

John - Commentaries by Edward B. Dennett

Occupation With Christ, Occupation With Christ (6:53-58)

The subject on which I would meditate a little is wider than is suggested by the scripture read. Here we have "eating the flesh of the Son of Man, and drinking His blood" and "eating" Christ Himself, but I desire to consider the whole subject of feeding upon or occupation with Christ. Combining other scriptures with this, we are said to feed upon Christ in three characters: as the passover Lamb, as the manna, and as the old corn of the land. I scarcely need to say that all three are types of Christ. In John 6 we have Christ as the manna (John 6:32-33,48-50; and more), and a reference to Him also as the passover Lamb (compare verse 4 with verse 53). We shall have to turn to the epistles to find Him in the character which answers to the old corn of the land (Josh. 5:11).

Christian Truth: Volume 21, Occupation With Christ: Part 1 (6:53-58)

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1) We will first take Christ as the passover Lamb, as the food of His people. If we go back to the history of Israel, we shall find that they kept the Passover in Egypt (Ex. 12); in the wilderness (Num. 9); and in the land (Josh. 5). The question then arises, When do we feed upon Christ as the passover Lamb? It is sometimes said that we only do this at the outset, when, convicted of sin, we fear the approach of God as a judge; and that, as soon as we have deliverance, we thereafter cease to feed upon Him in this character. If this be so, why does Israel keep the Passover both in the wilderness and in the land? I think, therefore, that it will be seen that we never cease to keep the Passover; and, moreover, that the place in which we thus feed upon Christ depends upon our states of soul.

Every believer knows what it is (has known what it is) to feed upon the roast Lamb in Egypt. Awakened by the Spirit of God, alarmed by the impending judgment, brought under the shelter of the precious blood, how eagerly we fed upon the Lamb that had passed through the fires of God's holiness, when bearing our sins on the tree! True, it was with bitter herbs that we ate it, for we then had a sight of our sins—in measure according to God—and with girded loins and shoes on our feet, and our staff in our hand, for already Egypt had become morally a desert, and we were only waiting for the word of the Lord to commence our pilgrim journey. It was a time much to be remembered, for it was the beginning of months—the first month of the year of our spiritual life.

But while every believer has passed through this experience, it is to be feared that many feed upon the roast lamb in Egypt all their lives. Not knowing deliverance through the death and resurrection of Christ, or even peace with God as the result of the sheltering blood, they feed upon Christ only as the One who by His death bars the way to God as a judge; and consequently they do not know God as their God and Father in Christ Jesus. Such a state of soul is both to be deprecated and deplored; for it is the result either of bad teaching, or of the unbelief of the heart in the fullness of the grace of God.

Passing now from Egypt, the next place in which Israel kept the Passover was the wilderness; and they were told to keep it there "according to all the rites of it, and according to all the ceremonies thereof" (Numb. 9:3). The wilderness is the place of every believer when viewed as a pilgrim. The world has become a desert to him, and he is passing through (as not of) it, because he is waiting for the return of his Lord. How then does he feed upon Christ as the slain Lamb in the wilderness? "It is participation by grace in the power of the death and resurrection of Christ," by which we have been brought out of the enemy's territory—delivered from the power of Satan and redeemed unto God.

In the wilderness we feed upon the Passover as the memorial of our deliverance from Egypt; and in it we see Christ going down into death, and not only bearing all the judgment that was our due—going through and exhausting it—but also as meeting and conquering all the power of the enemy—destroying him that had the power of death, and thereby bringing us out from the house of bondage, and setting us free as the children, and for the service, of God. In the wilderness, therefore, we feed upon the passover Lamb as pilgrims and strangers—knowing deliverance, but not as yet come to the land of which the Lord has spoken. Hence in this character we not only value (according to our faith) the precious blood, and delight to contemplate its wondrous efficacy as clearing us forever from every charge and claim of the enemy, but we also feed upon the death of Christ as such because of our death (and resurrection) in Him, by which we have been brought out into a new place, where we can look back upon death and judgment as being forever behind us.

In the land the Passover assumed another character still, and one too which should also find its correspondence with the believer now. It is very evident that to the Israelite it would have a much fuller significance when he was across the Jordan than when he was in the desert. It would be to him now the memorial—not simply of deliverance from Egypt and Egypt's thralldom and power, but of accomplished salvation. For in truth his position in the land, while it was to the glory of God's faithfulness and grace in the performance of all that He had promised (for "there failed not aught of any good thing which the LORD had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass" [Josh. 21:45]), was the consequence of the shed blood. In other words, the blood of the passover lamb laid the foundation for the accomplishment of God's purposes; and hence to those whose eyes were opened, the blood would have a far greater value when over the Jordan than when in the waste, howling

wilderness.

So now, for we have a position which agrees entirely with being in the land. Not only have we been quickened together with Christ, but we are also raised up together, and made to "sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:6). This is the place before God of every believer; but whether we are occupying it depends upon whether we know death and resurrection with, as well as in and through, Christ—whether we have crossed the Jordan as well as the Red Sea. It is our privilege to do so; indeed we ought never to be content until, by the grace of God, we do know what it is to be seated in spirit in the heavenly places. But if we are there, we cannot dispense with the Passover.

On the other hand, the more fully we apprehend the character of the place into which we are brought, the more the riches of the grace of God are unfolded to us, the more delightedly, and with enlarged apprehensions, we shall look back to the cross, and feast upon the death of Him whose precious blood alone has made our place in the heavenlies possible for us. But our feeding upon Him now will partake more of the character of communion with God in the death of His Son. Our eyes will then be opened to discover, not so much the blessings which have thereby been secured to us, as that God in every attribute of His character has been fully glorified in that death. We shall thus (if we may so speak) feast with God when we keep the Passover in the heavenly places; and the effect on our souls will be adoration and praise; in a word, worship of the highest character will be the result of our feeding upon the slain Lamb when seated in the heavenlies. For we are seated there in peace before God—already in possession of our place in His presence. And it is only then that we can have communion with His own thoughts, and with His own joy in the death of His Son.

We see, therefore, that we feed upon Christ as the passover Lamb in every stage of our experience; but the place in which we do so—Egypt, the wilderness, or the land- will depend upon our states of soul. And, no doubt, when we are gathered together to show the Lord's death until He come, there are often side-by-side those who are in the wilderness, and those who are in the land. Still they feed alike upon the death of Christ, remember Him as dead, whatever the difference in their apprehensions, or in their experiences or attainments. In heaven itself, indeed, we shall contemplate that death with ever increasing adoration; for the blood of the Lamb will be the theme of glorified saints throughout eternity.

Three Marys, In Cana of Galilee (2:1-11)

Years pass away before Mary is again seen in the sacred record. Her last appearance was at Jerusalem, when Jesus was "twelve years old," where she had gone with her husband to keep the feast of the Passover. Thence they returned to Nazareth, and for at least eighteen years there is no mention either of Jesus or His mother. During all this time in which He was hidden, she also was hidden; it is, or should be, the same with the Christian. Now our life is hid with Christ in God, but when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory. (See also 1 John 3:2.) So, in the gospel, the moment Jesus commences His manifestation to Israel (John 1:31), Mary is once more introduced. But in order to rightly apprehend this and the subsequent appearances of Mary, it should be observed that her personal history is closed. If she is seen or mentioned afterward, it is either in a typical way, or to be used to furnish some precious lesson in connection with our Lord. She must not, highly favored as she was, catch the eyes of God's people when her Son, Jesus, is upon the scene. It is His perfections, His wisdom, His devotedness to the will of His God, His glory, that must occupy the reader, though he may not forget the uniqueness of the relationship in which Mary stood to her child.

Three Marys, Mary as the Lord's Messenger (20:17-18)

Before entering upon this, it is necessary to define in a few words the position of Mary. For this we will borrow the striking and beautiful language of another: "She represents, I doubt not," (that is before her risen Lord had made Himself known to her), "the Jewish remnant of that day, personally attached to the Lord, but not knowing the power of His resurrection. She is alone in her love: the very strength of her affection isolates her. She was not the only one saved, but she comes alone to seek—wrongly to seek, if you will, but to seek—Jesus, before the testimony of His glory shines forth in a world of darkness, because she loved Him....It is a loving heart.... occupied with Jesus, when the public testimony of man is still entirely wanting. And it is to this that Jesus first manifests Himself when He had risen." This entirely explains the words of Jesus to her, "Touch me not." There must have been some gesture on the part of Mary, some outstretching of her hand to express the ardency of her love, as if Jesus risen would now be the Messiah on earth. (This will entirely remove the apparent contradiction between this and the account in Matthew, according to which the woman held Jesus by the feet and worshipped Him, because in that gospel He is presented as the Messiah.)

But He had not come back now to establish His kingdom on earth, for, as He says to Mary, He had not yet ascended to His Father. Before the manifestation of His glory in this world, He was about to associate His redeemed with Himself in His own heavenly relationship. He had said before this, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He had died, and the fruit had been produced, and He now places His own, on the ground of redemption, in His own heavenly relationship, so that we obtain a glimpse here of the end of God's counsels in conforming His own to the image of His own Son, who having glorified God on the earth, and finished the work which had been given Him to do, was about to be glorified as Man—as the Man of God's counsels—at God's right hand.

Three Marys, Mary and Her Risen Lord (20:1-16)

After the reverent interment of the body of the Lord, Mary Magdalene with her companions who had come with Him from Galilee, who had seen how His body was laid (compare Luke 23:55-56 with Mark 15:47,16:1), "returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment." Three things are thereby most clearly indicated: first, their affection for Christ; secondly, that they entertained no expectation of the resurrection; and, finally, their devout piety, as seen in their subjection to the Word of God. They longed to lavish the tokens of their ardent love upon the dead body of their Lord; but as the sabbath followed immediately, these holy women, among whom the Magdalene was the most prominent, quietly waited and rested in obedience to the commandment before carrying out their intention of anointing the sacred body of our blessed Lord. (It must be remembered that our blessed Lord was crucified on the Friday, and that the sabbath commenced at sunset the same evening. If then the ninth hour were three o'clock in the afternoon, Joseph must have acted with great promptitude in obtaining Pilate's permission to take down the body of Jesus from the cross, and in preparing it for burial so as to accomplish the burial before the sabbath began. Luke indeed marks this by the statement, "and the sabbath drew on.") But "when the sabbath was passed, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint Him. And very early in the morning, the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulcher at the rising of the sun," or, as Matthew says, "in the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week," or, as John records, "when it was yet dark."

Three Marys, Mary Magdalene at the Cross and Burial of Jesus (19:25)

From the mention of Mary in Luke 8 until the crucifixion of our blessed Lord there is nothing further recorded. All the evangelists (although Luke does not give her name) mention that she was a witness of the Lord's death, or at least the accompaniments of His death, and wherever she is noticed in these last days in company with other women, she comes first, save in one instance. The exception is in John's gospel where the mother of Jesus is specified: "Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene." Here the chief object before the Lord's mind (and how beautiful it is to see it!) was His mother, as, now that He had finished the work which God had given Him to do, He was about to commit her to the care of the beloved disciple. In Matthew and Mark, Mary Magdalene, seen in the company of others, stands first, teaching surely that the Lord had recognized the devotedness of her affection. Luke only says (and he twice speaks in this manner); "the women that followed Him from Galilee" (Luke 23:49,55); but as Matthew includes Mary among those "which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto Him" (Matt. 27:55), we know that Mary was one of the number described by Luke. We have no account of the journeys when (as we have before remarked) Mary and the other Galilean women accompanied Jesus, but it is certain that they were with Him on His last visit to Jerusalem, when He was about to offer Himself, through the Eternal Spirit, without spot to God. What an immense favor was accorded to these devoted souls—to hear His words, and to see His face during the last weeks of His life upon earth! But they were hidden until the end came, for the Spirit of God was not occupied with them and their privileges. All heaven, it might be truly said, had its attention then centered upon the Lamb that taketh away the sin of the world. When, however, the mighty work of atonement had been completed, the Holy Spirit could notice, and cause to be recorded, the fidelity of the Magdalene and her companions.

Three Marys, Mary Standing by the Cross of Jesus (19:25-27)

When the aged Simeon held the infant Jesus in his arms, he said to Mary, "Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thine own soul also;) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." We have italicized the words which referred especially to Mary, and which surely found their fulfillment in the scene contained in this scripture. Whether she had followed Jesus to the cross is not said, nor whether she had witnessed the mocking insults and buffetings He had received when before His judges. A veil, as far as Mary is concerned, is drawn over her feelings, her suspense and agony, during the dark night of His betrayal. Although the sword must have pierced through her inmost heart during the night and day that succeeded the Passover, it is with the Lord Himself, and not with Mary, that the Spirit of God is concerned. It is His attitude, His demeanor, His meekness, His patience and humility, His words that we are called upon to contemplate. But now that His sorrows and sufferings are drawing to a close, the veil is lifted for one brief minute, that we may behold Mary at the cross, or rather, let it be said, that we may behold the perfection of Jesus in His care for Mary, now that the will of God has been accomplished in His service on the earth. Others are with Mary, her sister, Mary, the [wife] of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene but it is to Mary and to the beloved disciple who was "standing by" that the Lord's words are addressed. We may not conjecture where the Word of God is silent; still we may surely repeat that Mary could not gaze upon the crucifixion of her holy Son without unutterable agony—without having her heart rent by the harrowing spectacle. She had watched Him for more than thirty years; she could only have been sensible of much of the moral fragrance and beauty of His devoted life, and she must have had some glimpses, at least, of the glory of His person. And now it was her lot to behold Him rejected, insulted, and crucified! That divine support was ministered to her, while passing through such a fiery trial, we may be assured, but none the less, it must have been with a bursting heart, that she watched Him upon the cross, and saw the fiendish delight of His enemies in the realization of their wicked ends.

Intimacy With Christ, Intimacy With Christ (15:15)

"I have called you friends" (John 15:15).

O Lord, Thou seest, Thou knowest, That to none my heart can tell
The joy and the love and the sorrow, The tale that my heart knows well.

But to Thee, O my God, I can tell it —To Thee, and to Thee, Lord, alone,
For Thy heart my heart has a language, For other hearts it has none.

In the wide world speechless and lonely, For me is no heart but Thine;
Lord, since I must love Thee only, Oh, reveal Thy heart to mine.

H. Suso

"Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." If you meditate upon these words, you will never reach their profound depths, nor shall we even in eternity. For who shall tell what friendship with Christ involves? No one can or ever will gauge the possible intimacy which it holds out to us.

We should diligently cultivate the enjoyment of the love of Christ that we may become molded by it, so as to express it more in our very demeanor and be surrounded by the holy atmosphere which it creates.

Whatever makes Christ more precious to us is of God. Whatever comes between us and Christ is of the devil.

"It is I, be not afraid." The realization of Christ's presence is the antidote to every possible fear, and the way to comfort people is the ministry of Christ in the power of the Spirit — to so present Him that they shall apprehend His presence.

The nearer we are to God, the more we lose sight of ourselves and the better we are able to apprehend and to communicate His mind.

I do not know a happier employment than to sit down quietly before the Lord and let Him make impressions on your heart — to let Him impress you with His own presence and to produce whatever influences He will upon you.

By sitting at the feet of Jesus, we shall both delight His heart and find ourselves in the place of untold and unfathomed blessing.

Many people think communion is having happy feelings. It is being in the mind of God. Communion is doing the right thing at the right moment in the right way. Once get out of communion and you cannot do anything rightly.

Are we satisfied with light instead of cultivating love for Christ? The more light the better, if affection goes with it, but if light be held without the heart, it will not benefit us. John 20 illustrates this. John had more light about the resurrection than Mary, yet when he came to the sepulchre and found it empty, he went home. Mary had no light about the resurrection, yet as she waited there, weeping, Jesus revealed Himself to her. It is to the heart and not to the head that Christ reveals Himself, so the more heart you have, the more you will get manifestations of Him.

To be near Christ is the great enjoyment of the spiritual life. "Can the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them?" As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. In heaven itself you would not be content never to come into contact with Christ. Have you come into contact with Him today?

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Christian Truth: Volume 27, Scripture Note: John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7 (14:16,26)

Scripture Note

The word rendered "Comforter" is difficult to translate. It is embodied in some hymns in its Greek form—Paraclete—and is given in 1 John 2:1 as Advocate. Speaking generally, it means one who undertakes and manages the affairs of another. This is very interesting especially if we remember that Christ is the Paraclete with the Father, and the Holy Spirit the Paraclete for the saints on earth. As such, the latter has taken the place of Christ; and He is thus termed "another Comforter," one who (in contrast with Christ in this respect) abides with His people forever. Two distinguishing features may be noted. The office of Christ as the Paraclete with the Father is limited to the believer's sins; and it is thus based upon what He is in Himself as "Jesus Christ the righteous," and on the fact that "He is the propitiation for our sins." The object of its exercise is the restoration of the communion which had been interrupted by sin, by producing self-judgment and confession. In the case of the Holy Spirit as the Paraclete or Comforter there would seem to be no such limitation. It would rather appear that He undertakes all that concerns our interests as saints in our various divine relationships. It must not be forgotten, however, that the activity of the Holy Spirit as the Comforter in regard to our failures is dependent upon the action of Christ as the Paraclete above; and that, indeed, all His work here in testimony to, and in the maintenance of, the glory of Christ, in guiding the saints into all truth; in a word, in all His ministry, is carried on in connection with the ministry of Christ on high. In grace, both the Paraclete in heaven, and the Paraclete on earth, have become the willing servants of those whom the Father has given to Christ in order to secure their present safety, instruction, and enjoyment, as well as their perfected and eternal blessedness.

The Glories of Christ as the Son of Man, Glories of Christ as the Son of Man, The: The Son of Man Glorified and Glorifying God (13:31-32)

John 13:31-32

When the Greeks desired to see Jesus, He said to Andrew and Philip, "The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified." The glory of which He thus speaks is rather the result of His work on the cross than the cross itself. It looks onward, we apprehend, as pointed out in the last chapter, to the day of His glory in this world, when as Son of man He will be the Head of the nations (Psa. 18:43), and when all things will be subdued under His feet. But when He says in the scripture now to be considered, "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself and shall straightway glorify Him," it is the cross and the work done there, together with His consequent exaltation, which are in view. This fact shows both the fullness of Scripture and also the need for its careful consideration. The same words in different connections may mean entirely different things, and hence the necessity for the study of

the context under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

It will be profitable, therefore, before examining these profound words, to point out the circumstances under which they were uttered. The Lord had been teaching His disciples through His own blessed example, and placing them thereby under the obligation to wash one another's feet: "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." (John 13:14-15). Thereupon He proceeded to draw back the veil which concealed the traitor in the midst of His own. And with what infinite sorrow and compassion for this poor slave of Satan He did it! We read that after He had recalled to them the scripture, "He that eateth bread with Me hath lifted up his heel against Me," He was troubled in spirit and testified and said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray Me." It was not simply one of you, but it was one of you. Ah! it was that which troubled the Lord in spirit, that one of the twelve, one of His chosen companions, one of those who had heard His blessed words of grace and seen the miracles of His power, one of the objects of His fostering care — that such a one should have yielded to the incitements of Satan to betray Him. Then, in answer to the question of the disciple who was lying on Jesus' breast, Jesus said, "He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when He had dipped the sop, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon." Then we have the solemn statement that after the sop Satan entered into Judas. Morally, it was all over with him from this moment. Hitherto Satan had led this poor man, governed him through his lust for money, and thereby hardened his heart against all the gracious influences of the Lord's presence, of His words and works; but at this juncture, as if his day of grace were past, Satan entered and took full possession of the man, leading him captive for the accomplishment of his will. All this is surely implied in the words of Jesus, which were not understood by the other disciples, "That thou doest, do quickly." What a threefold revelation is thus made: first, that nothing was hidden, nor could be hidden, from the eyes of the Lord; second, that man's heart is capable of all iniquity; and last, that Satan spares no artifices in his ceaseless activities for the destruction of souls.

The traitor thus exposed went immediately out; and it was night. It was night actually, but assuredly we may attach a deeper meaning to these significant words. "As long as I am in the world," Jesus had said, "I am the light of the world." Judas, captivated by the devil, went out from the rays of that blessed light; and, hence, of necessity, when the door closed behind him, it was night — the night of death — the awful darkness of which enwrapped his soul forever; for he had entered that land of which Job speaks — "a land of darkness, as darkness itself; and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness," because, it may be added, there lies upon it the judgment of God.

No one may venture to penetrate, or could penetrate, into the sorrows of the Lord's own heart through this scene, but one cannot fail to perceive that it was a relief to His spirit when Judas had gone out; for the evangelist would seem to call attention to this by saying, "Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him." It was indeed the treachery of Judas which brought up before His soul what lay before Him in His conflict with Satan's power on the cross. Satan had tested Him at the outset; but, foiled and defeated, he had departed from Him "for a season." That season was now ended, and his seduction of Judas was but the commencement of his final onslaught, the issue of which, blessed be God, could only be his complete overthrow. For it was through death that Jesus destroyed ("annulled") him that had the power of death, and delivered them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage. Another thing may be noted. The Lord's heart was restrained by the presence of Judas, and thus it was only after the traitor had gone out that He made the ineffably blessed communications contained in verses 31 and 32. And do we — we who are gathered out to His precious name — do we not know from sad experience what it is to limit the out-flowings of the Lord's heart by the presence of sin? Alas! how often do our feeble meetings testify to this! The Lord may be in the midst of His people as fully as He was with His own on this occasion, but how can He display Himself to our hearts unless we are in moral suitability to His presence, unless we have put our shoes from off our feet because the place whereon we stand is holy ground? May the Lord Himself fasten this instruction upon our hearts in the power of the Holy Spirit!

We may now pass to the consideration of the communications made. We cannot doubt that the passage from verse 31 to chapter 14:3 hangs together; but we will, in the first place, confine ourselves to what we have in verses 31 and 32. It may be at once perceived that there are mainly three things: the Son of man glorified on the cross; God glorified in Him, the Son of man; and last, the Son of man glorified by God in Himself. These we may, however feeble our apprehensions, proceed to meditate upon in the order given.

It may be observed at once that the true character of what was before the Lord may be gathered by the form of His words. As we read it in our translation it is, "Now is the Son of man glorified." What the Lord really says is, "Now has the Son of man been glorified." The incident of Judas had brought before Him the cross and its awful character; and, as having already passed through in spirit all that it involved for Him, He could say, "Now has the Son of man been glorified." The issue of the cross was thus foreseen and stated in the full assurance of victory over the whole of Satan's power. It might be going too far to regard it as a triumphant outburst, and yet it partakes of this character in that He looks right through all the darkness of the cross and onward to the glory in which He would be glorified at the right hand of God.

What then is to be understood by the expression, "Now is the Son of man glorified?" It will be seen at once that the reference is not to His actual glory on which He entered after His resurrection, but that it is rather to the display of His moral glory in His death on the cross. All His blessed perfections came out in a new way and under new circumstances. In all His sojourn in this world, in every step of His pathway, He was ever the perfect One, ever devoted in His entire obedience to the Father's glory, so that He could testify that He always did the things which pleased Him. He was thus always the object of the Father's complacent delight, as indeed it is said, "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand." It was not, therefore, that He was more perfect — this could not be — on the cross than in His life. But the truth is that, searched and tested as He had never been before, by the holy fire of judgment through which He passed when forsaken of God, there was a greater manifestation of His moral beauties and excellencies. All these came out so richly and so fully that He became enshrined, as it were, in their brightness and halo. The light is ever light, but when the rays of the sun are seen playing upon a dark thundercloud, their brightness and beauty are intensified. So with our blessed Lord — all that made up the perfection of His life toward God and toward man was enhanced and magnified by the thick darkness of the cross. All that He is was there expressed and glorified.

Let a few words of another be given, that the heart of the reader may comprehend by the power of the Holy Spirit this character of the cross, and be more deeply affected by its contemplation. "Now, in Jesus on the cross, the Son of man has been glorified in a much more admirable way than He will be even by the positive glory that belongs to Him under that title. He will, we know, be clothed with that glory; but, on the cross, the Son of man bore all that was necessary for the perfect display of the glory of God. The whole weight of that glory was brought to

bear upon Him to put Him to the proof, that it might be seen whether He could sustain it, verify and exalt it; and that by setting it forth in the place where, but for this, sin concealed that glory and, so to speak, gave it impiously the lie. Was the Son of man able to enter into such a place, to undertake such a task and maintain His place without failure unto the end? This Jesus did. The majesty of God was to be vindicated against the insolent rebellion of His creature; His truth, which had threatened Him with death, maintained; His justice established against sin (who could withstand it?); and, at the same time, His love fully demonstrated." And who, we may inquire, was sufficient for this glorious work, to accomplish all these ends, except the Son of man? There was no other in all God's universe, no creature in heaven, however exalted, who could have stepped in and endured all that the glory of God required on account of what man was, and of what he had done. If this be so, as all Scripture testifies, we can apprehend a little of the meaning of the Lord's words, "Now is the Son of man glorified."

All this may well invite us to a more constant meditation upon this aspect of the death of Christ — we mean the aspect which brings so vividly before us, not only what He effected on the cross for God, though this be the foundation of all eternal blessing, of the vast universe of bliss, nor even what He secured for His people, though without this we never could have been in association with Him before God, but also that which brings out in such a marvelous manner the glories of His Person. The more we are affected by these, the more our hearts will be conducted into fellowship with God concerning His beloved Son, and the better we shall understand the greatness of the work which He accomplished on the cross.

Three Marys, Mary Anointing the Feet of Jesus (12:1-8)

Some little time had elapsed since the raising of Lazarus, and Jesus was found again at Bethany. The notable miracle which had been wrought, testified to by so many witnesses, even by some who still rejected Christ (John 11:46), produced such a commotion at Jerusalem that a special council was summoned by the Jewish authorities to consider what should be done. No attempt was made, remarkable to say, to deny that Lazarus had been raised from the dead; the fact was tacitly admitted, for they said, "What do we? for this Man doeth many miracles. If we let Him thus alone, all men will believe on Him; and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation." God acted behind their deliberations, and took up Caiaphas, as in former days He had used Balaam, to prophesy that Jesus should die for that nation, and "from that day forth they took counsel together for to put Him to death." Jesus retired with His disciples from before the hostility of the Jews, for His hour was not yet come, and waited in a city called Ephraim. But the time was drawing near when the true Passover Lamb was to be killed, although it is ever to be remembered that no man took His life from Him, but that He laid it down of Himself; and six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, "where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom He raised from the dead." There—in the house of Simon the leper, both Matthew and Mark say—"they made Him a supper." John does not specify where the supper was made— and no doubt he is silent on this point purposely—as his object is rather to call attention to the fact that Martha and Mary and Lazarus were all present, and in the enjoyment of the fruit of their exercises and divine teaching in connection with the sickness, death and resurrection of Lazarus. How blessed for the soul when the object of God's dealing with it is reached and realized!

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