

John - Commentaries by George Vicesimus Wigram

Christian Truth: Volume 27, Behold the Lamb of God (1:29)

John 1

Who is this Lamb who takes away the sin of the world? Who is He, that Man of sorrows, coming into the world and saying that He is able to take up the question of sin and settle it? No mere man could do that. Who then is this One? If we turn to the beginning of the chapter we shall find a whole string of glories as the answer, connected with that Lamb—the Lord Jesus Christ.

One has often seen persons carrying a string of beads, having so many prayers to go through in connection with each bead; and one has thought, Ah! if the glories of the Lord Jesus were seen by His people as a string of pearls, so that they knew how to count over those glories, what far happier hearts and faces the people of God would have! One cannot turn from titles of highest glories to titles of humiliation without seeing a depth of moral glory coming out, God having to stoop very low because of going to touch this question of sin—He alone being competent to do it. "Behold the Lamb"! The words were like a living touch to the hearts of those who turned and followed Him. Their hearts were laid hold of by this Christ, this Lamb of God who was drawing them to Himself.

He is at work just in the same way now; people cannot tell how it is, but they are drawn and constrained to go seeking this Lord. They find Him melting their hard hearts and they are drawn on to follow Him—still a man, though now in glory instead of being down here. He has left the door of heaven open that the glory may be seen, and we can enter in through the rent veil. We can enter by a new and living way into the place where He is—can follow Him into heaven itself.

Unless the heart is on fire from having seen Jesus, how any little thing turns it aside from the glory of that Lord! How that little word "Nazareth" came between Nathanael and the Son of God! But when he sees Jesus, he finds that Philip has not said half enough, and falls down in worship at once. How one simple word from this Christ could unravel the deeper glory which Nathanael saw and owned!

Memorials of the Ministry of G.V. Wigram 2 & 3: Volume 2 & 3, Two Requests of the Lord to His Father (17:11-12,20-21)

John 17:11, 12, 20, 21

Verses 11, 12: " I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to Thee. Holy Father, keep through [lit. in or by] Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, as we. While [lit. when] I was with them in the world, I kept them [] in Thy name: those that Thou gavest Me I have kept [lit. guarded], and none of [lit. no one out of] them is lost [lit. has perished], but the son of perdition; that the Scripture might be fulfilled."

Verses 20, 21: " Neither pray [lit. ask] I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us.: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me."

BOTH of these requests are about unity.

The first request that as He the Son had preserved and guarded in His Father's name a people, through the days of His trial in humiliation [His Father had given them to Him] (v. 12); the Father should now keep them Himself according to what was involved in that name of the Father—My Father and your Father. When the Holy Spirit, promise of the Father, came down on Pentecost—gift of the Father through the Son (Acts 2:33, 36), then the power and the instrumental means were evident; viz., the Holy Spirit's use of the apostles in testimony to the Lord Jesus, and working with it too. In the Galatian epistle we find, " Ye are all the sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus " (chap. 3:26); and (chap. 4:4, 6) " When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made [lit. become] of a woman, made [lit. become] under law, to redeem them that were under the law... that we might receive the adoption of sons [the adoption of sons; lit. son-place or sonship] And because ye are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." This flowed out of the place the Son was in; and was by the Holy Spirit Himself who was, and is, Spirit of God and of Christ. (Romans

The expressions, " Holy Father, keep in Thine own name," " Whom I kept in thy name," put the relationship of the names of Father and Son very forward before the mind. It is the leading idea in the truth here presented. But what a way of putting it that the reality of the relationship, right out from the heart and mind of the Father might be realized in us, "that they may be one, as we."

The second contains another unity, and is " not for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word," and here a visible result to be attained is stated, " That the world may believe that Thou didst send Me." The world cannot receive the Spirit of truth; for it sees Him not, nor knows [not having learned or been taught of] Him. (John 14:17.) Nor can it know [intuitively perceive] the things of God. (1 Cor. 2:10-16.) The unity here is not as " in the name of the Father" (name or manifestation supposed by the title " Father," as used by Jesus), and as true, fully so, to Him, but " as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us." The mode of manifestation is here in question. There was and is essential union between the Father and the Son, besides that of ostensible relationship and full fellowship (true also of the Holy Spirit) in counsels, plans (as well as nature), in truth, affections, thoughts, in life, or being, and in principle, and hence indirectly in outward practice and walk; that " they may be one, as we."

How near the unity and fellowship (unqualified by any let or drawback) lay to the Lord's mind when making these two requests (referred to above) is proved by what follows. In those requests He had, as Son of Man and One in service representing the Father, and accomplishing His will-in full intelligence and fellowship with the Father, yet in thorough dependence and obedience-asked two things as having full liberty to do so. But then follows what shows a change. He does not request as One in service requesting of One on an equality with Himself (which would well become Him as the perfect Servant of God and the Father); but says, knowing right well that all His actings were in full accordance with the Father's mind •

Verses 22, 23. "And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that [in order that] they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved me."

Unity twice spoken of. By His having given to us the glory which the Father had given to Him, He showed His intention of all being shut in toward the end in His glory in perfect unity. When the millennial glory sets in, all that Christ is will shine into, and through us, as all that the Father is will shine unhindered into, and out through the Son; and this will make the Church, in that day, the vessel of the display through the Son of the Father's being and glory, perfected in one! And the world below will know that the Father sent the Son. The prince of this world, the god of this world, set aside as a usurper, and the Lord become the Father of an age (Isa. 9:6), such will be the world's knowledge and acknowledgment (see Isa. 4:4-6) as it looks up to the heavenly glory on high.

Wondrous addition made by the Lord to what He means to accomplish, " that the world may know that Thou hast... loved them as Thou hast loved Me." Yes, if we suffer with Him, we shall share His glory.

Secondly (which shows the fixedness of His mind about this unity) He adds

Verse 24, " Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world."

Not only are we to share the highest of the given redemption and salvation-glory-such his love and purpose-but His own heart's desire is that His nearest and dearest friends, partakers of His sorrow, should behold Himself there in " the more excellent glory;" in glory, eye-witnesses of His majesty, and hearing the voice uttered in heaven to Him in the excellent glory-" This is my beloved Son, in whom I have found my delight." Our object of adoration and worship when we are peacefully beholding His place in the highest glory

Thirdly, He adds in verse 26, confirmatory of fellowship with Him and the Father, as verse 25 is of our complete severance from the world through His grace:

Verse 26. "And I have declared [lit. made known] unto them Thy name [i.e. that which is Thy manifestation under that title of Father], and will declare it: that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them."

As the two preceding blessings are, in their full import, for the time to come, yet hope now lays hold of both of them; and, in one sense, the second is open to us, in that the Son is already in the Father and in His glory, yet in the third we have a portion for the wilderness all through it. No one has seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is [lit. He being] in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him [lit. told out in detail]. (John 1:18). And again verse 14: "The word was made [lit. became] flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld [contemplated] His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of [or with] the Father) full of grace and truth;" " and (v. 16) of His fullness have all we received, and grace for grace." John could write of what he had known; have we no songs to sing while glorying in our God through our Lord Jesus Christ? (Rom. 5:11.) And what will it open into when we are with Himself above the Mount!

Christian Witness: Volume 5, Sent One, The (14:28)

"My Father is greater than I." (John 14:28.)

How sadly different is the measure of intelligence which men display when occupied with the things of God and with the things of man. Who, when bade study some plan proposed for the bettering or renewing of anything upon earth, is there who would not endeavor, whilst studying it, to mark the adjustment of the various parts of its machinery, and their suitability to accomplish the object proposed. Say that his intelligent sympathy and co-operation through a wearisome course of labor, were supposed by the proposed plan, would any one feel it enough, merely to have read the proposal, or would he feel that he might read it carelessly, that the having read it was enough, that he had nothing to do with the suitability of the machinery or with the object to be accomplished thereby? Surely he would rather feel that unless the object were distinctly known to him and kept, before his mind, all his study would be in vain; the whole question being, is this course capable of producing such or such a given effect? But alas! when man comes to the things of heaven and of God, he has, by nature, no intelligence to exercise; and that which he receives in Christ, the mind of Christ," (1 Cor. 2:16.) he is too prone to neglect. Satan avails himself of this; and the saints are found, oft reading the bible with preconceived thoughts of what they will or ought to find there, as opposite from what they will find as possible. Happy are the few who find grace to correct themselves and their own notions, by subjection to the blessed contents of God's scriptures. Many an infidel rejects the bible because it contains no systematic proof of the existence of a God. Surely his own existence is no great assumption for any one to make when sitting down to write a book. How much more when the living God was the party. Alas! the naughty pride of the flesh which sets man up to judge his Creator, and leads him to count everlasting misery in his own way better than the fullness of blessing in God's. It is the same pride of the flesh and independence of mind concerning God's object, which leaves the minds of so many to be exercised upon the question of the Deity of the Son and the Deity of the Spirit. The questions are taken to Scripture, as though God's object, or one of them at least, in writing the book, must have been to advance proofs of the Divine nature of the Son and of the Spirit. And then some are stumbled because the evidence they can collect, is of so indirect a nature. Indirect! to be sure it is indirect; and this in, directness is its strength. In writing the bible God had no such thought as to make man judge of Deity. Neither was it even one of His objects

to bring out proofs of the Divine nature of the Son and the Spirit. He writes in and from His own circumstances. And the Divine nature of the Son and of the Spirit, are as much assumed in what He has written, as is even the existence of a God. God's object in the bible was just to unfold the way and glory of Redemption. And they who humbly follow it out as traced in the Scriptures, will find thousands of collateral points taught them; but if they get upon these collateral points separately from their connection with the object for which they are revealed, let them take heed: " what God hath joined together let not man put asunder." I do not say that direct proofs weighty and abundant cannot be brought forward in proof of the unqualified Deity of the Son and of the Spirit: there can be I knew; but what I do say is, that if we try to prove truth according to the good pleasure of our own minds, and not according to the way God teaches it, we are in danger as not being led by the Spirit therein. Just so is the way in which men look at the Savior; either they will look exclusively at His being the Son of God, or they will forget this and look at Him as the Son of man: but the whole virtue is lost if we regard Him in any other way than in the double nature-God manifest in the flesh. This will appear plain if we consider what Redemption is.

God's purpose in Redemption is to glorify Himself by the exceeding riches of His grace and power and wisdom shown in Christ Jesus. The substance of the Gospel was and is just this that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." (2 Cor. 5:19.) And the blessing of them that know the truth in the love of it is, they have been reconciled to God by Jesus Christ; (ver. 18.) they have seen the glory of God in the face of Jesus; (4:6.) they have acknowledged the mystery of God, even of the Father and of Christ. (Col. 2:2.)

The work and object of our Lord was to reveal the Father. There were riches and glories in God most suited for man's fallen state; but how should they be made his? God could not come in contact with the sinner even to bless him, and the sinner could not come into the presence of God, as God, even for a cure. Jesus was the way of infinite wisdom, grace, and truth. His sufficiency for the work was just this, that " in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." (Col. 2:9.) The perception of " God in Christ" is the turning-point of blessing to man. To know Jesus, but not to know the Father in Him, is not faith. Unless " God in Christ" be seen and rested upon, there can be no cleansed conscience, no repose, no assurance or obedience. It cannot be too strongly impressed upon our minds, that the only place in which we can find light and truth as concerning God the Father, - the only place in which we can make sure of the Spirit's power and teaching, is whilst beholding by faith " the glory of God in the face of Jesus;" and that this was the object of the revelation of the Son-not to reveal Himself, but to reveal the Father.□ The Son is presented to us, not that we may know Himself; for it is written, no man knoweth the Son but the Father only.-He is presented simply to declare the Father. (John 1:18.) " He that hath seen me hath seen the Father. (14:9.) In every position in which the Son is presented to us, He is presented as being the servant of the Father, and of the Church for the Father's sake. Appointed by the Father to office, fulfilling all the duties of office as the servant.

I will endeavor to show this,-that Jesus is presented in Scripture as the servant of the Father, first, from those Scriptures which present to us the works and offices proper and peculiar to Himself; and then, secondly, by quotations exhibiting the posture of His heart and mind while found occupied therein.

His High Priesthood was service, and Jesus received it at the Father's hand. " Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; who was FAITHFUL to Him that APPOINTED Him. (Heb. 3:1, 2.) " Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.' (4:14.) " No man taketh this honor unto himself, (i.e. High Priesthood,) but He that is called of God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not Himself to be made a High Priest; but He that said unto Him, Thou art my Son, today have I begotten thee. As He saith also in another place', Thou art a Priest forever, after the order of Melchisedec called of God an High Priest after the order of Melchisedec." (v. 4-6, 10.)

Can anything be clearer than that our adorable Lord was the Father's servant for the Church's sake in this High Priesthood?' And if called to, instated in the High Priesthood by the Father, and faithful in it to Him that appointed Him, then all its duties and offices present Him as the servant also. And thus accordingly we are taught to look at Him while entering into heaven itself, now to appear before God for us: (ix. 24.) having appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, (26) we are taught, I say, to look upon Him as the servant of the Father, and of the Church for the Father's sake. For as it was not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins, when He came into the world He avowed this, saying to His Father, (and therein bearing witness before all, of His being the Father's servant,)

" Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not in burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin, Thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, lo, I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me, to do thy will, O GOD by the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus once for all." (Heb. 10:4-10.)

The blood that He presented, when by His own blood He entered in once into the Holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us, that blood (needed in our case, at once both as to the heavenly things themselves to which we are called, and for the purging of our consciences from dead works to serve the living God,) that blood, I say, He presented to us in the character of the servant of the Father. More than this, both the glory and the weakness which are presented to us in the first two chapters, as being His in connection with the office of Daysman, to stand between God and us, and between us and God, are represented as taken upon Himself in sympathy with and subjection to the Father's will.

That which commends Him to the Church, as a sure resource in every time of trouble, is, that He is such an one as can be touched with the feeling of their infirmities; one who knows what temptation, and crying, and tears mean; one that " learned obedience by the things which He suffered." But the provision of this suitability in Jesus we find attributed to the Father, " For it became Him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings:" (Heb. 2:10.) and from ver. 11, I judge that it was the perception by the Son of such loving union in the mind of the Father to these sons, that led Him, as it were, to greet them as " my brethren," and then associate Himself with them in all their circumstances of misery.

" Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil; and deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage." (14, 15, ver.)

But not only was it the Father's will which guided Him into that which meets our minds, and gives us liberty of soul in drawing near to God through Him, but also the Father's good pleasure which conferred upon Him the glory proper to Him a Mediator- the rank, estate, dignity, and

glory, in which He should Bland in the courts of the Lord's house as the Mediator provided and appointed of the Father. Let me not be misunderstood, His fitness for the office was one thing; the glory and estate proper to the office in order that its duties should be fulfilled, was another. The fitness of Jesus for the Mediator was just " that He was God manifest in the flesh," essentially one with the Father, Jehovah, Lord God of Sabaoth, from before all worlds. This and this alone could suffice; this and this alone could give virtue, and character, power, weight, and value to the blood. It was the blood of God's own Son. Of whom else could the blood speak from the mercy-seat of God in the Holiest of all? Whose blood else could silence Satan, or still the accusing consciences of ten thousand times ten thousand, whose robes were to be washed in the blood of the Lamb? Such alone was His qualification for the office. But when ushered into it by the Father, He found a new glory in it, proper and peculiar to itself. This glory is opened to us in Phil. 2:6-11, Eph. 1:10, as what it shall be hereafter: the blessedness of it we know in that by faith we see Jesus in the midst of the Father's throne as the Lamb once slain, but now alive again. There He is, all things under His feet, and Himself given to be the Head over all things to the Church; heaven opened and we in Spirit and affection gathered there unto Him and the Father. A study of the ten last verses of the 1st chapter of Hebrews, in connection with the Scriptures whence the quotation is made, opens much of the riches of the glory appointed unto the Mediator; as also other Scriptures. And furthermore I would observe, that on ourselves all this is pressed. in detail, by the Holy Ghost, with peculiar emphasis, in the Scriptures, so that we are taught to read our Father in the works and doings of our blessed Lord. See this as to

1.-PROPITIATION FOR SIN. (Rom. 3:24, 25.) Christ Jesus " whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood." (Rom. 8:32.) "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all." (Gal. 4:4.) " God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law," &c. &c.

2.-THE RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD. (Acts 13:33.) God

has fulfilled... the promise made unto the fathers... in that He has raised up Jesus again; And as concerning that He raised Him from the dead, &c., (Rom. 4:25.) if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was raised again for our justification. (Eph. 1:20.) The Father is represented as having raised Christ from the dead, and His object in so doing is stated 1 Peter 1:21, " who believe in' God, that raised Him up from the dead, and gave Him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God, &c. &c.

3.-HIS PRESENT POSITION IN HEAVENLY PLACES FOR THE

SAINTS. (Eph. 1:20-23.) "According to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when lie raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and bath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all." See also (Heb. 2. 5-9. Col. 3:3.) " Fur ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."

4.-THE DISPENSER TO THE CHURCH OF BLESSING. (Acts 1.

4.) " Wait for the promise of the Father, which ye have heard of me." (2-32.) " This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear," arc. &c. &c.

5. THE SECOND APPEARING OF JESUS which is the Church's hope. (1 Tim. 6:14.) " Keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: which in His times He shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, &c." (1 Thess. 4:14.) " Them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him."

Secondly.-I will now endeavor to quote a few Scriptures exhibiting the posture of our Lord's heart and mind while found on earth occupied with these works, as presenting Him in the same most blessed position of the servant of the Father for the Church's sake.-As the One who, though the Son, and not thinking it robbery to be equal with God, yet emptied Himself, made Himself of no reputation, took on Him the form of a servant, and put His trust in God, and all this for the Church's sake, to show her the Father. The gospel of John, as it opens to us more than the other gospels, the glory of the person of Jesus as the only begotten Son of the Father from before all worlds, so likewise is more full of proofs of His subjection to the Father. From it and it alone will I now quote a few of the many passages adducible on this most deeply interesting subject.

Chap 1:18. He is presented as the revealer of the Father. " No man bath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him."

The names of the Lamb of God Chap 1. 29-36. The Messiah or Christ (ver. 41.) both present Him, if considered attentively, as in subjection to the Father. So also will He appear in the 3rd Chapter, when considered as the One given " to be lifted up." (ver. 16.)-" The One sent not to condemn but to save. (ver. 17.) (" The One whom heaven had honored above John. 27.) The One of whom alone it could be said." He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him.-The Father loveth the Son, and bath given all things into His hands." (ver. 34, 35.)

In Chap. 4. We find Jesus speaking of Himself thus, as the gift of God (ver. 10.)-Again, " my meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work." In Chap. 4. ver. 19

He says distinctly to the Jews-" The Son can do nothing. of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do: for what things soever He doeth; these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son and showeth Him all things that Himself doeth and He will show Him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them: even so the Son quickeneth whom He will. For the Father judgeth no man, but bath committed all judgment unto the Son: that all should honor the Son; even as they honor the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which bath sent Him. Verily, verily, I say unto you He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life." (Ver. 26.) "As the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself; and hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man." (Ver. 30.) " I can of mine own self do

nothing: as I hear, I judge; and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me." (Ver., 36.) "I have greater witness than of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me." (Ver. 38.) "Whom He hath sent, Him ye believe not:" (Ver. 43.) "I—am come in my Father's name and ye receive me not; if another shall come in His own name, him ye will receive."

Again.—CHAP. 6. He speaks of Himself as the One sealed by God the Father. (ver. 27.) Sent by the Father. (ver. 29.) Given as bread from heaven by the Father. (33.) "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I am come down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me, And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day." (37-40.) "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." (57.)

CHAP. 7. "My doctrine is NOT MINE, but His that SENT me (16.)... "be that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true." (18) "I am not come of myself, but He that sent me is true, whom ye know not. But I know Him; for I am from Him, and He hath sent me." (28, 29.) "I go unto Him that sent me." (33.) CHAP. 8. "I am not alone, but, I and the Father that sent me:" (16.) "the Father that sent me beareth witness of me." (18.) "He that sent me is true; and I speak those things which I have heard of Him." (26.) "I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. And He that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please Him." (28, 29.) "I speak that which I have seen with my Father;" (38.) "neither came I of myself, but He sent me." (42.) "I honor my Father, and ye do dishonor me." (49) "I seek not mine own glory." (50.) "I know Him (the Father) and keep His saying." (55.) CHAP. 9:4. "I must work the works of Him that sent me." CHAP. 10. "This commandment have I received of my Father;" (18.) "the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me." (25.) "My Father which gave them (the sheep) me, is greater than all." (29.) "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not." (37.) CHAP. 11. "Father I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And, I know that thou nearest me always: but because of the people... I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me." (41, 42.) CHAP. 12. "What shall I say? Father, save me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour: Father, glorify thy name;" (27, 28.) "Him that sent me." (44.) "For I have not spoken of myself, but the Father which sent me, He gave me a commandment, what I should say and what I should speak;" (49.) "whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak." (50.) CHAP. 13. "Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God and went to God." (3.) "He that receiveth me receiveth Him that sent me." (20.) CHAP. 14. "The Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works." (10.) "I will pray the Father:" (16.) "the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me." (24.) "My Father is greater than I." (28.) "As the Father gave me commandment, even so I do." (31.) CHAP. 15. "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman." (1.) "I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in His love." (10.) "All things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you." (15.)

I have quoted the words illustrative of the subject, just as they occurred, without regard to their connection; in conclusion, let any one read carefully the 17th chapter of the gospel of John, and it cannot but be observed how prominent and important a place this same truth held in the mind of our blessed Master at the time of His prayer. His whole desire seemed to be to mark Himself as the one who was the sent Servant of the Father and of the saints for the Father's sake.

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Memorials of the Ministry of G.V. Wigram 1: Volume 1, Proof of Love to Christ, The (14:15-23)

John 14:15-23

When the first passover was kept, all the principles connected with the transit of Israel out of Egypt, and through the wilderness, were brought to light. God that gave them to them looked forward to their progress; and the Lord Himself, the Paschal Lamb (John set out before the minds of His people how entirely He understood how everything would be secured in His absence, whatever they might be, by the position He would occupy as being the Guardian of His people on high, meeting all the failure of His people on earth. Any one who reads chap. 13, I think, may well say, "What a wonderful thing!"—not only what the person of the Lord was, being able to look to the end of time, and to embody in a few verses all these great principles; but having the graciousness of heart to put Himself forward, just as now He makes us know that whatever the difficulties until He comes to take us to Himself He charges Himself with every difficulty, and meets it all.

In the first part of chap. 14., He takes higher ground still as the only One that knew all about the Father; and He introduces the Father by mentioning the Father's house, and presenting Himself as the One who had come to guide us into it in the end, and how they who knew Him ought to read the Father in Him. His own self as a Person, all His ways, thoughts, habits, all His mind—the great thing with Him was to present the Father to His disciples. There were the works He had wrought in the name of the Father as Servant, and the words He had spoken, and the love He exhibited in all His course to His children. In that wondrous love of His, He puts forward to the disciples the place they would hold when He had gone on high. That connects itself with testimony. The fullness of His love which knew all the Father's counsels should pray for the Holy Ghost, and all that He had in Himself as Messenger of the Father would become marvelously connected with the believer by the Spirit of truth dwelling in him—He the truth gone on high, the Spirit in them, and the character of their relationship marked in this way as to life: "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." Well, from that verse 20, He shows another very precious thing, that He understood the heart of a child of God, and what would make it happy in the wilderness, and what His position was as a Servant, and presents that as instruction which occupies the latter part of the chapter.

I would like to follow up what I said the other day when speaking on this chapter. Note verses 15 and 21. If ye love me, treasure up my commandments—injunctions. "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him." "If a man love Me, he will keep (treasure up) My word" (not words): "and my Father will love him, and we will conic unto him, and make our abode with him."

The Lord was really bringing out the two grand principles of His life when here—thoroughly obedient, perfectly dependent. The difference sometimes escapes notice. Dependence is more than obedience. In Him everything was perfect, and there was the most implicit obedience, so that at the close of His course on the cross, His mind seems to turn to Scripture to see if anything had not been fulfilled, and then He said, "I thirst." The last word that described what the Perfect Servant would do, meeting the mind of Him whose Servant He was, He gave up the ghost. The spirit of dependence went further. He had the whole heart of the Father fixed on Him when as a Servant of a lower kind, fulfilling His duties as Messiah, King of Israel, He did it in all the savor of His relationship to the Father. We have a striking instance in Gethsemane. "The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" Not merely I must obey, but as a Son that had fully entered into the mind of His Father in perfect subjection. Christ was the perfect model of dependence in two ways. One, always seeking solitude in the enjoyment of communion; the other, the word of His Father leading Him to thrust Himself out, and set His face like a flint before the world. If I walk as a son and a servant, I realize the heart of a child in perfect dependence. I also get the injunction which comes often in a different way.

One remark I would like to make—it often escapes the attention of the children of God—as to the power of the word as received by the person. When God said, "Let there be light," there was light; and every word of God, if I might give it an epithet, I should call creative. When I find the word comes to me, I cannot say "I cannot." God says these things, and as sure as He says it, there is power given to me to do the thing He speaks of. These exhortations scare people, but are entirely met in that way. To the overcoming one Christ says, "He that hath an ear, let him hear," not to him that shall overcome. The person becomes an overcomer. Do not say, I cannot overcome. Has the word come to you? That word brings power with it. Every command comes to irritate the unconverted; but when sheltered in Christ it comes with the power of God, and there is power because God has put it on His own people.

Just see what an appeal there is in these words of Christ. We know He has loved us, and revealed to us that He gave Himself for us; and His own word tells us that, His thought was, that "they which live should not live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them and rose again." He says, "If ye love Me, keep My commandments." Again, "He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me." It is a great thing to realize that that Christ of God is a living Person in heaven, occupied with the people He has given life to down here, and that having saved us, and given us Himself, bearing all the responsibility in God's presence—that He has given life to me, that He has given life to you, and it is the desire of His heart that we should recognize His commandments, and live to Him. "He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me." "If any man love Me, he will keep My words; and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him." On the ground of that, the heart will be happy all through the wilderness. Do you find your hearts thoroughly happy? If you were to sit down and give an account of last year, has the happiness (I mean the enjoyment of it in your souls) been greater than the sense of difficulties? Which do you find nearest to you, the Lord in His presence, or the difficulties you have to combat and fight with? There is a great deficiency in us in realizing the fulfillment of that gracious word of the Lord, spoken in verse 21, and repeated in verses 23 and 24.

This brings up very much the question of Christian experience. People often put experience entirely in the wrong place. There is no experience that I know of preceding the reception of the word of the living God. God and the word of His grace come first. When that has been received, and the Lord is known as a living Person, is there no rich enjoyment in the heart of His love, as we pass along, presented by Christ as that which He thought would make us happy? Abundantly full it is, and however deep the sorrow through which we may be called to pass, I am bold to say that a man full of the Holy Ghost, and walking in obedience and dependence, will find the joy preponderate over the affliction. "Our light affliction which is but for a moment." Then you say, "Dear me! I must give up everything if I know this." And what is the everything that you give up? The revelation of God's love does make demand of surrender; but what of that, when I think of what it is to have Christ dwelling in the heart by faith, and the soul passing through the wilderness conscious of His eye on me, His heart with me, and in the enjoyment of His love?

Let me give another turn to that thought as to the portion that is ours, and the sorrow into which it may lead us. Persons often pity themselves. True Christians waiting for the Lord have a great deal of sorrow they could tell of. Did it ever occur to you to sit down and write out a list of your sorrows, and present them to Him who was the Man of sorrows, and bore them all for your sake? I should be ashamed to do it. I recognize that character of prayer, that it is the gracious intention of the Lord for us to empty out our care before Him, and ask Him for what we need, even when the thing that presses on us may not be His mind to give us. The Lord Jesus knew no place to lay down the weight upon Him but in the presence of the Father. If I knew my place in Him on high, I could not bring my sorrows there to make much of them. I may present them, and am quite free to do it, and think how much deeper sorrow He went through. I am ashamed to speak of myself when He suffered so much for my sake.

He that hath My commandments and treasures them up, keeps them, not obeys them merely. It is a privilege to have a directing word from the Lord—it is commandment, injunction, the stepping-stone to put my foot on as I go along. Very precious that word "keepeth," that is what the word is here, it involves distinct obedience. You never treasure up a word from anyone if you do not obey it. The love remains after the opportunity has passed for meeting His mind "He that loveth Me shall be loved of my Father." You and I ought to be able to say, I love the Lord, and to say it to Himself—not in the coarse way many boast of their love to Him, without seeing what His love has been to them. "We love Him because He first loved us." Peter, when the Lord speaks to him—Peter says first, "I love, yes, I love." Then he says, "Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee." He takes Him on the ground of His divine glory, and the Lord cannot deny that He has given warmth to Peter's heart. Peter could therefore say it, and say it boldly. It is different—the consciousness of love to Christ when in the secret of God's presence, and when in the world. When in the world I say, "They do not know His word, I do; they have no regard for Christ, I have, and am dependent upon Him." The Holy Ghost is given to us (Rom. 5), proved by our obedience to the known will of God, enabling me to find out the things the Lord would have me to do, and behind which the word stands. I am one of His body, and have to do these things expressive of my obedience to Him.

"He that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him." It is the display of personal affection in the family, not salvation here. What a need there is, when you look at religion and Christianity in our day, of the family affection and ties of the children of God being restored to the soul. It is not a question with you or me whether we are saved, but if we are children of the Father. If Christ the first-born among many brethren is in heaven, we want so to walk that the love of the Father may flow toward us, and be free to flow toward us. If we walk contrary to Him, it will stop the expression of His mind, because the child is in the house, belonging to the house, and in the room with the parent, subjecting the child to the parent. "If a man love Me he will keep My words, and My Father will love him." And what has the

Father seen me do to-day? And what was His thought? That I was very good? Oh, no! but that grace had given me the perception to carry out the mind of the Father. " Shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him." Practically I find that this is connected with that simple truth—the effect of the word of Christ dwelling in my heart is to cast light on my circumstances. The word treasured up and kept. It makes all the difference if you have a week's difficulty before you, and you have no word that connects itself with you. You will be exercised, and fretted, and distracted; and perhaps a Christian of less power will be in the circumstances in a different way, finding this word and that word to throw such light upon them that it changes the bearing of them all, making the sorrow turn to testimony that he is the Lord's. The very darts that the wicked one uses to harass me, make me a testimony to the Lord Jesus Christ. You cannot correct yourself with the apostle's doctrine save by the word dwelling in you. I do not believe we are so taught in the word as a practical thing to ourselves as to be able to read new discipline by the word of Christ treasured up by us.

Well, as to this question of manifestation, the Lord knew what He was saying—how He could let a ray of light shine down to Saul of Tarsus; and how now, if we are dependent and obedient, He can communicate the sense of His presence. Judas says, " How is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" and the Lord repeats, " If a man love Me, he will treasure up My word." Aye, that is much larger than commandment. How many a bright thought the Son had of the Father down here. " Commandment " is, Do you do this; be the doers and workers in a certain path. The " word " is the expression of the mind of the perfect Servant.

" If a man love Me." And do you love the Lord Jesus Christ? Can you face that word, " If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha"- cursed for eternity? Do you love Him? The simple heart that believes says, " Oh yes;" and not boasting as though it was the expression of goodness in itself. Have I been forty-eight years under the tender guardian care of the Lord Jesus Christ, such a One as He is, and have I not learned His love and enjoyed it—the pure outbreathing of love divine to those without strength and ungodly?

He lays it home in a blessed way; " We will come unto him, and make our abode with him." Really there is no difficulty in making a soul conscious of His presence. And have I got it practically? Is the Spirit ungrieved in me? Does the word so dwell in me that there is the consciousness of the nearness of Abba, and of Christ Himself with me in the wilderness? And here, in verse 24, He puts it forward as Abba's word. As the only-begotten Son He had Abba's word with Him; as the perfect Servant He had what was written in the book. He knew what a Son's heart was, and what a Servant's. Abba's word is what He gives us as our fare down here. He could not have been here save as knowing the Father. He had something to do for the Father down here. It was His stay and support, Abba's love and Abba's word; because a Son, therefore a Servant. Satan is god of this world. What have I to do with the world? Serve God in it surely; but the world is not my portion.

" These things I have spoken unto you, being yet present with you: but the Comforter (Paraclete), which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." No doubt this had weight with the apostles. The word of God is known by reading it in the book; it is what is written. The Lord says, " If you do not attend to Moses, how can you listen to My word? " I should have been inclined to put it the other way, and say, " You do not attend to Moses because you do not attend to the Lord; " but He says otherwise, showing what Scripture is to the mind of Christ. It is the great difference in persons reading the word. If one is dependent on the Lord, he counts on the Spirit to give him power to use Scripture, and to bring Scripture to his mind when conversing with others. The Spirit guides the child of God as to the use of the word and as to his own heart too. I get fellowship with the Lord, the only-begotten Son. I am a son, therefore a servant, and treasure up the word; and the Lord sets His seal to it by letting His countenance shine on the person.

"Let not your heart be troubled." You must judge. "Not as the world giveth give I unto you." The world gives after a fashion; it can only give part. When He makes His peace our portion it is another thing. In Philippians the apostle talks of the peace of God keeping, and the God of peace being with him. Christ had perfect peace, conscious He was the doer of the word,—just what a believer understands. It is very simple; in time of trial the mind will let everything pass except something about Christ which sets us in heart before God. " The peace of God." I do not limit it to peace of soul; it is peace for all varieties of circumstances. Christ is the peace. " My peace I give unto you." It is what you must learn. A " babe " only learns in small measure, " young men " will learn it more largely, and the " fathers " still more deeply. Each has to learn it. Are you skilful in it? How long have you been happy in Christ? and are you skilful in this, carrying perfect peace through all your circumstances? Have you known how to carry the vessel with this peace in it? I believe we have great cause for shame as to what is practical in this respect. The heart of the Lord seeks to have us thoroughly good soldiers. We are not skilful in this inward life, and so the outward life is not to the praise and glory of God as it might be. What a thought, that the Lord in heaven, if He looks on such as you, seeing every trouble round about you—what a thought in His heart that He should be your peace! Is it really true that Christ, the Lord of glory that spoke that word, the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever, is there in heaven, His eye on the heart? And that such a word as verse 27 is made good to His disciples? He is going away, and puts it before them, challenges the heart's affections to Himself, " If ye loved me ye would rejoice." The principle is, that Christ cares for my entering into His joys. Can I do it? Have I done it? Did ever such a thought cross my mind, and rest upon my heart, " I am in the field of battle and a great deal of battle goes on within me), but the Lord that has loved me—He, thank God, is at rest upon the throne." The question is, whether I have any power in entering into this thought at the present time. Let me take a very simple figure. If there were a tempest, and a sailor out in it, if he knew his wife and child were safe at home, he would have a thought of thankfulness, " They are safe. I may be exposed to all these difficulties, but the objects of my affection are safe." It is just the same with the blessed Lord. I could not in nature rise up to Christ's joy, but having the Spirit I can. The blessed thing is that Christ cares for it.

" And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe." When I am gone you will have this mark of confidence. " Hereafter I will not talk much with you." He was restrained, because the prince of this world was coming, and all He had to do was to go to the Father.

I ask and entreat you to look and to see, whether in the present time, when through mercy, page upon page of Scripture has been brought out before us, whether we are walking in the power of the truth to the eye of God, to the eye of the Father who loved us, to the eye of Christ who cares about the state of our affections and of our thoughts. He is large-hearted enough to take notice of everything in each one of us; and He desires that we should lie practically consistent, since we are sons, and therefore servants of God.

John 14:1-3

Very little is said about the Father's house save what we find in John 14. One is never weary of those verses because they tell of the personal love of the Lord Jesus to His church. The location of the house is not defined, nor the thought of heaven introduced as meaning any particular locality. But Jesus lifts up His eyes to heaven.

Whenever my faith goes up there, what does it experience? The thought of the One there who was once in all my circumstances of sorrow down here—the thought of home up there with Him. Oh, what a warm, happy feeling the heart experiences at that thought—not the circumstances of that home, but the being there with Him. A man's heart is in his home, not because of its circumstances, but because the object of his affection is there. It is the same with regard to heaven. I find uncommonly little of detail as to circumstances there, but I find unfading reality in one or two simple verses; for instance this: "If ye loved Me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father." What a volume in that expression! Christ wants us to enter into the joy of His heart at the thought of the Father's home, saying, in substance, "I want to share with you this thought of My joy; I want you to rejoice with Me because in a little while I shall be with My Father, and not only that, but you also shall soon be there with Me."

If we could see all the glory of heaven, it would be poor in comparison with the thought of seeing the Son sitting on the throne of His Father, and ourselves seated together with Him in those heavenly places. What perfect rest of heart there is in that expression, "Made us sit together in heavenly places," thus bringing us into the blessed taste of the glory He has!

The character of our rest and our power to walk as risen men are laid down in Colossians 3. When God's eye looks upon you, what does He see? That you are one who has a place up there. And when His eye rests on Christ, it rests as not expecting to find a blot. How impossible, as the eye of God turns on us, that He should find anything but imperfection! But He turns round to see us hid in Christ, and to meet in those who are hid in Christ, Christ's perfection. By His work and in that perfection we are prepared for the Father's house.

G. V. Wigram

Memorials of the Ministry of G.V. Wigram 2 & 3: Volume 2 & 3, Two Prophecies Through a Wicked Man (11:49-52)

John 11:49-52

" Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. And this spake he not of [or from] himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should [lit. was going to] die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that [lit. in order that] also he should [lit. might] gather together in [lit. into] one the children of God that were scattered abroad."

The first of these two predictions found a fulfillment (Acts 2); but still awaits its fullest. (Rom. 11:26-32.)

The second is, that Jesus was going to die in order that He might gather together into one the children of God that were scattered abroad. Surely in " gathered together into one " there is unity. And the children of the heavenly family-of His Father and our Father, His God and our God (John 20:17), were not known as such till He was risen; after that they knew Abba, and the Firstborn among many brethren, and the Spirit of adoption and the unity of the brotherhood in their own family. (1 John.) Again, Jesus, the good One, prophesied the same (John 12:24, 32.)

Reader, will your ignorance make void God's promise? or the truth of the realization of the unity which faith gives to me and to the rest of the children?

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