

Exposition of the Gospel of John CHAPTER 50 CHRIST COMFORTING HIS DISCIPLES (CONCLUDED)

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Transcript

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CHAPTER 50

CHRIST COMFORTING HIS DISCIPLES (CONCLUDED)

John 14:21-31

The following is an Analysis of the closing section of John 14: 1. Christ manifested to the believer, verse 21. 2. The quandary of Judas, verse 22. 3. Christ's explanation, verses 23-25. 4. The ministry of the Spirit, verse 26. 5. The gift of Christ's peace, verse 27. 6. The failure in the disciples' love, verses 28-29. 7. The coming conflict, verses 30-31. That the central design of Christ in the first main section of this Paschal Discourse was to comfort His sorrowing disciples, and that this section does not close until we reach the end of John 14 is clear from verse 27: "Let not your heart be troubled." The Lord here repeats what He had said in the first verse, and then adds, "neither let it be afraid." That the first section of the Discourse does terminate at the close of the chapter, is obvious from its final words: "Arise, let us go hence." Many and varied were the grounds of comfort which the Lord had laid before the apostles. First, He assured them that He was going to the Father's House. Second, that He would make provision for their coming there. Third, that when the necessary preparations were completed, He would come and conduct them thither. Fourth, that He had opened the way for them, had made them acquainted with the way, and would give them the energy necessary to go along that way. Fifth, that He would not withdraw from them the miraculous powers which He had conferred upon them, but would enable them to do still greater things. Sixth, that whatever they needed for the discharge of the work to which He had called them, on asking in His name, they should assuredly obtain. Seventh, that a Divine Person should be sent to supply His place, acting as their instructor, guide, protector and consoler. Eighth, that they should not be "left orphans," but He would return to them in possession of an endless life, of which they should be partakers. Ninth, that in a soon-coming day they should apprehend the oneness of life, shared by the Father and the Son and the sons. In the passage which is to be before us we find the Lord adding to these grounds of comfort. Tenth, He would manifest Himself to those who kept His commandments. Eleventh, those who kept His Word should be loved by the Father. Twelfth, the Holy Spirit would bring back to their remembrance all things

Christ had said unto them. Thirteenth, Peace He left with them. Fourteenth, His own peace He bequeathed unto them. No wonder that He said, "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid!" "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him" (John 14:21). In this instance we shall depart from our customary method of expounding the different clauses of a verse in the order in which they occur; instead, we shall treat this verse more or less topically. That in it which is of such vital importance is the final clause, where the Savior promised to manifest Himself to the obedient believer. Now there is nothing the real Christian desires so much as a personal manifestation of the Lord Jesus. In comparison with this all other blessings are quite secondary. In order to simplify, let us ask and attempt to answer three questions: How does the Savior now "manifest" Himself? What are the effects of such manifestation? What are the conditions which I have to meet? In what way does the Lord Jesus now manifest Himself? It is hardly necessary to say, not corporeally. No longer is the Word, made flesh, tabernacling among men. No more does He say, as He said to Thomas, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands, and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side" (John 20:27). No longer may He be seen by our physical eyes (1 John 1:1). Nor is the promise of Christ which we are now considering made good through visions. We recall the vision which Jacob had at Bethel, when a ladder was set upon earth, whose top reached unto heaven, upon which the angels of God ascended and descended. We think of that wondrous vision given to Isaiah, when he saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, before which the seraphim cried, "holy, holy, holy." No, it is not in visions or in dreams that the Lord promises to come to His people. What then? It is a spiritual revelation of Himself to the soul! It is a vivid realization of the Savior's being and nearness, in a deep and abiding sense of His favor and love. "By the power of the Spirit, He makes His Word so luminous, that as we read it, He Himself seems to draw near. The whole biography of Jesus becomes in this way a precious reality. We see His form. We hear His words." It is through the written Word that the incarnate Word "manifests" Himself to the heart! And what are the effects upon the soul of such a manifestation of Christ. First and foremost, He Himself is made a blessed and glorious reality to us. The one who has been granted such an experience can say with Job, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye (the eye of the heart) seeth thee" (Job 42:5). Such a one now discerns the surpassing beauty and glory of His person and exclaims, "Thou art fairer than the children of men." Again: such a manifestation of Christ to the soul assures us of His favor. Now we hear Him saying (through the Scriptures) "As the Father hath loved me, so I have loved you." And now I can respond, "My beloved is mine, and I am his." Another consequence of this manifestation of Christ is "comfort and support in trials, especially in those trials, which, on account of their Personal nature, are beyond the reach of human sympathy and love—the trials of desertion and loneliness, from which Jesus Himself suffered so keenly; heart trials, domestic trials, secret griefs, too sacred to be breathed in the ears of men—all these trials in which nothing can sustain us but the sympathy which His own presence gives." Just as the Son of God appeared to the three faithful Hebrews in the fiery furnace, so does He now come to those in the place of trial and anguish. So too in the last great trial, should we be called upon to pass through it ere the Savior comes. Then to earthly friends we can turn no longer. But we may say with the Psalmist, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me." Now, let us inquire, What are the terms on which the Savior thus draws near? Surely every Christian reader is most anxious to secure the key to an experience so elevating, so blessed. Listen now to the Savior's words, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." The faith by which we are saved does not destroy the necessity for an obedient walk. "Faith is the root of which obedience is the beautiful flower and fruit. And it is only when faith has issued in obedience, in an

obedience which stumbles not at sacrifices, and halts not when the way is rough and dark; in an obedience that cheerfully bears the cross and shame—it is only then that this highest promise of the Gospel is fulfilled... When love for the Savior shall lead us to keep His holy Word—lead us to an immediate, unreserved, unhesitating obedience—lead us to say, in the spirit of entire self-surrender and sacrifice, 'Thy will, not mine, be done,' then, farewell to doubt and darkness, to loneliness and sorrow! Then shall we mourn no more an absent Lord. Then shall we walk as seeing Him who is invisible, triumphant over every fear, victorious over every foe." [1] This manifestation of Christ is made only to the one who really loves Him, and the proof of love to Him is not by emotional displays but by submission to His will. There is a vast difference between sentiment and practical reality. The Lord will give no direct and special revelation of Himself to those who are in the path of disobedience. "He that hath my commandments," means, hath them at heart. "And keepeth them," that is the real test. We hear, but do we heed? We know, but are we doing His will? "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth" (1 John 3:18)! "And he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father." There are three different senses in which Christians may be considered as objects of the loving favor of the Father and of the Son: as persons elected in sovereign grace to eternal life; as persons actually united to Christ by believing; and as persons transformed by the sanctifying work of the Spirit. It is in this last sense that Christ here speaks. Just as the Father is said to love the Son because of His obedience (John 10:17, 18), so is He said to love the believer for the same reason. It is the love of complacency, as distinguished from the love of compassion. The Father was well pleased with His incarnate Son, and He is well pleased with us when we honor and glorify His Son by obeying His commandments. "Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" (John 14:22). This question had in view the Lord's words when He had just said, "The world seeth me no more" (John 14:19), and that He would "manifest" Himself to him who kept His commandments. This conflicted sharply with the Jewish ideas of the Messiah and His kingdom. As yet Judas had failed to perceive that the truth of God must sever between those who receive it and those who reject it, and that therefore His kingdom was "not of this world" (John 18:36). And why was it that Judas understood this not? 1 Corinthians 2:10, 11 tells us—the Spirit had not yet been given. "Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot." "There is something very affecting in this brief parenthesis; the short, sad sentence which our Evangelist throws in—'Judas, not Iscariot.' The one is not for a moment to be confounded with the other; the true apostle with the traitor. How widely different may men be who yet bear the same name! How many have but the name in common!" (Dr. John Brown.) The Judas who asked this question was the brother of James, the son of Alphaeus, see Luke 6:16. "Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" How many there are to-day who, by means of legislation and social amelioration, wish to press on the world those teachings of Christ which are only for His own! Judas did not go quite so far as the unbelieving brethren of Christ according to the flesh—"Go show thyself to the world" (John 7:4); but he was sorely puzzled at this breach between the world and them. Dull indeed was Judas, for the Lord had just said, "Even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him" (John 14:17). But equally dull, most of the time, are all of us. "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (John 14:23). "If Judas had known what the world is, and what every human heart is by nature, instead of being puzzled at the Lord's withdrawal from the world, he would have wondered how Jesus could reveal Himself to any man" (Stier). The Lord here repeats that God has fellowship only with those whose hearts welcome Him, who love Him, and whose love is manifested by submission to His Word. Then He loves in return. The Old Testament taught precisely the same thing. "I love them that love me" (Prov. 8:17). "If a man love me he will keep my word." Let not renewed souls torture themselves by

attempting to define too nicely the extent of their "keeping." Let those who are tempted to do so meditate upon John 17:6—"I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy Word." Mark it well that this was said by the Savior in full view of all the infirmities and failures of the disciples, and said prior to the day of Pentecost! To "keep" God's commandments is to obey them, and the primary, the fundamental thing in obedience, is the desire of the heart, and it is on the heart that God ever looks. Two things are true of every Christian: deep down in his heart there is an intense, steady longing and yearning to please God, to do His will, to walk in full accord with His Word. This yearning may be stronger in some than in others, and in each of us it is stronger at some times than at others; nevertheless, it is there! But in the second place, no real Christian fully realizes this desire. Every genuine Christian has to say with the apostle Paul, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may lay hold of that for which I am laid hold of by Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:12). Now we believe that it is this heart-obedience, this inward longing to be fully conformed to His will, this burning desire of the renewed soul, of which Christ here speaks. "If a man love me, he will keep my word." Every true believer loves Christ; therefore every true believer "keeps" His Word, keeps it in the sense thus defined. Let it be repeated, God looks at the heart; whereas we are constantly occupied with the outward appearance. As we scrutinize our deeds, if we are honest, we have to acknowledge that we have "kept his word" very imperfectly; yea, it seems to us, that we are not entitled to say that we have "kept" it at all. But the Lord looks behind the deeds, and knows the longings within us. The case of Peter in John 21 is a pertinent illustration. When Christ asked him a third time, "Lovest thou me?" His disciple answered, "Lord, thou knowest all things; THOU knowest that I love thee" (John 21:17). My disgraceful actions contradicted my love; my fellow-disciples have good reason to doubt it, but Thou who searchest the heart knowest better. In one sense it is an intensely solemn and searching thing to remember that nothing can be hidden from Him before whom all things are open and naked; but in another sense it is most blessed and comforting to realize that He can see in my heart what I cannot often discover in my ways, and what my fellow-believers cannot—a real love for Him, a genuine longing to please and glorify Him. Let not the conclusion be drawn that we are here lapsing into Antinomian laxity, or making it a matter of no moment what our outward lives are like. To borrow words which treat of another subject, "As there was a readiness to will so there should be a performance also" (2 Cor. 8:11). Though the apostle acknowledged that he had not "already attained," yet he continued to "follow after." Where there is love for Christ, there cannot but be bitter sorrow (as with Peter) when we know that we have grieved Him. And more; there will be a sincere confession of our sins, and confession will be followed by earnest supplication for grace to enable us to do what He has bidden. Nevertheless, it is blessed to know that He who is the Truth declares, positively and without qualification, "If a man love me, he will keep my word;" and in the light of John 17:6, this must mean: first and absolutely, in the desire of his heart; secondly and relatively, in his walk. It is to be noted that the Lord here makes a change of terms from what He had said in John 14:21; a slight change, but an important one. There He had said, "He that hath my commandments, keepeth them;" here, "If a man love me, he will keep my word"—in the Greek the singular number is used. "This is a beautiful difference, and of great practical value, being bound up with the measure of our attentiveness of heart. Where obedience lies comparatively on the surface, and self-will or worldliness is not judged, a 'commandment' is always necessary to enforce it. People ask, 'Must I do this? Is there any harm in that?' To such the Lord's will is solely a question of commandment. Now there are commandments, the expression of His authority, and they are not grievous. But, besides, where the heart loves Him deeply, His 'word' will give enough expression of His will. Even in nature a parent's look will do it. As we well know, an obedient child catches the mother's desire before the mother has uttered a word. So, whatever might be the word of Jesus, it would be heeded, and thus the

heart and life be formed in obedience" (Mr. W. Kelly). "True also it is that something of both characters of love, as Christ affirms them, will be found in all true Christians over-borne by so much contrary influence that, like Peter in the high priest's palace, only He who knoweth all things can detect the true disciple beneath the false. There is the false within us all, as well as the true, Alas, in many, so often uppermost. The results cannot fail to follow: the blessing of which the Lord speaks attaches to that with which He here connects it. We find it in proportion as we answer to the character. "Looked at in this way, there is no difficulty in seeing the deeper nature of a love that keeps Christ's 'word', as compared with that which keeps 'commandments' only. Not to keep a positive command is simple, rank rebellion, nothing less. His 'word' is wider, while it addresses itself with less positiveness of authority to the one whose heart and conscience is less prompt to the appeal of love" (Numerical Bible). I do not "command" a friend: my mind is made known to him by my words, and he acts accordingly. One word has greater weight with him than a hundred commands have on one at a distance? A servant receives my commands and obeys them, but he knows not my heart; but my friend walks with me in the intelligence of my deepest thoughts. Ah! is this so with us? Are we really walking with Him who calls us not servants, but friends—see John 15:15! "And my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." Just as there is a marked advance from His "commandments" in John 14:21 to His "word" in John 14:23, so there is in the blessings respectively attached to the keeping of the one and the other. In the former He promises to manifest Himself to the heart, in the latter He speaks of both the Father and Himself coming to make Their abode with such a soul. "Abiding" speaks of fellowship all through John's writings. Not only is our fellowship with the Father and His Son (1 John 1:3), but to the one who truly heeds the Word, They will come and have fellowship with him. This is the reward of loving obedience. The "result will be to manifest the competency of Scripture for the 'man of God' to whom alone it is pledged as competent, able to furnish thoroughly unto all good works.' Who is the man of God, but he who is out and out for God, and who else can expect to be furnished in this way, but he who is honestly intentioned to use his knowledge as before Him who gave it? The very passage which we are quoting here reminds us of where the profit is to be found: 'All Scripture is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.' If we do not mean to accept the reproof and the correction, where is the use of talking about the rest?" (Numerical Bible). "He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings" (John 14:24). Here was the final word to Judas: the line between "the world" and "his own" is clearly drawn by the "whoso loveth me, whoso loveth me not." Not to love the Loveliest is because of hatred. There is no other alternative. Of old Jehovah had declared that He would visit the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hated Him, but that He would show mercy unto thousands of them that loved Him and kept His commandments (Ex. 20:6). What seems to be indifference is really enmity. All who are not with Christ are against Him (Luke 11:23). "He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings." Observe the change. In the previous verse the one who loves Christ keeps His Word; here the one who loves Him not, His sayings or words. Why this variation? Because unbelief does not combine in their unity the individual sayings, but dismisses them as they are isolated. The true believer hears in all God's words one Word—Him, the unbeliever heeds not! An unbeliever may observe some of Christ's words as a matter of policy and prudence, because they commend themselves to his reason; but others, which to him are distasteful, which appear impracticable or severe, he esteems not. If he loved Christ he would value His Word as a whole; but he does not; therefore he keeps not His words. "And the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me" (John 14:24). Thus the Lord concludes this point by magnifying the Word. Here, we say again, was the final answer to the question, "How is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" Does the world believe on Me? Does it love Me? Does it keep My commandments? How, then, can I manifest Myself to it? "Thus did the Lord dispose of the three main

stumbling blocks which hindered these disciples: the offense of Thomas, who would know all with his natural understanding; the offense of Philip, who was eager for visible manifestations to the outward senses; the offense of Judas, who would too readily receive the whole world into the kingdom of God" (Lange). "These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you" (John 14:25). In the light of the verse which immediately follows we understand this to mean: I said what I have in view of My near departure. Because I am yet with you, these things make little impression upon your hearts, but when the Holy Spirit has come you will be able to enter the better into their meaning and blessedness. "But the comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things" (John 14:26). This is one of many verses which contains clear proof of the Divine personality of the Holy Spirit. A mere abstract influence could not teach. Moreover, "he shall teach you," being a masculine pronoun, could not be applied to any but a real person. The Comforter would be sent by the Father, but in the name of Christ. The significance of this can best be ascertained by a reference to John 5:43: just as the Savior had come in the Father's name, so the Holy Spirit would be sent in the Son's name: that is to say, in His stead, for His interests, with His authority. Just as the Son had made known the Father, so the Spirit would take of the things of Christ and show them to His people. Just as the Son had glorified the Father, so the Spirit would glorify Christ. Just as, hitherto, the Savior had supplied all the needs of His own, henceforth the Comforter should fully provide for them. "He shall teach you all things." Here is another instance where the words of Scripture are not to be taken in their absolute sense. If the apostles were to be taught all things without any qualification, they would be omniscient. Nor did Christ mean that the Holy Spirit would teach them all that it was possible for finite creatures to know: He would not make known to them the secrets of futurity, or the occult workings of nature. Rather would He teach them all that it was necessary for them to know for their spiritual well-being, and this, particularly, in connection with what Christ had taught them, either fully or in germ form. He would make clear to them that which, as yet, was mysterious in their Master's sayings. "He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26). Two striking examples of that are recorded in this very Gospel. In John 2:22 we are told, "When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them." Again, in John 12:16 we read, "These things understood not his disciples at the first; but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him." No doubt this promise of Christ applies in a general way to all real Christians. Hundreds of times has the writer prayed to God, just before entering the pulpit, that He would be pleased to strengthen his memory and enable him to recall the exact words of Scripture as he quoted them; and graciously has He answered us. We would confidently urge our fellow-believers to plead this verse before God on sleepless nights, or when on a bed of sickness, as well as before going to teach a Sunday School class, asking Him to bring back to your remembrance the comforting promises of His Word; or, when tempted, that His precepts might flash upon you. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you" (John 14:27). Without being dogmatic, we believe that there is a double "peace" spoken of here: a peace left and a peace given. In the New Testament "peace" is spoken of in a twofold sense: as signifying reconciliation, contrasted from alienation: and a state of tranquillity as contrasted from a state of tumult. The one is objective, the other subjective. The former is referred to in Romans 5:1: "Being justified by faith we have peace with God." His holy wrath against us and our vile opposition against Him are ended forever. The latter is mentioned in Philippians 4:7: "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." The one who fully unbosoms himself before the throne of grace enjoys rest within. The one then is judicial, the other, experiential. "Peace I leave with you" would be the result of the Atonement. "My peace I give unto you," would be enjoyed through the indwelling Spirit. The one was for the conscience; the other for the heart. "My peace I give unto you." This was the personal

peace which He had enjoyed here on earth. He was never ruffled by circumstances, and never resisted the will of the Father. He was ever in a state of most perfect amity with God. The peace He here promised His disciples was the peace which filled His own heart, as the result of His unbroken communion with the Father. "For us it is restlessness of will which disturbs this—the strife with His will which this means, and the dissatisfaction of soul which follows every gain that may seem to make in that direction. Doing only His will, there can be no proper doubt as to the issue" (Numerical Bible). "Not as the world giveth, give I unto you" (John 14:27). The peace which the worldling has is shallow, unstable, unsatisfying, false. It talks much about peace, but knows little of the thing itself. We have peace-societies, peace-programmes, a peace-palace, and a League of Nations to promote peace; yet all the great powers are armed to the teeth! "When they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them" (1 Thess. 5:3). The world's peace is a chimera: it fails under trial. When the world gives, it is to the ungodly, not to the godly, whom they hate. When the world gives, it gives away, and has no longer. But Christ gives by bringing us into what is eternally His own. When Christ gives He gives forever, and never takes away. "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27). Here the Lord concludes that section of His discourse which had been devoted to the comforting of His sorrowing disciples. Abundant had been the consolation He had proffered them. Their hearts ought now to have been at perfect peace, their minds being stayed upon God. And yet while this verse terminated the first section of the address, it is closely connected with the verses which follow where the Lord proceeded to make application of what He had been saying. "Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come unto you. If ye love me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I" (John 14:28). Connecting this verse with the one immediately preceding, the force of our Lord's words is this: If you only believed what I have been saying to you, your cares and fears would vanish, and joy would take the place of sorrow. But what did the Lord mean by "If ye loved me?" Was He not instructing and directing their love, in order to purify it? He knew that they loved Him, and what He had said in John 14:15, 21, 23, assumed it. But their love was not yet sufficiently dis-interested: they were occupied too much with the thought of their own bereavement, instead of the heavenly joy into which the Redeemer was about to enter. If they had loved Him with a pure love, they would have been happy at His exaltation and forgotten themselves. "My Father is greater than I." This is the favourite verse with Unitarians, who deny the absolute Deity of Christ and His perfect equality with the Father—a truth which is clearly taught in many scriptures. Those who use these words of our Lord in support of their blasphemous heresy, wrest them from their context, ignoring altogether the connection in which they are found. The Savior had just told the apostles that they ought to rejoice because He was going to the Father, and then advances this reason, "For my Father is greater than I." Let this be kept definitely before us and all difficulty vanishes. The Father's being greater than Christ was the reason assigned why the disciples should rejoice at their Master's going to the Father. This at once fixes the meaning of the disputed "greater," and shows us the sense in which it was here used. The contrast which the Savior drew between the Father and Himself was not concerning nature, but official character and position. Christ was not speaking of Himself in His essential Being. The One who thought it not robbery to be "equal with God" had taken the servant form, and not only so, had been made in the likeness of men. In both these senses, namely, in His official status (as Mediator) and in His assumption of human nature, He was inferior to the Father. Throughout this discourse and in the Prayer which follows in chapter 17, the Lord Jesus is represented as the Father's Servant, from whom He had received a commission, and to whom He was to render an account; for whose glory He acted, and under whose authority He spake. But there is another sense, more pertinent, in which the Son was inferior to the Father. In becoming incarnate and tabernacling among men, He had greatly humiliated Himself, by choosing to descend into shame and suffering in their acutest forms. He was now the Son of man that had

not where to lay His head. He who was rich had for our sakes become poor. He was the Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. In view of this, Christ was now contrasting His situation with that of the Father in the heavenly Sanctuary. The Father was seated upon the throne of highest majesty; the brightness of His glory was un eclipsed; He was surrounded by hosts of holy beings, who worshipped Him with uninterrupted praise. Far different was it with His incarnate Son—despised and rejected of men, surrounded by implacable enemies, soon to be nailed to a criminal's cross. In this sense, too, He was inferior to the Father. Now in going to the Father, the Son would enjoy a vast improvement of situation. It would be a gain unspeakable. The contrast then was between His present state of humiliation and His coming state of exaltation to the Father! Therefore, those who really loved Him should have rejoiced at the tidings that He would go to the Father, because the Father was greater than He—greater both in official status and in surrounding circumstances. It was Christ owning His place as Servant, and magnifying the One who had sent Him. "And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe" (John 14:29). "The question naturally occurs, Believe what? That question is answered by referring to the parallel statement in reference to the treachery of Judas: 'Now I tell you, that when it is come to pass, ye might believe that I am' (John 13:19)—that I am the Messiah, the Divinely appointed, qualified, promised, accredited Savior: and of course, that all that I have taught you is indubitably true; and all I have promised is absolutely certain. The disciples did believe this, but their faith was feeble; it required confirmation. It was to be exposed to severe trials, and needed support: and the declaration by Him of these events before they took place was of all things the best fitted for giving their faith that required confirmation and support" (Dr. John Brown). "Hereafter I will not talk much with you" (John 14:30). In a very short time He would be cut off from them, while He undertook His greatest work of all. In reminding them that it would be impossible for Him to say much more to them, He hinted at the deep importance of them pondering over and over what He had just said, and what He was on the point of saying to them. This was to be His last address in His humbled state, and during the next few hours they would sorely need the sustaining and comforting power of these precious promises if they were not to faint. "For the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me" (John 14:30). The awful enmity of the Serpent was now to be fully vented upon the woman's Seed: he was to be allowed to bruise the Savior's heel. All that this meant we are incapable of entering into. It would seem that Satan began his assault in the Garden, and ceased not till he had moved Pilate to seal the sepulcher and place a guard about it. The words "and hath nothing in me" refer to His inherent holiness. As the sinless One there was nothing within to which the Devil could appeal. How completely different is it with us! Throw a lighted match into a barrel of gunpowder, and there is a fearful explosion; cast it into a barrel of water and it is quenched! "For the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." This too was said for the consolation of the apostles: the Savior would assure them beforehand that the issue of the approaching conflict was not left in any doubt. There was no weak point in Him for Satan to find; therefore He must come forth more than Conqueror. Satan could find something in Noah, Abraham, David, Peter. but Christ was the Lamb "without blemish." "But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence" (John 14:31). Most blessed is this. The last words of this sentence look back to the end of the previous verse. The prince of this world cometh—but, nevertheless, I suffer him to come against Me, and I go to meet Him. Christ's love to the Father was thus evidenced by His willingness to allow the dragon to lay hold upon Him. He went forth to meet Satan because He had received "commandment" from the Father to do so. It is remarkable that this is the only time that Christ ever spoke of His love to the Father; it was now that He was to give the supreme proof of it. How this rebukes those who are ever talking and singing of their love for the Lord! In the words "Arise, let us go hence," the Lord must have got up from the supper-table, and apparently was followed by His apostles into the outer room, where they remained until

they left for Gethsemane, cf. John 18:1. The following questions are to help the student on the first section of John 15:— 1. What is meant by "the true vine," verse 1? 2. In what sense is the Father the husbandman, verse 1? 3. What is meant by "He taketh away," verse 2? 4. What is meant by "purgeth," verse 2? 5. What is meant by "abide in Me," verse 4? 6. What is meant by the last clause of verse 5? 7. Who is in view in verse 6? ENDNOTES:

[1] The above questions are from an article by the late Mr. Inglis, in "Waymarks in the Wilderness."

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