparison, we thought of the treachery of Judas, who having allowed Satan to enter into his heart, betrayed his Lord.

The passage appears to suggest (v. 23) that John was loved by the Lord more than the rest. We believe, however, that what is brought before us is the close relationship that existed between the Lord and John. We read that he was reclining in Jesus' bosom. Perhaps the same thought is expressed in John 1: 18 concerning the relationship between the Lord and His Father.

The things that the Lord was seeking to bring before His disciples may not have been understood at this time, but they were things that would surely be remembered in retrospect.

Did the Lord really love Judas? We believe that His love for Judas was no different, even though He knew he would betray Him, for He refers to him as 'Mine own familiar friend' (Ps. 41: 9). We may not always display the love for the Lord that we ought. This will not, however, affect His love for us. The thought portrayed by the Psalmist would appear to be the dastardly deed that Judas performed in betraying the Lord Jesus for thirty peices of silver. This is also emphasized in John 13: 30, 'and it was night'.

Satan had already entered the heart of Judas and he was well aware that it was he of whom the Lord spoke. The disciples did not, however, realize this and so they could say, 'Is it I?' (Mark 14: 19).

The Lord, knowing what lay ahead of Him, was concerned that His disciples learned to love one another and to show to the world through this testimony that they belonged to Christ. Today, we, His disciples, have that responsibility to show others by our daily living, that we are children of God. We cannot, however, hope to witness for Christ unless we first love one another.

Peter, though he denied the Lord with oaths and curses, was not guilty of treachery. Judas, though one of the disciples, was not saved and so he became a willing tool of the devil.

We understand that Judas left the upper room immediately after taking the sop, and that he was not present when the Lord instituted the Remembrance. *A. R. Smith*

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From Nottingham: It was with some amazement that we realized just how closely connected love and treachery are in this passage. Although fully aware of Iscariot's, plans, and up to v. 30 actually speaking about them, the Lord was still able from v. 31 to commence teaching the disciples about love. In fact the Lord goes on to speak and pray with the disciples up to ch. 17 and we can see from this His single-mindedness in doing His Father's will. Although the knowledge of what was before Him was beginning to weigh heavily on Him, the words that He had to say were of vital importance to the eleven disciples present, and also to disciples of future generations.

What a loss it would have been to us if the Lord, obsessed with the dread things of the next few hours, had failed to speak of the Vine (ch. 15), persecution (16), the Holy Spirit (16), His death and resurrection (16).

As usual the Lord Jesus is our supreme example and gives us a real lesson to learn in our Christian lives. Sometimes when adversity comes to us we are overwhelmed by it, to the detriment of our service and of our care for others.

Let us in future try to model our lives on the One who 'humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross' (Phil. 2: 8).

C. Edis

COMMENTS

1. (Hayes): Attention to the grammar in Luke 22: 31, 32 will show that the second person plural is used in v. 31, and the second person singular in v. 32. This is obvious in the Greek, and the distinction (between 'you' and 'thee') is made in the older English versions, but it is largely missed by the reader of modern versions, since 'you' is used for both singular and plural in modern usage. Satan demanded, and obtained, all the apostles, that he might put them to the test (cf. Job 1: 6-12; 2: 1-10). The Lord prayed particularly for Peter that his faith would not fail when his resolution failed in the trial. His prayer was granted, for Peter, after his repentance, did act to stabilise and build up the disciples (Acts 1: 15, 16; 2: 14-36). P.L.H.

2. **(Liverpool):** I doubt if we can correctly suggest that the Lord had not prepared Himself for the treachery of Judas. He was well aware of the prophecy of Ps. 41: 9 and had chosen Judas, well knowing the dreadful part he was to play. The two reasons suggested in this paper provide the explanation of His grief of heart.

R. L

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

From Liverpool: It was suggested that in John's account the institution of Remembrance took place between v. 30 and v. 31, implying that Judas did not partake of the loaf and the cup. However, in both Matthew's and Luke's accounts it seems that Judas was present at the institution.

Is Judas' participation in the Remembrance significant? If so, how do we justify the accounts of Matthew and Luke?

Matthew does not mention when Judas went out, but John 13: 30 places this immediately after the taking of the sop. It appears that after Judas had been identified to John, the Lord spoke to him (Mat. 26: 25), and he went out. After this, the Remembrance was instituted. A problem arises in reconciling this with Luke 22: 21, which would appear to indicate that Judas was still present after the institution. However, it may be that the expression 'the hand. . . ., is with Me on the table' has the same significance as 'He that eateth my bread' (John 13: 18), and indicates the way in which Judas shared the table with the Lord in general, rather than on that particular occasion. Considering all accounts together, I would not think that Judas was present at the institution of the Remembrance.

P. L. H.

From Cowdenbeath: 'Now is the Son of Man glorified... and straightway shall He glorify Him', vv. 31-32.

Please explain precisely when it is believed this took place.

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I suggest that v. 31 refers to **the** Son's giving glory to **the** Father in **His death**, now imminent; **this** completed **the** work of redemption, **supreme** among **all the** works of God. V. 32 refers to **the** resurrection; **the** Lord's body **is** not **permitted** to **see** corruption, **but He raised** to glory **with the Father** (John 17: 5).

P. L. H.

The Lord Jesus **is here** referring to **the time** of **His** forthcoming **death** and resurrection, **which was** imminent. Satan and men **were** seeking to destroy **Him**, **but in His** crucifixion, resurrection and exaltation **He was** to **be** glorified, not **defeated**, and God **was** to **be** glorified in **His** work.

R. L

NOTE

Editors would **be pleased** to **receive** suggestions for **the future** study **subjects** from contributors. **It would be helpful if these could be submitted** soon.

Bible Studies

A magazine for the exploration of the Word of God (Acts 17. 11)

EDITORIAL

8104

The Ministry of the Upper Room is recorded within a few relatively brief chapters of Scripture, yet it contains teaching whose depth and richness can continually exercise the disciplined heart. Our study portion for this month is no exception. Within these few verses the Lord Jesus gave to His apostles the first intimation of His coming again, declared Himself to be the way, the truth and the life, emphasized His deity and oneness with the Father, told them of His imminent return to the Father, and revealed the power of prayer made in His Name.

Matching the depth of His teaching was the patient, gracious manner in which it was given. Much of the importance of what the Saviour said appears to have been missed by this little band of troubled apostles. Yet their inability to understand drew no word of reprimand from their Master. Rather, their fumbling questions occasioned some of the gems of divine revelation. Like those present in the synagogue of Nazareth (Luke 4), we too may wonder at the words of grace which proceeded out of His mouth.

R. L

THE LIVING WAY (John 14: 1-15)

From Birkenhead: In our consideration of this passage we decided that it was important that it should be viewed *in* the context of the apostles' experience and feelings, and in the light of what was to happen when the Lord left them.

After three years of following the Lord, of being guided and encouraged by Him and of learning to rely upon Him, it would have been a shock for them to hear the Lord say, 'Whither I go, ye cannot come' (John 13: 33). They would be perplexed to think that He should leave them and also by the exchange in 13: 33-38.

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It is in this setting, therefore, that their **Master** offers them hope and encouragement. He instructs them to have the same faith in Him as they have in His Father. Firstly, He speaks of the purpose of His departure - by virtue of this there will be a place for every believer in His Father's house. The idea is not one of many grandiose dwellings, but rather of a resting place where there is room for all. The Lord Jesus continues by saying that just as surely as He is to leave them He will return unto them that they then might join Him. We took this to be a reference to the Lord's return to the air, but doubted whether the apostles would be able to identify it as such [Comment 10].

At this point Thomas sought reassurance and clarification from the One who had for so long given these things. The response may not have been what he expected. It assured him that he (Thomas) knew the way but did not recognise it until the Lord said, 'I am the way and the truth and the life'. Knowledge of the Son was knowledge of the Father to whom they would go in due time. Again it was necessary for the Lord to expound the relationship of Father and Son. He assures them that Father and Son work in unity and there is no differing view or independence of action. Consequently there is a unity of mind in what is spoken (revealed) to the apostles, hence the Lord can say, '... the words that I say unto you I speak not from Myself, but the Father abiding in Me doeth His works'. There can be no greater accord than that of Father and Son.

The remaining verses in the portion seem to reinforce what has just been stated. Because the Lord was returning to the Father He would be sending the Holy Spirit in whose power the 'greater works' of v. 12 would be fulfilled. In addition to this, the Lord gives them further comfort in His statement that although He has gone from them they can petition the Father in Christ's name and He will fulfil their request, with the purpose of glorifying the Father. We noticed, as must those to whom the Lord spoke these words, that He imposed no limitation on what they could ask [Comment 11],

Perhaps editors could comment on the question of whether believers go to 'My Father's house' at death or

are welcomed by the Lord at the time of His coming again [Comment 12].

R. C. Halpin, R. D. Williams

From Cowdenbeath: The hearts of the disciples were troubled at the prospect of their Lord's going. The antidote for such a condition is faith. He urges them, 'Believe in God, believe also in Me' (R. V. M.). Faith needs firm ground on which to stand. This He gave them in His promise, 'I go' and 'I come again'. But moreover, He told them that in going He would prepare a place for them and in coming He would receive them unto Himself. This is a new revelation. It is not mentioned in the Old Testament. It is part of the truth of the Church the Body, even the mystery which hath been hid from all ages and generations (Col. 1: 26). He who revealed that He would build the Church now reveals that He will come to receive it unto Himself, as a man would receive (*paralambano*) his wife. This word is used of Joseph (see Mat. 1: 20, 24).

Some thought that the abiding places (R. V. M.), (same word as 'abode' in v. 23; those are the only two occurrences of the word) are for humans, others considered that the place He would prepare, being for His own, is in distinction to these abiding places already there. It was suggested that 'the place' is the eternal abode of the Bride i. e. the New Jerusalem. Heb. 11: 16 states that this City is now prepared. Some hymnwriters speak as if it is still in the process of being prepared.

The Lord speaks of going unto the Father (v. 12). Heaven is not mentioned in these verses but is implied. We consider that He is saying much more than that He is the Way by which the sinner may come to God and so reach Heaven at last. Approach to the Father can never be made directly but mediately. The sinner must come through Christ the Mediator (1 Tim. 2: 5), the child of God in confession through Christ the Advocate (1 John 2: 1), and the people of God in their need (Heb. 4: 14-16) and in worship through the High Priest (Heb. 10: 19-21).

It would seem that the Lord expected His disciples to know of the oneness between Himself and His Father.

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Because of their close association with Him during those few years they should have been progressively acquiring a knowledge (*ginosko*) of Himself which would have enabled them by intuitive knowledge (*oida*) to have perceived the Father also. Vine (Expository Dictionary of NT. Words) gives a helpful note on the latter part of v. 7: 'Having unconsciously been coming to the Father as the One who was in Him they would now (henceforth) consciously be in the constant and progressive experience of knowing (*ginosko*) Him'.

The oneness of the Father and the Son is manifested in that to see the Son is to see the Father, and the words spoken by the Son and the works performed by Him, are the Father's. The retention of the word 'Me' in v. 14 would seem to indicate that, in certain circumstances at least, prayer may be addressed to the Son [Comment 1]. We realize that in all public services of the assembly thanksgiving and prayer should be addressed to God the Father in the name of the Son.

J. Bowman

From Derby: v. 1 *'Let not your heart be troubled'*

Other scriptures mention things which may trouble the Christian.

- (1) The unknown (Mat. 14: 26)
- (2) Bad News (Mat. 2: 3 - it was bad news to Herod)
- (3) Persecution (I Pet. 3: 14; Acts 17: 8, 13)
[Comment 2]
- (4) Wrong Doctrine (Acts 15: 24; Gal. 1: 7; Gal. 5: 10)

The command is not to allow these things to trouble us. The reason is given - 'Believe in God, believe also in Me' (R. V. M.). This is more than mere credence, believing about Him. It is trusting and relying on Christ. 'Believe' is a word used far more by John than any other gospel writer (Matthew 10 times, Mark 10, Luke 9, John 99).

v. 2 7 *go to prepare a place for you'*

This is a promise which is of great comfort to all Christians. In contrast we are told in Acts 1: 25 that Judas went to his *own* place.

v. 6 7 am the Way'

That is, the path, **course** of conduct, **way** of thinking. **All** these things, **perfected**, **are** personified in Christ. **He** is the means of **access** to the Father, and there **is** no other way. Hence **His disciples became** Followers of the Way (**Acts 9: 2**).

'... And the Truth... '

Jesus Christ, the perfect expression of the Truth.

'... And the Life'

In the **past we were** 'alienated from the **life** of God' (Eph. **4: 18**). However, **because** of God's great love toward **us**, 'The **Life was** manifested' (1 John **1: 2**) and through faith in **Him we** are **able** to say, '**He is our Life**' (see Col. **3: 4**).

vv. 7 & 9

These verses are confirmation of the Deity of the Lord Jesus. **He is able** to say that knowledge of **Himself** conveys knowledge of the Father. In **fact**, seeing **Him is** seeing the Father. **See** also John **1: 18**, '**He** hath **declared Him**', and John **12: 45**, '**He** that beholdeth **Me** beholdeth **Him** that sent **Me**'.

vv. 11 & 12 'Believe'

The emphasis in these **verses is** on '**believe**', casting our thoughts **back** to the first **verse**. The teaching **is** to **put** our **trust** in Christ - a person. Here **He is** asking **His disciples** to **believe Him**, in what **He** told them of **His** relationship with the Father. **If that is difficult** to **grasp**, then consider the evidence of **His** works - the **miracles**.

The outworking of our trust in Christ **will not be** without **effect**. **We will** do the works that **He** did. **His** work **was** to do the Father's **will**. That **is** our work also.

vv. 13 & 14 'Ask... in My name'

The purpose in our 'works' **is to** glorify the Father. That **is** the purpose also in our asking - to glorify the Father in the Son. Then **it will be effective**. **Let us** not lose sight of the scope of the promise '**If ye shall ask Me**

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anything in My Name, that will I do'. Within the context of desiring the Father's glory and seeking His will, we can take hold of this promise from His beloved Son.

P. Webster, G. W. Conway

From Douglas: The portion opens with the Lord Jesus comforting His disciples in the Upper Room after foretelling to them His betrayal and denial. 'Let not your heart be troubled...'. The Lord then goes on to describe an aspect of His character as the the Living Way'; for first comes the statement: 'I go to prepare a place for you', looking forward to the fact that through, or because of, His death and resurrection a place' is offered [Comment 3]; also as Peter later remembered (1 Pet. 1: 3, 4), that this place is prepared and reserved for us. Then comes the promise in v. 3, of a future role of the Lord as our 'Living Way', for He will 'come again'. So that through Him, our truth, is the only way unto and into eternal life (v. 6).

Verse 4 implies that the disciples should have known where the Lord was to go and 'the way'. We pondered whether, (i) the disciples had been told these facts earlier in the Lord's ministry or, (ii) were told this for their remembrance after His ascension (John 16: 4), or (iii) were subject to the Lord's particular method of teaching, which induced 'thinking' and asking questions, e. g: v. 5 [Comment 4].

The living way is further depicted in the key verse, 6, where Jesus explains that He is both the 'Life' and the 'Way' and foretells a time when He would become 'a new and living way' (Heb. 10: 19, 20) and this 'living way' continues for ever because 'He ever liveth to make intercession' (Heb. 7: 24, 25). Through these verses we were brought on to consider Him not only as the 'Living way' but also as our living way of life; for, we have turned from following our own way (Is. 53: 6) [see also Prov. 14: 12; Mat. 7: 13-15—Eds] and turned, through salvation, to following Him who is 'the way'.

The Lord Jesus chose this moment of promise and instruction to teach His disciples about His oneness with the Father. We seemed to gain the impression from John's

writing that time was short and that the disciples still had a lot to learn before the Master left them, even for so short a time.

In connection with the Lord's deity, we thought it strange that to prove Himself in His disciples' eyes (v. 11) He should resort to 'works', for most of what the Lord proclaimed seemed to have its foundations in faith alone, but it should be noted that the identification marks of the promised Messiah of the Old Testament were fulfilled in the works of the Lord and this reminder would prompt the slow disciples [Comment 5],

The Lord goes on in v. 12 to describe the works of him 'that believeth on Me', and once again the truthfulness and straight-forward approach surprises us. We were forced to consider what was meant by doing greater works than the Lord himself. Whilst we could not imagine this in some obvious visible signs (i. e. miracles), we thought that in some invisible things it could be possible, for salvation is in itself a great work and other Spirit - led action also, e. g. works of the heart. This suggestion is further strengthened by the fact the Lord added 'because I go unto the Father', implying His resurrection and the Spirit indwelling the believer (John 16: 7).

Finally, the remaining verses present another promise from the Lord (v. 14) but we conclude that in order for what we ask in prayer 'in His Name' to be fulfilled it must (i) Glorify the Father in the Son (v. 13) or, (ii) be subject to our own faith, 'nothing doubting' (James 1: 6) [and be according to the will of God—Eds].

P. J. Dodge

From Hayes: The Lord Jesus reveals His destination as His 'Father's house'. The disciples may have identified this with the Temple, but He chooses this term to speak of His home in Heaven. The spiritual house of today and the access to the heavenly Sanctuary through 'the way of His flesh' is a foretaste of the experience that will follow the second coming of our Lord (**1 Thes. 4: 16-18**).

It seems reasonable to expect that the disciples might initially have seen this message as pertaining to Jesus' departure in death and return in resurrection. It was de-

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livered just prior to the death rather than the ascension of Jesus, and reference to John 16: 20 finds this application encouraged. Although we now await a future fulfilment of this passage, perhaps we can relate our present partial experience to the Way that Christ has opened for us by His resurrection.

While the interpretation of which reunion the Lord was referring to and when and where it will occur stimulate interesting debate, the principal theme and the proportions of the passage must not be lost sight of: that by trust, all their hopes and aspirations were to be fulfilled. Philip, relying on his intellect, thought he was just one step away from this, but Jesus' answers were to show him and Thomas that in verses 1-4 they had only been given a conceptual framework. The full knowledge of when, where and the extent of what was in store for them would be beyond the grasp of their minds for as long as they were limited by time and space. To convince them, Jesus gave an impression of the complexity involved in comprehending the Trinity, spiritual space, and perhaps also, as has been suggested in relation to the Return, life beyond the constraint of time.

P. Stoner

From Leeds: The twelve apostles had doubts about the Lord Jesus on many occasions but perhaps in this chapter their doubts and worries come to the surface more than at other times. Who was their Teacher, and was His relationship to God this close? The Lord's calm reassurance of His place and authority must at this time have settled their minds a little. Already confused by the events leading up to the Upper Room, they needed His words and His love [Comment 13].

The Lord portrayed Himself as the Way; to God and in God. He is the access point and the maker of that access. In spite of this statement, the apostles still doubted and wondered if He was a prophet. What prophet was this who came fulfilling the prophecies of the Old Testament? There always has been a way to God, from Adam's coming with sacrifice [Comment 14], Abraham's communion with his Friend, the Tabernacle and the Tem-

pie. These ways were always on God's terms, and this **was** no less true in the Lord's day here on earth. There is one way only; through Jesus Christ - the Living Way. Our acceptance of this Way means not only a life but communion with God, for as He views Christ He sees **us** in Him.

The promises of the Lord - great works and all things by prayer - are not isolated promises slipped into the chapter; they form an integral part of the whole. Acceptance by the apostles and by the people of God today that Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth and the Life brings, not only happiness but through faith in all that the Way entails it brings too, the possibility of great works: all things.

P. Jefferson

From Liverpool: *Exhortation and Promises (vv, 1-3)*

Following the sadness of the previous chapter - occasioned not only because the Lord had announced that He was going to leave them, but also perhaps ashamed at their own selfishness and pride, and perplexed by the revelation that one of them would betray Him - comes an exhortation to faith in God and in the Lord Jesus Himself, a continued **trust**. They had, of course, put faith in Him previously. 'Believe in God, believe also in Me' (R. S. V.) is to be preferred, an exhortation in time of stress, rather than a statement of fact as in R. V. The import of v. 2 seems to be lost in the translation. 'Rooms' (R. S. V. and N. I. V.) seems to be too small for the concept, while 'Mansions' (R. V.) strains the illustration somewhat and is peculiar. The Lord Jesus is preparing a place for all, a house with spacious apartments, not a tenement with individual rooms. 'Mone, Primarily a staying, abiding, denotes an abode. There is nothing to indicate separate compartments in Heaven; neither does it suggest temporary resting-places on the road' - Vine.

We noted that it is the Lord Jesus who is the comforter and exhorter here, when it ought to have been the disciples exhorting and comforting Him.

We have the direct promise of the Lord Himself that He will return to take His disciples to be with Himself.

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This was His ultimate purpose in being here. There **is a simple** definition of heaven here too: 'where **Jesus is!** Although **at death a** believer in the Lord Jesus goes to **be with Him yet** the **special place** in preparation **will not be** inherited until the Lord returns personally **at** the Rapture.

The Way (vv. 4-6)

Jesus had already taught **His disciples** that **He was** the door (**10: 9**); now **He is** teaching them that **He**, personally, **is** the way to God. They **did** know the way for they knew **Him**. **Yet** Thomas wasn't thinking of Heaven, **but** of some geographical location. In our Christian experience **we meet** these truths in **reverse** order. First **we** have **Life**, then **we** come to the Truth, then **we** follow the Way. **We** cannot stop short **at** our initial salvation, **but we** are forced to go on. **He is** our **example** along the road of faith that **leads** to the house of God and holy priesthood **service**, to the 'new and living way' of **Heb. 10: 20**.

Relationship with the Father (vv. 7-11)

Philip's desire to **see** physically the invisible God **is a similar** thing to the **request** of Moses. **But** before his very eyes **was** God in flesh. By looking **at Him**, listening to **His** words and seeing **His deeds**, he had a manifestation of the invisible God. 'For in **Him** all the fulness of God **was pleased to dwell**' (Col. **1: 19**, R. S. V.). Jesus had taught them this previously - '**He who sees Me sees Him** who sent **Me** (John **12: 45**, R. S. V.). **He came to speak** the Father's words and do the Father's **deeds**. The mystery of the Trinity and the deity of the Lord Jesus **was** going to **be** revealed to them **later (cf. v. 20)**, at Pentecost. Jesus had been with them 'so long' (**v. 9**); this **was** during the three years in which they had been so close to **Him** that they ought to have known **Him**.

We will get ourselves into mental tangles **if we** try to think of **v. 10**, '**I am** in the Father and the Father in **Me**', in physical terms. Jesus **is** not the Father, nor the Holy Spirit. Physically an impossibility, in character **it is true**; the Lord Jesus **is** everything in character that God **is** [Comment 6].

The Greater Works (v. 12)

It is difficult to imagine anybody doing greater things than those which the Lord Jesus did. It was suggested that (a) this promise had a literal fulfilment in the first century - the disciples did the deeds that Jesus did on a wider geographical scale and (b) it applies to us today in a different sense. We do not heal, raise the dead or turn water into wine, but in preaching the Gospel, making disciples and forming the house of God we are doing the greater works. It was pointed out that Solomon's greatest work was the building of the Temple. Is it legitimate to use the word 'works' in two different senses to reach such a conclusion? [Comment 7].

D. J. Webster

From **Methil**: 'Let not your heart be troubled' - these words of comfort were spoken by the Lord Jesus in the Upper Room as He ministered to the eleven disciples. He was about to leave them, and He wanted to reassure them that when He had gone He would be preparing a place for them in His Father's house. The disciples, men of God, believed in God, and they must trust in Jesus Christ the Son of God also.

'My Father's house' was obviously not Herod's temple for the Lord had said of that 'Your house is left unto you desolate'. Nor was He projecting His thoughts forward to the spiritual house of God today. He was channelling their thoughts so that they would realise He was going back to heaven and there in heaven, would be preparing a place for them.

'If I go' refers to His death and subsequent resurrection and ascension to heaven. 'I come again' refers to His coming to the air for His own (1 Thes, 4:14-18). The important point to note is that He was personally going to prepare a place for them, and that He would personally come again and would receive them unto Himself 'that where I am there ye may be also'. They had spent three years in close company with the Lord Jesus. Now He was leaving them, but He would come back again and then they would be *with Him*.

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We are glad the disciples asked Him so many questions, for the Lord, in answering them, reveals much to our hearts also. It seems that Philip had not truly recognised that 'I and the Father are one'. The Lord Jesus is the effulgence of God's glory (Heb. 1: 3); 'the image of the invisible God' (Col. 1:15). Here the Lord Jesus is emphasizing His equality with the Father.

Just how much the disciples understood at this time we do not know; but He appeals to them, 'Believe Me for the very works' sake'. He wanted them to remember the miracles that He had performed, which so clearly demonstrated His divine power. In later days they would reflect on His words as the Holy Spirit brought these to their remembrance. Then by His words and His works they would be fully established in the truth.

We are indebted to Thomas for his question, for the Lord Jesus spelt out the great truth that it is only through Him anyone can get to the Father. 'I am the Way, and the Truth and the Life: no one cometh unto the Father but by Me'. Jesus Christ is our only access to God. He is the living way to the living God.

In v. 12 the Lord makes a remarkable statement when He says that those that believe on Him would do greater works than the Lord Himself had done. These are not miracles for there are no greater miracles on record performed by any of His disciples. The greater works refer to the rapid spread of the Gospel through evangelizing. These early disciples took the word of God that the Lord Jesus had given them and passed this living word on to others, so that at Pentecost about 3, 000 souls were saved and added to the kingdom of God. The conversion of souls in the sight of God is greater work than the miraculous healing of physical bodies. This explosion, the result of the work of the Holy Spirit through these keen disciples, became known as 'the Way', because they continued in, and passed on, the teaching of the One who said, 'I am the Way, and the Truth and the Life'.

N. Coomer

From Nottingham: The context of the passage given to us as the basis of the study is, as always, very important.

If we go back to previous chapter (John 13) the words of the Lord Jesus Christ on this subject start at v. 33: 'Little children yet a little while I am with you. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say unto you, 'Where I am going you cannot come!' Perhaps in many people's minds, this refers exclusively to the Cross, but observe that this statement by the Lord Jesus Christ refers to the Cross as a step on the way to Heaven. This statement worried the disciples greatly, so the Lord Jesus reassured them (v. 1) and began to elaborate on His earlier points (13: 33, 36). Can these mansions or abiding places (v. 2) be in the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, as mentioned in Rev. 20: 2, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared (or made ready)? [Comment 8].

Throughout this passage, the disciples seem to be unsure about and even doubt the identity of the Lord Jesus. In vv. 6 and 7 the Lord Jesus gives an answer that would satisfy anybody, but Philip asks in earnest (v. 8) 'Lord show us the Father and we shall be satisfied'. The Lord Jesus goes on to explain even further in vv. 9-11, that He and the Father are one, and that His authority is from the Father. We must remember in this passage that the disciples are shocked, confused men and this probably accounts for the lack of understanding and memory of all Jesus' teaching, shown by these disciples [Comment 9].

We discussed the saying of Jesus in v. 12, 'Truly, truly I say unto you, he who believes Me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I go to the Father', and came to the conclusion that the works that he who believes in Jesus does, will be greater, perhaps in area or number, but certainly not quality, than the works that Jesus has done.

(All quotations from R. S. V.).

T. Elson

COMMENTS

1. **(Cowdenbeath):** The inclusion of 'Me' in the original text of John 14:14 is doubtful, and it is, therefore, unsafe to build anything on it.

R. L.

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Although this is so, 2 Cor. 12: 8 might be appealed to as providing an example of special circumstances in the experience of a believer.

J. K. D. J.

2. **(Derby):** Strictly speaking, these examples from Acts 17 do not provide examples of persecution. In both Thessalonica and Berea, unbelieving Jews were stirring up the rulers and the people against Paul and Silas.
3. **(Douglas):** The place which the Saviour was going to prepare is, of course, the eternal home of the redeemed.
4. (Douglas): For some time previously, the Lord Jesus had been instructing His disciples concerning His forthcoming death, resurrection and ascension. See, for example, Mat. 16: 21 and Luke 9: 22. However, it was only after the resurrection that they fully understood what He had been teaching them. The question voiced by Thomas (v. 5) illustrated the failure of the disciples fully to comprehend the Lord's words.
5. (Douglas): His works (and, indeed. His words) were also intended as evidence to all men of His deity. See, for example, John 20: 30, 31.
6. (Liverpool): It is, indeed, true that the Lord Jesus is, in character, everything that God is. V. 10, however, implies something further - that the union between Father and Son was so mysteriously intimate that the Saviour could speak of 'the Father that dwelleth in Me'.
7. **(Liverpool):** The Greek noun translated 'works' in vv. 11 and 12 is a very ordinary word, meaning 'deed' or 'act' (Vine), and is thus comparable to the Hebrew word used in 2 Chron. 5: 1, 'All the *work* that Solomon wrought for the house of God was finished'. Thus the use of these words to reach the conclusion here noted seems legitimate. For comment on the 'work' and 'greater works' of which the Lord here spoke, see Bible Studies, 1955, p. 105.

8. **(Nottingham):** In the eternal state, this is certainly true, but we should remember that, in Rev. 21, the new Jerusalem is seen in an eternal setting. Although I am inclined to the view here suggested, I would be reluctant to state it with absolute confidence, in the absence of direct scriptural proof on the matter. Believers will, of course, go to heaven to be 'with Christ' immediately on death or at the Rapture.
9. **(Nottingham):** The disciples were indeed shocked and confused by what the Master had been telling them. But is there not also the underlying fact that, although He had been preparing them by telling them for some time past about His forthcoming death, they had failed to understand His words?
10. **(Birkenhead):** This is the first reference to the Lord's return to the air for His own, and the suggestion that the disciples did not understand it can be justified. Indeed, the question raised by Thomas would confirm this impression.
11. **(Birkenhead):** The point made here is, of course, true, but our friends will agree that the very fact that we make our request to the Father in the Name of the Lord Jesus imposes its own limitations on what we will ask. See interesting comments on this point in the papers from Liverpool and Nottingham.
12. **(Birkenhead):** 'My Father's house' refers to Heaven, to which all believers go immediately on death. They are 'with Christ' (Phil. 1: 23). Those still alive at His coming to the air will be caught up to Him (1 Thes. 4: 17). See also 2 Cor. 5: 1.

R. L

13. **(Leeds):** The disciples had surely by this time acknowledged that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God (Mat. 16:16). They were perplexed because they had not understood that the Messiah would be permitted to suffer and die.

P. L. W.

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14. (Leeds): Abel is the first we read of coming with a sacrifice acceptable to God (Heb. 11: 4), although he had doubtless received instruction from his father.
J. K. D. J.
15. (**Several papers**): Opinions vary between contributors as to whether the 'place' which the Lord Jesus has gone to prepare is different from the 'mansions'. Some link 'the holy city, New Jerusalem, made ready... ' (Rev. 21: 2) with the 'place', on the ground that both are the eternal dwelling place of the redeemed. On the other hand, there would seem to be little point in the Lord's mentioning the 'abiding places' (R. V. M.) unless they were to be the abode of the disciples. Do we not prepare places for guests in our own homes? Perhaps we are attempting to tie these too firmly to particular spatial locations.

P. L. H.

QUESTION AND ANSWER

From Cowdenbeath: Considering that we are born unto the inheritance which is reserved for us and that, being eternal, it must have an eternal location, i. e. The New Jerusalem, does this give reason to believe that departed saints receive their inheritance in the Holy City on arrival in Heaven?

The Holy City, New Jerusalem, is presented in Rev. 21 in the setting of the eternal state and in the chronology of prophecy it appears subsequent to such events as the Marriage of the Lamb and the return of the Son of Man to earth. Although I, personally, lean to the suggestion implicit in this question, I would suggest that there is no clear enough indication in Scripture that believers receive their inheritance in that city immediately on their arrival in Heaven for us to say this with any degree of dogmatism. What is, of course, clear is that our eternal inheritance is already 'reserved in heaven for you' (1 Pet. 1: 4), and we will certainly enjoy eternal glory from the moment of our arrival there.

Bible Studies

A magazine for the exploration of the Word of God (Acts 17. 11)

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The **disciples were** understandably dismayed by the prospect of their **Master's** impending departure. To bring them consolation the Lord spoke of another Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, who would never **leave** them. They had already known the Spirit's presence and power in their **lives** and they were soon to **be** indwelt by **Him** (John 14: 17).

Certain **aspects** of the **Spirit's** work in and through the **believer are** clearly outlined in the Lord's **Upper Room Ministry** and these **are** more fully developed in the teaching given in the **epistles**.

There **is a** remarkable agreement this month among our contributors in their treatment of the personality, deity and work of the Holy **Spirit as set** out in the Lord's teaching in the portion under consideration.

J. K. D. J

CORRESPONDENCE

'MY PEOPLE' or 'NOT MY PEOPLE' (See Issue 8102)

The following comment on this subject is contributed by Mr. A. J. Taylor, Ayr.

Each **age** does not contain within **itself** the whole of the **divine** principles operative in **respect** to a **called-out** and gathered together people with **all** the concomitants of worship, obedience, separation and service.

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The words recorded concerning the ordinance of circumcision 'Moses gave you circumcision, not that it is of Moses, but of the fathers' which may also refer to the placing of clean birds and beasts on the sacrificial altar of Gen. 8: 20, the pouring out of the blood as in Gen. 9: 4 and other moral requirements given to the Fathers, would lead us to infer that, although God made known His covenant requirements at the door of the tent of meeting as well as on Sinai's summit, the pattern and principles of collective service and approach to God were not entirely divorced from that which preceded the Mosaic economy.

The Sinaitic covenant reflected the Abrahamic covenant of Gen. 17 which was also based on obedience, 'I will establish *My* covenant between me and thee and *thy seed* after thee throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to *thy seed after thee*'. Such was the man and his seed whom God chose to serve Him, a race and a nation who would walk before Him.

There is an obvious relationship between the covenants of Abraham and Moses as they concern God's purposes regarding The Land and The People.

(Further contributions on this topic will be welcomed—Eds.)

THE COMFORTER (John 14: 16-31).

From Birkenhead: On that night in the Upper Room the apostles had just learned that the Lord Jesus was to leave them. In His ministry He now sought to guide them by imparting knowledge which would enable them to avail themselves of the support which God was to send them. Verse 16 speaks of another Comforter, that is, one of the same kind. It is important to note that as the Lord Jesus Christ was a gift from the Father, so the Holy Spirit is also a gift to those who have accepted the Son. The

Lord **was** addressing **believers** and **it is** to **believers** that the Spirit **is** given. The work of the Holy Spirit **as** Comforter **is available** only to those 'in Christ'. In the unsaved the Holy **Spirit** works, convicting them of sin.

We must notice the words 'with you' (**v. 16**) and 'abideth with you' (**v. 17**), and compare them with 'shall **be in** you' (**v. 17**). **It is** clear that they were not indwelt by the Spirit until they were **baptized** in the Spirit **at** Pentecost and this **was** the promise the Lord **gave** them.

Before speaking further of the coming of the Holy **Spirit**, the Lord Jesus refers to **His** death and resurrection and indicates to them the **effect** that this **will** have upon their spiritual **lives** and their relationship with **Him**. **Because He was** to **die** and rise from the **dead**, so they would **live** and **be** 'in **Him**'.

The unity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit **is stated**, and **we can see** that although the work of the Holy Spirit **is** evident in the **Old Testament**, **it is** this **age**, from Pentecost, that **is** to **be** the **age** of the Spirit. The Lord Jesus recognized that some of the things **He** had told them on this occasion and **at** other **times** during their years together had been forgotten, **but He made it** clear that **part** of the work of the Spirit would **be** to comfort by bringing to their remembrance and to their understanding that which they had heard previously. Our dependence on Father, Son and Holy Spirit in differing ways **is clear** from the **passage** and **we** were careful not to conclude from **v. 28** that the Son **was** in any way inferior to the Father.

Our consideration of the Lord's statement with regard to **His** commandments **led us** to beware of sitting in judgement on others when **we** are far from **perfect** ourselves. The keeping of God's commandments **is** in direct relationship to our love for **Him** and failure in one **leads** to **failure** in the other.

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We decided that v. 27 implied that while there is a kind of peace which the world can give, it is ill-based and cannot compare with the peace we have in the knowledge of Christ as our Saviour. We felt that the words of Psalm 46 encapsulated the force of this verse: 'Be still, and know that I am God'.

R. C. Hatpin, G. H. Roberts

From Cowdenbeath. The character of the Comforter is revealed in His name. The Lord so speaks of Him four times—John 14: 16, 14: 26, 15: 26, 16: 7. His work in this respect is mentioned in Acts 9: 31, 'The comfort of the Holy Spirit'. The fact that our Lord speaks of Him as another, (*allos* - Gk.) that is, another of the same kind, implies that He Himself was this to His disciples.

The *personality* of the Spirit is made clear by the use of the word He in v. 26. We understand that although the neuter pronoun 'it' is used of the Spirit in certain scriptures, e. g. 1 Pet. 1: 11, because *pneuma* (Gk.) is neuter and does not imply that the Spirit is simply an influence.

The *sending* of the Comforter is an evidence of the oneness between the Father and the Son for He is spoken of as being sent by the Father (14: 26) and by the Son (15:26).

Two of the functions of the Spirit are stated in v. 26, namely:

- (1) to teach all things
- (2) to bring to remembrance all that He had said.

It was not possible for them to retain in their memories all that the Lord had spoken. What He said was of the utmost importance. None of His words could be allowed to be lost; they expressed vital truths. Some truths He gave to them only in embryo form. We observe three instances of this in the chapter.

1. In v. 3 **He made a brief** mention of **His** coming again. The **Spirit** would teach them much more concerning this wonderful truth **as is now revealed** to **us** in 1 Thes. 4 and 1 Cor. 15.

2. In the **fewest** and **smallest** of words **He said**, '**Ye in Me and I in you**' (v. 20). They were to learn that **He was** speaking firstly of their being 'in Christ' and **all** that that involved, and secondly that they could have Christ dwelling in their hearts. In vv. 21, 23 **He amplifies** what **is** meant by the **latter**. Rev. 3: 9 agrees with such teaching.

3. In v. 27 **He speaks** of '**Peace**'. Whilst the first application of those words **was** to them **as** men with troubled hearts yet many **aspects of peace were** later **revealed** to them, **as we** can also **see** from the **epistles**. **His** work in this two-fold manner **did not**, **we believe**, apply only to what **He said** in the Upper Room **but** to what **He** had spoken previously, and also to what **He** spoke **in** post-resurrection days.

If the **disciples** had loved their Lord unselfishly they would have rejoiced **at** the thought of what **it** meant to **Him** to **be** going **back** to **His** Father. Instead they **were** concerned with how **His** going would **affect** themselves.

Most **believe** that the words 'in that day' (v. 20) **refer** not to **a** calendar day **but** to **a** duration of **time** extending to the present.

In vv. 30, 31 the Lord anticipates **His** trial and crucifixion. The Prince of the world **was** coming. **His** forces would **be** arrayed against Christ; yet such **a** coming would **but serve** to **let** the world **see** that the Son loved **His** Father by obeying **His** commandment in the laying down of **His** life.

J. Bowman

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From Derby: John **14: 1-3** introduces the subject of comfort and there it is the Lord Jesus who is the Comforter in the disciples' trouble. In vv. 1-15 there are two persons of the Godhead spoken of, namely the Father and the Son; then in the portion 16-31 the Lord Jesus introduces another person, thus completing the Trinity.

The use of the pronoun 'He' in v. 16, firstly referring back to the Father and then to the Comforter, makes it quite clear that a personal Comforter, as distinct from an influence, is being indicated.

So far as the disciples were concerned the work of the Holy Spirit, referred to in this scripture, was that of comforting in circumstances of sadness. This is achieved in part through the Spirit's teaching, and partly through His reminding them of the Lord's teaching (v. 26).

Although the Lord Jesus introduces the third person of the Trinity as the Comforter there are two other titles that He uses. These are the Spirit of Truth and the Holy Spirit, so revealing two of His attributes, namely holiness and truth. The attribute of truth is one which the Lord Jesus claims for Himself in 14: 6. Here in 14: 7 there is a contrast between the world and the disciples. There is truth in connection with everyday facts which worldly people can appreciate; but here is revealed truth which can only be received by faith. This latter is the truth concerning the Lord Jesus as set out in John **1: 14** and 17.

The Lord Jesus in John **14: 16** states that the Holy Spirit is to be with the disciples permanently. He nevertheless states in v. 23 that there is to be fellowship with the Father and the Son.

It is to be noted from John **14: 26** that the Comforter will be with the disciples, teaching and reminding. However, the Lord Jesus, while still with them, is also their Comforter (14: 27).

N. Bramfitt, G. W. Conway

From Hayes: The Lord Jesus continued to support the sad and bewildered disciples by the promise that He would ask the Father to send another *parakletos*. Vine describes a *parakletos* as one who pleads another's cause (as in the law-court), an intercessor, advocate, succourer, comforter. There are two Greek words for 'another' and the one used, *allos*, signifies 'another of the same kind'. The AV, RV and RSV translate *parakletos* as Comforter, but the TEV (Good News) has Helper and the NIV Counsellor. The Parakletos is *to pneuma to hagion* (John 14: 26), translated Holy Ghost in the AV but Holy Spirit in all subsequent versions. (The word 'Ghost' is not used today in the way it was in 1611. See, for example, Mat. 27: 50).

There are those who deny that the Holy Spirit is a person, but reduce Him to a spiritual influence emanating from God. The Lord Jesus said that the Comforter to come would be another of the same kind as Himself. This shows Him to be a person and to be equal with the Son. The pronoun used for the Holy Spirit is 'He' and Vine states that this is so, even in cases where this is not strictly grammatical, because *pneuma* is neuter gender. The Holy Spirit teaches (John 14: 26), can be grieved (Eph. 4: 30), intercedes (Rom. 8: 26), loves (Rom. 15: 30). These are the attributes of a person. The words of the Great Commission (Mat. 28: 18-20) make clear the equality of Father, Son and Holy Spirit in the Godhead.

The Lord Jesus told the disciples that the Holy Spirit would teach them all things and remind them of His words. He would take what belongs to the Son and make it known to them. When the disciples were sent out to witness in the world, their own imperfect memories of the Lord's words and works were reinforced by the Holy Spirit Himself.

The Lord Jesus said that the Holy Spirit was living *with* them while He was speaking to them, but that presently He would be *in* them and this would be for ever.

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This is true of all believers. The Holy Spirit came at Pentecost and indwelt the disciples as the Lord Jesus promised, but He had been present in the world from the beginning (Gen. 1: 2). He came upon certain men in order that they might do things for God and under His influence the Old Testament Scriptures were written. He was closely involved in the Lord's birth (Luke 1: 35), in His baptism (Luke 3: 22), in His life (Luke 4: 1), in His sacrificial death (Heb. 9: 14) and in His resurrection (Rom. 8: 11).

The Holy Spirit has many titles, one of which is used in the portion we are considering: the Spirit of truth. Some other titles are: Spirit of grace (Heb. 10: 29), Spirit of God (Rom. 8: 9), Spirit of life (Rom. 8: 2)

C. R. Stoner

From Liverpool: *Another of the Same Kind* (vv. 16, 17). The purpose of the Holy Spirit in the world is to convict unbelievers and to strengthen and intercede for believers. The Lord Jesus requests as an equal (not implores as we do in prayer, cf. vv. 13, 14) the Father to send not a substitute but a Counsellor or Helper truly equal to Himself, and able to carry on the work that He Himself was doing. We now have both an Advocate in heaven and an Advocate here with us.

The key to understanding this passage is found in the narrative of Acts 2. This opens up an understanding of the words of the Lord Jesus concerning the Spirit and Himself.

1. 'For ever' (v. 16)—The Holy Spirit was already at work in the world, working in and through those who serve God. From Pentecost onwards, however, He would be with believers on a permanent basis, indwelling them.
2. 'He dwells with you, and will be in you' (v. 17) (RSV)—God's people could always ask for the presence of God's Spirit, but from Pentecost onwards He would actually be in them.
3. 'I will come to you' (v. 18) (RSV)—Although the Lord Jesus will personally return, He had in mind here His coming to them in the person of the Holy Spirit.

4. 'In that day' (v. 20)—This refers to Pentecost. With the fulness of the indwelling Spirit they would begin to understand the involvement of the Trinity with believers [Comment 1].

5. 'We will come to him and make our home with him' (v. 23) (RSV)—In the person of the Holy Spirit both the Father and the Lord Jesus actually dwell with us [Comment 2]. Aptly, He is also called the Spirit of Jesus.

Judas' Question (v. 22)

Judas was asking if the rest of the world was to be abandoned. The answer is given in v. 23, 'If a man love me... ' What a person sees depends on his response in love to the Lord Jesus. The world did not respond to that love and so did not have a revelation. A love for Christ brings with it a love for the Father. To love is to obey and 'keep my word', and so we have a contact with the Godhead which the world knows nothing about. The person who does not do what the Lord Jesus says does not love Him.

Equal yet Greater (v. 28)

The Lord Jesus is speaking in this context as the servant who subjected Himself to the will of His Father. The one who subjects is not as great as the one to whom he is subject.

D. J. Webster

From Melbourne: The Lord Jesus promised His disciples that He would pray the Father to send them another Comforter after He had gone. This clearly indicates that although we read in the Old Testament of the Spirit of the Lord coming upon, and speaking through, men of God, there was under the Old Covenant no thought of His dwelling within them. Of men like Gideon, Jephthah, David and many others, we read that the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon them, enabling them to do a specific work, otherwise beyond their natural powers. But as to One to dwell within them nothing is said or indicated.

In considering the promise of the Lord recorded in John 14, that He would pray the Father to send this Comforter (Advocate of Helper), we remember the circumstances. They had believed in and accepted Jesus of Nazareth

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as the Messiah, the anointed King of Israel, because of what they had discerned in Him and in the miracles and signs He wrought, even to the raising of the dead to life. In complete confidence and love to Him, they had left all and followed Him for the space of about three years.

They anticipated the appearance of the long expected kingdom of God, and their entrance into it, the principles of which He had revealed to them. But although their love towards Him, and their confidence in His credentials and Person still remained, perplexity and fear were entering their minds. He had spoken of going away, and they knew that the leaders of Israel, because of envy, were planning His death. If they hated Him, they would hate them also; and if this were so, they would be left as orphans in a comfortless world, if they were permitted to live at all. Knowing their fears and forebodings, He gives them the promise 'I will not leave you desolate', (orphans). He tells them of another Comforter, whom the Father will send when He is gone, One who would bring to their remembrance all that He had said unto them. He would be a divine Person, the Spirit of Truth. The world would not see Him, or know Him, as He would not, as the Son of God had been, be manifest in flesh. Men, however, would be brought under His power in convicting and convincing them of sin. He would dwell with and within all who believed in and loved the Son of God. He would bring to their remembrance all that He had said unto them and show them things to come.

Following upon His resurrection, during those forty days when He remained with them, speaking unto them the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God, He charged them to remain in Jerusalem and wait for the promise of the Father, when they would receive power to be His witnesses. On the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit descended. We see them no longer fearful men, but men empowered by the Holy Spirit dwelling within them, fearlessly proclaiming to a Jewish multitude the facts concerning the death, burial, resurrection and ascension on high of the One whom they had crucified and slain. As they witnessed the results, 3000 on that day repenting of their sin and

receiving pardon, and a little later, notwithstanding the opposition of the leaders of unrepentant Israel, 2000 more, they were filled with joy and the Holy Spirit, speaking without fear. They truly experienced the comfort of the promised Comforter. It was the same as they witnessed the power of the Spirit in the conversion of individuals and of the first Gentiles.

As we pass on to the Epistles, we find the writers, taught by that same Comforter, giving consolation to those who previously knew but little of what lay beyond death. In the words of Paul, taught by that Comforter, it was 'to depart to be with Christ; for it is very far better'; and again taught by that same Comforter concerning them that had fallen asleep, sorrowing saints in Thessalonica are comforted by the promise of 1 Thes. 4, that 'the dead in Christ shall rise first' with the promise of glad reunion.

The words of the Lord Jesus are found in the written word, and disciples of the Lord must make themselves familiar with the written word. Thus the Comforter speaking through it may bring to their remembrance that which they have learned there, for He speaks not of Himself, but of the words of the Son.

We feel that we should draw attention to the following facts concerning the Comforter who dwells within us. It is possible for us to grieve Him (Eph. 4: 30). We can quench Him (1 Thes. 5: 19). He can be lied to (Acts 5: 3). He guides into all truth (John 16: 13). He can guide us to individuals who are prepared to hear the word (Acts 8:29).

G. Munday, T. W. Fullerton

From Nottingham: Whether it was to the natural need of the poor widow (Luke 7:11-15), or to the spiritual needs of sinners in general as exemplified by the Good Samaritan (**Luke** 10: 30-37), or the disciples (John 14: 1,

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16: 22), the Lord Jesus was the Great Comforter. The disciples and the men of their day lived in an age when the Holy Spirit came upon men on occasion as God permitted, for example, Simeon (Luke 2: 25-27). The case of John the Baptist, by its exceptional nature, proves this to be so (Luke 1: 15). The Lord Jesus was the perfect Man from whom the Holy Spirit never departed (Luke 4: 1, 18) even in death (Heb. 9: 14). Therefore the disciples were doubly blessed in that their continual companying with the Lord ensured their being in the continual presence of the other Comforter, the Holy Spirit.

The imminent departure of the Lord (John 14:1-3) would have meant double loss to these privileged men, but the Lord had made provision. In future the Holy Spirit would indwell them permanently (John 14:16-27). In their case this happened at Pentecost when they were baptized in the Holy Spirit, a baptism that characterizes all believers of this age. Not only is the Holy Spirit thus indwelling all believers but because this is so, so is the Lord (John 14:20).

Knowledge of the Lord, however, depends on the degree to which the indwelling Spirit is allowed free rein in the believer's heart. In particular, it depends on the extent to which the Holy Spirit is allowed to minister the word of God to the heart of the believer (John 14: 21, 23, 26). In the case of the disciples it is easy to see how this was done after the Lord's departure, when the indwelling Spirit brought His words to remembrance. This action, however, is linked with the bringing to their remembrance of the written word (John 2: 22). In our day, when we have not known the Lord in the flesh, our knowledge of Him is therefore entirely dependent on our knowledge of the Scriptures. This is all within us that the indwelling Spirit has to work upon and underlines the importance of our learning the Scriptures.

I. E. Penn

From Vancouver, B. C.: Little did the disciples realize that their Master was soon to leave them. In the portion before us He assures them that He would not leave them alone. He had been their Comforter during the past three

years. The Lord then goes on to assure them that **He** would request the Father and **He** would send another Comforter, one **like Himself**. Verses **17** and **26** reveal that this Comforter **is** the Holy Spirit and Spirit of Truth.

References **were made** to the **Old Testament**, such as **Psalm 51: 11**. **David pleads** with the Lord, **Take** not Thy Holy Spirit from me'. Then there are a number of references to the Holy **Spirit** prior to John **14** in the **New Testament**. John the **Baptist** (John **1: 33 RVM**) says, '**He** that sent **me** to **baptize** in water, **He said** unto **me**, Upon whomsoever thou shalt **see** the Spirit descending, and abiding on **Him**, the **same is He** that baptizeth in the Holy Spirit'. Also in **Luke 4: 1** we read, 'Jesus, **full** of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan', and in **v. 18** the Lord Jesus **said**, 'The Spirit of the Lord **is** upon **Me**'. Portions such as these would indicate that possibly the Lord Jesus often spoke of the Holy **Spirit**, **His** work and **His** power.

Thus the **message** given in John **14:17** would **give** them much assurance **as** to the Comfort of the Holy Spirit who would **be** with them forever. '**Ye** know **Him**; for **He** abideth with you, and shall **be** in you'. **We** who are **disciples** of our Lord Jesus Christ have God's word to assure **us as** to the person and work of the Holy Spirit our Comforter.

The Master then goes on to say, 'The Holy Spirit shall teach you **all** things, and bring to your remembrance **all** that **I said** unto you". No doubt the **disciples** experienced this many **times as** they were questioned by Jew and Gentile. **A great deal** of what the Lord **said** has been preserved for **us** in the Scriptures. So in our daily **walk we** can experience the power of the Holy **Spirit as He directs** our minds to the portions of Scripture **we** need to **guide us**, to teach **us**, and to **give us** answers to questions when **we are** questioned and scarcely know what to say.

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Verse 17 states that the world cannot receive the Holy Spirit and does not know Him. Accepting Christ as Saviour, being baptized in the Holy Spirit and having Him indwell us is our portion. But all those of the world who do not know the Holy Spirit will experience His power convicting them of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; that the unsaved may be convicted and accept Christ as Saviour.

Verse 15 says, 'If ye love Me ye, will keep My commandments'. Doubtless most of us would say, 'I love the Lord Jesus', but can we all say 'I keep His commandments'? Verse 24 gives the negative, 'He that loveth Me not My

words'. These are searching words and they should cause us to love Christ more and to be more diligent to keep His commandments. We should listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit as He directs our thoughts to the Lord Jesus and to His Father.

J. Bell

COMMENTS

1. **(Liverpool):** I favour the view expressed in the penultimate paragraph of the Cowdenbeath paper regarding 'that day'.

2. (Liverpool): This fellowship that the believer can experience with the Father and with the Son is, of course, a conditional experience. This is clearly shown in John 14: 21, 23; 1 John 1: 7 and Rev. 3: 20.

J. K. D. J.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. **From Cowdenbeath:** In his modern translation of the New Testament Dr. Marshall states that the true position of John chapter 14 is immediately before chapter 17. The final words of chapter 14, 'Arise, let us go hence' would fit in with such an arrangement. In the preface to his translation he states that evidence for this change can be found in his 'Introduction to the Literature of the New

Testament'. Are editors in a position to consult such a publication and to examine this evidence? **Is it possible** that **Dr. Marshall is** correct?

Not having a copy of the publication referred to one cannot comment specifically on the points **made** by Dr. Marshall. The question, however, raises an interesting point. Some scholars consider that there **is** evidence of dislocations in John's Gospel and suggest that the original **text** has suffered some mechanical disarrangements in the course of transmission. Dealing with this point in his '**New Testament Introduction**' Dr. Guthrie says, The suggestion **is** not entirely impossible especially if the autograph **was** in codex form, although there **is** no certain evidence to show whether codices were used **quite as** early as this'. **He** also **makes** the **valid** point that 'amended arrangements can **be justified** only if the existing arrangement **is** incapable of intelligent interpretation'.

In support of the possibility of some disarrangements **it is** worth noting that there is general agreement that the section John **7: 53 - 8: 11** **is** not its proper **place**, indeed, some would **place it** after **Luke 21: 38**.

John Chapters 13-16

A re-arrangement of these chapters so that **15** and **16** precede **14** has been proposed **because** John **14: 31** appears to indicate the conclusion of the discourse in the Upper Room. Alternatively, **it** might **be** proposed that the command of John **14: 31** might not have been carried out immediately. The going forth from the Upper Room **is** perhaps indicated by the command of John **18:1**. The teaching of chapters **15** and **16** and the prayer recorded in chapter **17** **seem** more **suited** to the privacy of the Upper Room than elsewhere. **It** has been **suggested** that these words were spoken on the way to Gethsemane; this has been consistently opposed by **Bible Studies** editors in the **past** (see B. S. vol. **23**, p. **105**, comment **4** and B. S. vol. **36**, p. **45** comment **5**).

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2. From Liverpool: **Is it** possible for **us** to experience the very presence of the Lord Jesus or the Father other than through the indwelling **Spirit**?

It is inconceivable to contemplate such an experience without the indwelling Spirit being involved (**see** Eph. 3: 16, 17; Rom. 8: 9-11). **All** our longings and **desires** **after** divine things **are** directly **attributable** to the work of the Holy **Spirit** within **us**.

J. K. D. J.

Hebrews 12: 18, 19 clearly states that the present dispensation, unlike the preceding one, **is** not characterized by a knowledge of God **as perceived** by our physical senses. The Lord **is** not, for **example**, 'touchable' nor **is** **His** spoken voice to **be** heard. These things **await** **His** coming to the **air** to **receive us** unto **Himself**.

Bible Studies

A magazine for the exploration of the Word of God (Acts 17. 11)

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8106

A difficulty in the use of even the most apposite of illustrations is that its application may be extended beyond the point which it was intended to illustrate, to produce faulty conclusions. For instance, the Lord spoke of **Himself as** the Good Shepherd to emphasize the **care** which **He** has for **His** own. **If we seek to take** this further, and **ask why a shepherd keeps a flock**. The answer is to **fleece** them or **eat** them, which has no relation **at all** to the Lord's purpose.

The metaphor of the vine can similarly **be misapplied**. The Lord **was** teaching **His disciples** that they could only **bear fruit if** they remained in communion with **Him**, using an illustration which would already **be familiar** to them in **Scripture (Is. 5: 1-7)**. **Fruit** had been **desired** from **Israel**, **but** the nation had **failed** to provide **it**, and the responsibility **was** now being given to the **disciples**. **If they failed, as Israel had failed**, they too would **be discarded**. However, **success** or failure would not come from their own strength or weakness, **but** from the Lord **Himself**. By keeping **His** commandments (**v. 10**) they would **be able** to share in the power which flows from **Him (v. 7)**. **It is** tempting also to apply the **passage** to the teaching of union with Christ, since **it seems to give** such an excellent illustration of the organic unity which **is** elsewhere **described as a 'body'**. This application **is** unsatisfactory **because** the **passage** envisages that some may **fail to abide** in Christ, **bear no fruit** and **be** taken

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away. Scripture elsewhere teaches that union with Christ is permanent and irreversible; to use the metaphor, His body cannot be dismembered. The use of the illustration of the vine, then, should be kept within its context; if this is done, the passage presents no difficulty, and remains full of teaching for our guidance.

P. L. H.

ABIDING IN THE VINE John 15: 1-10

From Birkenhead: The Lord continues to speak to His apostles in a way which will prepare and guide them in relation to what they may have to face after He has left them.

It is the Lord's purpose to emphasize to them the importance of complete loyalty to His teaching, and in the first place, to Himself, despite the fact that He will no longer be physically present with them. In order to impress upon them their relationship and dependence on Him, the Lord uses the analogy of the vine. Without the vine the branches could not exist, but even in existence the branches are useless if they do not fulfil their purpose, that is to bear fruit. In order to bear fruit the branches must receive nourishment, and this can only be obtained from the vine. So it is with the believer. If he is to bear fruit he must have spiritual nourishment, obtained only from the Lord Jesus.

The passage commences with the statement that the Father is the husbandman. He is responsible to attend to the vine according to the way in which it grows. The treatment of fruit-bearing branches is necessary if they are to bear fruit more abundantly. If they do not bear fruit at all He takes them away. In spiritual terms the disciples have experienced an initial cleansing by the word (v. 3).

It is necessary for them to experience further continual cleansing. This may manifest itself as the disciple is called on to endure experiences in his life which the Father sees as necessary to his upbuilding.

We considered it important to note the action meted out to the unfruitful believer. 'Casting forth' and 'taketh away' were the expressions used and it was thought that this could be viewed, for example, in the form of an illness or even death, when dealing with such a person (1 Cor. 11: 30). These could be the rewards of unfruitfulness, but suffering may very well manifest itself when the husbandman is cleansing. What was quite evident, however, was that the reference to casting out into the fire in v. 6 was not a reference to the withdrawal of salvation, as v. 3 already stated that they had been cleansed by the word. We decided that the latter part of v. 6 simply states what men do with withered branches.

Fruit-bearing, which comes from abiding, is for the purpose of giving the Father pleasure (v. 8) and if abiding, the believer is authorised to 'ask whatsoever ye will', with the assurance that the Father will grant it. It was thought that abiding would lead to a close relationship which would bring the believer to ask in accordance with the Father's will.

R. C. Halpin, R. C. M. Bolt

From Cowdenbeath: We view these verses as a parable. Each branch in the Vine, who is our Lord, represents a born-again believer. The truth which is taught is 'abiding in Christ', which must be distinguished from 'being in Christ'. The believer's place 'in Christ' is eternal and cannot be affected by his failures. 'Abiding in Christ' is a conditional state. It is linked with Christ abiding in the believer (see vv. 4 and 6). Indeed, those are twin truths. They are inseparable. The one cannot be experienced without the other. The condition of becoming unfruitful and so being severed from the Vine must speak of a state being reached when a believer may be rejected by the Husbandman, who is the Father, as being of no further usefulness in service.

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Fruit-bearing, **we** believe, is first of all the producing in the believer, through the power of the indwelling Spirit, of the fruit of the Spirit, which is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness and self-control (Gal. 5: 22, 23 RVM). Those graces were each seen in full measure and in perfect balance with each other in the life of Christ. By producing such a fruit we, therefore, display a Christ-likeness in our lives. The reference to fruit-bearing in v. 16 is, we believe, in relation to soul-winning.

In v. 7 we see a picture of a believer in the ideal condition. In addition to abiding in Christ, which condition is attained by rendering the obedience of love, he is seen as having the word of Christ dwelling in him richly (Col. 3: 16). He is also seen as a praying person whose prayers are answered. Whilst not placing any limitations upon the word 'whatsoever', the words 'done unto you', rather than 'given you' would seem to suggest prayer of a personal sort which is towards greater fruit-bearing.

In chapter 14 we learn on what condition He will dwell in our hearts, that is, by our obedience to His commandments; and in chapter 15 we learn what the result of such an indwelling will be. Abundant fruit-bearing marks out a true disciple. A disciple is not simply one who follows, but is one who is like the One he follows.

J. Bowman

From Derby: The vine in a figurative sense is found in Is. 5 and in Jer. 2: 21. Both portray Israel as the vine, and in both there is reproach for Israel's failure. This may explain why the Lord describes Himself as the true vine. The intention in all three cases is that God the Father shall have satisfaction as a consequence of the attention given by Him to the care of the vine. God's intention is to allow those whom the vine typifies to use, under His control, their potentialities.

It could be that the Lord's words up to John 14: 31 were spoken in the upper room. That verse suggests dep-

ature, and so 15: 1 to 17: 26 could have been spoken on the way to Gethsemane. John 17: 1 suggests the open air, and 18: 1 shows the Lord in Gethsemane [Comment 1].

John 15:1-10 deals in type with God the Father achieving His purpose in the disciples through the Lord Jesus. There is still the possibility of failure in the branches. These are taken away or cleansed according to their condition. For the disciples, the initial cleansing is a fact (v. 3); but as stated in vv. 4 and 5, association must be maintained for fruit-bearing. As is seen from v. 6, the disciples have to be active in their adherence to the Lord Jesus if success is to be achieved. Lack of continuous association makes fruit-bearing impossible, and in this condition discipleship ends and life is valueless.

It is desirable at this point to notice the entirely different figure of John 10: 27-29 where the certainty of eternal security is stated.

Reverting to John 15, vv. 9 and 10 show an aspect of God's love which is conditional upon the keeping of the Lord's commandments. This is love in the sense of affection, as distinct from the love in 3: 16, which is love in compassion.

N. Bramfitt, G. W. Conway

From Leeds: John 15: 1-10 describes a new relationship which was to exist between the Lord and His disciples. In the previous chapter we saw the departure of the Lord to be with His Father; now we see the work of salvation dealt with on the basis of our union with Christ [Comment 2]. The idea of the union between God the Father, God the Son and His disciples is brilliantly illustrated here by reference to husbandman, vine and branches, and its teaching would be as clear to the Lord's disciples then as it is now. If the disciples were to look back at their early teaching from the Law, they would recognise the significance of the Lord's use of the vine. The vine symbolised for Israel their obligations as a worshipping people, and here was the Lord taking on Himself the true significance of total fulfilment of His Father's promises.

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The Lord's words here show that each individual member of the Church must be fruitful, and God in His actions as husbandman only wishes to increase our fruitfulness. For those firmly grafted into the vine in union with the Christ, His word gives a wonderful promise [See Comment 3]. There are, however, conditions. The limitless power given is in reality limited by the effectiveness of the union and sense of oneness we have. Christ's promise did not imply total power, but as with all relationships there was and is a code of practice to be followed. Disciples can always go to their Teacher with requests, but those requests will only be answered in proportion to the unity we have. That unity is based on love, a love which comes from Father to Son, and in this love disciples must abide in obedience.

P. Jefferson

From Liverpool: It has been suggested that if Jesus had now left the Upper Room (14: 31) He would be passing through the courtyard of the Temple, and this illustration may have arisen out of the fact that a great vine was sculptured on the Temple wall [See Comment 1].

What is 'abiding'?

We are not physically 'in Christ', therefore the idea of abiding is metaphorical. Only in Christ can we produce fruit. Abiding incorporates the idea of enduring, remaining and being in close contact with. The same Greek word is used in Acts 11: 23, translated 'to remain faithful to' (RSV) or 'cleave' (RV). There are two outward indications of abiding - more power in prayer (v. 7) and a life that glorifies God (v. 8). The whole theme of this passage is that of our lives in service to God; even the branches that are cut off are saved people.

What is fruit-bearing'?

The term 'fruit' in this context includes the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5: 22-3), leading souls to Christ, good works

(Tit. 2: 14) and having our character and **way of life** in conformity to that of Christ (Rom. 8: 29) [Comment 6]. **It was said** that 'faith **is** the root; works are the **fruit**'. Col. 1: 10 shows that fruit-bearing should **be a** continual thing.

What is 'pruning'?

It was suggested that pruning **is** equivalent to chastening (Heb. 12: 5-6). By pruning God makes our **lives** more fruitful. Whatever kind of **lives we lead, we will** experience God's intervention: good Christians **will** know pruning - unfruitful ones **will be cut** off.

What are the 'cast off branches'?

It is an over-spiritualisation to say that 'burned' (v. 6) refers to hell. **It is saved** people that are referred to here. **But useless** branches are parasites on the vine and have **a** deadening influence on **it**. Why **are useless** branches here in the **first place**? **Verse 16** shows that the reason **we** were chosen **was** to bear fruit. **It is** an interesting **fact** that wood from the vine has no other use than for bearing fruit (**see Ezek. 15: 2-5**). The **ideal is** to bear fruit continually. That this **will** not happen **all the time is** shown by the **fact** that **at** the judgement **seat** of Christ wood, hay and **stubble will be** seen and burned [Comment 7]. The **believer can be cast** out of the vine (v. 6) and his **life** of service lost. The **life** of the vine **is** not now going through the branches and the works 'of the flesh' **will** result (Gal. 5: 19-21).

Summary

In the **Old Testament**, Israel **was** the vine and God the gardener (the **best** there could **be**). **Yet Israel was still** unable to bear fruit. The Lord Jesus **was** the true vine and pleased God in every way. Perhaps this section of John 15 could **be summed up** by this quotation: 'The secret of fruit-bearing **is** abiding; the secret of abiding **is** obeying; the **secret** of obeying **is** loving'.

Today God **expects His** people to bear **fruit** (Cf. S. of S. 7: 13).

P. G. Barrett, D. J. Webster

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From Melbourne: The Lord refers to Himself under the figure of a vine, and the disciples who had followed Him as the branches, appointed to partake of the nourishment which flowed from Him, the true Vine, with a view to bringing forth fruit which cheers both God and man. His Father is depicted as the husbandman and vinedresser, who watches carefully over the branches; removing those which bear no fruit, and where there are indications of disease attacking healthy branches, using a cleansing agency, so that the fungus or disease be not allowed to spread, and that in the ensuing season there might be abundance of healthy fruit.

The cleansing agency used had been the word which He had spoken unto them— 'Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you'. The only way whereby they could bear fruit would be by 'abiding in the vine'— His life flowing through them as the result of the life-giving and cleansing word which He continually spoke unto them. The promise given v. 7 is qualified by the promise found in 1 John 5: 14, 15: 'If we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us; and if we know that He heareth us whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions which we have asked of Him'. Much honour and glory is the portion of the Father as He sees much fruit, even the fruit of the Spirit, brought forth by the branches of the true vine, the members of Christ's body [Comment 3],

The fruit of the true vine has been referred to by a former esteemed contributor to the pages of *Needed Truth* (Vol. 48, pages 41 and 65). We submit extracts:

In John 15 the Lord tells us that He is the Vine, and His disciples are the branches: that they are dependent on Him, not only for life, but for character, even the reproduction of Christ in their lives. He makes it plain that fruit-bearing is the result of such dependence, or abiding in Him, shewn in two ways: 'abide in Me

and I in you', or, **as** more fully expressed, 'If ye abide in **Me** and My words **abide** in you', which are the *up* and *down* lines of communion... Fervent expressions of devotion to the Lord **are** not enough, the ear **must be** opened to hear and the heart ready to perform what **His** word says...

The fruit of the Spirit **is love**, which **is** in manifestation in **life**. In **Him** alone the words of the **Law** were **fulfilled** (**Luke 10: 37**). Love **was** the motive power of **His life** **We** think of **Him as a** 'man of sorrows', **but He** also knew *joy*, in the consciousness of pleasing **His** Father'.

Peace - some thought to frighten **Him**, **but He was** not perturbed, for **He** knew that no human power could **prevail** against **Him** until the **time** appointed by the Father.

Longsuffering is not suffering such **as** sickness or pain which cannot **be** avoided, and which one endures **because** of necessity, **but is** suffering unjustly and willingly **because it is** in the **will** of God [Comment 4], **Kindness** - the thought here **is** not simply acting kindly... say, in the Lord's dealing with children, or the infirm, or in feeding the **multitude**... or a kind or pleasant manner. **It** has in **it what is expressed** in **Luke 6: 35**. God **is** 'kind toward the unthankful and **evil**', and 'love suffereth long and **is** kind'. On the cross in the **midst** of **His** agony **caused** by men, **He said** 'Father, forgive them, for the know not what they do'.

Goodness - **He was** good essentially, even **as** God **is** good, without admixture of **evil** or corruption, **but** here goodness **was** manifested in **His** doings.

Faithfulness - **He was** not only good to men, **but** also faithful to God who appointed **Him**... In **Luke 10**,

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Martha was displeased with her sister, and viewed the Lord as encouraging her in leaving her to serve alone, and practically demanded that He should interfere and tell the sister to help her. The Lord did not interfere with these domestic matters, but when He was thus challenged He put the matter in its true light, blaming Martha with inordinate care for 'tables' and commending Mary for choosing the better thing, and asserting that she should not be forbidden. This was a kindly but faithful word which put *both* right, and we see the sequel in John 12 where Martha serves acceptably without interfering with her sister.

Meekness - This was a wondrous feature of the life of the Lord of Glory. Men are out to get on, to rise to a higher place in the world, to assert themselves. The Lord's path from the throne of heaven to the cross and the grave was ever a humbling of Himself.

Temperance or Self-Control - The Lord was every whit a man, and nothing that was proper to man was outside His nature. He could suffer hunger and could also enjoy food, but He was ever under control... True temperance is found in the word, 'Use the world as not using it to full (1 Cor. 7: 31, RVM); but there is a higher thing than ministering to self, which is in view in self-control, and that is the kingdom of God - the manifestation of His rule, which is not eating and drinking, *but* righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit' (Rom. 14:17). (S. J. Hill)

These are the fruit of the Spirit which was ever manifest in Him, fruit which in some degree we should bear to His glory, and the glory of the Father.

W. Sneddon, T. W. Fullerton

From Methil: In Psalm 80 we see Israel as a very strong vine, but because of failure we see it cut down and burned with fire. Hosea declared that Israel had become a luxuriant

vine bringing forth wrong **fruit**. Jeremiah **declared** that the nation had become 'a degenerate vine'. **Ezekiel**, as the people gloried in the **fact** that the vine represented the nation, **asked** what **was** the good of the wood of the vine, declaring the vine only has **value** in fruit-bearing. When **we** come to John **15** **we see** the **true** Vine in contrast to **all** the other failures. Now, the Son of God **claimed** that in **Him** there would **be** fulfilment, and God's purposes **were** not failing to progress.

In fruit-bearing there has to **be** good husbandry, and who **better** than God the Father to **fulfil** this function in combination with **His** Son, the great '**I AM**', 'the Vine the true'. The branches, in order to survive and bear fruit, had to **abide** in the vine and so gain nourishment. Prayer **is a vital** necessity in fruit-bearing, and the source of power to withstand the human failings and **diseases** associated with them. Complete unity with **Him** in our **lives is** essential, **as is** contained in the statements '**I am** the Vine, ye are the branches'. **He is** the trunk structure of the vine, and in **a** sense each branch becomes an integral part of **Himself** to **bear fruit** [Comment 8]. These **disciples** to whom **He** spoke were bound **up** in **His life** so **as** to **be** one with **Him** in fulfilment of the divine purposes of God. **As we** look at the branches **we** can **see** they **were** the instruments **used** in providing the **fruit**. Again **we** grasp the solemnity of those words, '**Apart from Me** ye can do nothing'. **We** can do nothing in ourselves **if severed** from Christ. There **must** also **be** an underlying consciousness in our abiding. To **abide** in **Him** means to desire only the things that are in keeping with **His will** and purposes. This **is** where prayer **is** necessary, in co-operation with God, to **bear** fruit.

The words, 'No longer do **I call** you servants... **but...** friends' points to an intimate relationship with **Him**. **He** **was** the **perfect example**, **as He** could say '**I have kept** my Father's commandments, and **abide** in **His** love'. May **we imitate Him** and so **abide** in **His** love.

D. B. Reid

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From Nottingham: The Lord Jesus had spoken much already about depending upon Him, and then He spoke of His going away. He was not leaving them without support, for another of like character was to be sent. Yet the close relationship with Himself was to continue.

The Lord and the disciples may have left the upper room and have been part-way to the valley of Kidron (14: 31, 18: 1), and be contemplating a living vine; or they may still have been in the upper room, prior to leaving, and recalling grape-vines they would have often seen [See Comment 1].

Here we have one of the great 'I AM's' of John's Gospel. He speaks of a vine because it describes Himself in some aspects (cf. 'I am the door'). The Father is the vine-dresser - the one who tends the vine, and for whom the fruit is produced. Later the Lord gives a further insight - 'I am the Vine and you (pl.) are the branches'. It is a closer relationship than that of the shepherd to the sheep, and is more like that between Christ and 'the church which is His body'. It is a living union, with the branches being totally dependent upon Him, and living that they might be fruitful to the glory of God. This fruit should be characteristic of Him and show forth His excellency. It should be noted that He did not say He was the stem and they the branches. Every branch is either taken away because of unfruitfulness or pruned (RSV) to make it even more productive. Notice both sets of branches are 'in Me' (RV) less open to confusion than 'of Mine' (RSV).

The disciples were already clean because of (again better than RSV 'by') the word that the Lord had spoken. They should therefore abide (stay, remain or continue) in Him. There may be much that we appear to be doing by way of service, but if we are not in continuing communion with our Lord then His evaluation of it will be 'nothing'! The one who does remain in Him is the one who bears much fruit. The unfruitful one (the cause being failure to

abide) is cast forth and withers. Notice that it is the branches (not the men who are 'as branches') which are gathered, thrown into the fire and burned [Comment 5]. What a great contrast with those who abide and in whom God's word finds a home; they have a privilege of rich communion. In Ps. 37: 4 we read, 'Take delight in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart' (RSV). When we are captivated by Christ then we find residing in our hearts what is in His great heart of love. Then can we ask for 'whatever we will' and it can be safely given, for we are asking what He desires and longs to give. This harmonious relationship brings glory to God and fruitfulness as disciples. We are told how to remain in His love—keep His commandments. That is how the Lord Jesus Christ kept in communion with His Father; 'And He who sent Me is with Me: He has not left me alone, for I always do what is pleasing to Him' (John 8: 29, RSV). (See also John 14: 2). Let us seek to be those who abide in Christ.

D. Rafferty

COMMENTS

1. **(Derby):** The question of the place where chapters 15 to 17 were spoken was discussed in the last issue of Bible Studies, where it was concluded that it is most probable that the Lord and His disciples did not leave the Upper Room until after the events of chapter 17, which seems most appropriate to an indoor setting. However, some suggest (see Liverpool paper) that the sculpture of a vine on the wall of the Temple may have led the Lord to use the illustration of the vine.

P. L. H.

The wording of John 17: 1 does not necessarily imply that the Lord was in the open-air. It denotes the posture He adopted during the prayer.

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2. **(Leeds):** Many commentators link this passage with the teaching of union with Christ, but such an association cannot be regarded as satisfactory. Union with Christ occurs when a person believes in Him and is baptized by the Spirit into the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13) thus becoming a member of Christ. From that point his 'life is hid with Christ in God' (Col. 3: 3) and the connection with Christ can never be severed. This union cannot be compared with one in which a branch which does not bear fruit is taken away (v. 2) or cast forth (v. 6). The passage refers to the source of energy for fruit-bearing; it is not a legitimate extension of the illustration to apply it to salvation. Judas, who is sometimes cited as an example, never knew union with Christ, or he could not have gone to 'his own place' (Acts 1: 25).

3. **(Melbourne):** As the previous comment explains, the vine cannot be identified with the church which is Christ's body, because branches can be taken away.

4. **(Melbourne):** 'Longsuffering' (**makrothymia**) refers to patience or forbearance in the face of provocation rather than directly to suffering.

5. **(Nottingham):** I do not understand the distinction being made here. 'As' is an adverb meaning 'in similiar manner to', and the verse says that if a man does not abide in Christ he is thrown out in the same way as a branch is thrown out.

P. L. H.

Nottingham friends are possibly alluding to the fact that it is only the person's life of service and fruit-bearing as a branch of the vine that has been terminated. The possession of eternal life cannot be forfeited. The man himself is saved. A similar principle applies to a man whose works are burned at the Judgement Seat (1 Cor. 3:15).

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- 6. (Liverpool):** Titus 2:14 has to do with the people of God; Romans 8:29 has to do with the new birth. Neither is directly related to the truth of the vine.
- 7. (Liverpool):** The wood referred to in the context of the Judgement Seat is not analogous to the wood of the vine.

I. E. P.

1 Cor. 3:10-15 deals particularly with a person's work in the context of service in a church of God, and the testing of the quality of that work at the Judgement Seat with a view to rewards being given. It may be that we do not need to seek an application of the burning of the branches. There is a general agreement that the 'taking away' and 'casting forth' are present day experiences

J. K. D. J.

- 8. (Methil):** The point about the vine is that it does not have a trunk and branches like an oak tree. Rather it makes its own support for the fruit by branches becoming intertwined.

I. E. P.

QUESTION AND ANSWER

From Nottingham: In John 15 when the Lord said 'You (pi.) are the branches' (RSV), it is often assumed that He meant 'You (sing.) are a branch'. Is there any reason why He could not have meant that an individual consisted of a number of branches?

If so, does this help in gaining an understanding of v. 2?

The Lord, addressing all the disciples, said that they were the branches; each disciple was an individual branch. He then appeals to each individual to abide in Him, and states the consequences if 'a man' does not do so (v. 6). I cannot see that the suggestion in the question can be fitted into the sense of the passage.

P. L. H.

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EDITORIAL

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When giving instruction on various aspects of Christian character and conduct the Lord Jesus on several occasions emphasized the need for us to 'love one another'. So vital is love in Christian life that He *commanded* it to be shown. Our responsibility in this matter is, therefore, not optional. Equally clear is the standard of love which He requires - 'even as I have loved you' (Jn. 13: 34; 15: 12). Vine (Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words) writes of the verb used (*agapao*) 'It is the characteristic word of Christianity... Christian love, whether exercised toward the brethren or toward men generally, is not an impulse from the feelings, nor does it spend itself only upon those for whom an affinity is discovered'. We remind ourselves that love is in the forefront of the 'fruit of the Spirit' (Gal. 5: 22, 23), and that the Apostle Paul expounds its characteristics in 1. Cor. 13. In a day such as this, when self-interest is regarded as the norm, we do well to be reminded that the exercise of love is one of the great acts of Christian witness by which disciples may glorify their Lord (Jn. 13: 35).

As in all other matters, the Lord Jesus Himself was the perfect example of love. He paid its supreme price in the laying down of His life. As pointed out by several contributors, the possibility of disciples being called upon to lay down their lives, as an expression of their love, must not be overlooked. Among other examples, one thinks of Prisca and Aquila who for the life of the Apostle Paul 'laid down their own necks' (Rom. 16: 4). Such willingness to sacrifice for others is well-pleasing to God.

R. L

MAN - HIS NATURE AND CONSTITUTION

Introduction

This article is intended to stimulate the investigation of the Biblical revelation of the nature and constitution of man, both in his original state and in his state as modified by sin and redemption. The opinions expressed are not necessarily generally accepted, and in some cases alternative views have been expressed. Editors hope that readers of Bible Studies will make their own contributions to the discussion of the subject, so that a fuller understanding of the teaching of Scripture may be arrived at. Although the study is technical and abstract, it does not follow that it is of little importance; errors in the doctrine of man can lead, and have led, to teachings which strike at the heart of the Christian faith by reducing the scope of, or denying the necessity for, the Atonement. Study of any part, such as this, makes it more evident than ever that Christian theology, although not systematized in Scripture itself, is a coherent whole, and error in any part threatens the stability of the whole.

The Origin of Man

Scripture clearly avers that man is the creation of God (Gen. 1: 27; 2: 7). There was a first man, created by God in innocence, and since Adam is the common father of all, and he owed his existence to God, all men are God's offspring (Acts 17: 28). The existence of a single head of human race, and his initial act of sin, are facts essential to the scriptural exposition of the doctrine of the Gospel (see Rom. 5: 12-21; 1 Cor. 15: 22). The consequences of Adam's headship are considered in a later paragraph.

The essential elements of man's nature

Two interpretations have been proposed of the Scriptural statements relating to the constitution of man, the dichotomous theory, which suggests that man is made up of two parts, and the trichotomous theory, which proposes three. They may be briefly expressed as follows:

The dichotomous theory **describes** man **as** having a two-fold nature - on the one hand **material**, on the other hand, **immaterial**; the first **is** the body, the second the **spirit** or soul. Considerations which support this theory are:

- (a) In Gen. 2: 7 God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of **life**, and man **became a** living soul. Compare this with Job 32: 8 - 'there **is a** spirit in man, and the breath of the Almighty giveth them understanding'.
- (b) The apparently interchangeable **use** of the terms 'soul' and 'spirit' in many Scriptural instances. Compare the following pairs of scriptures: Gen. 41: 8 and Ps. 42: 6; John 12: 27 and 13: 21; Heb. 12: 23 and Rev. 6: 9.
- (c) Body and soul, or spirit, are together **used** to indicate the whole man. Note 2 Cor. 7: 1 - 'all defilement of flesh and spirit'; if the soul **is a** separate entity, **is it not capable** of being **defiled**?

According to the dichotomous system spirit (*pneuma*) **is** primarily **used** of man's immaterial part in **its** relation to God, and soul (*psyche*) in **its** relation to the world. This distinction **is** not always maintained, **at least as far as** the English words are concerned, for animals are spoken of **as** having a spirit (Ecc. 3: 21).

The trichotomous theory **suggests** that man has a three-fold nature - body, soul and spirit. The following considerations support this theory:

- (a) 1 Thes. 5: 23 and Heb. 4: 12 distinguish the soul from the spirit. In the first **case, spirit** and soul and body are the terms **used** to describe the whole person, and in the second the word of God **is** described **as** 'piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit'.
- (b) **At** death, the destinations of soul and **spirit** appear different; e. g. the Lord's soul went to **Hades (Acts 2: 27)**, **but He** commended **His spirit** to **His Father (Luke 23: 46)**. The latter could refer to the commendation of the soul/spirit to the Father's care, **but** Ecc. 12: 7 refers to the spirit of man returning to God who **gave it**.

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If there were a difference between **two** entities, the soul and the **spirit**, one would **expect** there to **be** some differentiation of function between them. There **is** in most **cases** a differentiation of **use** between **psyche** and **pneuma**, the former referring to those **abilities** which man has **by virtue** of his natural **life**, and shares in **measure** with the **beasts**; and the **latter** to man's perception of God, and his powers of conscience and **will**. The natural (**psychikos** — 'soulish') man cannot receive the things of the **Spirit** (1 Cor. 2: 14) **because** they **are** spiritually (**pneumatikos**) discerned. **Has** the natural man then no spirit, or **is it** that he allows the soul to dominate his personality? **If** soul and **spirit** are different, **but** not **separable**, **aspects** of the **same** entity then **it may be** that the **spirit aspect** is dormant until **acted** upon by the **Spirit** of God. There **are** no Scriptural **examples** of soul and **spirit** directly **set** in contrast with one another, so **it is difficult** to **make clear** distinctions between their functions.

The origin of the soul

Man's soul originated in the creation of **Adam**, **but** the origin of the souls of subsequent men **is** not so apparent. Two main theories have been propounded:

- (a) Creationism, which **regards** each soul **as** immediately **created** by God, and joined to the body **at** or between conception and birth. Is. 57: 16 **speaks** of 'the souls that **I** have **made**', while Zech. 12: 1 **refers** to 'Jehovah... who formed the spirit of man within him'.
- (b) Traducianism, which **views** the human **race** **as** **created** in **Adam**, and propagated from him by natural generation - **all** souls since **Adam** being only mediately created by God. Heb. 7: 10 says **Levi** **'was** yet in the loins of his father, when Melchizedek **met** him'.

As far as the body **is** concerned, **it is** evident that **its** creation **is** **mediate**, although God **is** **described** **as** the maker of the body (Jer. 1: 5). **It seems** in keeping with the teaching of Rom. 5: 12-21 to **regard** the soul **as** the product of human generation, which transmits sin **as well as life**. These theoretical considerations have their **practical** implications in relation to the possession of **a** soul by **a** foetus before birth.

The original state of man

Man was created in the image and after the likeness of God (Gen. 1: 26). Considering other uses of these words (e. g. Gen. 5: 1-3; 9: 6) there seems no reason to conclude that any differentiation of meaning is implied between the words 'image' and 'likeness'; the intention is emphasis rather than distinction. Man as created was like God in two respects, personality and holiness. Personality may be defined as the abstract consciousness of the self and the power of determination of the self (i. e. will). The likeness to God in the possession of personality is retained to the present time (Jas. 3: 9), and it distinguishes him from the beast, which has no such likeness. Man was also created with a righteousness like God's (Ecc. 7: 29), and the new man is re-created in the same way (Eph. 4: 24). The original moral disposition of man was therefore towards good; man himself was 'very good' and not merely a moral neuter.

P. L. H.

(To be continued)

WITNESS IN THE WORLD John 15: 11-27

From Birkenhead: The words recorded in this part of Scripture contain the Lord's continuing instruction to His apostles. The Lord has said He will leave the disciples but that He will send another Comforter. They have been told of love and care and abiding in Christ. The Lord now turns from the consideration of the responsibility to bear fruit to being a witness in the world. The portion implies not only a positive idea of preaching Christ but also the suggestion that their manner of life, actions, words, indeed their very existence should be a witness to Him.

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They are to prepare themselves with the joy obtained from Christ by abiding in **Him** and are **to love** one another completely. The Lord **gives** the **example** of a man who lays down his **life** for his friends **as** the measure of the love that they should exhibit. **It was** thought that while this undoubtedly covered the death of the Lord on the Cross, **it was** not meant to **be** taken **as** a reference to that exclusively. The Lord defines **His** friends **as** those who obey **His** commands and who have been instructed with regard to the purpose behind **His** actions. **He** elaborates by reminding them that **He** chose them **as disciples**, they **did** not choose Him. **He** appointed them **as** apostles for a purpose - that they should **bear** fruit which **abides**.

They were warned what to **expect** from the world (the unsaved) in response to their witness. They have the love of one another to fortify them against the hatred of the world. They have been chosen out of the world and now no longer acknowledge **its** dominion over them, **but** acknowledge the Lordship of Christ. What they might suffer **will be** for the **sake** of Christ **but** they **will** also know that **all** they suffer, even unto death, Christ **will** have **suffered** before them.

Because of Christ's preaching **all** men should now **be** aware of sin and failure, **but because** they **reject** Christ they **are** conscious of wrong within and transfer their **guilt** in the form of hatred to **Him**, rather than directing **it** to themselves and their sin. The Lord warns that **because** of the unity of the Godhead anyone who rejects or hates **Him**, rejects and hates the Father also. Confirmation of this unity **appears** in v. 26 where Christ **reveals** that **He will** send the Holy **Spirit** from the Father with the purpose of bearing witness of the Lord to the world. This sending **is** not a once for **all** action, **but** continues throughout the Lord's dealing with mankind.

We noted an apparent contradiction between 'They know not **Him**' (v. 21) and 'Now have they both seen and hated both **Me** and My Father' (v. 24). However, **we** conclude

that v. 21 referred to acceptance or recognition of the Father while v. 24 referred to the evidence of Christ Himself, which they had witnessed.

R. C. Halpin, R. D. Williams

From Derby: A witness is one who tells of what he has seen or known. The English word martyr comes from *martus* meaning witness. Among other things it is used of the witness of the Holy Spirit to Christ and it is also used of the witness of prophets and apostles to Christ (see Vine). The Lord Jesus Christ said we were to be witnesses but we have to be in a right condition. The disciples were chosen by Christ out of the world and commanded to love one another as Christ loved them. The Lord always binds up love with obedience and so if we obey this commandment we will be His friends, although hated by the world as the Lord was hated without cause (Ps. 35:19).

Our task in this life is to bear fruit which will last. In this connection we are promised that if we ask in His Name we will receive. To be able to do this we must be walking closely with Him. He said of His disciples 'Ye are the salt of the earth' (Mat. 5:13). As the salt is not seen in the food but gives it the flavour so it speaks of our inward condition. He also said 'Ye are the light of the world' (Mat. 5:14). This is the outward manifestation of our inward condition.

We are called to bear witness to Him in every way. The Spirit of Truth was to testify of Christ's heavenly glory, something which the disciples could not do. The Spirit of truth would help them to testify to what they had seen and heard. Love is the key to Christian life and testimony Godward and toward each other.

G. W. Conway

From Leeds: *Love* - We considered that we only love because God first loved us and that we are commanded to love one another. It is sad but true that love has to be drawn or commanded from us. Taking 1 Cor. 13 as a model, we turned to trying to put Paul's poetry into action. We noticed that putting others first is difficult, especially

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in **little** routine **matters**; that **it is** relatively easy to 'love' and '**care**' for each other in **times** of **crisis**, **but** chronic needs **seem** to **drain** our **weak** love very quickly. **We felt** too that **we must** not **make it difficult** for others to love **us**; **we must** not overlook an **act** of love or **care** that comes our way. The day to day evidence of love between **disciples is a** powerful witness - 'by this shall **all** men know that ye **are** my **disciples**'. Also, the determination to **put** this command into **practice is a** guarantee of Christian joy (vv. 10-11).

Friendship - **We** thought of how the Lord Jesus **is** often portrayed **as** God's Servant and how **He said** to the **disciples** '**I am** among you **as** one who **serves**' (Luke 22: 27 RSV). The Lord Jesus taught **His disciples** to **serve** and to **realise** that **we** often can **claim** only to have done our duty - yet he **calls us** to friendship, to **be** welcomed into **His** close **circle**. **We** thought that our **attitude** should **be** that of the servant who, when offered freedom, **decides** in that freedom to **serve** willingly for **life** (see Ex. 21: 2-6).

Hate - The Lord warns that the change in life-style and **attitudes** that flows from salvation and living faith **will** **make us** obvious **targets** for persecution. **We** wondered **if** possibly there **is** something wrong when our **attitudes** at work or among friends provoke no interest **at** all. Can **we be** too much **like** non-Christians to **be** noticed?

The **radical** change in **life-values** that the Lord Jesus brings **will** provoke in many people **a** negative response. For **example**, people often do not **like** admitting to **deep-felt** needs and **feel** threatened by Christian witness. In addition, when **we became** Christians **we** 'changed **sides**'. People **react** against the **implied criticism** of their way of **life** when **we** say or show that **we** can no longer go their way. **It is a** reaction to knowing their sin has been exposed.

Witness - 'You also **must** testify' (Jn. 15: 27 RSV). The Lord Jesus teaches that Christian witness involves **at least** two major forces. **First**, the Holy **Spirit** has been sent to convict of sin and to teach Christians. The second **is** that Christians have **been** sent to testify, for **it is we** who

know Him. The Holy Spirit challenges and prepares hearts, but by and large we are entrusted with the business of bringing and introducing those people to the Saviour.

A. W. J. Terrell

From Liverpool: *Love (Jn. 15: 11-17)*. These things' (v. 11) refers back to abiding in the vine and shows the relationship between abiding and witnessing. The secret of witnessing is abiding in the vine. Believers are both friends and servants of the Lord Jesus. We are friends because we are let into His secrets (v. 15) [See Comment 7], We found the idea of giving commands to friends a strange one (v. 14). Friends usually choose each other but this is a one-sided affair (v. 16). The disciples were chosen for service (not salvation), the purpose being to bear fruit [Comment 5]. The seriousness of this decision was shown by the fact that the Lord Jesus prayed all night before choosing His apostles (Lk. 6: 12-13).

The prayer that will always be answered is the prayer that is according to God's will. Asking is linked to fruit-bearing (v. 16). Therefore, it seems that those who are bearing fruit will ask according to God's will - and receive.

Hate (15: 18-25) There is a cost involved in witness-bearing. Persecution, however, will produce greater fruit in the believer's life. Joy and love are essential when witnessing in a world of hate (Neh. 8: 10; 2 Cor. 5: 14). The word for witness could be translated 'martyr', and this was the case for the early churches (eg. Stephen) and could be for us **too**.

The Holy Spirit (15: 26-27) The Holy Spirit will help us in our witnessing. Witnessing is part of fruit-bearing, which is more than making converts. It is showing Christ in your life. This involves living holy, Christ-like lives that will draw others to Him. It is what we are, not necessarily what we say, that is important. A suggested link might be as follows:

abiding leads to *fruit-bearing* which leads to *witnessing* which brings *hatred*.

P. G. Barrett, D. J. Webster

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From Melbourne: The Son of God in the days of His flesh was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, yet He experienced joy of which the world knew nothing. It was this joy that He desired His disciples to know. His had been the joy associated with heaven, its occupants and its throne. Yet He left it for a season, and for the joy that was set before Him of accomplishing the work of redemption He endured the cross, despising shame, and is now sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. During the years of His humiliation we suggest that it was His experience as a man to be 'sorrowful, yet always rejoicing', something of which the world knew nothing. In the midst of all His sorrows it was His greatest joy to know that He was doing the will of His Father, even though it took Him to the cross and the tomb. There was no other way by which a lost world could be saved, and a people from a ruined race raised and seated with Him in the heavenly places, no longer to look forward to coming judgement but to the sharing of eternal glory with Christ. What joy this knowledge brought to Him in the midst of His sufferings!

The children and people of God are not joyless. In addition to the joy of knowing what Christ has done for them they too have a joy in being engaged in a work which will have eternal issues. What the world often calls joy, characterised by merriment and gaiety, and expressing itself in laughter, is 'like the crackling of thorns under a pot' and of brief duration. The joy of the believer in Christ is based upon eternal realities, the joy of sins forgiven, the present possession of eternal life, the hope of putting on incorruption or immortality and of sharing His throne. It was that they might possess these certainties that He died and rose again, and as He was soon to leave them He desired them to share the joy which had been His doing the will of the Father. Before He left them He was renewing His commandment that they were to continue to love one another as He had loved them. He had seen the petty jealousies and friction which they sometimes had manifested towards each other, but they had never seen such in Him. How much this involved could only be known after He had gone, for then they

would know why He had laid down His life for them. If the circumstances arose, the ultimate in their love one to another would manifest itself in doing as He had done. They had been His followers, but He called them more, they were His friends in the midst of a hostile world. How much this meant to Him we may never know. As friends He had revealed unto them intimate things, even things to come of which this world knew nothing. Now they are reminded that they had not chosen Him although attracted to Him by what they saw of Him. It had been His prerogative to choose them from among all the thousands of Israel with a view to fruit-bearing that would abide, even others who would believe on Him through their word. Not only so but they were to bear the fruit of the Spirit in the midst of a world of corruption. They had already experienced the hatred of men, because of being His disciples, but this would be intensified after He had gone and He was preparing them for it. We understand that after His death there were those who were turning back to the keeping of the law of Moses and turning their backs to Him and what He had taught. They were reminded that if He had not done among them the works which none other did, there would be some excuse for doing so; but because of His presence among them and the love of God manifest through Him, they would be without excuse [Comment 1]. He again reminded them of the coming of the Paraclete who by apostolic signs would bear witness to His divine Personality. They too would be His witnesses in a world where He had been rejected. Their witness is still with us through the written Word, first spoken to Him then placed on record by those who had followed Him in the days of His flesh.

W. H. Fullerton, T. W. Fullerton

From Methil: We considered this to be a very important part of the Lord's discourse to His disciples, and that each one of the ingredients mentioned is extremely necessary for the man of God. All are essential, and none may be discarded. The Lord said 'These things have I spoken unto you' (v. 11). The disciples were indeed privileged to hear the Lord speaking to them, and we in our day have the equivalent in His Word, equally authoritative. The

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things to which the **Lord referred** in this **verse** concerning fruit-bearing are equally **applicable** to **us** today. **We, as** branches of the Vine, **are** required to **bear fruit (v. 5)**, and those branches which **bear** no fruit **are cut** off. The application here **is** to **believers**, and the taking away of the branches signifies **a disciple** who has **made** no progress in the things of God, and has had **a wasted life** for Christ. **We** have been chosen **as** fruitbearers for Christ, and **as** such have **a** responsibility to **be** faithful to the Lord, 'Who **His own self bare** our sins in **His** body upon the **tree**' (**1 Pet. 2: 24**).

The Lord goes on to **command His disciples** to love one another. **It was** to **be** no ordinary love, **but** love **as** shown in the **example** that **He gave** them, 'Greater love hath no man than this, that **a man lay down his life** for his friends'. **He did** not consider **His** disciples to **be** servants, **but** friends, and **as** such **He made** known to them the things that **He** had heard from **His** Father (**v. 15**). **He** reminds them that **He** chose them and that they **did** not choose **Him**, and that **He** appointed them to go and bear **fruit**. **We** have been similarly chosen, and **if we are** to bear **fruit**, then **we must** first of **all** love one another.

In Mark **10: 29-30**, the Lord **makes** a promise to **His disciples**, that any one of them who **leaves** his family, or suffers anything for the gospel's **sake, will receive** a bountiful reward, **but** not without persecution, and in the world to come, eternal **life**, '**All** that would **live** godly in Christ Jesus shall **suffer** persecution' (**2 Tim. 2: 12**). **We** can **expect** no love from the world, for **it** only has **time** for **its** own. **We as** children of God are not of the world, **but** chosen out of the world and, therefore, hated by it.

The character of the servant of the **Master** proves the abiding character of the Christian in his testimony. The Lord told **His disciples** that not only **did** the world hate **Him**, **but** also **His** Father. 'They hated **me** without **a cause**', **He said**. How **sad** if **we** show no love towards **Him** in our daily **life** by loving one another, even **as He** loved **us**. **He left His disciples** with the promise of the Comforter, who would **bear** witness of **Him**, and told them that they

too would bear witness, having been with Him from the beginning. May we each one seek to bear witness of the One who has chosen us, that we may prove to be fruitful branches of the Vine.

From Nottingham: In our study we considered what the Lord was referring to when He said 'These things have I spoken unto you'. Was the reference to His teaching about the true vine or to the remarks contained in verses 10 and 11 about keeping His commandments and abiding in His love? [Comment 2]. We must take note of the Lord's command in verse 12 as He is obviously emphasizing the point. This is first mentioned in John 13: 34 and later 15:17. Clearly this shows that our love for one another is all we have and all that we should expect, as the world will only hate us (vv. 18-19).

As we, as disciples, have such a title as 'friend' we thought of how Moses shared such a title (Ex. 33:11), 'And the Lord spoke unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend' [Comment 6]. The disciples were called friends because they knew the counsels and purposes of God but they appeared unprepared, at that time, to accept all that was involved [Comment 7]. We considered the choosing in v. 16 to be that of the call to apostleship and labour among the churches of God. We can take courage in that the Lord was hated first and if we experience this also then we are bearing His mark and doing His work.

The Lord Jesus is shown in v. 21 as the perfect manifestation of the Father in His character, words and works. This manifestation in the Lord Jesus Christ was that which brought out their sin. In verses 22 and 24 men are shown as having no excuse or cloak because the words which the Lord spoke were not those of an ordinary man and, in rejecting them, they showed a wilful rejection of the Father in heaven. The fulfilled word in v. 25 is from Psalm 35: 19. The hatred of men the Lord accepted in pure love and patient endurance. The promise of the Comforter to console and sustain the apostles is further mentioned in John 16: 8-10. We considered why, on this occasion, the Lord said that

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the Comforter was to come from the Father. He did so earlier (John 14: 16-26), yet, in contrast in John 16: 7 the Lord says of the Holy Spirit, 'I will send Him unto you', [Comment 3]. Then in Rom. 8: 9 the Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of God while in Phil. 1: 19 He is called the Spirit of Jesus Christ [Comment 4]. It would seem that in John 16: 8-10 the Lord was speaking to emphasize the independence of the witness of the Spirit.

The Lord reminded the disciples that they had been with Him from the beginning, which we understand as referring to the time of John the Baptist, (see John 1: 35-42). This applied also to Mathias who took the place of Judas Iscariot. 'Of the men therefore which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and went out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto the day that He was received up from us' (Acts 1: 21, 22).

K. Hickling

COMMENTS

1. (Melbourne): In vv. 22 and 24, the word 'they' refers back to v. 20 where the world, i. e. the unsaved, is in view. The reaction of the Jews to the Saviour's life and testimony was what He was discussing here. He had also warned the disciples (and us!) that those who would follow Him must suffer 'for My Name's sake'.

2. (Nottingham): I judge the reference in v. 11 was all that had gone before in the Lord's discourse, particularly to His commandments about the vine and the branches. Vv. 10 and 11 stand in relation to that teaching.

3. **(Nottingham):** Taken together, the scriptures referred to indicate that, in sending the Holy Spirit, Father and Son were acting in unity.

4. **(Nottingham):** Rom. 5: 8 also describes the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Christ. An interesting concordance study is to identify the names by which the Holy Spirit is called in Scripture. In the New Testament, there are at least 16 different names given to the Holy Spirit, each of these having its own special significance.

R. L

5. **(Liverpool):** I would agree that the choosing alluded to in verse 16 has service in view, and that the choosing in this context has specifically the call to apostleship in view, as a number of contributors suggest. There is, of course, an election to salvation as well as one to service. Paul has the former particularly in view in 2 Tim. 2:10 while in 2 Pet. 1:10 Peter has the latter in view. Those in the upper room had experienced both.

6. **(Nottingham):** It is worth noting that Abraham has the unique honour of being called, 'the friend of God'. There are three references to this fact in Scripture (2. Chr. 20: 7; Is. 41: 8; 3: 23). Abraham had an intimate personal relationship with God and shared in many precious secrets of divine purpose.

The reference our friends make to Ex. 33:11, of course, indicates that Moses also enjoyed a similar close personal relationship with God although he is not designated the friend of God in the specific way Abraham is.

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7. (Nottingham): Was it not rather because the Lord regarded them as His friends that He made known to them divine counsels? In verse 14 He lays down the condition to be fulfilled to secure this privileged relationship, 'Ye are My friends, if ye do the things which I command you'.

In this portion the word for friend in the Greek is *philos* which is a term of endearment. When the Lord addressed Judas as 'friend' in the Garden of Gethsemane he used a different word, *hetairos*, (comrade) denoting a kindly term of address. It was grace on the Lord's part to greet the traitor thus.

J. K. D. J.

Bible Studies

A magazine for the exploration of the Word of God (Acts 17. 11)

EDITORIAL

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The Lord's tender care for His own is displayed in the way He sought to prepare them for the persecution that they would experience in a hostile world. He had already told them that they would be hated by the world; He now reveals to them specific ways in which that hatred would be expressed. The remembrance of these words would minister strength and comfort to them when the time of trial came upon them.

At this point in time the disciples failed to appreciate that the Lord's going away would work for their good.

The Greek word *sumphero*, translated 'expedient' in John 16: 7 (RV) means, 'to be an advantage, profitable, expedient (not merely "convenient")' (W. E. Vine). The Lord's departure would lead to new and greater blessing for the disciples through the coming of the Holy Spirit to indwell them and to work in them and through them. The scope of that work and the blessings it would bring are outlined in the Lord's teaching in the study portion for this month.

We regret that there has been a decrease in the number of study papers received in recent months and we would exhort former contributors to 'continue in these things'.

J. K. D. J.

MAN - HIS NATURE AND CONSTITUTION (continued)

The consequences of the Fall

Despite his inclination towards God, man disobeyed Him, exalting his will against the expressed will of God. Eve was persuaded by Satan to take the forbidden fruit, and Adam, having the choice before him, took the fruit as a straightforward act of will. It was a matter of obe-

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dience (Rom. 5: 19), and Adam chose to align himself with Satan in disobedience to God. God had warned that death would result if they took the fruit, and death of two sorts followed - physical and spiritual.

Physical death is the separation of body and soul **and** spirit. This is not the primary reference of Gen. 2: 17, since it did not take place immediately, although the process of corruptibility which results in death did begin at the instant of sin. A creature is not necessarily mortal, and man was not created mortal, but he brought death upon himself (1 Cor. 15: 21).

Spiritual death is separation from God, which was instantaneous at the time of Adam's sin. The moral likeness to God is lost, and man no longer tends to do what is good, but instead his will is enslaved, his intellect blinded and his feelings corrupted. In choosing to make his own will, rather than God's, the director of his life, man has cut himself off from the spring of all good.

Adam took his action as an individual, but he was also the natural head of the human race, and the representative of that race in all his actions. Just as Levi gave tithes to Melchizedek when 'he was yet in the loins of his father' (Heb. 7:10), so men in general are regarded in Scripture as participating in, and sharing the guilt for, the sin of Adam. It is repeated several times in Rom. 5 that the one act of trespass constituted the many sinners, and all men are subject to death, even those who have not consciously sinned against a divine commandment, as Adam did (Rom. 5:14). The words 'in Adam all die' (1 Cor. 15: 22) express that solidarity of the human race with Adam which has resulted in the condemnation of all. It is not only that men are born with a tendency to sin, but they are born having sinned through their representative. This idea finds its balance in the work of Christ, as is pointed out below.

Man's present state results from the imputation of Adam's sin. As a result of this he is born totally depraved. This does not mean that he is as bad as he could be, or that he cannot do good acts (see Acts 10: 35), but that every faculty which he possesses, and every area of his being, is tainted with sinfulness. He can never therefore produce anything which is completely acceptable to God. God's law

demands that every faculty of man should be directed to love Him (Deut. 6: 5), and this man cannot do, since the Fall. His will is not now free in all respects, and man cannot of his own will turn himself to God (John 6: 44). The will remains active, however, and man does have a range of freedom of choice, and a knowledge of the direction his will should take, which renders him responsible. The intellect is also blinded; the natural man - man as born of Adam's race - cannot discern spiritual things (1 Cor, 2:14). The emotions cannot produce that constant love to God which is God's requirement. Because he is sinful man carries the guilt of sin, and exposes himself to its penalty, death. He is therefore depraved, condemnable and unable to exert himself in any way to remedy his own state.

The effects of the work of Christ

The work of Christ has, of course effects which extend far beyond man, although his redemption was its central purpose, at least as far as has been revealed to us. The effects of this work on the nature and constitution of man are all that are considered here.

Regeneration is the act of God which changes the nature of the soul, in the same way in which the fall changed its nature, but in the reverse direction. As has been shown, man naturally is in a state of death - separation from God - and regeneration is a creating again to new life (Eph. 2:1). This act is accomplished through the union of the soul with Christ (2 Cor. 5:17), and believers only live because Christ lives. Christ is the head of the new race of men recreated in Him, and the righteousness which derives from our solidarity with Him is set in opposition to the sin which derives from our solidarity with Adam. Adam was 'a figure of Him that was to come' (Rom. 5:14) because both Adam and Christ are the heads of their respective races, although the results of their actions were opposite. Believers are accounted as having died with Christ, and having been raised with Him in a life which is indissoluble (Col. 3: 1-3). Regeneration does not imply the addition of any element to man's nature, but the redirection of his faculties. Whereas previously the natural

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('soulish') man **was** paramount, now the spiritual man **is** predominant; the connection with God, which **is** the essence of **life**, has been restored.

The regenerate man **is justified** and sanctified. Justification does not produce **a** change in the nature or constitution of the **justified** person, **but declares** that he **is** relieved from liability to penalty; **it is a forensic term**. Sanctification in the believer, after initial cleansing (John 13: 10), **is a process** which **takes place** throughout his **life**, conforming his **desires** and **attitudes** to those of Christ. **It is** the continuation of the work of which regeneration **is** the beginning. The Holy **Spirit** works upon the human spirit, directing **its desires** and strengthening **it** in the constant fight against the corruption of the old nature, which remains **as long as** the believer remains in the body (**Gal. 5: 17**). This indwelling of the Spirit **is** the principal change in the **believer's** overall constitution, for although nothing **is added** to the person himself, each **believer** has working within him **a** power which **is** not in unbelievers (**1 Cor. 6: 19**). The new nature, that **is**, the soul **as** joined to Christ and directed by the Holy **Spirit**, cannot sin (**1 John 3: 9**), **but** the old nature may **still lead a** man to sin even when his mind can **see** the wrong (Rom. 7: 15-23).

Death and resurrection

Physical death **is** the separation of the soul and/or spirit from the body, and **falls** upon **all** men (**except** those **believers** who remain **at** Christ's coming) **as a** consequence of the sin which **is** in **all** men. **Spiritual** death **is** the separation of the soul from God, and the **believer** **is** not **subject** to **it**, since he has eternal **life** from the instant of his faith in Christ (John **5: 24**). For the **believer**, death **is** the entrance into **a state** of rest, in the presence of Christ (**2 Cor. 5: 8**). There the soul **is alive** and **active** (Mat. **22: 32**, Rev. **6: 9-11**), although **it is** disembodied. The story of the rich man and Lazarus does indicate some bodily appearance, **but** this may not **be** intended to **be** taken literally. Unbelievers too **are** conscious of their **state** (**Luke 16: 23**), and are **kept** under punishment until the day of final judgement (**2 Pet. 2: 9**).

The resurrection of believers **takes place** when the Lord comes for them (**1 Thes. 4: 16**). Christ's own **res-**

urrection is a guarantee of His ability to raise believers (1 Cor. 15: 20). The soul is reunited with the body, but Scripture explicitly denies that the resurrection body is identical with the body that is buried (1 Cor. 15: 37). The resurrection body bears a similar relation to the natural body as that of the seed corn to the plant which grows from it; the particles are not the same, but there is a definite continuity between the one and the other. The spiritual body will be like Christ's resurrection body; in glory and power dissimilar from the earthly body tainted by sin, but recognizably continuous with that body. Those who are not members of the Church which is Christ's body will be raised before the final judgement (John 5: 28, 29), but the nature of their bodies in resurrection is not revealed.

The eternal state

In the eternal state redeemed men will live in communion with God, exceeding the communion which existed in Eden. They will still be in bodies, which will be perfectly adapted for the service of God. There will be no further possibility of sin, since it will have been expunged from the universe and its perpetrators will be restrained in a place of punishment for eternity. Thus man, through the work of Christ, will have been brought to a position before God greater and more glorious than that from which he fell - the prime instance of the way in which God is able to overcome evil with good.

P. L. H.

THE SPIRIT'S WORK (John 16: 1-15)

From Birkenhead: The teaching of John 16 is to be viewed against the warning delivered in ch. 15 that because of the hatred of the world for the Master, His servants would also be hated. Verse 3 states the reason for this hatred is the failure of the world to recognise or accept the Father or the Son who came to them. Those who were to mete out this treatment to the apostles are referred to simply as 'they' and later in the chapter as 'the world'. It was suggested that the word 'world' means that system or arrangement organized by the devil against God. Evidence of the treatment to be expected is given in v. 2, where the apostles are warned

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that they **will be put** out of the synagogue, thus becoming social outcasts. This would hurt them the more **because** those imposing such treatment would do so in the mistaken impression that they **were** serving God, **as** for **example did Saul of Tarsus**.

As the narrative develops **it** shows the apostles, who **as Jews** had **a** vision of the Messianic kingdom always in mind, becoming accustomed to the **fact** that their Lord **was** leaving them. There follows **a gradual** opening **up** of what they should learn **at a rate** commensurate with what they could **bear**. Further truth would **be revealed** by the Holy **Spirit** when **He came**. Such **was** their concern for their own predicament that none **asked** where the Lord **was** going. **Despite** this, the Lord confirms the necessity for **His departure** and the **equal** necessity for the Holy Spirit to come to **fulfil a** different role in these soon-to-be-changed circumstances.

The work of the Holy **Spirit** towards the apostles **was** to **guide** them in the truth **as** spoken by the Father. This emphasizes not that the **Spirit is subject** to the Father, **but** rather that in **perfect** harmony the **Spirit** could not **speak** other than in accordance with the Father's **will**. **He will** also declare what **is** to come and bring to light the excellencies and glories of Christ to those who **are exercised** towards Christ.

The Holy **Spirit will** also work among those who **are** unsaved and the nature of this work **is** clearly **stated** in this **passage**, that **is** to convict the world in **respect** of sin, righteousness and judgement. The meaning of the word 'convict' **was** examined and the alternative 'convince' (**RSV**) considered. **We were best able** to **see** the meaning in the **examples** of **Peter at Pentecost** and the centurion **at the Cross**.

Considerable thought **was** given to the **means** by which the Holy **Spirit** works to convict the world, and whilst recognising **His** unlimited power, **we** considered whether **it** would **be** necessary for the **Spirit** to **use** the **believer** in some way, for **example** with **tracts** and/or the Holy **Scriptures** to obtain the conviction. No firm conclusion **was** reached, although Romans **2: 6 was** thought to **be** relevant to our consideration [Comment 5].

R. C. Halpin, T. M. Hyland

From Derby: The subject of the work of the Holy Spirit in the sense in which John deals with it can be commenced in John 14: 16.

Actually, the work of the Spirit in a wider sense is seen in Gen. 1: 2 but in John 14: 16 it is the title of the Holy Spirit which reveals the special character of His work with the disciples. In this verse translation appears to have been a difficulty and there are alternative meanings of Comforter, Helper and Advocate. This latter is one who pleads the cause of another person. Further, in John 14: 26 it is seen that the Spirit's work includes teaching and reminding of the Lord's teaching.

The next work of the Spirit appears in John 15: 26 and is that of witnessing. A witness is not just one who sees; he is one who testifies of that which he has seen. Here the witness of the Spirit to the disciples is to lead to their being witnesses in consequence of their having been with the Lord from the beginning of His ministry.

The subject of the Spirit's work can now be continued from the specified scripture portion.

The special work of the Spirit is associated with the absence of the Lord in person. He says that this is desirable. His going (16: 7) is expedient, that is, it achieves a desired purpose. The Spirit is to work in a wider sphere than the Lord Himself did. The sphere is world-wide (16: 8) and the work is that of convicting. Conviction is linked to the idea of guilt.

Firstly there is the matter of sin; and the sin which is foremost in the mind of the Lord Jesus is that of unbelief in Himself. This would apply particularly to the Jews. They should have been able to receive Him as Messiah even if they could not appreciate the greater truth of His Deity [Comment 6].

Verses 10 and 11 are more difficult to understand. It may help if 'convict' is regarded more as 'convince'. The absence of the Lord Jesus is the cause of difficulty when the subject of righteousness is considered. So many things seem wrong in the world and men feel that those ought to be put right. Nevertheless the Spirit can reveal that ultimately righteousness will be achieved [Comment 1]. Judgment can simply involve making a decision; but it can also involve the passing of a sentence of condemnation. The

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judgement of v. 11 seems to include the second meaning and it seems to link with the Lord's words in John 12: 31. These words are associated with the Lord's impending death and the victory this would achieve (v. 32).

In v. 13 the application of the Spirit's work is once more to the apostles. It involves guiding into the truth and the revelation of things which God has decreed for the future.

Finally, (v. 14) the Spirit's work is to glorify the Lord Jesus and to reveal truth concerning Him.

It is interesting to make a list of the activities of the Spirit in the present context. There are at least nine in this portion of Scripture.

N. Bramfitt, G. W. Conway

From Leeds: The Holy Spirit is God's means of communication with man and it is He who speaks to us the things of God (John 16: 13). He tells what is to come and perhaps more importantly tells of God's love. As the Holy Spirit is part of the Trinity He knows exactly what the will of God is and is, therefore, infallible in His work.

The Holy Spirit has a very close relationship to the Lord and one of His works is glorifying Christ, revealing who the Lord is and being His witness in the world. It is clear that all that the Lord has is also the Holy Spirit's so that the work done by the Lord with the apostles is carried on today by the Spirit with present-day disciples.

The Holy Spirit is the source of wisdom and knowledge (1 Cor. 12: 8) and has a three-fold purpose in the world. This relates to the unbeliever and tells him what his state before God is and where the folly of unbelief will take him. With some individuals he searches out what is in their heart and moves them to God by way of Christ's work at Calvary. To the believer the Spirit gives so much that to mention all would take eternity (John 21: 25). It may be that in glory saints will think more of the Spirit's work. Without Him there would be no conviction. He as the life-giver quickens those who are dead in their sins. The Spirit is with us always, supplying the power to act as God's servants just as He has since coming upon the Apostles at Pentecost. Without this power Satan would have little problem in destroying us. The Holy Spirit is the believer's strength and power.

During times of spiritual depression the Spirit helps to keep the believer in a good spiritual state. The Spirit is Comforter, Counsellor and Helper. He is also a Teacher (John 14: 26) who will never leave us short of knowledge. Not only does He teach us how to fight off Satan's attacks but He also guides us into the truths of God, revealing them to us (1 Cor. 2: 8-10). This helps our spiritual growth and our understanding of God's actions.

The action of the Spirit in churches of God was, and is of prime importance to their existence. His guidance extends through the individual to the church enabling us to be heirs of God [Comment 2], It is by the Spirit that individuals know their place in God's scheme, as preacher or pastor for example. The disciple is just a vessel through which the Spirit can work.

The Spirit's work in a historic setting is a reminder of His great power and presence. It was He who was with God at creation, who hovered over the face of the waters. It was He by whose inspiration the Scriptures were written and the prophets spoke foretelling of God's plan of salvation.

J. Gardner

From Liverpool: *Future Persecution* (1: 4) The Lord Jesus warns of persecution to come - this is the cost of discipleship; but He also goes on to tell them about the Comforter who would be there to guide and help.

Exchange of Comforters (5-7) It is easy for us to desire the presence of the Lord Jesus and to overlook the greatness of the presence of the Holy Spirit. It is an advantage to us that we have Him rather than the Lord Jesus, for He is with us twenty four hours a day, and is 'in' us. The coming of the Holy Spirit is a sign that Christ's work is complete.

He is (1) Teacher (John 14: 26); (2) Guide (16: 13); (3) Keeper of the Christian; (4) Witness of the Lord Jesus (John 15: 26); (5) Bringer of things to our remembrance (John 14: 26); (6) Forbidder (Acts 16: 7); (7) Counsellor / Comforter in which role He helps us in prayer (Rom. 8: 26). He also witnesses to us inwardly, declares the meaning of Scriptures and glorifies the Lord Jesus.

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The Spirit of Conviction (8: 11) To convict is to expose, reveal or even cross-examine. He does so in three ways (1) working directly on the minds of men, (2) enlightening minds blinded by Satan, (3) through Christian's lives and words (Rom. 10: 17). From 1 Cor. 2: 9-12 it is evident that man does not appreciate the things of God by his natural reasoning [Comment 7],

The Spirit of Truth (12: 15) The Lord Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would guide them into all the truth. There are two ways of interpreting this:

- (1) He was limiting this role of the Holy Spirit to the apostles, to reveal the truth of God in Scripture to pass on to us.
- (2) This is a truth for the whole age, and the Spirit will help today those who seek, guiding them into all God's truth [Comment 8].

K. Jones, D. Webster

From Melbourne: The blessed Holy Spirit is perhaps the least understood person of the Trinity. Is He also the most neglected?

The Spirit's work is to comfort. In verse 7 we learn about the Spirit's work as the Comforter. What a glorious title! Only a person can give comfort. Thus here we have the personality of the Holy Spirit. He is not a force or an influence, but One sent by the Saviour Himself who is able to comfort all God's children.

The Spirit's work is to convict. He convicts the world of (a) sin, (b) righteousness and (c) judgement. It was pointed out that this verse is often misquoted when brethren say '... judgement to come'. Most certainly there is judgement to come but the sinner without Christ is already under judgement - present judgement.

The Spirit's work is to guide 'into all the truth' and to show us 'things that are to come'. If we are willing, the Comforter will teach us great spiritual truths. Our knowledge about the truth of God's house is the result of the teaching of the Holy Spirit. He also reveals to us 'things to come'. Our understanding of the Rapture and subsequent events is due to the Spirit of God. '... God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit' (1 Cor. 2: 10).

The Spirit's work is to glorify our Lord Jesus Christ. This is His greatest work. He magnifies not Himself but the 'Altogether Lovely One' that 'in all things He (Christ) might have the preeminence' (Col. 1: 18).

We wondered if the disciples expected a human person whom they could see and touch. Perhaps they did. We have the advantage of looking back almost two thousand years and have learned the great truth that the divine Spirit resides within the body of each believer in Christ [Comment 3],

What a vital and unique ministry belongs to the Holy Spirit of God! With Him as our Helper we need never lose the battle against Satan. If we allow the Holy Spirit to do His work in our lives we will live triumphantly and have victory.

M. McFarlane, D. Mawhinney

From Methil: In this passage the Lord Jesus, speaking in the upper room, is preparing His disciples for His going away. He says clearly now that they will be persecuted and be thrown out for what they believe and teach. The synagogue was the centre of the life of the town in those days, and to be put out meant total ostracism. This had already happened to the blind man in John 9, and the Pharisees in John 12: 42 were afraid to confess to their belief in Him lest they be put out of the synagogue. There are several records of persecution of the disciples in the book of Acts - indeed it is said of the apostles that they were men 'doomed to die'. Those who persecuted did so because they did not personally know God or recognise Jesus Christ as His Son.

Because He was going away it was absolutely essential for them to have 'another Comforter' - the Holy Spirit. In every respect like the Lord Jesus, but not in human form, He is a divine Person, one of the Godhead.

Were the disciples sorry because the Lord Jesus was going away or were they sorry because of the persecution that He had just prophesied? [Comment 4].

The work of the Holy Spirit from the day when He came (i. e. at Pentecost) is to convict the sinner and to comfort the believer. He convinces the unbeliever that he is indeed

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a sinner in the sight of God and He does this through men who preach and who act as ambassadors on behalf of Christ.

The Holy Spirit operates through the word of God spoken or written by man to man. He clearly proves the total righteousness of the Lord Jesus in His resurrection and return to the Father. The Holy Spirit also points to future judgement for every sinner who does not accept the completed work of the Lord Jesus.

The aim of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, is to guide the convicted sinner into all the truth. Sadly there are many saved people who are not willing to be so guided. Nevertheless it is the will of God that all men should **be saved** and come to the knowledge of the truth.

The Holy Spirit does not glorify Himself; He glorifies the Son, and the thoughts and words He uses come from the Father.

He is the comfort, the helper of the believer, to meet his every single need. If we do not listen to, or read, or think about the word of God we cannot be fed or comforted by the Holy Spirit.

The mind of the Spirit is peace - the mind of the flesh is not.

During the years of His ministry, they had leaned constantly on the Lord Jesus. Now He says, 'I will send another Comforter, just like Myself. At Pentecost they knew that Comforter had come.

N. Coomer

From Musselburgh: This passage can be split into two sections: vv. 1-4, dealing with persecution and **vv.** 5-15 dealing with the work of the Holy Spirit in the world and in the disciples.

In the first section Christ is still talking about the persecution that the disciples would face; they would be thrown out of synagogues and even put to death (it is generally accepted that most of the twelve were martyred). These things were spoken as warnings, 'that when their hour is come, ye may remember them' (v. 4). and, 'that ye should not be made to stumble' (v. 1). The persecutions were carried out by those who did not know God or Christ,

but who thought that they were serving God. Paul in his persecution of the church in Jerusalem is an example of this (Acts 26: 9-12). The Spanish Inquisition was another example.

It should be noted that throughout the Lord's teaching on persecution in the upper room He refers to the Holy Spirit as the Comforter (John 14: 16, 26; 15: 26, 16: 7), as the One who succours and strengthens.

The second section deals more directly with the Holy Spirit's work in the world (vv. 8-11) and also in the believer (vv. 13-15). The Spirit's work in the world is to convict through the hearing of the spoken word, 'How shall they hear without a preacher?' (Rom. 10:14), and by working in the individual heart 'Ye do always resist the Holy Spirit' (Acts 7: 51). The conviction of the world would be in respect of sin, because it does not believe in Christ (e. g. Acts 7: 51); of righteousness because Christ is the Righteous One (Acts 7: 52) who has entered into heaven: and of judgement because Christ's death on Calvary 'brought to nought him that had the power of death' (Heb. 2:14), and that is the 'judgement of this world' (John 12: 31).

The Spirit's work in the individual believer is that of guiding, strengthening, instructing and reminding him of the things of God (John 3: 5-8; 14: 26; 16: 13). He has been gracious enough to dwell in us as a token of our redemption - another part of His work (2 Cor. 1: 22; Eph. 1:13-14). He has the privilege of being able to search the deep things of God (1. Cor. 2:10), and to reveal to us those things which He is given to reveal to us (vv. 13-15).

N. McLachlan

COMMENTS

1. **(Derby):** The presence of the Lord Jesus at the right hand of God shows Him to be the 'Righteous One', and guarantees divine acceptance of the righteousness He wrought for men.
2. **(Leeds):** Every born-again person is an heir of God and born to a heavenly inheritance (Rom. 8:17; Gal. 4: 7; 1 Pet. 1: 3, 4). Possibly our friends have the present conditional inheritance in view (Acts 20: 32).

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3. **(Melbourne):** The **Lord**, in the **Upper Room**, told **His** disciples that the Spirit would indwell them (John **14: 17**). There is no doubt that they did not understand much of what the Lord told them when He was with them. The coming of the Holy Spirit and His enabling power was one of the subjects of the Lord's post-resurrection ministry, but these things would become clear to them from Pentecost onwards as they benefitted from the instruction of the indwelling Spirit.
4. (Methil): I think it was the thought of the Lord's departure from them that made them sorrowful.
J. K. D. J.
5. **(Birkenhead):** I agree that it would be wrong to limit the Holy Spirit in the methods by which He convicts the world. He works through the Word of God and the consciences of men. What is clear is that the child of God has a responsibility in this. We remember that it was as a result of Peter's preaching on the Day of Pentecost that conviction of sin came upon many (Acts 2: 37. See also Rom. **10: 13-15**). Similarly, we cannot evade our responsibility in other avenues of outreach. Linked with our active service in witness is our duty to live Spirit-filled lives. We should be 'an epistle of Christ - - - written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God' (2 Cor. 3: 3). There have been many cases of sinners brought under conviction by the holy lives of men and women who have walked by the Spirit.
6. **(Derby):** We remember, of course, that the deity of Christ is implicit in the Old Testament promises of the coming Messiah. See, for example Is. 7: 14 and 9: 6.
7. (Liverpool): Just as important as the work of the Spirit on the minds of men is His work in their hearts.
8. (Liverpool): The second interpretation here suggested by our Liverpool contributors is, I believe, the one which can be sustained. Divine truth cannot be received by natural men, but 'the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the

deep things of God', and it is through His work in our hearts and minds that we are taught. See 1 Cor. 2: 6-16. We should remember, too, that the Spirit is also the Spirit of Truth with regard to the Gospel.

R. L

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. **From Liverpool:** In what way can we acknowledge and communicate with the Holy Spirit?

I suggest that Rom. 8:16 is helpful in this context. It indicates that the channel of communication is through the spirit part of our being.

J. K. D. J.

It seems to me that we are not intended to seek to communicate with the Holy Spirit. He acts as a guide (John 16:13), confirms our security (Rom. 8:16), and helps us to pray (Rom. 8: 26). In all these the Spirit is an aid to communication with, and knowledge of, the Father, rather than a person to be appealed to in His own right. We can ask for His help, but our petitions are addressed to the Father, in the name of the Son.

P. L. H.

2. **From Liverpool:** How do we know when it is the Spirit rather than our own minds that is guiding us? How can two Spirit-led Christians come to opposite opinions about the interpretation of a passage of Scripture?

There is clearly a danger of assuming that we have the mind of the Spirit when we do not have it. It is interesting to note that Paul was careful not to be presumptuous when giving his judgement on a particular matter (see 1 Cor. 7: 40).

J. K. D. J.

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I do not think that **we** can readily **make** this distinction. The **Spirit** works through our minds, **as He** worked through the minds of the writers of Scripture. In their **case**, their different styles of writing **are** apparent to **us**, showing that inspiration **was** not merely mechanical, although they were prevented from writing error. **We** know the leading of the Spirit through the action of our minds in understanding and applying what **is** written, and **He** does not force our minds to any conclusion, **but** teaches gradually, **as we** study the Scriptures. For this reason **it is difficult** for **us** to determine whether **we** are reaching conclusions by the help of the **Spirit** or not. The **test must** rather **be applied** to the conclusions. Are they consonant with the general teaching of Scripture? Are they in keeping with the character of Christ?

P. L. H.

3. **From Liverpool:** If the promise that **He will guide** you into **all** the truth **is** for **us** today, why **are** so many sincere Christians not **lead** into the truth of churches of God?

I have no doubt that the promise **is valid** today. So **is** the Lord's promise given in John 7: 17, where a very important condition **is laid** down, that of being willing to **be** instructed. Error may **be practised** with sincerity.

J. K. D. J.

Following what has been **said** above, **I suggest** that there **are** certain channels of reasoning along which many **believers are** unwilling to **be led**. If the mind 'blocks' these channels, people who **are** otherwise very spiritually - minded may **fail** to **appreciate certain** truths.

P. L. H.

Bible Studies

A magazine for the exploration off the Word of Bod [Acts 17. 11)

EDITORIAL

8109

It often strikes us, when reading of the Lord Jesus' teaching to His disciples, how slow they were to understand the purpose for which He came. The passage studied this month relates to a time immediately before the Lord's crucifixion, and the disciples had been with Him for about three years, yet they are still saying (John 16: 30) 'Now know we that Thou knowest all things. . . . by this we believe that Thou earnest forth from God'. They had seen Him calm the storm, walk on water, heal the sick and raise the dead, but their faith was still not unwavering. They had heard many allusions to His death and resurrection, but they still did not really understand what was to happen.

But were they really so slow? Hindsight through scriptural revelation gives clarity to our own view, and we have seen, with the Holy Spirit's help, the true purpose behind the coming of the Son into the world. The disciples were products of their own time, and all their background disposed them to reject from their minds the idea that the Messiah would suffer and die. They needed long and patient teaching from the Lord, and finally His resurrection, to break their minds free from their own misconceptions to receive the truth. It is notable that it was after the resurrection that the Lord spent time with His disciples teaching 'things concerning the kingdom of God'.

It may be that our own background and prejudices prevent us similarly from seeing the obvious. We have the Holy Spirit as a guide and teacher, but we can still be slow to be taught. Perhaps after the Lord's coming we will look back at the present time and wonder why we were so slow; in the meantime, we can seek the Spirit's guidance, and refrain from condemnation of those who went before us.

P. L. H.

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THE LORD'S DEPARTURE (John 16: 16-33)

From Birkenhead: Verse 16 points to the awakening understanding of the apostles, when it records the Lord's statement that while they are able to see Him now in person, there will be a time when they will see Him again, but in such a way as to understand Him. That is, in seeing Him then they will be able to piece together all they had been taught and had learned and will reach conclusions about the truths of the Lord Jesus which had previously eluded them - the significance of His being among them would become apparent.

We concluded from the content of the Lord's remarks and His analogy of childbirth that the 'little while' would be short. We agreed that it related to His resurrection time when He would be with the disciples, enlightening them on many matters. Their sorrow at seeing Him crucified (that which gave the world joy, v. 20), would be turned to joy.

Continuing His reference to 'that day' (v. 23) the Lord Jesus makes further revelation to them about their relationship to Him and to the Father, and to their approach in prayer. Up to this time they had petitioned the Lord Jesus directly, but in 'that day' the situation would be different [Comment 1]. It would then be appropriate that they should speak directly to the Father, using the name of the Lord Jesus as their authority. The Lord continues by telling them that their right to do this comes from the Father's love, which has been drawn forth by their acceptance and belief on His Son.

This discourse elicits from the apostles a re-affirmation of belief in their leader. However, in the knowledge of what was before Him, the Lord could inform them that they would be scattered and leave Him. The continuation of v. 32, 'and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me', may have been spoken to comfort the apostles, but would undoubtedly comfort the Son Himself.

It is difficult to understand the exact meaning of the phrase 'with me' since we know that the Lord Himself was left alone and forsaken by God on the Cross. We considered the suggestion that He was forsaken by 'God' not by the 'Father' but concluded that the character of God the Father could not be separated in such a way. It was also

proposed that the phrase 'with me' implied God's approval of what was to happen, which would include the forsaking. However, we decided that as forsaking was not in doubt, this explanation was not altogether conclusive [Comment 2]. The Old Testament type of Abram and Isaac was considered relevant to our subject. We concluded therefore that we should not forget that some matters regarding the atonement are not for our understanding but for our acceptance.

R. C. Halpin, R. D. Williams

From Birmingham: What departure of the Lord is being referred to by the title? What is the meaning of the phrases 'little while' and 'that day' which the Lord uses? Thankfully the disciples had the same questions going through their minds. 'What is this that He saith, a little while? We know not what He saith' (v. 18).

Regarding the phrase 'little while' we suggest there are three possible answers.

7. It could be referring to the three days in which His body was in 'the heart of the earth', after which, on the day of His resurrection, the disciples saw Him again, on which occasion it is said 'the disciples therefore were glad when they saw the Lord' (Jn. 20: 20). This would answer v. 22 of our passage 'your heart shall rejoice'. It is also said concerning the effect that seeing the Lord again after His resurrection had upon the disciples, on the day of His ascension, that they 'returned to Jerusalem with great joy' (Lk. 24: 52).

2. It could be referring to the short time that elapsed between His ascension from the Mount of Olives to the Father, and the Day of Pentecost. From that point onwards they would see Him no more, bodily; but because on the Day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit was sent and they were all filled with Him, through His ministry to them, they would be able to 'see' the Lord in a way never before possible, that is by discernment, through the fulfilment of v. 14 (See also Jn. 14: 21).

3. It could be referring to the 'little while' which will have elapsed from His ascension from the Mount of Olives, to the Father, through to His return again, to the air for His saints (1 Thes. 4: 16, 17).

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This phrase 'little while' is also spoken of by the writer to the Hebrews as 'a very little while', referring again to that time-period prior to that time when 'He that cometh shall come' (Heb. 10: 37).

It was suggested that when the Lord said, 'In that day ye shall ask me nothing' (v. 23), He could be speaking of the fact that when He is manifested, and we see Him even as He is, in 'that day' we shall be like Him and shall not need to ask anything, for we shall know all things 'even as also I have been known' (1 Cor. 13: 12).

In the first half of the chapter the Lord taught concerning the coming of the Holy Spirit. This could not happen until He had ascended to the Father (vv. 7, 10). The meaning of our title, 'the Lord's departure' is, therefore, concerning His departure from this scene, His ascension to the Father (see also Jn. 7: 33).

In v. 16 the Lord gives a double use of this phrase 'a little while'. The first could be referring to that time when **He** would be **with** them prior to His ascension (which would cover His departure to Calvary, His resurrection and the forty days prior to the actual day of His ascension). The second to the short time from His ascension up to Pentecost when they received the Holy Spirit, when they would see Him again, by discernment. This is in accordance with suggestion No. 2.

A look at the Greek is interesting regarding this thought. 'Behold' (v. 16) *theoreo*, means to view as a spectator. It is used of one who looks at a thing with interest and for a purpose, usually indicating careful observation of details (Vine). This is what the disciples were able to do whilst the Lord was with them. The word 'see' *harao*; means to discern, 'mental perception', (Vine). This would have been the privilege of the disciples from the day of Pentecost onwards, and is the privilege of every child of God today, to 'see' the Lord by spiritual discernment, as the Holy Spirit reveals Christ and His things to us, through the Word of God (v. 14. See also Lk. 24: 27 and 45 in the light of 2 Cor. 3:17) [Comment 3].

It is today, or the present dispensation, that we suggest is the meaning of the Lord's words 'that day'. He is not

necessarily referring to a specific day, but as the Greek indicates (*hemera*) 'an age', 'a period of time', 'a period of undefined length' (Vine).

J. Watts

From Cowdenbeath: All times are within the Father's authority (Acts 1: 7). One day it was time to send His Son (Gal. 4: 4) but now the day was drawing near when the Lord would leave His own. The words He uses, 'behold' and 'see' are two different words also in the Greek. In a little while they would not be looking at Him as they then were. That troubled them. He would be out of their sight, but He consoled them with the fact that, subsequently, they would see Him in a new way as they had never seen Him before.

The disciples discussed these things openly and seriously. They did not understand the message. In grace, their Lord explained that the sorrow into which they must pass as He was crucified on the cross would contrast sharply with the joy of the world at such an occasion. The world believed that, at last, they were rid of Jesus of Nazareth. However, theirs was to be real joy since the very thing that had caused their sorrow was to be so translated. Their joy would come out of their sorrow; thrilling experience! In interpretation the Master of explicit examples illustrated the thought by reference to a mother's feelings at the birth of her child.

Of those days of joy the Master spoke indirectly of the work of the Spirit. He said, 'Ye shall ask Me nothing' or, as the RV margin states, 'Ye shall ask Me no question'. This, surely, was because the Spirit would guide into all the truth. There had been many questions at this time asked by Peter, Thomas, Philip and Jude. The gracious Interpreter, leading and teaching, would shortly be with them for ever.

In that day they would have a new relationship with the Father. Then they would ask of the Father directly but they would ask in His Name and the Father would give in His Name, that is, in the Name of the Lord Jesus.

R. I. Shaw

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From Derby: The imminence of the Lord's departure is seen in the institution of the Remembrance. This is recorded in Matthew, Mark and Luke, but not in John. Departure is implied in Mat. 26: 29, Mark 14: 25 and Luke 22: 18.

Excluding the actual Remembrance, John 13 covers much of the ground of Matthew, Mark and Luke, but it introduces the subject of departure differently in v. 33 and very briefly deals with Peter's intention to follow the Lord fully. Following directly, John 14: 1-3 again introduces departure quite differently from the other gospels. It also introduces return to take the disciples. This is repeated in 14: 18 effectively in a very few words [Comment 4].

In spite of departure, there is indicated in 14: 23 a mystical presence, for any man, of the Father and the Son.

The Lord in John 16 is preparing the disciples for the difference in their circumstances consequent on His departure, and this change of emphasis is brought out in vv. 4 to 7.

The initially temporary nature of His departure is shown in v. 16; but the disciples did not understand it. Their questioning is answered by the Lord in vv. 19 to 20 with a promise of joy and further promise in v. 22. The truth is explained by the parable of v. 21.

The changed relationships are set out in vv. 24 to 26 and these explanations lead in v. 28 to the Lord's claim regarding His coming from God the Father to the world and returning to the Father. The disciples came to appreciate this but the Lord's question in v. 31 reflects the limits of their understanding.

The final verses (32, 33) deal with their leaving Him in His time of need. These verses show His confidence in the Father and comfort for them in their time of tribulation.

It is desirable to look a little at His return after the initial departure of Calvary. The first fulfilment of His 'I come again' is to Mary Magdalene in John 20: 11-18. This and other appearances lead on to a more marked departure not described by John.

N. Bramfitt, G. W. Conway

From Douglas, Isle of Man: It is apparent from the reading that the disciples could not grasp the significance of the Lord's words when He referred to His departure from His

earthly grave to be glorified (John 20:17) and His return unto them again. This was surely due to the fact that the Holy Spirit had not yet been given unto them in full measure (John 14:17). We note again the Lord's style of teaching His disciples things which they were to remember. The Lord had many things to say to them before He went away, even for such a short time and to help them grasp these things He made them question within their own minds (vv. 17, 18; 13: 36, 14: 5, 8, 22).

In verse 23 the Lord repeats His promise to His disciples of a privilege in prayer which He spoke of in John 14:13-14, but whereas in chapter 14 the Lord says 'that will I do', in our portion it is changed to 'He will give it you'. We conclude that while the Lord was on earth anything that the disciples would ask in His name, would be done by Him to the glorification of the Father; but the time came when the Lord's work on earth was complete and 'in that day' (v. 23) the disciples were to ask and receive from the Father [Comment 5].

The Lord was able to predict the joy that the disciples would feel when they saw Him raised again from the dead and a progression of this joy can be seen through our passage. First of all in verse 20 the Lord speaks of their sorrow being turned into joy, which would have been their initial reaction on first seeing the Lord alive again; the Lord whom they had followed for three years, whom they had grown to love and depend on. They would forget the sorrowful times they experienced in His absence, the anguish many would have felt at letting the Lord down (v. 21). This joy would be so full, so complete, that they would remember it for the rest of their lives and would motivate them through tribulation and trial. This was a joy that 'no one' could take away (v. 22) (see 1 Pet. 1: 8).

P. J. Dodge

From **Leeds**: We considered this passage in three sections:

1. The Lord leaving His disciples for a little while (while in the tomb) (vv. 16-22).
2. Instructions on praying in Jesus' Name (vv. 23: 27).
3. His leaving for heaven, and the disciples problems (vv. 28-33).

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The Lord continued patiently to prepare His disciples for the turmoil that would be theirs after His departure. The 'hour' of Calvary had almost come upon Him, yet His concern was not for Himself, but for His 'sheep'.

In the first section (vv. 16-22) the disciples struggled hard to understand what the Lord meant by the twice-mentioned 'a little while' (v. 16). We concluded that the former 'little while' referred to His three days and three nights in the tomb, and the latter 'little while' to His appearance to them after His resurrection (Acts 1: 3) [Comment 6]. Jesus would soon be isolated from His friends, from mankind, and even from His Father, yet He feared for the effect this would have upon His disciples in their being isolated in the world, as they mourned, and the world rejoiced at His death. He looked beyond His death 'for the joy that was set before Him' (Heb. 12: 2). He pointed the disciples to time beyond their sorrow, when they would be reunited with Him and when their sorrow would be replaced with a 'joy no one taketh away from you' (v. 22).

In the second section (vv. 23-27) the Lord touches again on what is in ch. 14: 13, with regard to praying in His Name in that day, (v. 23). Whilst the Lord was present with them, they had little need to ask for anything of the Father, but when He returned to heaven, they would 'ask... the Father in My Name' (v. 23). They had learned much of the Father, through the Son, and of His greatness. The Lord gave His authority to use His Name as they prayed to the Father. The Father would hear their prayers, not only for Jesus' sake, but because He loved them (v. 27). After His resurrection and return to the Father, we wondered if the disciples ever spoke to the Lord Jesus directly, and, if so, for what [Comment 7].

The third section (vv. 28-33) was earlier referred to by the Lord in John 13: 33, 14: 3. Now he spoke plainly that He was going away (v. 29) and His disciples understood. The Lord knew that they would desert Him and be scattered abroad.

I. Gardner, H. R. Dodge

From Liverpool: 'A little white' (vv. 16-24). There are two possible explanations for this:

- (a) there are two periods of time involved here -
 (i) between then and His death
 (ii) between His death and resurrection e. g. AV, RV, TEV.
- (b) there is one time-period involved, namely that between His death and resurrection, e. g. NIV [Comment 8].

'In that day' (v. 23)

This is the period between Pentecost and the Rapture. The Lord's promise having been fulfilled (v. 20), we can now enter into the joy of the resurrection (v. 22). It is remarkable that the Lord was concerned about the disciples' sorrow (v. 21) and not His own sorrow.

'In my Name' (v. 23)

The Lord did not specify which of His names were to be used here. Some thought the name 'Jesus' was used in reference to His earthly life and that the correct phraseology is 'in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ' when used in prayer. Is this correct or are we being pedantic? [Comment 9].

It is unnecessary for each person taking part in the prayer meeting to use this phrase once we have approached the Father in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ at the start of the prayer meeting [Comment 10].

Speaking Plainly (v. 29-33)

The disciples are said to have believed that Jesus came from God because He knew all things (v. 30). Omniscience is an attribute of deity. Verse 31 can read as a question or a statement. It is preferable as a statement as the emphasis in the original is on the word *now* i. e. 'you do *now* believe, but your belief will soon be shaken' [Comment 11].

P. Barrett, D. Webster

From Methil: On His departure the Lord said to His disciples, 'Again a little while and ye shall see me'. Both the 'little while's' of this verse may be understood as one and the same although John uses a different Greek verb 'to see' in each half of the verse [Comment 12]. The first is his normal *theorein*, whilst the second is His more suggestive *opsesthai* with its inference of beatific vision. It

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can be understood as the passing of the Lord from physical sight and His subsequent resurrection appearances. As the disciples wondered at what He was saying their minds must have gone back to verses 5 and 10: 'But now I go unto Him that sent Me, and none of you asketh Me, 'Whither goest Thou?' and again, 'Because I go to the Father and ye behold Me no more'.

When the Lord returned again their sorrow was turned to joy: 'The disciples therefore were glad when they saw the Lord' (John 20: 20) and in 16: 22 'and your joy no one taketh away from you'.

The Lord used the example of the woman travailing in childbirth until the time of her delivery of the child. Her travail and sorrow were immediately forgotten in the joy she had. So the joy of the resurrection for all the world's persecution will become the highlight in the Christian experience. Although the disciples did not seem to understand that the Lord was going to die, that He would be raised again, this must have been a tremendous experience for them when He appeared again in resurrection thereby turning their sorrow to joy. In verse 23 the disciples are introduced to a new conception of prayer by speaking to the Father through the Lord Jesus Christ and not directly as before [Comment 13]. The former things as spoken in Proverbs were not understood by the disciples but now He could say that He would tell them plainly of the Father, as confirmed in v. 29.

D. B. Reid

From Musselburgh: From previous studies it has been shown that the Lord had to depart before the Comforter could come. In this passage the imminence of this is brought out by the words, 'a little while, and again a little while' (vv. **16, 17**). These words puzzled the disciples and there may be several thoughts about what is referred to. The first period takes us to the Lord's burial, the second to His resurrection appearances. It may be that there is also a reference to the period until the Lord's return to the air, as that will bring great joy to us. These two trains of thought are further strengthened by the disciples puzzling over the phrase, 'because I go unto the Father' (v. 17).

This could refer to the ascension of Christ to the Father before visiting the disciples (as spoken to Mary Magdalene in John 20:17), but the context shows it to be His return to sit at the Father's right hand (Eph. 1: 20).

The Lord refers to the joy that their seeing Him again would bring, and this could be either their seeing Him in the locked room (John 20: 20), or to the joy of salvation at the second coming, and again we concluded that it was the former. In both cases the promise, that, 'the joy of the Lord is your strength' (Neh. 8:10) finds a fulfilment. During the early period of witness, as recorded in the book of Acts, Peter and others were fired by the Holy Spirit and by certainty of the return of Christ that they were able to preach the word with boldness.

In the Lord's last recorded teaching He reminds the disciples of the closeness of all these things, 'Behold the hour cometh, yea is come', and He also tells them that they will be scattered and that He will be stricken (see Zech. 13: 7). He also tells them that during the period in which they would forsake Him, from the Garden of Gethsemane until the Cross, the Father would be with Him, comforting and strengthening. It was only during that period on the Cross while suffering as the sin bearer that He was really alone and forsaken by His God.

In the course of this teaching, and against the background of His departure the Lord still manages to impart a note of comfort, 'Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world'. This He did by His death and resurrection.

N. C. McLachlan

From Nottingham: This particular passage starts just after the Lord had been talking about the rest of His own life and the work of the Spirit after He would be gone. He starts by saying (v. 16) 'A little while and ye behold Me no more; and again a little while, and ye shall see Me'. This can be taken literally or figuratively. If it is taken literally, then the Lord first refers to a 'little while' which could be a few hours until He was crucified and was put in the tomb. When He was put in the tomb they would see Him no more. The Lord then refers again to a second 'little while' which could be the time when He was in the tomb before He was raised, after which they would see

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Him once more. This **view is supported** by v. 22, 'ye therefore now have sorrow; **but I will see** you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no one taketh away from you'. If this verse **is** taken literally then **it** supports the first **view, because** when the **disciples saw** the Lord again, after **His** death, they **were** joyful and rejoiced.

If, on the other hand, the phrase **is** taken figuratively, the first '**little while**' that the Lord refers to could **be** the **time** from then on until **His** final return to Heaven where **He is** now. When the Lord finally went into Heaven, the **disciples saw Him** no more. The second '**little while**' is the **time He is** and **will be** in Heaven, until **He** comes **back** to **take us** to **be** with **Him**, when **we 'will see Him'**. This **view** could also **be** supported by v. 22 in that when **we see Him** again our hearts **will** rejoice **but** the **time** now can hardly **be** referred to **as** sorrow. Verse 25 can also support the second **view**. This could mean that the Lord **had** earlier spoken to them figuratively, therefore **His** preceding statements on the **subject** had been figurative. **We were divided** in our **views** on the statement, **but** the most popular **view was** the first one mentioned. In any **case, it is difficult** to define the '**little while**' **said** by the Lord, when 2 Pet. 3: 8 says 'one day **is** with the Lord **as** a thousand years, and a thousand years **as** one day'.

The **disciples** muttered to themselves that they **did** not understand, **but** the Lord knew what they wanted to **ask Him**, so he answered their **queries (Verse 20 onwards)**. **It is** interesting to note that the end of v. 22 says, 'your joy no one taketh away from you'. This wonderful statement means that other people **will** not **take** the **disciple's** joy from him and, in **fact**, the only person who can **take it** from him **is** himself.

In v. 29 the **disciples** say, 'Lo, now **speakest** thou plainly, and **speakest** no proverb'. This statement **seems** hard to understand since the Lord had **just said**. 'These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs; the hour cometh when I shall no more **speak** unto you in proverbs, **but** shall **tell** you plainly of the Father'. The **disciples** carry on to say, 'Now know **we** that thou knowest **all** things, and needest not that any man question you. . . .!' Surely this **was** not the **case** [Comment 14]. **If we** go to other **passages** in the

New Testament such as the Lord appearing to the two on the road to Emmaus (Lk. 24) and in the same chapter, His appearing to the disciples when they were gathered together, the two on the road to Emmaus thought that the Lord had gone for good, and the disciples gathered together thought He was a ghost.

T. Elson

COMMENTS

1. **(Birkenhead):** The two words 'ask' in v. 23 are translations of different Greek words. The first, *erotao*, usually suggests asking on a basis of familiarity. Here I suggest it refers to the questions which the disciples had been asking about what was going to happen to the Lord. The second, *aiteo*, refers to the attitude of one who asks as a supplicant, addressing one greater than himself. When the resurrection had passed, the disciples would have no doubts about the Lord's intentions, but would be able to petition the Father in confidence using the name of His Son.

2. **(Birkenhead):** The Father was with His Son through His trial and torture, and on to the crucifixion. I judge that it was only in the period of darkness that the Lord was forsaken by the Father.

P. L. H.

The Lord Jesus Christ is perfectly God and Man. Therefore the Scriptures carefully distinguish between what is proper to His deity and what is proper to His humanity. For example, concerning His birth we are told, 'Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given' (Is. 9: 6). The dreadful cry of Mat. 27: 46 and Mark 15: 34 preserves such a distinction for it is clearly the cry of a Man to His God. The Scriptures nowhere explicitly say that the Father forsook the Son at Calvary or at any other time or place, such a thing would appear to call into question the eternal unity of the Godhead. How it was that the Man was forsaken at Calvary yet, as the Son was perfectly united with the Father may be part of the mystery of godliness which is great.

I. E. P.

The above comments illustrate two differing viewpoints frequently expressed on this point. The Lord, although

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one glorious Person, has two natures, divine **and** human, and therefore speaks of His Father and His God. **In** the first and last utterances from the cross the form of address used is 'Father'. In His anguished cry recorded in Mat. **27: 46** the form of address used is 'God'. It was as God that the Father forsook the sin-bearer at the cross, but whether the form of address is God or 'Father' it is the same Person that is in view. See also B. S. Vol. 36 p. 56 comment 5 where the view expressed by P. L. H. is strongly supported. This subject may be profitably pursued further.

J. K. D. J.

3. (Birmingham): This paper gives a most helpful summary of various possible interpretations of the phrase 'a little while', with cogent arguments in favour of the second possibility. These depend in part upon taking *horao* in its sense of 'mental perception'. This is quite possible, just as in English we may say that we 'see' an argument, but since it is only a secondary sense (just as in English) the argument from the use of this verb is not conclusive. My own opinion inclines to the first possibility, that the Lord was saying that in a short time He would be taken from them by death, but a little while afterwards they would see Him again in resurrection. This seems to be borne out by His own explanation (vv. 20-22); the world rejoiced when the Lord was crucified, and the disciples wept, but their sorrow was turned to joy when they saw the Lord after His resurrection (Jn. 20: 20). The resurrection seems also to accord with the Lord's simile of giving birth; joy at the new life overcomes the memory of **past** pain.

P. L. H.

It is worth noting, as some contributors have pointed out, that the RV uses two words, 'behold' and 'see' for the two Greek words *theoreo* and *optomai*. The latter word may be found in some dictionaries under the word *horad* but as W. E. Vine states, 'it supplies some forms that are lacking in that verb. Dr. Strong gives the following definitions: *theored* signifies an earnest but more continued inspection.

optomai to gaze (i. e. with wide open eyes as at something remarkable).

It is the latter word that is used in the Lord's message, Go tell My brethren that they depart into Galilee, and there they shall see Me (Mat. 28: 10), and in Mat. 28: 7; Mk. 16: 7. This supports the view expressed above.

J. K. D. J.

4. (Derby): John 14:18 refers to the Lord's presence with the believer through the person of the Holy Spirit, as this paper indicates. This is not the same as the return in John 14: 3.

5. (Douglas): While the Lord was with the disciples He taught them to pray 'Our Father.....', so not all their requests were made to Jesus Himself.

6. (Leeds): Is not the first 'little while' the period from the time when the Lord was speaking up to His being taken away by the High Priest's servants? See the Birmingham paper and Comment 3 on it.

7. (Leeds): The only recorded instances of direct address to the Lord Jesus are those in which the Lord appeared to Stephen, at his martyrdom, and Paul, on the Damascus road.

8. (Liverpool): See the Birmingham paper for other possibilities. I cannot see why the NIV should be thought to support a single time-period; in that version v. 16 reads, 'In a little while you will see Me no more, and then after a little while you will see Me'. This surely indicates two time-periods.

9. (Liverpool): Study of the scriptural use of the name 'Jesus' shows that in the vast majority of cases where it is used without the addition of 'Lord' or 'Christ' it is in the context of description of the Lord's actions, simply as an identifier of the person. Where His name is invoked in blessing or petition, however, the usage is rather different. Several of the epistles have in their salutations

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'grace. . . . and peace from. . . . the Lord Jesus Christ' (rom. 1: 7; 1 Cor. 1: 3; 2 Cor. 1: 2; Gal. 1: 3 *et al*).

Furthermore, in the instances where an act is specifically done in the Lord's name, some expanded title is used; either Jesus Christ (e. g. Acts 16: 18) or Lord Jesus (e. g. 1 Cor. 5: 4) or Lord Jesus Christ (e. g. Eph. 5: 20). The last seems particularly relevant to the present point, as it relates to address to the Father. One concludes that scriptural example would lead one to use, in making requests to the Father, a title which acknowledges the Lordship of Christ, not simply His earthly name.

10. (Liverpool): This may be so (being pedantic!) but nonetheless most feel it fitting to make individual requests in His **name**.

11. (**Liverpool**): The Greek text, and most translations, punctuate as a question, and this seems perfectly consistent with the **sense**.

12. (**Methil**): The idea that the two 'little whiles' in v. 16 are the same is supported by one commentator in 'A Bible Commentary for Today' (p. 1326), but it seems difficult to sustain. The Lord's words indicate 'a little while' followed by one event, and 'again a little while' followed by a different event. Since the events are not the same, how can the time-periods be the same?

13. (Methil): It is not that the disciples were not to ask the Father directly, but that they were to use the name of the Lord Jesus to support their requests; their petition thus effectively becomes His.

14. (Nottingham): It was the Lord Himself who had no need to be questioned. The disciples were convinced by the authority with which He spoke about the future that He did not need to be confirmed in His opinion by discussion with any other.

P. L. H.

Bible Studies

A magazine for the exploration of the Word of God (Acts 17. 11)

EDITORIAL

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As they listened to the prayer of the Lord Jesus in John 17, the disciples could not fail to be moved. The solemnity of the hour must, of course, have impressed itself on them. So, too, must the way in which the Lord ordered His prayer. But as they heard His words, these men must have been made vitally aware that they were privileged to hear the requests of One who was in all respects equal to the Father. The word the Saviour used for 'pray' (v. 9) was in itself significant. *Erotao* is used when the petitioner is the equal of the person to whom the request is made. Wherever we have a record of the Lord Jesus at prayer, this verb is used. On the other hand, whenever the petitions of men to God are in view, one of several other words is brought into use.

The statement of John 17: 4, 'I glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which Thou hast given Me to do', is one of the sublime declarations of Scripture. The entire earthly life of the Son had been to the Father's glory (see John 4: 34; 6: 38). Now, that life was almost at an end. Ahead of Him lay Calvary, its shadow dark across His path. With the foreknowledge of deity, the Saviour was aware of all it held. As man, He shrank from the experience. Nevertheless, as God the Son, He could look to the moment when He would say, 'It is finished', and the Father would be glorified in a completed work. Truly, this was the Son of God'.

R. L

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JOHN THE SON OF ZEBEDEE THE MAN AND HIS MINISTRY

Historical Setting

The events that John wrote about in his Gospel took place in the days of his early manhood, but he wrote about them in his old age. We see divine wisdom displayed in the production of one of the inspired Gospels at a late date from the pen of an eye-witness, and at a time when apostasy had developed and heretical teaching relating to the person of Christ was being propagated.

The Man

John was a young man when the Lord chose him and put him in the forefront of the forward movement of divine purposes. He had been a disciple of John the Baptist before becoming a disciple of Christ, and John the Baptist, fulfilling his mission, had directed him to Christ (John 1: 35-37). The four Galilean fishermen were, apparently, the first of the Lord's followers, and we are indebted to John for giving us a record of those events that preceded the commencement of the Lord's public ministry. It is significant that the Lord chose these sturdy independent-minded Galilean fishermen to be His close associates. When the call came to John and his fellows to leave their daily employment for the Master's service the choice was not an easy one to make. The family business was prospering, there were hired servants to assist in the work, and there was a good working partnership formed with Peter and Andrew, but they left all to follow Christ (Mk. 1:16-20). It was the age-long choice, things or Christ. Many of their contemporaries would consider that they were most imprudent to leave their thriving business to follow the itinerant preacher from Galilee. We know that if they had failed to respond to the call their loss would have been incalculable and eternal. There is always a price to be paid, a cost to be counted, but the cost of not responding is infinitely greater. We have all had our moments of doubt and despair but John had no regrets when he looked back.

The **time came** in the Lord's ministry when **He called twelve** men out from the **multitude** of **His disciples** and named them **apostles** (Mk. 3: 14-19). John the son of **Zebedee** was one of the **twelve**. The names of the **apostles** are given **four times** in the Scriptures. There are variations in the **order** of the names in each of the **lists**, **but** the names of the four Galilean fishermen **are** always in the first four **places** (Mat. 10: 2-4; Mk. 3: 14-19; Lk. 6: 13-16; Acts. 1: 12, 13), indicative no doubt of the important role they were to play in the outworking of divine purpose. **It should be noted** that, '**He appointed twelve** that they might **be** with **Him**, and that **He** might send them forth to preach' (Mk. 3:14). The experience of 'being with **Him**' **was** an essential prerequisite to **effective** service.

John **is** sometimes referred to **as** 'the apostle of love', and the study of his writings would appear to confirm the aptness of this designation, **but** other emotions were characteristic of him in his youthful days. The surname of Boanerges **was** given to James and John by the Lord **Himself** (Mk. 3:17), and there are incidents recorded in the **Gospels** that reveal the appropriateness of that appellation. John **was quick** to forbid the person who **was** casting **out** demons in the Lord's name **because** he **was** not one of them (Lk. 9: 49), and ready to **call** down fire from heaven upon the Samaritans who were discourteous to his Master (Lk. 9: 54). Being with the Master changed him, gradually he began to **take** on his Master's likeness. The Lord carefully prepares **His** instruments and **His** men for **His** service. The stones that **David plucked** out of the torrent **bed** had been lying there for a very long **time**. They had fallen into the torrent somewhere upstream in **a jagged** and angular **state**, and in **due time** they **came to** the right **place** in the right condition to **be** used. Those who are **used** in the Lord's service are **subjected** to a similar process.

In his early manhood John **was a place** seeker. **He was** linked with his mother and his brother in asking for a **place of** high honour in the Lord's kingdom. **He** had to **be** reminded on that occasion that rewards have to **be** earned by faithfulness. Although **privileged** above others in that circle of **twelve** he **was**, **like** the others, out of

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touch with divine purposes **as** the Master neared the cross. The **last** journey **up** to Jerusalem was marred by **a bitter** disputation over precedence and the contention **spilled** over into the **upper** room itself (Lk. **22: 24**). In retrospect and **guided** by the Spirit John **tells us** how the Lord shamed them by **His** action (John **13: 4, 5**). Rank and position were not to **fill** their minds; they **must** learn to love and **serve** one another, and the Master **Himself** provided them with the example. **It was** these men that the Lord would **use** so effectively after the cross.

His Mission

It was to John and his fellows that the Lord **gave** what **we** have termed the **Great** Commission (Mat. **28: 19, 20**). The carrying out of that commission **led** to the fulfilling of the **two great** divine purposes relating to this dispensation. The **first** of these **was** revealed by the Lord **at Caesarea Philippi**, when **He** spoke of the building of what **He called** 'My Church', and **made it** clear that the unity of that church could not **be** disrupted (**Mat. 16:18**). That work began **at Pentecost** and continues throughout this present day of **grace**. **It will be** completed when the Lord comes to the air, when **He will** present the church unto himself (Eph. 5: 27). That church embraces every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, and no one can **be** taken out of that organic unity. In the outworking of that great purpose John and his fellows were deeply involved fulfilling their mission of taking men **alive** for Christ. The second great purpose dear to the heart of the Lord **was** this, that **members** of **His** church should, during their **lifetime**, **be** together in **a** visibly expressed unity that would present **a** powerful witness to the world. John in chapter **17** of **His** Gospel records the Lord's prayer in which **He makes** request for the expression of this unity among **His** own. John's mission **was** to **make disciples**, to **baptize** them and to teach them. The teaching that the Lord had given to **His** apostles in the first instance **became** the Apostles' Teaching, for they **received it** from **Him** and faithfully transmitted **it** to others (John **17: 8; Acts 2: 42; Heb. 2: 3**). Obedience to that teaching brought men and women together in churches of God in **a** visibly expressed unity (Rom. **6: 17**).

This unity **was** the result of conforming to the pattern **set** out in that teaching. John was **active at** the beginning **of** the dispensation in establishing and maintaining that unity, and he **was**, apparently, **still** there towards the **close** of the first century **AD**. In the early days he **was** associated with Peter in giving firm, bold, leadership to the amazement of the Jewish **leaders (Acts. 4: 13)**. **At a** much later **date** he wrote to the Church in Smyrna, '**Be** thou faithful unto death' (**Rev. 2: 10**). There are two ways in which this exhortation might **be** fulfilled. One **was exemplified** by James, his brother, who **was** martyred **at** an early **date (Acts 12: 2)**; the other was **exemplified** in John whose faithfulness was manifested in constancy over **a** long period of **time** until his homecall in old **age**.

His Message

We are greatly indebted to John for the inspired words he wrote. They, no doubt, had **a** definite **effect at** the **time** they were written, **but** the comfort and blessing they have ministered throughout the intervening centuries has been incalculable. Through them, 'he being **dead** yet speaketh'.

The first three gospels are in many respects similar in their method of presentation, and have, therefore, been termed the synoptic Gospels. The Gospel of John **is** unique in **its** mode of presentation. **Of** course, in common with the other Gospel writers John **was** controlled by the Holy **Spirit**, and **like** them too he **leaves** the **stamp** of his own personality on what he wrote. John had the ability to present profound truth in **simple** language and with great lucidity. **His** principle objective in writing **is** defined in the **latter** part of his Gospel (John **20: 31**). The **passage** of **time** has confirmed the effectiveness of his **message**.

One notable feature of his Gospel **is** the prominence **it gives** to the Lord's Upper Room ministry. John **was** there in the upper room when the Lord opened **His** heart to **His** own before **He** went to the cross.

The themes found in the Gospel **recur** again in the **epistles** (particularly **1** John) confirming the identity of the writer. In the **epistles** there **is** much helpful teaching

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on how to live in the enjoyment of the eternal life we possess through faith in Christ, and clear instruction for dealing with sinful acts in our lives in order that forgiveness may be obtained and communion with God restored. Joyful Christian living comes through fellowship with God and with His Son. John's writings also combated the heresies relating to the person of Christ that were being propagated in that day and are still current today.

Finally through John we are given the last glimpse of corporate testimony towards the close of the 1st Century AD, as seen in the seven churches to whom he was commanded to write (Rev. 1:11), as one associated with them in the visible unity that was then still in existence (Rev. 1: 6, 9). Not only was he given a revelation of the true state of those churches as the Lord Himself saw them but also a review of the outworking of divine purposes and the final consummation of those purposes, that he might record them in an inspired account.

'Lord, and what shall this man do?' (John 21: 21). The question had come from Peter's lips as he stood with the Lord by the Galilean shore in that post-resurrection scene. Although the part that John would play was as truly known to the Lord as the part that Peter would play, He did not choose to disclose at that point in time that John's major contribution to the work of the Lord would be through the inspired writings that would come from his pen in the evening of his days.

J. K. D. J.

GLORIFYING THE FATHER (John 17: 1-10)

From Birkenhead: It was impressed upon us how privileged we are to be able to read the words which the Son of God used when He was praying to His Father. In reading we can understand that the Lord, knowing His work (plan of salvation) to have been designed and planned in the Godhead before the creation of the world, and having experienced the unfolding of that plan, would now be preparing for the ordeal which He knew He must face. His words, 'Father, the hour is come', convey this and much more to those who will meditate upon them.

Not only were the apostles present at this time (for we assume there to be no break in events at the end of chapter 16), but they were the subject of at least a part of the Lord's prayer to His Father; this prayer is for His own. This does not contradict the statement made in 16: 26, for that time had not yet come.

Vv. 1-3 record the Lord speaking as God the Son to God the Father and refers to His authority over all flesh, and His imparting of eternal life to those whom He has been given. From v. 4 onwards it would appear that the Lord speaks as God incarnate and also that He views His ordeal as if it were ended. Our study led us to conclude that the Son's request that He should be glorified had to do with the self-emptying of Phil. 2: 7. This was necessary in order that the great plan of salvation could be completed in the incarnate Son. Now He asks for His pre-incarnate glory to be resumed at His ascension to the Father [Comment 1], His moral glory was always clear to those who had eyes to see (John 1:14).

We considered the statement in v. 6 which indicates that there were those who were given to the Son by the Father. Ezekiel 18: 4 was relevant, indicating that 'all souls are mine', and upon their confession of faith the apostles were given into the custody of the Son whom they were to serve [Comment 7].

We were interested to note that v. 3 gives a definition of eternal life which hinges on the word 'know'. This would seem to be a capacity to enjoy God which we do not have in our natural state. This is not just an intellectual perception of God, but a growing personal knowledge. It restores the capacity to know God which Adam lost [Comment 2].

R. C. Halpin, G. H. Roberts

From Derby: According to Vine 'to glorify' means to magnify, extol, or praise, especially of glorifying God, that is ascribing honour to Him, acknowledging Him as to His being, attributes and acts. At the beginning of this prayer for Himself, Jesus lifts up His eyes to heaven where

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His Father is. He asks to be glorified so that **He** can glorify the Father. The Son can glorify the Father by revealing **Him** and manifesting **all** that **He** has and **is. He is** not the **rejected** One here **but is** seen **as** having accomplished **all** God's heavenly and everlasting purposes. So **He** does not **speak** of **His** death and resurrection, **but** looks beyond **it** and **asks to be glorified. He** had always been about **His** Father's business. Even when **He was twelve** years of **age He was able** to say, 'Wist ye not that **I must be in my Father's house?**' (Luke 2: 49). **He is** God, so **as** man **He** can **receive** 'authority over **all** flesh'. **Believers** from **all** flesh, not **just** the **Jew**, have eternal **life** in Christ. Christ **is** that **life. He came to give it** to a people who had **left** God. **He** wants them to know the **true** God **as** opposed to **all** **false** deities. Christ **emptied Himself** so that **He** could do the **will** of **His** Father. Every **created** being **is** a servant. Only Christ could **become** a servant. This **is** the only occasion on which **we read** that **He called Himself** Jesus Christ.

After He had spoken of **Himself He speaks** of **His** work. **His** entire **life** on earth had been spent in obeying and pleasing the Father. Everything has been completed to **His** Father's glory and so **He asks** the Father to glorify Him. **In v. 5 we see** that Christ had the glory in heaven before **He came** to earth and **He** would have **it** again when **He** returned to heaven, **but this time as** Son and Man.

From v. 6 onwards, Jesus **is** praying for **His** disciples. They **are** unlike many of the people in the world in that they have **received** the Lord's words. The Son **was able** to **impart His** knowledge of the Father to the **disciples** and **reveal** to them the Father, who **is** the source of **all** things.

The **fact** that the Father sent **Him** showed how much **He** loved them. In v. 10 **we read** that Jesus **is** glorified **in** the disciples. This **is** a lesser glorying than that spoken of **in** v. 1 and v. 5. Now Christ has been **raised and glorified** and **is sitting at** the right hand of God. The Father's glory has always shone through **Him** and always **will** do.

6. W. Conway

From Leeds: From His birth to His death and resurrection, the Lord Jesus glorified His Father. He was the complete fullness (Col. 1:19). The holiness, wisdom and righteousness of God, shown through many ages yet only dimly reflected by even God's greatest servants here on earth, was seen in total perfection in the Son of God. His life on earth, His very being, ever brought glory to the Father (John 1: 14; 17: 4).

He had emptied Himself for the task of salvation and redemption of mankind, laying aside the glory of heaven, to live out a life on earth to the glory of His Father (Phil. 2: 6-8). His words and His works led others to praise His Father and His claims to be God were assertions of fact and not attempts to show forth His own glory.

All attempts to divert Him from His purpose of salvation and redemption were always resolutely resisted. Satan tried (Mat. 4: 1-11); the high priest tried (Mat. 26: 57-68); the crowd tried (Mat. 27: 20-23); even Peter had unwittingly tried (Mat. 16: 21-23). The Son knew that His hour must come, and now He prays, 'Father, the hour is come', (John 17:1). Momentous words, the climax of God's eternal plan! The secret: an obedient Son whose will was always to do His Father's will, always to glorify His Father, even unto the death of the cross. 'Glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was' (17: 5). The ultimate of perfect obedience was evidenced at Calvary. The Father gave His Only Son and in His death the Lord glorified the Father. Only the glory of His perfect obedience, humility and love could cause Him to yield His all for the glory of His Father. The Son glorified the Father in His life and death; the Father glorified His Son in resurrection (1 Pet. 1: 21).

A. W. J. Terrell, H. R. Dodge

From Liverpool: *Where did this prayer take place?* Despite our comment in *B. S.* 8106 (p. 86) we are now of the opinion that this prayer, the true Lord's prayer, took place

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in the upper room. Presumably it was audible, and the Lord Jesus would hardly have prayed aloud while walking through Jerusalem; and 18: 1 implies that they **did** not leave until he had finished praying.

Glory

We defined this as 'honour, to magnify, extol, **praise** or worship'. The glorification of the Son brings glory to the Father (v. 1), and this **was** brought about by the obedience of the Lord Jesus to **His** Father (v. 4). Everything that the Lord Jesus **did** brought glory to God in an absolute sense - **His** miracles (John 2: 11; 9: 24), **His** entire life (John 1: 14), and ultimately **His** death (17: 4; Heb. 2: 9). Is v. 4 referring to the glory which **His** life had brought to God already, or **is** it anticipatory of **His** death? (NIV) [Comment 3]. We thought v. 5 **was** anticipatory. Phil. 2: 6-8 shows **us** the glory that the Lord **left** behind; Phil 2: 9-11 shows **us** something of the glory that **is** now **His**. The work of the cross glorifies God for **all** eternity.

A high-priestly prayer?

This **is** often **referred** to **as** the high priestly prayer by commentators. We **did** not **agree**. While on earth the Lord Jesus could not **be** a priest **at all** (Heb. 8: 4).

Eternal life (v. 3)

We have a definition of eternal life - **it is** an intimate knowledge (not **just** a head knowledge) of God and the Lord Jesus. **It is** through the Lord Jesus that this **intimate** knowledge of God **is made** possible.

'Thine they were' (v. 6)

We wondered in what sense they belonged to God. It would **seem** that this **is** referring to God's eternal choice, for eternal life **as** opposed to **service**, which **is** not, of course an arbitrary choice **but** one **based** on God's fore-knowledge [Comment 8].

Manifesting God's name (v. 6)

- (i) Jesus revealed the name 'Father'. God **was** no longer remote **but** could **be** appreciated in a close relationship [Comment 4].
- (ii) **He** **revealed** the personality behind the name. To the Jews the name of God **was** the unutterable tetragrammaton (**YHWH**). Jesus showed that this

remote and almighty being could be known and loved. In Acts 5 the disciples were proud to suffer disgrace for the Name, that is the person behind the name [Comment 5].

Faith (v. 8)

Being with Jesus over 3 years had left an indelible impression upon their minds and hearts. Here we have a definition of faith in practice.

Why did Jesus not pray for the world? (v. 9)

This does not imply that He neglected the welfare of all men. In this context His chief concern was for His disciples. The *world* here refers to all men, not the world system.

S. Seddon, D. J. Webster

From Melbourne, Australia: Until now the Lord had been graciously instructing His disciples through vital experiences which had been theirs during the final days of His presence with them, and preparing them also for things which were yet to come. Now He turns His thoughts to His Father's Home to which He will soon be returning. In anticipation of that which lies before Him, He can say that the hour to which He had looked forward from a past eternity has arrived, and He pleads for the coming of that time when the Father would glorify Him, that He might also glorify the Father.

The word 'glorify' means to ascribe honour to, and to magnify, because of the innate majesty which naturally belongs to the Creator. Soon the Son will be glorified because of His triumph over death and Hades through His resurrection. But He was glorified also through the cross, which although in the sight of men was a thing of shame, will be throughout eternity the crowning wonder of His work on earth. Through the cross it was the purpose of God to reconcile all things unto Himself. But further glory has been given unto the Son in that He has been given authority over all flesh, with the undisputed right to give eternal life to all whom the Father has given Him. The definition of eternal life which we now hear from Him, is that which He has imparted to His loved and His own, even the knowledge of the only true God, and

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of Himself, Jesus Christ, whom the Father had sent. In all things during the days of His incarnation and humiliation the Son had glorified the Father; nothing of the work which the Father had committed into His hands had been left undone. We would understand that in v. 4, He speaks in anticipation of the cross, the grave and resurrection, in addition to the revelation of the Father to men during the days of His flesh.

Now He intercedes for the men whom the Father has given Him out of the world. They had been chosen by the Father and given into His hands that they might hear from Him the Word of God and by keeping it become His disciples and witnesses in this world. They were not men of high degree or noble or wise as men reckon such, but men whom the Father had foreseen would keep His Word [Comment 8]. They were chosen to follow, to hear and obey the Son whom they had accepted as the Sent One of God. Because of this they are honoured to know that they are the joint possession of the Son and the Father; and that sovereign choice of the Father will be to the eternal glory of the Son throughout all ages.

**. W. Fullerton, D. Mawhinney*

From Methil: We believe that the Lord Jesus spoke the words recorded only in John 17 while in the upper room, shortly before going to the Garden of Gethsemane and thence to His crucifixion.

These words were spoken between two divine persons, God the Son speaking to God the Father. Only hours before the horrors of the cross, of which He foreknew every detail, His over-riding concern was that the Father should be glorified by the Son. This was His constant concern. 'My meat', He said to His disciples, 'is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to accomplish His work' (John 4: 34). This was the One who was obedient unto death, yea, the death of the cross (Phil. 2: 8). No matter what it cost. He was determined that the Father should be glorified by His actions. Although He had authority over all human beings, yet he was prepared to submit to them to glorify His God.

To the men God gave Him, the Lord Jesus gave eternal life and with it the potential to enjoy life eternal. 'Eternal Life' suggests the never-ending life, the *eternal* aspect, while 'Life eternal' emphasises *life*, spiritual life, the quality life, abundant life that comes through knowing the only true God and in recognising His Son who had been sent by God [Comment 6].

It was the Lord Jesus who told men about God. The Son revealed the Father. 'No one cometh unto the Father but by Me'. In v. 4 the Lord Jesus, who knew the end from the beginning, views Himself as having already accomplished the work of the cross: 'having accomplished the work which Thou hast given Me to do'. These words, though spoken before His crucifixion, indicate that He was master of every situation and determined to finish the course. The Lord makes the definite point that those who were His, whom God had given to Him, had kept God's word. So, like Him they were obedient.

Now the Lord Jesus Himself was to be glorified in them; so that the Son glorified the Father, the Father glorified the Son and the disciples by keeping God's word also glorified God. What is man's chief end? To glorify God. How does he do that? By keeping God's word. Faithful disciples do this (Eccl. 12: 13; Deut. 10: 12-13).

N. Coomer

From Musselburgh: The Lord, having completed His upper room ministry to His own, turns in prayer to His Father. The disciples were privileged indeed in being permitted to hear that prayer, and we too are privileged to have it recorded in the Scriptures for our benefit. Only John records this prayer, and he does not record the prayer in Gethsemane; this is in keeping with the character of his Gospel. It is also worthy of note that the Greek word translated 'pray' in this portion (vv. 9, 15, 20) is *erotao*. This word normally suggests that the petitioner is on a footing of equality or familiarity with the person whom he requests (W. E. Vine). It is always this word that is used by the Lord Jesus when making request to the Father. The prayer divides into three parts; the Lord prays for Himself (vv. 1-5), for His own, particularly the Apostles (vv. 6-19), and then for all believers (vv. 20-26).

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In view of the proximity, in time, of His cross work the Lord prays, 'Glorify Thy Son, that the Son may glorify Thee'. We noted that, as always, the Lord's ultimate objective was to glorify the Father. This had been His objective throughout His life and would be fully achieved by His death and resurrection. Associated with this request is the truth of the Lord's universal lordship. This truth was forcibly brought home to Peter when he stood in the house of Cornelius and declared, 'Jesus Christ (He is Lord of all)' (Acts 10: 36). It is also clearly taught by Paul in his treatise to the Romans, 'the same Lord is Lord of all, and is rich unto all that call upon Him' (Rom. 10: 12, 13). There is apparently a parallel between Rom. 10:12, 13 and John 17: 2; the one emphasizes human responsibility, the other divine sovereignty.

We took note again of the frequent references to the Father in the Lord's upper room ministry. In making known the Father's Name He had taught them that the One who was His Father in a unique way was also their Father by means of the new birth. This was the truth that He highlighted in the post-resurrection message He gave them through Mary Magdalene in which this distinction is carefully preserved (John 20:17).

J. K. D. Johnston

COMMENTS

1. **(Birkenhead):** I agree with the suggestion made here by our Birkenhead contributors. Before His incarnation, the Lord Jesus shared in all the glory of the Godhead. That He laid aside. His request in John 17: 5 was, I judge, anticipatory of His finished work, resurrection and ascension. Stephen, in the hour of his martyrdom, saw the Lord Jesus in His glory. He 'saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God' (Acts 7: 55).

2. **(Birkenhead):** Vine (Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words) provides a very helpful note on the meaning of '*ginosko*', to know. In addition to the point made here, he comments that 'such knowledge is obtained, not by mere intellectual activity, but by the operation of the Holy Spirit consequent upon acceptance of Christ. Nor is such knowledge marked by finality...'

3. **(Liverpool):** The NIV rendering of v. 4, 'I have brought You glory on earth, by completing the work You gave Me to do', is, in essence, the same as that of the RV. Both, on the surface, suggest that the Lord Jesus was speaking *retrospectively*. But both can bear the interpretation that He was speaking *prospectively* i. e. looking forward to the glory which would come to God through the completion of His atoning work at Calvary. I have always understood that the Lord had both His past life and His work on the cross in view in this verse.

4. **(Liverpool):** In the pattern prayer given to the disciples (Matt. 6: 9; Luke 11: 2), the Lord Jesus, of course, taught us the precious lesson that, in prayer, we can approach God as our Father.

5. **(Liverpool):** In Acts 5, it was in the Name of Jesus, not of the Father, that the disciples were preaching, and it was for His Name (i. e. Jesus) they rejoiced to be counted worthy to suffer (Acts 5: 40, 41).

R. L

6. **(Methil):** It is true that John 17: 3 (along with Acts 13: 46 and 1 Tim. 6: 12) reverses the normal order of the two Greek words usually translated 'eternal life' in the RV. Although John 17: 3 and 1 Tim. 6: 12 may refer to an aspect of eternal life to be appreciated by the believer, the same can hardly be said of Acts 13: 46. On the other hand, 1 John 2: 25, in which the Greek words *are* in their usual order, *does* refer to the believer's enjoyment of eternal life. Thus any distinction between 'life eternal' and 'eternal life' has no consistent textual basis (see BS 1964 Vol. 32 pp. 113-4).

I. E. P.

7. **(Birkenhead):** John 6: 37 says 'All that the Father giveth Me shall come unto Me', and John 10: 26-29 refers to the gift by the Father to the Son of his 'sheep'. In the latter case those addressed did not believe, because they were not of His sheep, not vice versa. Both of these scriptures show that the gift by the Father to the Son precedes faith, rather than results from it.

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8. (Liverpool): There is no 'of course' about it! Liverpool contributors are well aware that the point which they make is controversial. The theory that God's choice of men is based upon their foreseen faith or works, also proposed in the Melbourne contribution, relies on the interpretation of the word 'foreknew' in Rom. **8: 29** as meaning 'foresaw'. I consider that this is both logically and exegetically untenable.

A choice which is determined by the actions of another is no choice at all, and there is no logical difference between foreseen actions and past or present actions. Rom. 9 makes it clear that God does not choose men on the grounds of what they do, and the apostle Paul's answer to those who accuse God of arbitrariness is not a denial of the charge, but a justification of His right to choose.

Understanding of the meaning of the word 'foreknow' (Gk. *proginosko*) is aided by reference to the Old Testament, where the Hebrew word *yada*, 'know', is used in Gen. 18: 19, Hosea 13: 5 and Amos 3: 2 with the meaning 'to look upon with favour'. Gk. *ginosko* is used in this sense in 1 Cor. 8: 3 and Gal. 4: 9, where Bagster's Analytical Greek Lexicon comments that this is 'from the Heb. '. The word *proginosko*, 'foreknow', is used in a similar sense; for instance in 1 Pet. 1: 20. Here the sense is not that God knew about Christ from the foundation of the world, but that He had marked Him out for the purpose of carrying out the plan of redemption. Similarly, in Rom. 11: 2 the reference to 'His people which He foreknew' relates to His previous looking on them with favour. Returning to Rom. 8: 29, 30, it can be seen that the teaching of the verses is that those whom God determined to favour, He arranged to be conformed to the image of His Son, by means of giving them His call, justifying them through Christ and glorifying them in Christ.

P. L. H.

Bible Studies

A magazine for the exploration of the Word of God (Acts 17. 11)

EDITORIAL

8111

It is very pleasing to see the oneness of mind in all the papers in regard to the unity that the Lord had before Him when He prayed, 'that they may all be one' (v. 21). The point is clearly made in not a few papers that there was no need for the Lord to pray for the oneness of the Church which is His Body. He was to be the builder and the preserver of that Church, and Satan would have no power to disrupt it. He was, however, praying that there might be a visible corporate unity expressed by His disciples that would present a powerful testimony to the world. This would be a sphere in which human responsibility would have a place and it would be subjected to the attacks of the evil one.

The historical record in the book of the Acts reveals to us how that oneness was seen, first in the church of God in Jerusalem, and then in the churches of God established throughout the Roman world in the first century AD and fitly framed together to form a habitation for God in the Spirit.

J. K. D. J.

CORRESPONDENCE

The Forsaking on the Cross

With regard to the three paragraphical editorial comments on the subject of the Lord's 'forsaking' (pp 141, 142 B. S. 8109) the following is submitted:

The phrase in John 1: 18, 'the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father' indicates the sphere that was ever proper to the Lord in virtue of His place in deity. The preposition is 'into' the bosom, marking direction

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as well as position. The verb 'is' employs present participle tense, conveying the meaning of timelessness and nature. Christ 'came from' the Father's bosom without ever leaving it. Such is the eternal relationship of Divine Persons which nothing can change.

The relationship of Father and Son after the incarnation was not less infinite and sublime than that which preceded the incarnation. Even on the tree, when suffering 'abandonment' the Lord had full consciousness of His eternal place in the Father's bosom. In the agony and pain of His 'mar-ring', while enduring the divine wrath against sin, He was ever the effulgence and the image of the Father's substance. Being forsaken by His God did not impair for one moment His place in the Father's bosom. Although He died, He ever was and is the eternally self-existent One. There never has been and never will be a cessation, however temporary, of the intimacy of John 1: 18. He dwells in eternity (Is. 57: 15), and eternity dwells in Him (Is. 9: 6). When He died He did not cease to be eternal. Likewise, His oneness with the Father (John 10: 30) remained inviolable even when forsaken.

The Lord Jesus possessed two natures, divine and human, and yet remained one Person. Both natures were united, not acting independently, in the Christ of God. Being in full possession of both natures His sufferings as well as His works were those of one indivisible Person. The Servant of Jehovah (Is. 52: 13) was the Man of Sorrows (Is. 53: 3).

In the Godhead only is that most profound of mysteries - 'Why hast Thou forsaken Me?' - known. This was not a questioning but a searching of the righteousness and truth of the ways of God. Bearing sin and making atonement took place in the three hours of darkness. Deep reverence and holy fear are demanded when pandering these moments. The single cry of the Forsaken is the only key to an otherwise impenetrable mystery. No creature knowledge or vision other than Isaiah's (52: 14) unlocks the secrets. The Son's obedience unto death was an odour of supreme joy to the Father. During the three hours of woe the bliss of Sonship, the joy of the place of love - the Father's

bosom - was known by the Lord Jesus. Divine delight and pleasure rested on the Son at all times.

As a suffering Man, the Lord Jesus suffered from the hand of man in His life for righteousness' sake. As a dying Saviour He suffered from the hand of God for Sin not His own (Ps. 22 combines both aspects). The Father gave Him the cup to drink; God forsook Him. He was never more precious than when His soul was made sin-offering judicially before God. While crying outwardly 'Why hast Thou forsaken Me?', He could say inwardly, 'My Father loves Me because I lay down My life', again, 'I and the Father are One'. Only in the desolate cry did the Lord Jesus address God by the name of God. On the cross the Lord Jesus had to endure being made sin. This did not disturb His relationship of joy with His God and Father. In grace He brings the disciples into the joy of relationship and forgiveness in resurrection words, 'I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and My God and your God'.

Mystery can never be eliminated from the cross. Deductions do not explain what Deity alone comprehends. Birkenhead's closing statement is apposite.... 'We should not forget that some matters regarding the atonement are not for our understanding but for our acceptance'.

B. Fullarton

The viewpoint expressed by our correspondent is at variance with the general mind of editors, as briefly noted in issue 8109. A fuller statement may be made by editors in due course. A quotation is made from the Birkenhead paper p. 131, but it should be noted that in p. 130 they also wrote, 'We considered the suggestion that He was forsaken by 'God' not by the 'Father', but concluded that the character of God the Father could not be separated in such a way'.

J. K. D. J.

THAT THEY MAY BE ONE (John 17: 11-26)

From Birkenhead: As the Lord Jesus came to the climax of His evening with His apostles, He came to the point where He expressed His hope and desire for them. He

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continues to speak in prayer to His Father and in so doing expresses His hope for the unity of believers. We understood His prayer to be a petition to the Father that those who had followed Him would find themselves united not only on the common ground of their belief in Him but in the unity of service and responsibility towards the Father. In our terms we understood that the Lord Jesus had in view that believers, although being members of the Church the Body of Christ, would join themselves in service in the house of God. The Lord's prayer was undoubtedly answered in early days, but false teaching has since led many believers astray and we believe that within the Churches of God today should be seen the unity for which the Lord prayed.

The standard to which the Lord Jesus referred was high, indeed it was the highest standard, That they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in us'. The idea conveys more than individual units joining together into one mass of units - it suggests complete amalgamation into unity in every respect - total harmony

The basis of unity and of the common ground on which they stood was explained in v. 17. 'Thy word is truth' is the statement and in adherence to that they would be sanctified and find their guidance and help. The Lord recognises that He is the One who has kept them safely thus far and as He is to leave them He commits them to the care of the One with whom He Himself is one.

We regarded it as important to note that v. 23 spoke of being 'perfected into one', a continuous action which should be evident among those who are attempting to serve God according to His word.

R. C. Halpin, G. H. Roberts

From Cowdenbeath: For the disciples the Lord expressed three desires:

- 1) 'Keep them in Thy Name... that they may be one, even as We are'
- 2) 'Keep them from the evil one,
- 3) 'Sanctify them in the truth'

The first desire is complete in itself. The other two demonstrate how it may be accomplished. Holiness of life is so necessary for the people of God. This is seen in Ex. 19: 6 and in Eph. 1: 4. The Lord, in addressing the Father concerning His own, says, 'Holy Father' (v. 11).

That which was to bind them together was the truth of God. The sanctification associated with the new birth had been done for them (1 Cor. 1: 2), but it was now essential to united testimony (vv. 21 and 23) that they be set apart in the truth. They were one in Christ (Gal. 3: 28) but it was necessary for testimony and service that a visible unity of obedient disciples be brought about.

It might seem at first that the Lord had shut out the world in His prayer (v. 9) but He was praying for those through whom He was to reach out to the world. In effect, He was praying on its behalf for the men who were to go out with His message as His witnesses. United before Him as Lord was all-important to the accomplishment of the divine purposes among men (see Acts 4 32, 33). Men would come to Christ through what they heard and saw.

It is instructive to note the statement of v. 11 'That they may be one, even as We are'. This was vital oneness such as existed between Father and Son. This was not the oneness of opinion or sentiment but one in life, in spiritual understanding and in love. The expression in v. 23, 'That they may be perfected into one' recognises a process which would not be possible by human means. We have already seen that the new birth experience places us in Christ. This is unconditional. Christ living in the believer is an experience which can only be known by those who are humbly obedient to the truths revealed.

R. I. Shaw

From **Derby**: The impending departure of the Lord from the world causes Him to pray for God's keeping of the disciples in divine unity during their life while still in the world. He had kept them all (except Judas) in God's name; that is under God's authority (vv. 11, 12).

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The prayer reveals that the disciples were going to face the world alone in the absence of their Lord. Escape from these difficulties through isolation was not the Lord's purpose for the disciples. They were to be in contact with the world both as a place and as a group of unfriendly people, and the prayer (v. 15) is for God's keeping in this environment.

The Lord (v. 18) seems to look back to His being sent and to His earlier sending forth of the disciples during His ministry. The Lord seems to have a special devotion to the disciples which will in some way keep them in the truth (v. 19).

Verses 20 and 21 are a source of joy to believers today in that these believers are included specially in the sublime prayer of the Lord Jesus. These verses are also a challenge to believers to show something of divine unity and so to be a testimony to the Lord in respect of His being sent by the Father. Verses 22 and 23 are largely a repetition of the truth of vv. 20, 21.

Now in the final verses comes the 'will' of the Lord Jesus. Its execution will bring joy to the believers in the revelation of the Lord Jesus which they will receive in their heavenly home.

N. Bramfitt, G. W. Conway

From Leeds: The Lord Jesus Christ was the Son of God Most High, the effulgence of God's glory, the very image of His substance (Heb. 1: 3). All that was divine was shown out, in the world, in the person of the Son. 'It was the good pleasure of the Father that in Him should *ALL* the fulness dwell' (Col. 1: 19): 'For in Him dwelleth *ALL* the fulness of the Godhead bodily' (Col. 2: 9). He had come forth from the Father to do the Father's will, and He always did the things that were pleasing to His Father (John 8: 29), He was daily His delight (Prov. 8: 30) [Comment 1].

The glory which the Lord Jesus had, and which He showed forth, He gave to His disciples, in order that they might be one, even as the Lord Himself was one with the Father. 'There is *ONE* Spirit... *ONE* Lord... *ONE* God and

Father of all' (Eph. 4: 4-6). God is *ONE God*, yet is a triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the three are as one and agree together as *ONE*, a divine Unity. This Divine oneness is what the Lord Jesus desired and prayed for on behalf of His disciples; that they would continue together as one. Five times in His prayer the Lord asks His Father 'That they may be one' (v. 11, vv. 21-23). This is not one in number, (that is one, as in contrast to two or many), but rather one together as in being of one mind; of one purpose of heart; of one accord. By achieving and maintaining this unity, His disciples would be an effective witness in the world, and would convince the world, by their witness, in word and in deed, that the Lord Jesus had been sent from the Father (vv. 21, 23; John 3: 16).

The evidence of this oneness of mind and purpose is clearly seen before and after the first church of God came into being (Acts 1 and 2). After the Lord Jesus had been received up into heaven (Acts 1: 9), the disciples were together with one accord (1: 13, 14). Others were gathered and numbered together with them (1: 15). When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place (2: 1) and they continued steadfastly together in one accord (4: 24) and were of one heart and one soul (4: 32), and were all of one accord (5: 12) [Comment 2].

Unless disciples continue together in oneness of mind and in oneness of purpose in the doing of God's will, there can be little effective witness in the world. Divisions of mind and purpose can only bring discord, and there cannot be unity.

H. R. Dodge

From Liverpool: 'No more in the world' (v. 11). In this passage the Lord is viewing His work as already completed (cf. v. 4). This attitude shows how willing the Lord was to be subject to His Father.

'Keep them in Thy Name' (v. 11). His prayer was that the unity expressed by the disciples would be similar to that expressed between the persons of the Godhead.

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'That they may be one' (v. 11). We noted the possibility that the Lord could have been praying for either (i) the unity of all believers in the Church which is His Body, or (ii) the visible unity of all believers in churches of God. We decided that the Lord was praying for the latter because since He himself was to build the Church, His Body, it was certain to be united, and nothing can ever mar its oneness (Matt. 16: 18). In the churches of God man plays a significant part in their operation and thus man's propensity to fail needed praying about. Furthermore as a result of this visible oneness the world was to believe (vv. 21, 23) and there is no testimony in the invisible Church.

Why was the Lord's prayer not answered? We concluded that the Lord was expressing the great longing of His heart (as He was to do at Gethsemane), although He knew it would not be so. However, we felt that it was answered at Pentecost, and the disciples were kept during the dark times of Calvary [Comment 3].

'But the son of perdition' (v. 12). We wondered why the Lord was unable to keep Judas as He kept the others. It was suggested (a) Judas was an unsaved man; (b) he had to be lost in order to fulfil the Scripture; (c) he was not really one of the disciples, and thus the Lord's keeping ability had not failed [Comment 4].

'I sanctify/consecrate Myself (v. 19). We noted the link between sanctify and consecrate. The Lord had made it His purpose to save sinners (His sanctification) and thus sinners can be sanctified to His glory [Comment 5].

The glory which Thou hast given me' (v. 22). The glory referred to here is His moral glory which would be part of the doctrine of the Lord, summed up in the command 'Love thy neighbour as thyself [Comment 6].

'My glory which Thou hast given me' (v. 24). This time it is not the moral glory but the glory which He had in heaven but which He laid aside. The Lord longs for us to be there to share in it.

S. Seddon, D. J. Webster

From Methil: This great intercessory prayer for the disciples was uttered in the presence and in the hearing of the disciples in the upper room, after the Feast of the Passover and prior to the crosswork. The theme of the prayer was, however, concerning the future, as He requested that those and subsequent disciples be kept as one, in a closeness like that of the Father to the Son. His great desire was that the eleven remaining disciples, and all other believers, right down to the present day might testify to His glory. He Himself referred to His crosswork as glorifying the Father and not only a work of suffering

This oneness of which He speaks is not the unity of the Church the Body, but that of the unity of saints working together in a church of God [Or in all churches of God - Eds.].

'I have given them Thy word' (v.14). What greater thing can be imparted to each than the word of God? There can be no unity among God's people without love; personal and practical love for the Lord Jesus, which will be reflected in our love for each other and in our desire for unity. The Lord left us a great example 'The love wherewith Thou lovedst Me may be in them' (v. 26).

Though leaving them in the world, the Lord's desire for the disciples was that they be not of the world. We today should be careful that though in the world we do not seek to avoid the persecution of the world by becoming like the world. 'All that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution' (2 Tim 3:12).

The love of Christ for His disciples remains with us today and any departure from Him will not be due to His failure, for He has made complete provision and the fault can only be in ourselves.

A. R. Smith

From Nottingham: Again this is part of the prayer of the Lord Jesus Christ to His Father spoken out (*laleo*, v. 13) in the disciples' hearing. The word translated 'pray' is not the one often found in the New Testament (e. g. Matt. 6: 7, 9) but is one meaning to make request (RVM) [Comment 7]. The division of the chapter at v. 11 proves to be helpful with the present study title, although the passage may

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be divided at verses 6 and 20 on the basis of the different subjects that our Lord prayed about.

There are numerous occurrences of the word 'world' and other references to **it**. There **is** thus much to help **us** in our understanding of the relationship of the world to both our Lord and ourselves **as His disciples**. For our encouragement there **is** much also to remind **us** of the promises of **care** and protection for the men whom the Lord **described as** 'those whom Thou hast given **Me**'. Among them are:

- a) **v. 12. His** faithfulness and power - not one of those given **by** the Father **was** lost. The mention of '**but** the son of perdition' does not imply that Judas **was** among those whom the Father had given **Him**. The word translated '**but**' **is** found in similar construction in **Luke 4: 26** and **27** and **Matt. 12: 4** where the force of the Lord's words **was** that the person mentioned **after** the '**but**' **was** not a member of the group mentioned before **it**.
- b) The Word of God (**v. 14**) for they **were** given the Word that (**v. 17**) **is** truth.
- c) Assurance that they **were** not 'of the world' (**v. 14**), though they were sent 'into the world' (**v. 18**), **as** the Father sent the Son, and were 'in the world' (**v. 11**).
- d) Protection, for The Lord **requested** that they **be kept** from the **evil** one.

In addition, for **us** (those who have **believed** in **Him** in a later day), there **is** further encouragement in that **He** prayed for **us** and particularly that **we** should enjoy the promise (John **14: 3**) given by the Lord Jesus 'that where **I am**, there ye may **be** also' [Comment 8].

We considered the oneness **desired** by the Lord and how **it was to be** one 'even **as We**' (**vv. 11 & 21**). What characterized that relationship **was** not only union **but** unity. There **is** much in the world that has union **but** often the unity **is** lacking. The Persons of the Trinity, three in One, perfectly display this unity in both desire and action. An element of this unity **is** voluntary subjection. The Son **was** sent by the Father, the Spirit by the Son. There **was** no

inferiority, **but they** were and **are all equal**. Any union that **claims to be** the fulfilment of the Lord's desire for one thing should demonstrate these characteristics. **Lack** of unity and voluntary subjection soon destroys any testimony.

This **passage** has been **cited as a** support for the teaching that **we are 'All** one in Christ', the truth of the membership of the Body of Christ. Consideration **was** given **as to** whether the **passage's** main teaching **was** on the **subject** of membership of 'the church, which **is His Body**' (Eph. 1: 22, 23). Some observations **were** that:

- a) There would **be** no need for the Lord to pray for oneness in the Church which **is His Body because** this **was** assured owing to the **fact** that **it was based** on the (soon-to-be-finished) work of Christ. **He must**, therefore, have been praying for something **else**.
- b) One of the reasons spoken for the oneness **was as a** testimony to the world. Many of the **members** of the Body of Christ **are** no longer on the earth now. The unity of the Body **is** often hidden.
- c) The **request** of the Lord that they should **be kept** from the **evil** one would not **be** needed for a Church which they had already been **assured** would not have the **gates** of **Hell prevail** against it.

The expressions (v. 11) '**keep** them in Thy **Name** which Thou hast given **Me**', (v. 12) '**I kept** them in Thy **Name** which Thou hast given **Me**', **appear** to say one of three things, depending upon what the 'which' refers to.

- a) **It is 'Thy Name'** which has been given to the Lord **Jesus, i. e. the Name** of the Father has been bestowed on the Son.
- b) **It is 'Thy Name'** that has been given to the Lord Jesus in order to **be revealed** to the **disciples** i. e the person of God **as** Father has been shown to the **disciples** by the Son.
- c) **It is** they (the men whom Thou **gavest Me** out of the world) who **are able to be kept** in the Father's name.

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The use of 'which' does not necessarily exclude the third idea [Comment 9],

The strong support that the AV gives to one of the possibilities is not really reflected in the Greek text [Comment 12]. The third idea again is true (17:; 2 6, 9, 24) but it requires an explanation as to how people can be described as 'which'. In v. 2 'whatsoever', and in v. 24 'that which' describes a group of people (cf. the use of the expression in for example the Church which is His Body). If a group of people is again in mind then the 'which' causes problems (though note there are differences in the Greek construction in verses 2, 11, 12, 24). If this is so then the main force of these verses is a transfer of 'keeping' from the Son back to the Father [Comment 10].

D. Rafferty

From **Vancouver**, B. C.: As the Master prays to His Father, we grasp what He had been teaching His disciples in John chapters 13 to 16. Now that which lay before Him was Gethsemane, and being taken into the hands of lawless men who would crucify Him. Well might He commit His disciples to His Father that they may be kept from the adversary.

It would seem that as He prayed He looked forward to the days when His disciples would be in active service in churches of God seeking to guide those added into all the truth. He would be cognisant that the adversary would be busy seeking to bring friction and false teachings among those in churches of God. Thus in His prayer in v. 21, He says 'That they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee'. In v. 12 the Master looks back over the past three years and says, 'While I was with them, I kept them in Thy name... I guarded them, and not one of them perished, but the son of perdition'. Now He prays that they all may be one in future days.

It may be opportune to mention that there are many believers who when looking at this portion would no doubt say, 'Yes we are all one in Christ Jesus', thus stating that the position before us refers to the Church which is Christ's Body. We would state that all believers are in Church His

Body, they are eternally safe and secure by the blood of Christ. It is not necessary to pray that they be kept secure. The gates of Hades cannot prevail against them (Matt. 16: 18).

In John 15: 4 we note the words regarding fruitbearing 'Except ye abide in Me'. This would confirm the thought that 'abiding' in Him is conditional. The Lord could say regarding the coming of the Holy Spirit (John 14:17) 'He abideth with you and shall be in you'. Does this infer that abiding with is conditional and abiding in is unconditional? [Comment 11]. We can grieve and quench the Holy Spirit but His indwelling is continuous.

J. Bell

COMMENTS

1. **(Leeds):** It is true, of course, that the Lord Jesus delighted His Father day by day while He was here, but the reference to Prov. 8: 30 relates to pre-incarnate days and takes us back to a past eternity.

2. **(Leeds):** The following exposition, given by Mr. John Miller, in *Needed Truth* Volume 66 p. 23 is worth persuading again in this context:

Together in unity' (Ps. 133: 1) is the word *Yachad*, which means 'as one'...

In the LXX the word *Yachad* is rendered in the Greek by the words '*epi to auto*', which shows that the Greek words have the same thought of oneness, of unity. The thought of being together in one place is secondary to the meaning of being united according to the will of God as revealed in His word. This is seen in the divine command in Deuteronomy 22:10, 'Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together' (Hebrew, *yachad*. Greek, *epi to auto*). The idea of place does not enter into this matter of plowing: it is a matter of the yoke. They must not be yoked together, as the Lord indicated in Matthew 11: 29, 'Take My yoke upon you, and learn of (*apo*, from) Me'. They formed a divine unity and all their names were together as in one thing. They were those who

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formed the church of God in Jerusalem when the Holy Spirit came upon them.

3. **(Liverpool):** The remarkable unity that was visibly evident in apostolic times was the answer to this prayer (see Acts 4. 32, 33).

4. **(Liverpool):** Judas was an unregenerate man and thus different from the others. See the helpful note on this point in the Nottingham paper para. 2.

5. **(Liverpool):** There are a number of instances in which these two words appear together in the RV translation of the Old Testament scriptures, e. g. Ex. 28: 41 where 'consecrate' means 'to fill the hand' and 'sanctify' means 'to set apart'.

6. **(Liverpool):** The following extract from 'Jottings' by J. M., Needed Truth 1957 p. 114 on John 17: 22 is helpful:

It will be remembered that the vessels of the Tabernacle were of gold or covered with gold. The gold mercy-seat speaks of Christ, as also does the gold-covered ark. Gold speaks of divine glory. The same glory covered the boards of the Tabernacle which I take to signify men standing in testimony for God. So here we see the answer to the gold-covered boards of old. As the boards were united into one by sockets and bars, all glowing with the beauty of the gold which covered them, we may think of the beauty of the Lord being on His people (Ps. **90:17**) as they stand as one in unity.

7. **(Nottingham):** It has been pointed out in previous issues that in the Lord's prayer here the word translated 'pray' is *erotao*. This is always the word used when the Lord addresses the Father in prayer, but is not the word used by the disciples in prayer (see B. S. 8110, editorial).

8. **(Nottingham):** Of course John **14: 3** relates to the future, to the Lord's coming again to receive us unto Himself.

9. **(Nottingham):** When God sent Moses to deliver Israel from Egypt he was given a Name to reveal to the children of Israel. That Name was Jehovah (Ex. 3:15).

When the Lord Jesus came into the world, sent by the Father to accomplish man's redemption He made known to men His Father's name, revealing to His own that the One who was His Father in a unique relationship was also their Father through grace.

I am not sure what our friends have in mind when they speak of the Name of the Father being bestowed upon the Son.

10. **(Nottingham):** All the members of the Church the Body are embraced in the divine purposes referred to in v. 24. This will be accomplished when the Lord comes to claim His own.

11. **(Vancouver):** In John 14:17 the Lord is speaking of the Spirit being with them as they companied with Him and contrasting this with the then future experience of the Spirit's indwelling.

J. K. D. J.

12. **(Nottingham):** The word for 'which' is dative singular, agreeing with 'name', not with 'them', which is plural. This rules out the third explanation. I suggest that 'name' is used in its three occurrences in this chapter to signify the personal power and authority of the One who has the name, so that the Lord Jesus revealed the character of the Father (v. 6) to the disciples, and now prays for their protection by His power. In John 3:18 'the name of the only begotten Son of God' is used in a similar way; trust is placed in His person, not simply in the label which describes Him. Similar usages are found in the Old Testament, e. g. Ex. 3:15, Ps. 135:13.

P. L. H.

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QUESTION AND ANSWER

From Liverpool: Some thought that the Lord's prayer was again answered in part today in the establishment of churches of God. Can this be accepted?

The answer to the Lord's prayer came in the days of the apostles. At the beginning nearly all believers found their place in churches of God, to give expression to a visible unity. The development of error that began in the first century AD has resulted in believers on earth today being scattered and sadly divided. It is still the Lord's desire that believers should be united in a visible unity according to His will, but the expression of this unity today is, for the reasons given above, limited and circumscribed. In this respect the fulfilment of the Lord's desire today is partial as our friends suggest.

J. K. D. J.

NOTICE

Due to new printing arrangements, it will be necessary for contributors to ensure that papers are in the hands of editors 9 weeks before the date of publication. Will all contributors please note, and help by posting in good time?

Bible Studies

A magazine for the exploration of the Word of God (Acts 17. 11)

EDITORIAL

8112

With this issue we come to the end of our study of the Lord's Upper Room ministry and its immediate aftermath. We have seen how the Lord's greatest concern was for the welfare of His disciples, in spite of the imminence of His own death. He might have spent time in describing how deep His suffering was to be, and how He must bear the wrath of God against sin, but there is hardly a hint of these things, simply 'I go away'. Instead, He spoke of the Comforter who was to come and prayed to the Father for the safe keeping of the disciples in the world; a concern which extended even to disciples today.

This month's passage particularly highlights the contrast between the resolutions of men who lack the strength of will to carry them out, and the steadfast purpose of the Son of God to carry out the will of the Father. Because the Lord Jesus was human, His human nature recoiled from suffering; because He was divine His will was perfectly aligned with the Father's will. Examination of these things leads us to worship, and it is a good thing to remind ourselves that this is the final object of the study of the Scriptures. It is interesting and useful to delve into Greek words and hard doctrines, but if we are not led to adore God as a result the exercise is worthless.

P. L. H.

CORRESPONDENCE

Romans 8: 29-30

May I comment on the explanation of Romans 8: 29-30 by PLH in Bible Studies 8110? Good men may differ on the subject of God's foreknowledge, so we must write with grace, giving due weight to the minds of others. It is always wise to test our teachings by their ultimate effect. Our

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esteemed editor writes that the teaching of Romans 8: 29-30 **is** that, those whom God determined to favour **He will** justify through Christ. We must then assume that those whom He does not so favour, He will not justify through Christ. If God's favour brings life - eternal life; then those who are not favoured of God, will have death - eternal death.. All this being decreed by an all-wise Creator. If this is indeed Scripture truth, then we must still bow and adore God, even though we do not understand His way.

But the Scripture says clearly that, God willeth (*thelo* desires) that *all* men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth. How thankful we are for 1 Tim. 2: 4 and John 3: 16, and other portions of the Word. 'Is not My way equal?' said the Lord to His people Israel (Ezek. 18: 25). How thankful we are that it is so. And how thankful we are also that He is a God full of compassion and gracious (Ex. 34: 6).

May I suggest that God does not foresee, as we sometimes do. He foreknows, as He alone can. Those of us who know His grace (or favour) will thank God from redeemed hearts that we were foreknown and foreordained of God to be conformed to the image of His Son. We are thankful also that the same grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to *all* men (Titus 2:11). He knows before, who will accept His salvation, and these also He will conform to the image of His Son. This is my understanding of Romans 8: 29-30.

In Romans 9, the election of God, is not an election to eternal life, but to a place of privilege or of power in the present life. In this, the sovereignty of God is manifest. For who withstandeth His will? (*boulema* - purposes) (Rom. 9: 19). He calls whom He will (as He did with Cyrus) to fulfil His own purposes.

G. Jarvie

Editors welcome this expression of the alternative view of this difficult matter, a view which is held by one of themselves. The comment was made in issue 8110 to avoid the impression that one view was taken for granted in the Churches of God.

P. L. H.

A REPOSE TO "MY PEOPLE OR NOT MY PEOPLE" (see B. S. Vol. 48, pp98, 114, 129)

God does not always act instantaneously. The developmental character of the covenants is a case in point to the contrary. In Genesis 12, God laid the foundation stones for future covenants by commencing with a basic call and a promise.

Chapters 14 to 17 of Genesis show the Lord laying initiatory principles in the Abrahamic covenants. The giving of the tenth, the sacrifices made to confirm and solidify the covenant and the rite of circumcision were special events in Abraham's time to allow initial exposure to a new concept in man's relationship as a group (i. e. Abraham's immediate family) with God. This covenant of growth and freedom was based upon righteousness credited by faith, as shown in Abraham's willingness to offer Isaac.

As we examine the transition from this to the Mosaic covenant the petals of the bud unfolding are viewed. The captivity of the Israelites caused God to reassert the past covenants and to expand upon the existing principles as seen in the giving of the detailed law. Life in this relationship was founded now upon obedience to the law *and* faith (e. g. journey to the land). At this point, however, access to God was by way of the priests only.

The names that God gives to the people during these stages also show the developmental nature. In Genesis 12 God simply promises countless offspring. In the full Abrahamic covenant (Gen. 17) He promises in addition to be their God, to make nations of them and to have kings come from them. Matters become more patterned and detailed in the Mosaic covenant, the people becoming a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

Life settled in to an established routine in the Mosaic covenant, indeed too routine. The promise and the service lost its appeal and sparkle. Therefore God began anew - a new covenant, new in the sense that it was now a testament of commitment to a larger realm known as his people, without respect to natural race. The basis of it was still faith and obedience. Many of the principles changed their evidence in one's life from the external to the internal (spiritual). In addition a temporary priesthood gave place to

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permanent one. Shadow became reality and the blood of animals ceased because of the shedding of that of the Son. These mutations are ably described in Hebrews. In addition this new covenant promises us that we can enter a final rest (Hebrews 4:11).

Christ himself defines this covenant succinctly as being symbolized in the cup and personalized in the blood poured out for forgiveness. It is the testimony that the promise is sure and the inheritance is paid already. This exists in Christ.

We see the final unfolding of the bloom in Hebrews 10: 13-16. All covenants are perfected in Christ's reign. Each will have contributed its own aspects to the millennial state.

*J. C. Bell
Vancouver, B. C.*

OUT TO GETHSEMANE Matthew 26: 30-46

From Birkenhead: With the singing of a hymn, the disciples and the Lord Jesus left the upper room where they had been told so much and where they had witnessed the Lord's prayer to His Father concerning them and what lay in the future.

Having gone out to the Mount of Olives the Lord made a statement which was met with incredulity. Having been inspired by the words in the upper room, the disciples could not accept that they would fail the Lord Jesus. In spite of the Lord's statement and His quotation from Zec-hariah, Peter led them in their affirmation of faith in Him and support for Him.

Their journey took them to the garden of Gethsemane, a place familiar to the Lord and perhaps a place where He hoped to gain reassurance and comfort. The Lord laid Himself before His Father physically and spiritually. He knew that which was before Him and expressed His desire that the suffering and death which was in the plan of the Godhead might not befall Him. However, His overriding desire was to do the will of His Father and with this thought taking precedence over others, He committed Himself to fulfilling His Father's will. His spiritual anguish, the intensity of His prayer, and the conflict of mind and body

which occupied Him during this deadful time are clearly summarized in the words of Luke. He sweat 'as it were great drops of blood'. The analogy gives rise to rewarding meditation regarding the agonies which He underwent for man because of sin.

Notwithstanding His own torment, the remarks addressed to three of the disciples who accompanied Him into the garden, and who had fallen asleep during their vigil, bear the kindly hallmark of the Lord's dealing with His followers. Despite His own concerns, He was able to understand their difficulties and weaknesses and did not condemn them as perhaps any ordinary man might have done. Indeed, on His return to them, He sought to comfort them with the instruction to sleep on [See Comment 2],

The climax of this most moving passage of Scripture reveals the Lord prepared and awaiting the events which are before Him. He fulfils His Father's will by giving Himself into the hands of sinners - those for whom He is to bear the penalty of sin.

R. C. M. Bolt R. C. Halpin

From Cowdenbeath: It is written of Abraham that he accounted that God was able to raise Isaac from the dead. That in no way numbed his feelings towards, his only son on Moriah. It is written of the Lord that, 'for the joy that was set before Him He endured the cross'. That joy in no way relieved the awful sorrows He passed through, some of them so evident at Gethsemane.

Gethsemane was an 'enclosed place' and, latterly the disciples found the way of discipleship too narrow as they fled. Gethsemane is the entrance to His greatest loneliness.

The disciples must have been mystified by His words, 'All ye shall be offended in Me this night: for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad'. How could He be the object over which they would fall? The words, 'It is written' were emphasizing to them that this was part of a divine plan. The Scriptures had foretold it. Furthermore, they now knew that He knew they would stumble. We can understand why they all declared otherwise, but He left the matter in their minds and hearts, something which they would

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recall as they returned later to Him according to His word through Mark, 'After I am raised up, I will go before you into Galilee'. After the scattering, there would be a gathering. What grace!

The loneliness of the Master was gathering momentum. From 12 disciples in the upper room Judas went out; from 11 men 8 are left near the garden gate as the 3 who had accompanied Him at the Holy mount and had no doubt heard Moses and Elijah speaking with Him of His decease went a little further. Next He was alone as He went forward to pray while they watched.

It is stated by some authorities that the words 'sore troubled' are from a word meaning 'away from home', [Comment 1]. Most appropriately to this passage, this could be rendered 'desolate loneliness' as there came the consciousness of absolute isolation in that which He must pass through.

Seldom did the Master speak of His sorrow. Now the One of whom it is written that 'He began to be sorrowful' Himself states, 'My soul is *exceeding sorrowful*'. Amid such sorrow He prayed, saying '...if it be possible...' but His second and third cries showed consent to that impossibility in the words, 'My Father, if this cannot pass away, except I drink it. Thy will be done'. Throughout, the central theme of the prayer is that God's will may be done.

As the Lord returned to His disciples He said, 'Sleep on now, and take your rest'. Can it be that He, so graciously, kept vigil over the 'watchers' while they slept and until the betrayer and band appeared? [Comment 2]. He had nothing but love in His heart for His own.

R. I. Shaw

From Derby: Peter, James and John were a privileged trio, being chosen by the Lord to be present on occasions when the others were not so chosen. The event in Gethsemane and that of the Transfiguration serve to illustrate this privilege.

At the time of the Lord's arrest the disciples either fled or followed at a distance. This was in keeping with the Lord's estimation of their ability. Peter did not flee, for he followed at a distance (Luke 22: 54). He was present when the Lord was interrogated but, as foretold by the Lord, he

did initially fail. John was present at the Lord's crucifixion and accepted the charge which the Lord gave him there.

Turning now to the three accounts of the Lord's experience in Gethsemane, one can see that Mark's account agrees closely with that of Matthew.

The study of the event in Gethsemane is profound and solemn for it deals with the humanity of the Lord. The full personality of the Lord is beyond human understanding. He himself said, 'No one knoweth the Son, save the Father' (Matt. 11: 27). Nevertheless one can see in the event the fact that the Lord did accept much human limitation in order to come to our human situation. Paul brings this out in Phil. 2: 5-8.

A great human need is for friendship and companionship, and although the Lord had many enemies He did also have friends. The Lord wanted His friends near Him in His deep need in Gethsemane. He knew solitude as He withdrew from the main company of the disciples but He chose to have the relative nearness of Peter, James and John. They failed because of their human weakness but the Lord only reproved them gently.

N. Bramfitt, G. W. Conway

From Hayes: It could be argued from the text that the discourse in vv. 31-35 was not part of the 'upper room ministry' since Matt. 26: 30 states that when they had sung a hymn they went out unto the Mount of Olives. The teaching given, however, in the upper room would be reinforced by the practical advice given by the Lord as to coming events which were to overwhelm the disciples.

The Lord predicts Peter's denial and the weakness of the disciples. It is noted that there is no reproach on the part of the Lord as to their predicted failure; indeed He goes on to encourage and inform them that after His resurrection He would go ahead of them to Galilee. This incident recorded in Matthew is possibly a further affirmation of loyalty by Peter since in John 13: 38 the Lord informs Peter as to his denial of Him (see also Luke 22: 32-34). Mark's account in chapter 14 vv. 27-31 shows that Peter's claim and the other ten disciples' protestations took place on the way to the Mount of Olives. It would seem in spite of what happened in the upper room with all its teaching

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and the institution of the Feast of Remembrance and their denials, the Lord had to reinforce the lesson of their weakness while they went to the Lord's familiar haunt (see John 18: 1, 2).

Gethsemane means 'oil press' and was a garden that was situated at the foot of the Mount of Olives to the east to the brook Kidron. The scattering of the disciples is considered by the Lord to be a fulfilment of the word in Zech. 13: 7. Even in the Lord's great stress He was able to reassure them as to the future (v. 32). This would probably, in the light of their later actions and deep grief at His death, be incomprehensible to the disciples. Peter in his affirmation of support to the Lord was only voicing what the disciples also believed but he was the one that would be vehement in his denial.

The eleven disciples were with the Lord in the garden. Three were given that extra place of nearness. They were asked to keep watch with Him, to be supportive in His trial. However, the Lord had to go further from even these three and be alone praying to His Father. The fact that the three disciples could not keep awake shows the strain and tension they must have been under (see Luke 22: 45; Mark 14: 40).

Three times the Lord prayed the same prayer. We see His holy nature shrinking from the ordeal but also perfect submission to His Father's will. Men until that moment were unable to hold Him. The Lord knew that this was their hour and the power of darkness.

R. F. Robertson

From Liverpool: *The hymn* (v. 30). This hymn, part of the traditional passover feast would be the Hallel (Psalms 113-118).

Jesus' prediction (v. 31-32). Despite Jesus' previous statements the disciples did not appreciate the fact that He was to be taken from them. Their faith was very dependent on His being with them. Whilst previous warnings had provoked no reaction, His bluntness now brought about a response.

Peter's reaction (v. 33-35). What was wrong with Peter's loyal reaction? His intentions were good and his love

sincere. However, his confidence in his own love for the Lord was the problem. Peter had to learn not to rely on his own love for the Lord but rather on the Lord's love for him.

Gethsemane (v. 36-37). Why did Jesus choose Peter, James and John? It was suggested that this inner cabinet of disciples were specially chosen because they would have to die for their faith (cf. John 21:18-19) [Comment 4], It is apparent that the Lord needed His disciples at this point to share in His sufferings, and specifically requested them to stay awake.

'Sorrowful, even to death' (v. 38). The Lord had no fear of physical death, although it was an unknown quantity, since He knew He would be raised again. However, He was overwhelmed by sorrow to the point of death, this being His separation from God. He was to suffer what the lost souls will suffer for all eternity [Comment 3].

The Lord's prayer (vv. 39, 42, 44). We have revealed to us here the struggle going on in the mind of the Lord Jesus. He did not want to go to the cross yet He loved us intensely. The fact that He prayed three times reveals how much it was going to cost Him, but His words reveal His willingness to be subject to God.

It was obvious to us that this took place over a much longer period than the narrative implies. The Lord prayed 'saying the same words' (RSV) yet the words quoted are not the same. Presumably the overall contents of the prayer were the same [Comment 5].

Watch and pray (v. 41). This is an occupation and will give us no time to fall into temptation. The lesson is obvious!

'Rise, let us be going' (v. 46). This reads peculiarly in the RV following the words 'Sleep on now, and take your rest' (v. 45). The RSV and NIV are to be preferred, 'Are you still sleeping and taking your rest?' [see Comment 2].

D. J. Webster, S. Seddon

From Methil: The Lord Jesus and His apostles had been in the upper room, first to keep the passover then the institution of the Remembrance. It was the last time before the Lord's death that they would all be together in this way. He knew precisely all that lay before Him, the agonies

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of the garden of Gethsemane, the forsaking by **all His disciples**, the mock **trials**, the cruelty and depravity of **men** that would surround **Him** and become **like wild** animals, **bulls** of Bashan and **wild** dogs, the crucifixion and the **ultimate** - the forsaking by **His** God and Father. **All was** foreknown by **Him** in **detail**, yet **His disciples** appeared completely oblivious to the momentous happenings that **were** about to **take place** over the **next few** hours.

Judas had already **departed**; having taken the sop, he went out. **He was** already working out his devilish plan to betray the Lord Jesus for **a mere** thirty **pieces** of **silver** and the Lord knew that too. **His disciples**, however, **were** totally unaware of this.

They sang **a** hymn. Some have **suggested** it was the traditional passover hymn. Then they **left** the **upper** room to go to the mount of **Olives**. To do this they crossed the brook Kidron and entered the **garden** of Gethsemane (John 18: 1-2, **Matt. 26**). **It was** a favourite **retreat**. The Lord Jesus often resorted thither with **His disciples**. Judas himself knew the **place** and **realised** that that would **be** the most **suitable place** to betray Him.

Gethsemane means 'oil **press**'. This **is** significant when **we** think of the tremendous stress and **pressure** that the Lord Jesus **was** experiencing in **His** foreknowledge of **all** the events that would shortly **take place**.

He had **just** told **His disciples** of the Zech. **13: 7** prophecy that would find **its** fulfilment that very night, yet **Peter** and the **rest** denied that they would **be** caused to **stumble**. **Peter** was singled out, **but it is** often overlooked that the **Bible** says '**Likewise** also **said** **all** the **disciples**' (**Matt. 26: 35**).

The Lord **was** **specific** in **His** reply, 'This night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny **Me** thrice'. Then they **came** to the **place** called Gethsemane. The garden experience **is** recorded in **all** four gospel accounts. How vitally important **it is**. The Lord told **His disciples** to **sit** while **He** went further on to pray. Peter with James and John (the two sons of **Zebedee**) **He** took further with **Him**. They **were** nearest to **Him** in **His** agony. They **were** told to watch and pray and they could not even do that for one hour, for **He** found them sleeping.

'**Thy will be done**', repeated three **times** by the Lord to **His** Father, **was** in character with **all** that had gone before.

He had always worked and walked in total harmony with His God. 'My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to accomplish His work', He had told His disciples.

Such was His agony, that His sweat became as it were great drops of blood falling down upon the ground. Meanwhile His disciples slept.

The Cup' surely signifies the enormity of the whole thing that He was facing, the shameful treatment by men, the reproach of the cross, the forsaking by His God, the being made sin offering. No wonder the Man Christ Jesus felt as He did as He thought of the cross.

N. Coomer

From Musselburgh: We now come to a very sad and solomn incident in the life of the Lord Jesus, which took place in the garden of Gethsemane. Before He went into the garden with the apostles, He said the Shepherd would be smitten, and the sheep of the flock scattered abroad. Peter was very bold and said he would not deny Him, and was prepared to die with his Master. The time came when he was not so bold, and denied his Lord three times as the Lord Jesus foretold.

In the garden with the apostles the Lord took Peter, James and John further in to pray. He went a little from them and prayed to His Father to remove from Him the cup He was about to drink. He knew that He would be defiled with our sins and forsaken by His Father, God. 'Him who knew no sin He made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in Him' (2 Cor. 5: 21) [Comment 7]. His holy, sinless nature would shrink from such an ordeal, causing Him to pray thus.

This was His first prayer here, and in His second He prays that if it cannot pass away, 'Thy will be done". Mark says He repeated His first prayer when He came the second time (Mark 14: 39). It would seem that He prayed both prayers the second time, and in His third prayer, according to Matthew, He repeated what He said in His second prayer, 'Oh My Father if this cannot pass away except I drink it Thy will be done'. Mark does not mention this third prayer and Luke only refers to His first. Luke deals more with the Lord's physical and mental condition, and his being a physician might explain that. Luke says the Lord's sweat

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became as it were great drops of blood falling upon the ground (Luke 22: 44). No man ever experienced an agony like this (Isa. 52: 14) and it would seem that the pressure of it upon the human frame affected some of the small blood vessels near to the skin giving the sweat the colour of blood [Comment 6]. Such was His agony that an angel came and ministered unto Him (Luke 22: 43). This is the second time during His public ministry that He was attended to in this way. The other time was on the high mountain after He had rebuked the devil who was tempting Him (Matt. 4: 11).

S. Ramage

From **Nottingham**: In the long history of mankind many journeys have been undertaken, some momentous, some insignificant. The last walk of the Lord before His arrest outshines all others; its repercussions will spread through all eternity. It is well for us to pause in our study and reflect again on the solemnity and importance of this walk. Leaving the upper room, passing from the comparative comfort and light of the upper room to the unwelcome darkness of the narrow city street, the incarnate Son of God made His way to the crisis hour of Calvary. Down the steep slope to the Kidron valley and then into the garden He and His disciples went. Most in Jerusalem slept, but some were active and they, soon, would be the ones who would take Him. Yet on this walk and in the garden the Master spoke in a way that must have remained imprinted on their memories for life.

The meaning of the word translated 'offended' is important (Matt. 26: 31). As the RV margin shows it is 'caused to stumble'. It has the significance of having a snare or stone put in the way. It is thought that at least one of the causes of this possible stumbling would be when the disciples saw their Lord being led away. Thoughts of the restoration of the kingdom to Israel no doubt were in their mind (cf. Acts 1: 6) and the sight of their beloved Master being bound and taken may well have given rise to doubts and fears (cf. Luke 24: 21). They had failed to grasp fully the words of the Lord to them as recorded in Matthew 16: 1.

The quotation, (Matt. 26: 31) from Zechariah shows clearly that this scripture relates to the Lord Himself. It is said that 'I will smite' can be just as correctly translated as

'I will give Him up to be smitten'. Both facts are true, for the Lord suffered at the hands of the Jews and the Romans but He was smitten by God in a way which no human hand could accomplish, when He was made the sacrifice for our sins.

Yet in the hour of intense sorrow which weighed so heavily on the Lord (v. 38), there was a wondrous joy set before Him, even the moment when He would rise again (v. 32). To what extent His disciples understood the significance of this is difficult to gauge but apparently they had little understanding of it until the resurrection morning (cf. Mark 16: 7).

As we read of the experience in the garden we are conscious of treading on holy ground. The three disciples who had been privileged to witness His glory and power on previous occasions, i. e. at the transfiguration (Matt. 17) and the healing of the ruler's daughter (Luke 8: 51) now are taken to be near Him in His agony. But they could not share in it; all that was involved in the cross-work of the Saviour could be undertaken by Him and Him alone.

Peter, in spite of his bold assertion that he would not desert his Master, succumbed to sleep. The word 'watch' appears several times. It is the word '*gregoreo*' and, according to Vine, in this context, means 'keep awake'. However willing the spirit was the flesh was too weak to obey the command and the time came when it was too late to watch because the betrayer was at hand. The temptation (v. 41) we think relates to the cause of stumbling already mentioned, that is, the inclination to have doubts on seeing the Lord taken and crucified. Also there was the temptation to forsake Him and deny Him if to acknowledge Him was to lead to personal danger (Luke 22: 54-62).

It is not possible for us to understand the bitterness of the cup which the Lord contemplated in the garden. He was to be forsaken by His God, He was made to be sin on our behalf (2 Cor. 5: 21). But there was no other way. He alone must drink that cup. However dreadful that through which He must pass we see His absolute submission to the will of God. 'Not as I will, but as Thou wilt' does not indicate that the Lord was unwilling to go to the cross, but shows His utter submission to His Father's will (see John 4: 34). R. Hickling

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From Vancouver: The Lord had instituted the Remembrance and also completed the keeping of the passover. Ere they left the upper room they sang a hymn. No doubt they would sing the last portion of Hallel (Psa. **113-118** and Psa. 136). We are not told where the conversation of verses 31-35 took place, possibly His last conversation with them ere He was crucified.

It is sad that the Lord should say, 'All ye shall be offended in Me this night' (offended, i. e. caused to stumble). If only the disciples had gripped the words '**After** I am raised up I will go before you into Galilee'. If Peter had asked when and where it may have spared him much sorrow. Instead, and out of confidence, Peter said 'If all shall be offended in Thee, I will never be offended'. How tragic the Lord's words regarding Peter's three denials'. How true the words, 'Boast not thyself of tomorrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth'.

The Lord had come to Gethsemane to pray. Perhaps the disciples thought, 'Could we not have prayed in the upper room?' Soon they would apprehend that the Lord knew all that lay before Him. Of the eleven He took the three, Peter, James and John. As He prayed He revealed the agony of His inmost being.

The Lord's prayer in the garden reveals Christ as the perfect man. In His humanity He could say, 'My Father, if It be possible, let this cup pass away from Me'. But as the perfect servant He could answer, 'Not as I will, but as Thou wilt'. In no way did He desire to return to heaven without knowing the suffering of Calvary. He was sent to be the Saviour of the world.

The Lord prayed three times using much the same words. The third time He came and found them sleeping, possibly about midnight. In John 21 we read that they toiled all night and took nothing - without sleep. In v. 40 Jesus said 'Could ye not watch with Me one hour?' Could it be that He prayed an hour?

Those who search for words in Scripture whereby they may find fault, would ask, 'How could any of the disciples know the words used by the Lord if they were sleeping?' The Holy Spirit who guided the pen of all writers could bring to remembrance all He said. This is similar to Moses writing Genesis 1 when he lived approximately 2, 500

years later. The Holy Spirit gave to Moses and all the writers the exact words for penning the Holy Scriptures.

In v. 47 we read, 'while He yet spoke, lo, Judas came'. It was impossible that Judas could come when He was praying. Jesus knew every detail and could tell the disciples what would come to pass.

The Lord was a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief, and the anguish of Gethsemane was a prelude to His being scourged, then crucified.

May we love Him more.

J. Bell

COMMENTS

1. **(Cowdenbeath):** I have been unable to find any evidence for this derivation. While it may be so, we need to be careful about applying the meanings of root words to their derivatives. Often the change in meaning between the two is so great that there is no overlapping area of meaning.

2. **(Cowdenbeath):** If this was the case, there must have been some time interval between the words of verses 45 and 46. While this is possible, it does not seem to fit the context very well. See the question and answer below for a discussion of alternative renderings.

3. **(Liverpool):** This rather understates the Lord's sufferings. Sinners will suffer separation from God, and will share the lake of fire with Satan, whose side they have chosen; but they suffer for their own wrongs only, and they are already corrupt. The Lord, holy in the highest degree, became a curse (Gal. 3:13); He was made the very personification of sin (2 Cor. 5:21). As a consequence, all the wrath of God against sin was unleashed against Him, going beyond forsaking into fearful chastisement, which no man could bear.

P. L. H.

4. **(Liverpool):** There is no evidence in the scriptures to suggest that John was martyred.

5. **(Liverpool):** There is no record of the words of the third prayer. There are some suggestions made in the third paragraph of the Musselburgh paper.

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6. (Musselburgh): Isaiah 52: 14, of course, refers to Golgotha rather than to Gethsemane.

I. E. P.

7. (Musselburgh): I, personally, would agree with the view expressed by Mr. J. Miller in his Notes on the New Testament Scriptures page 196, namely, that although our sins were imputed to Christ, and He suffered and died for them, 'He remained pure and holy as He ever was'.

J. K. D. J.

QUESTION AND ANSWER

From **Birkenhead**: In Matt. 26: 45 three versions have readings as follows:

RV: Sleep on now and take your rest.

NIV: Are you still sleeping and resting?

RSV: Are you still sleeping and taking your rest?

We were unable to reconcile the different versions and would welcome your comments.

Greek *katheudete* can be either present indicative or imperative, so the translators have had to make a choice as to which seems most likely in the context. RV represents the imperative, but this implies a period of time between these words and the following ones, which does not seem very likely at this point. Some have taken the words to be ironical, but again this does not accord well with the general tone of the Lord's words to His disciples at this time. Because of these points, NIV and RSV translators have chosen the present indicative, supplying a question mark. This does appear to suit the context better.

P. L. H.

My explanation of this is that the RV is correct. The time had come when the disciples had no further role to play. The Lord had to do it on His own.