

The Gospel of John

by Arno Clemens Gaebelein

The Gospel of John reveals the true nature of Christ and emphasizes the importance of believing in Him for eternal life.

Scripture: John 1:1, John 3:3, John 4:14, John 6:35, John 8:12, John 8:58

Topics: "Jesus Christ", "Salvation"

Description

In the sermon, Arno Clemens Gaebelein delves into the Gospel of John, highlighting the various testimonies and teachings of Jesus Christ. He emphasizes the importance of surrendering to God, the need for spiritual rebirth, and the promise of eternal life through faith in Jesus. Gaebelein explores the significance of Jesus as the Light of the World, the Bread of Life, and the eternal I AM, revealing His divine nature and the salvation He offers to all who believe in Him.

Transcript

The fourth Gospel has always been ascribed to the beloved disciple, the Apostle John. He was one of the sons of Zebedee. His mother Salome was especially devoted to the Lord. (See Luke 8:3; 23:55 and Mark 16:1.) He knew Him from the beginning of His ministry and had followed Him with much love and faithfulness, and seems to have been the most beloved of the Lord. He never mentions himself in the Gospel by name, but nevertheless speaks of himself, as the disciple whom Jesus loved (Chapters 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20, 24). With James and Peter he was singled out to witness the transfiguration and to go with the Lord to the garden of Gethsemane. The three also were present when the Lord raised the daughter of Jairus from the dead (Mark 5:37). John was likewise an eye-witness of the sufferings of Christ (19:26, 35).

The Johannine Authorship.

The Johannine Authorship of the fourth Gospel is proven by the testimony of the so-called church-fathers. Theophilus of Antioch, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Hippolytus, Origen, Dionysius of Alexandria, Eusebius, and above all, Irenaeus, all speak of this Gospel as the work of the Apostle John. Other ancient authorities might be added. Of great value is the testimony of the two most pronounced enemies of Christianity, Porphyry and Julian. Both speak of the Gospel of John and neither one doubted that the Apostle John wrote this last Gospel. Had there been any evidence against the Johannine authorship we may rest assured that these two prominent adversaries would have made good use of it to reject the authenticity of the Gospel which emphasizes the absolute Deity of Christ.

The most interesting and conclusive evidence for the Johannine authorship is furnished by Irenaeus and Polycarp. Polycarp had known the Apostle John personally and Irenaeus knew Polycarp. In a letter to his friend Florinus, Irenaeus wrote as follows:--

"I can describe the very place in which the blessed Polycarp used to sit when he discoursed, and his goings out and his comings in, and his manner of life, and his personal appearance, and the discourses which he held before the people, and how he would describe his intercourse with John and with the rest who had seen the Lord, and about His miracles, and about His teaching, Polycarp as having received them from eye-witnesses of the life of the Word, would relate altogether in accordance with the Scriptures."

Now Irenaeus who had known Polycarp the friend and companion of the Apostle John, speaks of the Gospel of John as the work of the Apostle John; he treats the entire fourth Gospel as a well-known and long used book in the church. He does not mention what authority he had for doing this. There was no need for it in his day, for everybody knew that this Gospel had been written by John. "When Irenaeus who had conversed with Polycarp, the friend of the Apostle John, quotes this Gospel as the work of the Apostle, we may fairly presume that he had assured himself of this by the testimony of one so well capable of informing him" (Dean Alford, Greek N.T.) This strongest evidence for the Johannine authorship has been ably stated by R. W. Dale of Birmingham in the following words: "Irenaeus had heard Polycarp describe his intercourse with John and the rest who had seen the Lord; this must have been long after John's death, perhaps as late as A.D. 145, or even A.D. 150, for Irenaeus lived into the third century. Was the Fourth Gospel published before that time? Then Polycarp must have spoken of it; if John had not written it, Polycarp would have denied that it was genuine; and Irenaeus, who revered Polycarp, would never have received it. But if it was not published before that time, if it was unknown to John's friend and disciple forty or fifty years after John's death, then, again, it is incredible that Irenaeus should have received it.

"Polycarp's martyrdom was in the year A.D. 155 or A.D. 156. He had known John; and for more than fifty years after the death of John he was one of the trustees and guardians of John's memory. During a great part of that time he was the most conspicuous personage among the Churches of Asia Minor. Nor did he stand alone. He lived to such an advanced age, that he probably survived all the men who had listened with him to John's teaching; but for thirty or forty years after John's death there must have been a large number of other persons who would have associated themselves with him in rejecting a Gospel which falsely claimed John's authority. While these persons lived, such a Gospel would have had no chance of reception; and for thirty years after their death, their personal friends, who had heard them speak of their intercourse with John, would have raised a great controversy if they had been asked to receive as John's a Gospel of which the men who had listened to John himself had never heard, and which contained a different account of our Lord from that which John had given. But within thirty years after the martyrdom of Polycarp our fourth Gospel was universally regarded by the church as having a place among the Christian Scriptures, and as the work of the Apostle John. The conclusion seems irresistible; John must have written it."

The Defeat of the Critics.

The Johannine authorship of this Gospel was first doubted by an English clergyman by name of Evanson, who wrote on it in 1792. In 1820 Prof. Bretschneider followed in the history of the attack upon the authorship of this Gospel. Then came the Tubingen school, Strauss and Baur. Baur, the head of the

Tubingen school gave the year 170 as the date when the Gospel of John was written; others put the date at 140; Keim, another critic, at 130; Renan between 117 and 138 A.D. But some of these rationalists were forced to modify their views. The Tubingen school was completely defeated and is now the dead thing of the past. We could fill many pages with the views and opinions of these critics and the answers, which able scholars who maintain the orthodox view, have given to them. This, we are sure, is not needed for true believers. The ripest and the best scholarship declares now that the fourth Gospel was written by John. Well said Neander, "this Gospel, if it be not the work of the Apostle John, is an insoluble enigma."

While the correct year in which the Gospel of John was written cannot be given, it seems quite evident that it was about the year 90 A.D.

The Purpose of the Gospel of John.

Modern critics of this Gospel have opposed the genuineness of it on the ground of the radical diversity between the views of the Person of Christ and His teachings as presented in the Gospel of John and the Synoptics. Such a diversity certainly exists, but it is far from being an evidence against the genuineness of this Gospel. It is an argument for it.

The synoptic Gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke, were already in existence for several decades and their contents known throughout the church. If an uninspired writer, some other one than John the Apostle, had undertaken to write another Gospel, such a writer would, in some way at least, have followed the story, which the Synoptics so closely follow. But the Gospel of John is, as already stated, radically different from the three preceding Gospels, and yet no critic can deny that the Gospel of John reveals the same wonderful Person who is the theme of the other Gospel records. As we have seen Matthew wrote the Jewish Gospel describing our Lord as the King; Mark makes Him known as the true Servant, and Luke pictures the Lord as the perfect Man. Thus the Synoptics emphasize His true humanity and show Him forth as the minister of the circumcision. The first two Gospels at least belong as much to the Old Testament as they belong to the New. True Christianity is not fully revealed in these Gospels. They move on Jewish ground. And what had taken place when finally the Holy Spirit moved the Apostle John to write his Gospel? The nation had completely rejected their Lord and King. The doom predicted by the Lord Jesus had fallen upon Jerusalem. The Roman army had burned the city and the temple. The Gentiles had come into the vineyard and the nation's dispersion among all the nations had begun. The facts are fully recognized by the Spirit of God in John's Gospel. This we find on the very threshold of this Gospel. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not" (John 1:11). That Judaism was now a thing of the past is learned from the peculiar way in which the Passover-feast is mentioned. "And the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh" (6:4; also 2:13; 11:55). The Sabbath and the Feast of Tabernacles are spoken of in the same way (5:1; 7:2). Such statements, that the divinely given feasts were but "feasts of the Jews," are not found in the Synoptics. In John's Gospel these statements show that we are outside of Judaism. Hebrew names and titles are translated also and the Gentile meaning is given. (Messiah, which is interpreted Christ. 1:41. Rabbi, which is to say, being interpreted, Master. 1:38. The place of a skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha. 19:17, etc.) This is another evidence that Judaism is no longer in view.

But something else had happened since the three first Gospels had been written. The enemy had come in perverting the truth. Wicked apostates and anti-Christian teachers asserted themselves. They denied the Person of the Lord, His essential Deity, the virgin birth, His finished work, His physical resurrection, in one word, "the doctrine of Christ." A flood of error swept over the church. (The Epistles of John, besides the early Christian literature, bear witness to this fact. See First John 2:18-23; 4:1-6. Men were scattering the

anti-Christian doctrines everywhere so that the Spirit of God demanded the severest separation from such. "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not in your house, neither bid him God speed. For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (Second John 10-11). An exhortation which is in force for all times.)

"Gnosticism" was corrupting the professing church everywhere. This system spoke of the Lord Jesus as occupying the highest rank in the order of spirits; they also denied the redemption by His blood and the gift of God to believing sinners, that is, eternal life. God in His infinite wisdom held back the pen of the Apostle John till these denials had matured and then he wrote under divine guidance the final Gospel in which the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Only-Begotten, the Second Person of the Godhead, is made known in the fullness of His Glory. Linked with this marvelous picture of Him, Who is the true God and the Eternal Life, is the other great truth made known in the fourth Gospel. Man is dead, destitute of life; he must be born again and receive life. And this eternal life is given by the Son of God to all who believe on Him. It is communicated as a present and abiding possession, dependent on Him, Who is the source and the Life as well. At the same time the Third Person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit, is revealed in this Gospel as He is not revealed in the Synoptics. The Gospel which reveals the Eternal Life is necessarily the Gospel in which the Holy Spirit as the Communicator, Sustainer and Perfecter is fully made known. The Gospel of John is therefore the New Testament Gospel, the good news that Grace and Truth have come by Jesus Christ. It makes known what is more fully revealed in the doctrinal Epistles.

The last chapter in which we hear the Lord Jesus Christ speak, before His passion, is the seventeenth chapter. He speaks to the Father in the great prayer rightly called "the high-priestly prayer." In it He touches upon all the great truths concerning Himself and His own made known in this Gospel, and we shall also find that all the great redemption truths given in their fullness by the Holy Spirit in the Epistles, are clearly revealed in this prayer.

John's Own Testimony.

At the close of the twentieth chapter of this Gospel we find John's own testimony concerning the purpose of this Gospel. "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through (in) His Name." Thus the twofold purpose of the fourth Gospel is given by the Apostle:--Christ the Son of God and the Life He gives to all who believe.

The characteristic features of this Gospel are too numerous to mention in this introductory word. We shall point them out in the annotations.

The Division of the Gospel of John

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (3:16). This verse may be given as the key-text of this Gospel, while the prominent words are: Life; Believe; Verily.

Different divisions of this Gospel have been suggested. In its structure it has been compared to the three divisions of the temple. The outer court (Chapter 1-12); the Holy Part (13-16); the Holiest (17-21). Others have used chapter 16:28 to divide the Gospel; "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again I leave the world and go to the Father." This is unquestionably the order of events in the Gospel of John. He came forth from the Father (1:1-18); He came into the world (1:19-12); He left the world and has

returned to the Father (13-21). Keeping the great purpose of this Gospel in view we make a three-fold division.

I. The Only-begotten, the Eternal Word; His Glory and His Manifestation. Chapter 1:1-2:22.

II. Eternal Life Imparted; what it is and what it Includes. Chapter 2:23-17.

III. "I lay down My life, that I might take it again Chapter 18-21.

First then we behold Him, the Only Begotten, the Creator of all things, the Life and the Light of men, in His full glory. The Eternal Word was made flesh and manifested Himself among men. This is followed by the main section of the Gospel. It begins with the story of Nicodemus in which the absolute necessity of the new birth, the reception of eternal life by faith in the Son of God, is emphasized; it ends with the great summing up of all He taught concerning eternal life and salvation, in the great prayer of Chapter 17. Chapters 3-17 contain the progressive revelation concerning eternal life. The Reception and assurance of it, the Holy Spirit as the Communicator, the provisions for that life, the fruits of it, the goal of it, etc., we can trace in these chapters. In the third part we find the description of how He laid down His life and took it again in resurrection.

Analysis and Annotations

I. The Only-begotten, the Eternal Word; His Glory and His Manifestation -- Chapter 1:1-2:22

CHAPTER 1

1. The Word: the Creator, the Life and the Light. 1-4.
2. The Light and the Darkness. The Light not Known. 5-11.
3. The Word Made Flesh and Its Gracious Results. 12-18.
4. The Witness of John. 19-34.
5. Following Him and Dwelling With Him. 35-42.
6. The Next Day. Nathanael's Unbelief and Confession. 43-49.
7. The Promise of Greater Things. 50-51.

Majestic is the beginning of this Gospel. Hundreds of pages might be written on the opening verses and their meaning would not be exhausted. They are inexhaustible. The name of our Lord as "the Word" (Logos) is exclusively used by the Apostle John. The Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria, who lived in the days of the Apostle John, also speaks of the Word. Critics have therefore claimed that the Apostle copied from Philo and reproduced his mystical Jewish philosophy. However, this theory has been exploded. Professor Harnack, the eminent German scholar, states "the Logos of John has little more in common with the Logos of Philo than the name." It is significant that the rabbinical paraphrases on the Old Testament (Targumim) speak hundreds of times of the Lord as "the Word" (Memra). These ancient Jewish paraphrases describe Jehovah, when He reveals Himself, by the term "Memra," which is the same as the Greek "Logos"--"the Word." Genesis 3:8 they paraphrased "they heard the Word walking in the garden." These Jewish comments ascribe the creation of the world to the Word. It was "the Word" which

communed with the Patriarchs. According to them "the Word" redeemed Israel out of Egypt; "the Word" was dwelling in the tabernacle; "the Word" spake out of the fire of Horeb; "the Word" brought them into the promised land. All the relationship of the Lord with Israel is explained by them as having been through "the Word." In the light of the opening verses of the Gospel of John these Jewish statements appear more than interesting.* (These paraphrases in the form we possess them were written in Aramaic about 300 A.D. But long before they were written they must have existed as traditions among the Jewish people.) The Only Begotten is called "The Word" because He is the express image of God, as the invisible thought is expressed by the corresponding word. He is the revealer and interpreter of the mind and will of God.

"In (the) beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Three great facts are made known concerning our Lord. 1. He is eternal. He did not begin to exist. He has no beginning, for "in the beginning was the Word." He ever was. Before time began and matter was created, He was. 2. He was and is a Person distinct from God the Father, yet one with Him. "The Word was with God." 3. The Lord Jesus Christ is God, for we read "The Word was God." He could therefore not be a being, a creature like the angels. The verses which follow add to this the fact that He is the Creator of all things and the Source of all light and life. Here is the most complete refutation of the wicked teachings concerning the Person of our Lord, which were current in the days of the Apostle, which have been in the world ever since and which will continue to exist till the Lord comes. Arianism, which makes our Lord a Being inferior to God, is answered. So is Socinianism, Unitarianism, Russellism, International Bible Student Association, which teach that Christ was not very God, but a man. Well has it been said in view of the revelation contained in the first verse: "to maintain in the face of such a text, as some so called 'Christians' do, that our Lord Jesus Christ was only a man, is a mournful proof of the perversity of the human heart." And in Him was life, which must be applied to spiritual life. Spiritual life and light is impossible apart from the second Person of the Godhead. The commentator Bengel makes a helpful statement on the opening verses of this chapter. "In the first and second verses of this chapter mention is made of a state before the creation of the world; in the third verse, the world's creation; in the fourth, the time of man's uprightness; in the fifth, the time of man's decline and fall."

John the forerunner is in this Gospel presented to bear witness of the Light. How this reveals the darkness which is in the world that He, Who is the Life and the Light, needed one to announce His coming! "The true light was that which, coming into the world, lighteth every man." (Verse 9; correct translation.) And when He came into the world He had made, the world knew Him not. Even His own, to whom He came, received Him not. This is His rejection by Israel, which in detail is described in the first three Gospels.

Verses 12 and 13 make known the gracious results for those, who receive Him, who believe on His name. The world had not known its Creator; Israel had rejected Him. After the great work of the Cross had been accomplished, the work done for guilty man, the good news is made known. As many as receive Him, to them He gives the right to be the children of God. The new birth is here mentioned for the first time; it is the communication of the divine nature by believing on His name. Believing on Him, receiving Him, we are begotten again and are therefore the children of God. Of this nothing is said in the preceding Gospels. The Gospel of John begins where the others end. The authorized version is incorrect in having "sons of God." (The same error appears in First John 3:2.) John always speaks of "children" not of "sons." The expression "children of God" denotes the fact that we are God's born ones, born by the new birth into the family of God. "Sons of God" we are called in view of our destiny in Christ and with Him. As sons of God we are also the heirs of God and fellow-heirs of Jesus Christ. Nowhere is it said that we are heirs of God because we are children of God. Our Lord is never called a child of God, for He is not born of God as we

are; He is "Son." (Acts 4:30 is incorrect; not "holy child Jesus," but "holy servant.") Verse 14 gives the fact of His incarnation. Here then we read what the Word became. It is almost impossible to believe that men who claim scholarship, who deny the fact of the incarnation, can state as they do, that the Gospel of John has nothing to say on this great foundation truth of our faith. These apostates must be blinded. The great mystery is made known here as it is in Matthew and in Luke. The Eternal Word, the Word which ever was, the Word which is God, became flesh. He became so by the union of two perfect and distinct natures in one Person. His person however cannot be divided. And when He became flesh, took on the creature's form, He did not cease to be very God; He emptied Himself of His outward glory, but not of His Deity. He became truly man, but He was holy, sinless; not alone did He not sin, but He could not sin. There is an ancient Latin statement which is worth repeating. It represents "the Word having become flesh as saying: "I am what I was, that is God"--"I was not what I am, that is Man"--"I am now called both, God and Man." In Him they beheld His glory, the glory of the Only Begotten, full of grace and truth. Grace and truth came by Him. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, declared Him, Whom no one hath seen at any time. These are great statements. The word "grace" is found here for the first time in the New Testament. And He, the Incarnate Word, and He alone is full of Grace and Truth. Out of His fullness have we all received, and grace upon grace. It is all grace, that those receive from Him who believe on His name.

The witness of John the forerunner is different from his witness and preaching as given by the Synoptics. They report mostly his testimony to the nation. Here we read when he saw Jesus coming to him, he saith, "Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world." (Often Christians quote "sins of the world." If our Lord had taken away the sins of the world, the whole world would be saved. Our Lord only bore the sins of those who believe on Him. All who do not believe die in their sins and are lost.) He knew that He Who came to him was to be the Sin-bearer. He knew that He is the true Sacrifice for sin, the true Passover-Lamb, the Lamb which Isaiah predicted. And he testified that the Lamb of God was to take away (not taking away then, or has taken away) the sin of the world. The Lamb of God had to die and the ultimate results of His death are announced in this testimony. They have not yet come, but will be realized in the new heaven and the new earth, when all things are made new.

Beginning with verse 35 we read what happened the next day after John had given his testimony concerning the Lamb of God. The results of that testimony now appear. Once more John points to Him: "Behold the Lamb of God." He, who was the greatest prophet of the Old Testament, directs his disciples to the Lord. The two disciples heard him speak and followed Jesus. These are the blessed steps: speaking the message, hearing (and in hearing believing) then following the Lord. And He knew them and their hearts' desire. His grace was drawing them to Himself. Their question, "Rabbi, where dwellest Thou?" is answered by that most blessed invitation, "Come and see." These are the first words of our Lord besides His question, written in this Gospel. He wanted them to know Him, to be in communion with Himself. They abode with Him that day. It foreshadows the results of the Gospel of Grace. The unmentioned place where they dwelt with Him is typical of the heavenly place where He is now. In faith we see where He abides, and by faith we know we are there in Him. It is a beautiful picture of the gathering which takes place throughout this Gospel-age. He is the Center, and "Come and see" are still His gracious words to all who hear and believe. And how Andrew at once testified and brought his brother Simon to Jesus!

Verses 43-49 unfold another picture. Nathanael (gift of God) would not believe. Philip had testified to him "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." Nathanael under the fig tree, where the Lord had seen him, is the type of the remnant of Israel.

When the Lord spoke to him he owned Him as the Son of God, the King of Israel. So all Israel in a future day will confess Him. Notice the first day, when the first company is gathered to abide with Him (typical of this age and the gathering of a heavenly company); then the second day, when the Lord reveals Himself to unbelieving Nathanael (typical of the conversion of the remnant of Israel).

The last two verses of this marvelous chapter will find their fulfillment in that day when heaven is opened. Then greater things will take place. The angels of God will be seen ascending and descending upon the Son of Man. It will take place when He comes the second time, when Israel acknowledges Him as their King and as the Son of God.

CHAPTER 2:1-22

1. The Marriage in Cana. 1-11.

2. The Temple Cleansed. 12-22.

The second chapter gives the record of the first miracle reported in this Gospel. He manifested His omniscience in the previous chapter and here, in turning water into wine, He reveals Himself as the omnipotent Creator. What harmony there is between the opening of the first two chapters of the Gospel of John. The first chapter speaks of Him as the Creator of all things and in the second chapter He manifests the power of the Creator. He needed no wine, no grapes, no mellowing process, to furnish the best wine. He but commanded and it was so. This is omnipotence. In verse 17 of the previous chapter there is a contrast between Moses representing the law dispensation and our Lord Jesus Christ through whom grace and truth have come. The first miracle Moses did, was turning water into blood, typical of the ministration of the law unto death; the first miracle of our Lord turns water into wine, which is typical of joy and the ministration of Grace which is unto life.

The many applications and lessons of the marriage in Cana and the changing of water into wine we have to omit. But we call attention to the dispensational aspect. The third day* mentioned connects with the preceding chapter. (The numbers 3 and 7 are prominent in this Gospel. Three times the Lord went into Galilee, three times into Judea; three passovers are mentioned, etc. There are seven signs or miracles, seven times the Lord speaks "I am"; seven times the phrase "These things have I spoken unto you, etc." is used.) On the first day the two disciples abode with the Lord. On the second day unbelieving Nathanael confessed Him as Son of God and King of Israel. On the third day there was a marriage. The third day clearly indicates the time of Israel's blessing and restoration. Beautiful is the predicted and still future confession of Israel: "After two days will He revive us, in the third day He will raise us up and we shall live in His sight." (Hosea 6:1-3). The marriage typifies the restored relationship of the Lord with Israel. That is why the mother of Jesus (type of Israel) and His disciples (those who come with Him to the marriage) are mentioned. And this miracle is spoken of as the "beginning of miracles," when He manifested His glory. When He comes again and changes existing conditions, when Israel enters into the promised and blessed relationship, when He manifests His glory, then the wine of joy will not fail. Better things are promised and better things will come, when that blessed day appears. But "His hour is not yet come." It will surely come.

The words of rebuke to Mary clearly show that she erred and was as fallible as any other woman. The Lord rebuked her because He did not want her to interfere with Him and His work. "She erred here, perhaps from an affectionate desire to bring honor to her Son, as she erred on other occasions. The words before us were meant to remind her that she must henceforth leave our Lord to choose His own times and modes of acting. The season of subjection to her and Joseph was over. The season of His public ministry

had at length begun. In carrying on that ministry, she must not presume to suggest to Him. The utter contrariety of this verse to the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church about the Virgin Mary is too palpable to be explained away. She was not without error and sin, as Romish writers have dared to assert, and was not meant to be prayed to and adored. If our Lord would not allow His mother even to suggest to Him the working of a miracle, we may well suppose that all Roman Catholic prayers to the Virgin Mary, and especially prayers entreating her to 'command her Son,' are most offensive and blasphemous in His eyes." (J.C. Ryle.)

The purging of the temple is closely connected with the marriage and miracle of Cana. When He comes again the Father's house, the temple, will be cleansed. "Yea every pot in Jerusalem shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts ... and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite (which means translated: merchantman) in the house of the Lord of hosts." (Zechariah 14:21). This is the first cleansing of the temple, mentioned exclusively by John. The synoptic Gospels report the cleansing which occurred at the close of His ministry. He manifested in it His authority as the Son of God, and Psalm 69:9 was fulfilled in His action. (The whole transaction is a remarkable one, as exhibiting our Lord using more physical exertion, and energetic bodily action, than we see Him using at any other period of His ministry. A word, a touch, or the reaching-forth of a hand, are the ordinary limits of His actions. Here we see Him doing no less than four things:-- (1) Making the scourge;--(2) Driving out the animals;--(3) Pouring out on the ground the changers' money;--(4) Overthrowing the tables. On no occasion do we find Him showing such strong outward marks of indignation, as at the sight of the profanation of the temple. Remembering that the whole transaction is a striking type of what Christ will do at His second coming, we may get some idea of the deep meaning of that remarkable expression, "The wrath of the Lamb." (Revelation 6:16)--Expository Thoughts on John.))

Then He spoke of His coming death and resurrection in a veiled form. The Jews and His disciples did not understand what temple He meant. He spoke of His own body. "In three days I will raise it up." His resurrection was both through the power of God and by Himself. God raised Him up and He raised Himself up. This statement properly belongs to this Gospel in which we behold Him as the Son of God. The same statement we find in chapter 10:18--"I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it again."

II. Eternal Life Imparted: What it is and What it Includes -- Chapter 2:23-17

The second part of this Gospel contains the blessed teachings the Son of God gave concerning eternal life, how it is imparted and what it includes. Everything in these chapters is new. The story of Nicodemus, the woman at Sychar's well, the healing of the impotent man, the discourses of our Lord, etc., are not reported by the synoptic Gospels. There is not a word of the Sermon on the Mount reported by John; the many miracles, so significantly arranged in Matthew, are omitted (except the feeding of the 5000); nor do we find a single parable concerning the Kingdom of Heaven. The progressive revelation concerning eternal life will be brought out in the annotations. As already stated the teachings begin with the new birth, in which eternal life is imparted, and end with the destiny of those who are born again. This is revealed in His high priestly prayer, "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory."

CHAPTER 2:23-3:36

1. The Many Who Believed on Him. 2:23-25.

2. Nicodemus and the New Birth. 3:1-8.

3. How the New Birth is Accomplished. 9-21.

4. The Last Testimony of John. 22-36.

He worked many miracles in Jerusalem, which are unreported by John. Many therefore believed in His name, but the Omniscient One knew that they were only convinced, but their hearts had not been touched and so they did not receive Him as the Son of God. But there was one who was more deeply exercised, an earnest, seeking soul, Nicodemus. He came to Jesus by night and addressed Him as Rabbi, acknowledging that He was a teacher come from God. The Lord did not permit him to go on with his address nor to state the object of his visit. The Lord treated him in an abrupt, almost discourteous, way and informed him at once of the absolute necessity of the new birth. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again (literally: born from above) he cannot see the Kingdom of God." Not teaching, mere knowledge, was the need Nicodemus had to see the Kingdom, but to be born from above.

But what Kingdom does our Lord mean? It refers primarily to the Kingdom of the Old Testament, promised to Israel. When that Kingdom comes, with the Return of the Lord, only those of Israel will enter in who are born again. The unbelieving and apostate mass of Jews will be excluded from that earthly, millennial Kingdom. Only the believing remnant inherits that Kingdom to come. This may be learned from Ezekiel 36 and Isaiah 4:3, and other passages. That is why the Lord said to Nicodemus: "Art thou the teacher of Israel, and knowest not these things?"

But the truth our Lord gave to Nicodemus has a wider application. Man is spiritually dead, destitute of spiritual life. In order to enter the Kingdom of God, to be in the presence of God, man must be born anew. Such a statement is nowhere found in the preceding Gospels. In the Gospel of John, the Gospel of Eternal Life, it is put into the foreground. Nicodemus is the only person to whom the Lord spoke of the absolute necessity of the new birth. He never made such a statement to the publicans and the harlots. And who was Nicodemus? A Pharisee, and therefore an extremely religious man. A ruler of the Jews, which necessitated a moral life. The teacher of Israel, one who possessed much learning. Religiousness, morality, education and culture are insufficient to save man and give him a place in the Kingdom of God. The new birth is the one thing needed. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." The flesh is the old nature which every human being brings into the world; it is a fallen, a corrupt nature and can never be anything else. And "they that are in the flesh cannot please God." (Romans 8:8). The natural man may do anything he pleases, become religious and philanthropic, but he cannot please God. What then is the new birth? It is not reformation. Nor is it, as so often stated, an action of the Holy Spirit to make an evil nature good. The flesh cannot be changed into something better. The new birth is the impartation of a new nature, the divine nature, by the Holy Spirit. "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit." This new nature is absolutely holy, as the old nature is absolutely corrupt. This new nature is the only thing which fits man to be in the presence of God.

But what is the meaning of "water" in verse 5? "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God." The water is claimed by ritualists to mean baptism. If a little water is put upon the head of an infant, they would have us believe, regeneration takes place. Others hold upon this statement of our Lord that the water is Christian baptism, and that therefore water-baptism is necessary to salvation. But the words of our Lord have nothing whatever to do with baptism. (Ezekiel 36:25-27 must be linked with John 3:5 and must be considered here as a national promise to Israel, how they will enter the Kingdom. But the verses in Ezekiel have absolutely nothing whatever to do with baptism. To apply them thus is ridiculous.) The water cannot mean Christian baptism. Christian baptism (an entirely different thing

from the Jewish baptism of John) was not instituted till after His death and resurrection. If it meant Christian baptism, the Lord's rebuke to Nicodemus would be unjust. How could he know something that was still undivulged? Water in this passage is the figure of the Word of God, which the Spirit of God uses for the quickening of souls. The following passages will demonstrate this fact: Ephesians 5:25-26; 1 Corinthians 4:15; 1 Peter 1:23; James 1:18. Begotten again by the Word of God, and water is the figure of that Word.

The Lord speaks next of revealing heavenly things (in distinction from earthly things relating to Israel). Then the Cross is revealed by which the heavenly things are realized, and how lost man is to be saved and receive eternal life (the new nature). The Son of Man must be lifted up. He Who knew no sin was made sin for us. "God so loved the world that He gave His Only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life."--"In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because God sent His Only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love; not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1 John 4:9-10). Blessed words these! It is by believing on the Son of God, who died for our sins, that we are saved and are born again.

John bears his final testimony in verses 23-26. He testifies of Christ as the bridegroom, who is to have the bride. John calls himself the friend of the bridegroom. "He must increase, but I must decrease." Note the three &(must's" in this chapter. "Ye must be born again"; the necessity of the new birth. "The Son of Man must be lifted up"; the necessity of the death of the Lord to make salvation possible. "He must increase, but I must decrease"; the result of salvation. The final testimony of John the Baptist takes us beyond the cross. (Verse 35-36). Blessed assurance! He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.--Solemn declaration! He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

CHAPTER 4

1. He Must Needs Pass Through Samaria. 1-5.
2. At Sychar's Well; Jesus and the Samaritan Woman. 6-26.
3. The Woman's Witness and the Believing Samaritans. 27-42.
4. His Return to Galilee. 43-45.
5. The Second Miracle, the Healing of the Nobleman's Son. 46-54.

In the Gospel of Matthew the Lord told His disciples not to go into the way of the Gentiles and not to enter into any city of the Samaritans. (10:5). He sent them to preach the nearness of the Kingdom. Here He must needs go through Samaria. He had left Jerusalem and was on His way to Galilee and passing through Samaria He manifested His marvelous Grace. Tired on account of the way, an evidence of His true humanity, "He sat thus on the well." There He rested in unwearied love, waiting for the poor, fallen woman, whose sad story He knew so well.

To follow the beautiful account of His dealings with the Samaritan woman in all its blessed details is impossible in our brief annotations. What mercy and grace He exhibited in seeking such a one! What wisdom and patience in dealing with her, bearing with her ignorance! And what power in drawing her to Himself and making her a messenger to bring others to Him! How different He treated her in comparison with Nicodemus in the preceding chapter.

The Lord speaks to the Samaritan woman concerning the living water, which He can give to all that ask Him. The central verse of His teaching is the fourteenth, "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." The well or fountain of water in the believer is the indwelling Spirit. In chapter 7:37-39 the Lord speaks also of living water and there the interpretation of it is given. "This He spake of the Spirit, whom they that believe on Him should receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." The believer has therefore not only eternal life, but also the gift of the Spirit, Who dwells in him as the spring of living water.

The new worship is next revealed in answer to the question of the woman. Verses 21-24. The Samaritans worshipped on a mountain (Gerizim); the Jews in the temple, but the hour was coming when the true worshippers would worship the Father in the Spirit. No longer would true believers worship God as the God of Israel, but as Father. It is to be a worship in the Spirit and not confined to a locality. Christian worship has for its foundation the possession of eternal life; the indwelling Spirit is the power of that worship. Only true believers, such who are born again and possess the gift of the Spirit, can be worshippers. "For we are the circumcision who worship God in the Spirit and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." (Philippians 3:3). And such worshippers the Father seeketh. In Old Testament times the Jews worshipped in an earthly place. In the coming, the millennial age, nations will go up to Jerusalem to worship the Lord of hosts in the great millennial Temple. (Isaiah 2:1-4; Zechariah 14:16, etc.) This present dispensation is the dispensation of Grace, and the Father seeketh worshippers who worship Him in Spirit and in Truth. Thus we are brought in the Gospel of John altogether upon the ground of grace.

Then He revealed Himself to the woman. "Jesus saith to her, I that speak to thee am He." She was face to face with the Messiah; she stood in the presence of Jehovah. She left her waterpot to tell others the good news of the living water. The earthly things were forgotten. And what a messenger she became! How her simple testimony was blessed in the conversion of souls! He abode there two days and is owned and proclaimed not alone as the promised Messiah but as the Saviour of the world. (Verse 42).

Once more we see Him at Cana of Galilee, and the nobleman's son, who was sick at Capernaum, is healed by the Lord. The nobleman represents typically Israel. The word the Lord addressed to him fits that nation. "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." How different from Samaria, where He did no miracle and yet they believed. And as the nobleman and his whole house believed, so will Israel believe in a future day.

CHAPTER 5

1. The Healing of the Impotent Man. 1-9.
2. The Opposition of the Jews. 10-18.
3. His Unity with the Father. 19-23.
4. The Present Hour. Believers Delivered from Death and Judgment. 24-25.
5. The Future Hour. His Power to Raise the Dead. 26-29.
6. Witness Concerning Himself. 30-32.

7. The Witness of John. 33-35.

8. The Witness of His Works. 36.

9. The Witness of the Father. 37-38.

10. The Witness of the Scriptures, and the Unbelief of the Jews. 39-47.

The teachings contained in this chapter are closely linked with the third and fourth chapters. He went up to Jerusalem again. In the foreground stands the healing of the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda with its five porches. An angel troubled the water at certain seasons, so that some were healed. We believe that it was actually so, though we cannot explain it. Many critics attack this occurrence and reject its genuineness. ("After all there is no more real difficulty in the account before us, than in the history of our Lord's temptation in the wilderness, the various cases of Satanic possession, or the release of Peter from prison by an angel. Once admit the existence of angels, their ministry on earth, and the possibility of their interposition to carry out God's designs, and there is nothing that ought to stumble us in the passage. The true secret of some of the objections to it, is the modern tendency to regard all miracles as useless lumber, which must be thrown overboard, if possible, and cast out of the Sacred Narrative on every occasion. Against this tendency we must watch and be on our guard.") But the impotent man could not avail himself of the opportunity for he was helpless. Such was Israel's condition under the law. The thirty-eight years point back to Israel's wandering in the wilderness. Furthermore the impotent man presents a striking picture of the utter helplessness of man as a sinner. By His word the Lord Jesus made him perfectly whole, so that he took up his bed and walked.

Opposition and objection from the Jews followed at once. They accused the healed man of breaking the Sabbath. He evidently did not know the Lord at all; only after He had spoken to him (Verse 14) did he find out that it was Jesus. Then he told the Jews. Their hatred was turned at once against the Lord. They persecuted Him and sought to slay Him because He had done this miracle on the Sabbath. The Lord's answer is most blessed. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." It is the first time in this Gospel that He speaks of God as "My Father." He, the Son, was in their midst to make the Father known. He told them that His Father works and that the Son works. Sin made this work necessary. He stood in their presence and claimed perfect and unbroken fellowship with His Father.

The Jews knew what He meant. Had He said "Our Father" instead of "My Father" no word of protest would have escaped their lips. They knew His words could mean but one thing, that He is equal with God, by saying that God was His Father. Augustine remarked on this verse: "Behold the Jews understood what the Arians (deniers of His Deity) would not understand." And He accepted the charge of the Jews as a correct one. "He thought it not robbery to be equal with God." (Philippians 2:6). His words which follow declare His perfect unity with the Father in His work; He is the Beloved of the Father; the Father raiseth up the dead, so does He; judgment is committed unto the Son; He is to be honored as the Father is honored. "Whosoever does not honor the Son with equal honor to that which he pays to the Father, however he may imagine that he honors or approaches God, does not honor Him at all; because he can only be known by us as 'the Father who sent his Son.'" (Dean Alford.) Unitarianism, Russellism, the new theology and a host of others which deny the absolute Deity of our Lord, stand condemned and convicted in the presence of these wonderful words, "He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father." All worship apart from the Son of God is idolatry. He claims the unity in Godhead; and such belongs to Him.

Verse 24 is a blessed Gospel text. Hearing and believing are the conditions to receive eternal life. There is no mention made of repentance. The word "repent" so prominent in the Gospel of Matthew in the Kingdom offer is not found once in the fourth Gospel. Faith and repentance, however, are inseparable. He that hears His words and believeth Him that sent the Son also repents. Again eternal life is spoken of as a present possession, "hath" not "shall have" or "shall receive later," but "hath eternal life." And with that gift comes deliverance from judgment. The reception of eternal life is a full acquittal; passed from death and all it means, into life.

"The coming hour" in verse 25 is the present dispensation. The dead are the spiritually dead. They that hear the voice of the Son of God shall live; they receive His life. Then He speaks of an hour which was to come and which has not yet come. Two resurrections are revealed by Him; the resurrection of life and the resurrection of judgment. This does not mean that these two resurrections are to take place the same time, in, what is termed, a general resurrection. Elsewhere we find the full revelation concerning these two resurrections. There is the first resurrection, the resurrection of the just, and a thousand years later the resurrection of the wicked dead. (Revelation 20.) All the wrong teachings concerning the wicked dead, such as Annihilation, Restitution, Restoration, Second Chance, etc., as taught by Seventh Day Adventism, Millennial Dawnism, (also called "International Bible Students' Association" and "Jehovah's Witnesses") Universalism and others, are completely refuted by the words of our Lord in verse 29.

The five witnesses who testify concerning Himself, that He is the Son of God, are of much importance and should be carefully studied.

CHAPTER 6

1. The Feeding of the Five Thousand Men. 1-14.
2. The Attempt to Make Him King, 15.
3. The Stormy Sea. "It is I, be not afraid." 16-21.
4. The Discourse on the Bread of Life. The Food of the Believer. 22-59.
5. The Falling Away of Disciples. 60-66
6. Peter's Confession. 67-71.

The events which are recorded in this chapter happened at the Sea of Galilee, the sea of Tiberias. John exclusively uses this name, an evidence that he wrote after the fall of Jerusalem. By this name the lake had become known to the Gentiles. The feeding of the five thousand is the same mentioned by the Synoptics. This great sign showed that Jehovah was in their midst, He Who had fed His Israel with manna in the wilderness and promised to satisfy the poor with bread. (Psalm 132:15.) When they had seen the great sign they acknowledged Him to be the promised Prophet who should come (Deuteronomy 18:15) and wanted to make Him King. But He departed into a mountain. He knew that all they meant by making Him King was to become the leader of a carnal movement to overthrow the hated Roman government.

The storm on the sea and His coming across the stormy sea we have had in the other Gospels.

The great discourse on the Bread of Life follows. It is connected with the sign of the feeding of the multitude. When He speaks of being the Bread from Heaven He refers to His incarnation. "For the bread of

God is He which cometh down from heaven and giveth His life for the world." They rejected that Bread. Then He speaks of eating His flesh and drinking His blood both for the reception of life and for the sustenance of that life. These words have nothing whatever to do with the Lord's supper. Bishop Ryle, who was a leader in a ritualistic church, repudiated this wrong interpretation in the following words: "For one thing, a literal 'eating and drinking' of Christ's body and blood would have been an idea utterly revolting to all Jews, and flatly contradictory to an often-repeated precept of their law.--For another thing, to take a literal view of 'eating and drinking,' is to interpose a bodily act between the soul of man and salvation. This is a thing for which there is no precedent in Scripture. The only things without which we cannot be saved are repentance and faith.--Last, but not least, to take a literal view of 'eating and drinking,' would involve most blasphemous and profane consequences. It would shut out of heaven the penitent thief. He died long after these words were spoken, without any literal eating and drinking. Will any dare to say he had 'no life' in Him?--It would admit to heaven thousands of ignorant, godless communicants in the present day. They literally eat and drink, no doubt! But they have no eternal life, and will not be raised to glory. Let these reasons be carefully pondered.

"The plain truth is, there is a morbid anxiety in fallen man to put a carnal sense on Scriptural expressions, wherever he possibly can. He struggles hard to make religion a matter of forms and ceremonies,--of doing and performing,--of sacraments and ordinances,--of sense and of sight."

The Bread of God, He Himself, gave His life for the world. He gave His body and shed His blood on the cross. It is His sacrificial, atoning death. By faith we partake of it. Without it there is no life. Note the difference in verses 53 and 54. In verse 53 He speaks of those who have eaten His flesh and drunk His blood, apart from which there is no life. By faith the sinner appropriates Him, Who gave His body and shed His blood, and then receives eternal life. In verse 54 He speaks of a continuous eating and drinking. He is the Source of eternal life. The believer feeds on Him; the eternal life the believer has must be sustained, nourished and kept by Himself, by ever feeding on His dying love. "The life that I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." (Galatians 2:20.) And the believer eating and drinking becomes one with Him. "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood dwelleth (literally: abideth) in Me and I in him." It is a wonderful discourse on His incarnation, His sacrificial, atoning death, and the blessed assurances given to those who believe on Him. Precious are the promises of this great chapter. "He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst" (Verse 35.) "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." (Verse 37.) "Every one who seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."* (Verse 40.) "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life." (Verse 47.)

*"The last day" does not mean a day of a final and universal judgment followed by the end of the world. It is the end of the Jewish age to which our Lord refers (the age which is yet to be completed in great tribulation.--Matthew 24). The first resurrection includes Old Testament saints, New Testament saints and the Jewish believers, who are martyred during the great tribulation. The first resurrection will be completed at the close of the tribulation period and followed by the setting up of the Kingdom.

CHAPTER 7

1. My Time is not Yet Come. 1-9.
2. Departure from Galilee; Sought by the Jews. 10-13.
3. In the Temple Teaching. 14-29.

4. Opposition to Him. 30-36.
5. The Indwelling Spirit Promised. 37-39.
6. The Division Among the People Because of Him. 40-44.
7. The Returning Officers and the Defense of Nicodemus. 45-53.

The Lord tarried in Galilee. How He must have sought souls there as He walked in Galilee! He would not walk in Judea (not "Jewry," as in the Authorized Version) because the Jews, that is the leaders of the people, sought to kill Him. The Feast of Tabernacles was at hand and what we find written in this chapter happened during that Feast. His brethren, no doubt sons born to Mary after His own birth, urged Him to go to Judea. Their motives were selfish. They did not believe on Him. However, later they believed, for we find them among those who waited in Jerusalem for the promise of the father. (Acts 1:14.) The Feast of Tabernacles typifies the millennial blessings for Israel and the Gentiles, the great consummation. The world hated Him and He declared that His time had not yet come. We cannot follow at length the interesting account of His coming to Jerusalem, the words He spake, the answers He gave to those who hated Him. He taught and they marvelled. He declared that the doctrine He preached was of Him that sent Him. What a challenge He gave them! "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." Then He told them that they tried to kill Him. "Thou hast a demon," was their reply, while others said: "Is not this He whom they seek to kill?" They sought to take Him and the Pharisees and Chief Priest sent officers to arrest Him. Thus the hatred against Him is manifested. His hour had not yet come; no one could touch Him. When the hour came He yielded Himself. The great center of this chapter is found in verses 37-39. The last day of the Feast of Tabernacles was the greatest. It was the eighth day, a day of rest and holy gathering together. During the seven days of the feast water was daily drawn from the pool of Siloam and then poured out. On the last day this ceremony did not take place. The seven days typified their wilderness journey; the eighth day the entrance into the land. For seven days they drew the water and poured it out, commemorating the water the Lord had supplied to Israel during the wilderness journey. On the eighth day they enjoyed the springs of the land itself an emblem of the living waters which the Lord had promised to His people. Israel has these promises. "And it shall be in that day that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem." (Zechariah 14:8.) The same promise we find elsewhere. (See Ezekiel 47; Isaiah 12.) And He Who had given to His people these promises, Who had come to fulfill them, stood in their midst. They hate Him. They tell Him to His face, "Thou hast a demon." They seek to kill Him.

On the last day of the feast, typical of Israel's promised blessing and glory, He stood and cried: "If any man thirst let him come unto Me and drink." He offers now upon the rejection of Himself something new to "any man who thirsts"; the national promises of living water pouring forth from Jerusalem cannot be fulfilled now. They will be fulfilled when He comes again. It is an individual invitation, an individual promise, He gives. "He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." We are then told that this means the gift of the Holy Spirit, which they were to receive who came to Him and believed on Him. The promise was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost. Then the Holy Spirit came to dwell in believers. The overflow, the streams of living water to flow from the believer, is the type of the Spirit, the Spirit of power manifesting Himself through the believer in bearing testimony for Christ. In the third chapter we saw the Holy Spirit communicating life; He is the Life-giving Spirit. In the fourth chapter the Lord spoke of the Spirit as the well of living water; He indwells the one who is born again to make communion and worship possible. Then followed His teaching in chapters 5 and 6, again concerning the

life the believer hath in Him and how it is sustained. In the present chapter the indwelling Spirit, Who is the well of living water in the believer, is seen flowing forth to others, just as a spring will overflow.

CHAPTER 8

1. The Woman Taken in Adultery. 1-11.
2. The Light of the World. 12.
3. His Testimony Concerning Himself and the Father. 13-20.
4. His Solemn Declarations. 21-47.
5. Before Abraham Was, I Am. 48-59.

The first verse belongs to the preceding chapter. The officers returned without Him, bearing their testimony that "never man spake like this man." Nicodemus ventured his timid defense. Then every man went to his own house while the Lord went to the Mount of Olives.

The story of the woman taken in adultery has been rejected by many leading scholars. It is claimed that it is nothing less than a forgery. The chief arguments against it are the following: That the story is missing in some of the oldest manuscripts and earlier translations; that some of the Greek Fathers never refer to it; that it differs in style from the rest of the Gospel of John, and that the incident ought to be discredited on moral ground. However all these arguments have been proven invalid. Many old manuscripts have the story as well as some of the oldest translations. Others of the so-called church-fathers speak of it. There can be no question whatever of its genuineness. It was omitted on purpose in certain manuscripts. The Grace, which shines forth so marvelously in the Lord's dealing with the woman, was unpalatable to teachers who mixed Law and Grace. They left it out for a purpose.*

*"The argument from alleged discrepancies between the style and language of this passage, and the usual style of St. John's writing, is one which should be received with much caution. We are not dealing with an uninspired but with an inspired writer. Surely it is not too much to say that an inspired writer may occasionally use words and constructions and modes of expression which he generally does not use, and that it is no proof that he did not write a passage because he wrote it in a peculiar way."

It was a clever scheme from the side of the Scribes and Pharisees to tempt Him. The Law of Moses demanded her death by stoning. If He gave as an answer, "let her be stoned!" He would contradict His own testimony that He came not to judge, but to save. If He declared that the guilty woman was not to be stoned, then would He break the law. They appealed to Him as teacher, not as judge. He was silent and stooped down and wrote with His finger in the ground. (The words, "as though He heard them not" are in italics and must be omitted.) It is the only time we read of our Lord that He wrote. The finger which wrote in the ground was the same which had written the law in the tables of stone. What He wrote we do not know; but it was symbolical of the fact that the law against man is written in the dust, the dust of death. Not alone had the woman deserved death, but all were equally guilty. After His demand, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her," the oldest in the company left first till the Lord was alone with the guilty woman. He did not set aside the law, and yet He manifested His marvelous Grace. The self-righteous accusers were condemned and sneaked into darkness, away from Him Who is the Light. The woman addressed Him as Lord, showing she believed on Him; and He told her to go and sin no more. The Grace He shows demands holiness.

The scene occurred in the Temple and the words He spoke following this incident were likewise spoken there. A great testimony again follows, which He gives concerning Himself. He is the Light of the world; it is not confined to Israel, but the light is to reach the Gentile nations. This is revealed in the Prophet Isaiah. After Messiah's complaint, "I have labored in vain," the rejected One is to be the light to the Gentiles. "I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles that thou mayest be my salvation unto the ends of the earth." (Isaiah 59:1-6.) Then follows an individual promise. He that followeth Him walks not in darkness, but has the light of life. In Him is life as well as light; there is then fellowship with God for the child of life, fellowship one with another if we walk in the light. He then bore additional testimony concerning Himself. He knew where He came from and whither He went. The blind Pharisees did not. And when He spoke of the fellowship of Himself and the Father, they asked, "Where is thy Father?" They were blind and blinded, and knew neither Him nor the Father.

Very solemn are the declarations in verses 21-29. They are as solemn and as true today as when they were uttered by the lips of the Son of God. "I said therefore unto you that ye shall die in your sins; for if ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins." Rejecting Christ, not believing on Him, means to die in sin. When they ask Him again, "Who art thou?" He answered, "Absolutely* what I am also speaking to you." (*The rendering of the Authorized Version is incorrect.) He is the Word, the Truth, the Life, the Light. He is, in the principle of His being, what also He speaks. Essentially, precisely, what He is, He also speaks. The phrase "lifting up" means His crucifixion. (See 3:14 and 12:32.) After that event His vindication would come. He is the "I am." Many believed on Him. Were they true believers or the same class as we find at the close of the second chapter? Most likely they misunderstood His statement of being lifted up. They may have thought of Him becoming King; they certainly knew nothing of the Cross.

More teaching follows. To be a true disciple means to abide in His Word. By the Word and the Spirit we are begotten, and to live as a disciple needs abiding in His Word. The Son is the Deliverer Who makes free from the power of Satan and of Sin, of which He bears witness.

This interesting chapter ends with a startling self-revelation of His absolute Deity, that He is the Eternal Jehovah. Eleven times the name "Abraham" is found in the eighth chapter of John. At the close the Lord speaks of Abraham having seen His day and rejoiced. He saw it in faith. Then when the Jews expressed their astonishment He answered, "Before Abraham was, I AM!" It is the most positive, the clearest declaration of our Lord of His Eternity, that He is God. He is the "I AM"--Jehovah. Thus this great testimony has always been received. We let a few of the ancient teachers speak:

Chrysostom observes: "He said not before Abraham was, I was, but, I AM. As the Father useth this expression I AM, so also doth Christ, for it signifieth continuous being, irrespective of all time. On whic

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