

EXPOSITION.

BY REV. B. SHERLOCK.

"And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may be with you for ever, even the Spirit of Truth."—JOHN xiv. 16, 17.

These are words uttered by Him whose birth was heralded by angels, whose life on earth is to be described as "Immanuel, God with us." His teachings are higher than all other—even inspired—teachings, for, is not a master greater than a servant? Is not the inspirer greater than the inspired? Is not the teacher greater than the pupil? To Him, give all the prophets witness; of Him did the noblest of men, John the Baptist, say, "The latchet of His shoes I am not worthy to unloose." To Him did Moses and Elias give precedence after coming from the celestial glory. To Him did God the Father bear witness in presence of the crowds at Jordan, and to Apostles and to Moses and Elias, saying, "This is my beloved Son." Three hours of darkness when He was dying, and an earthquake when He rose, showed the unique importance and dignity of this august personage. To His honor is the music of heaven dedicated, as sung by the innumerable host of the redeemed, and above all other subjects of angelic interest rises His glory in the thought of the cherubim and seraphim above. And these are His words!

The teachings of Jesus may be put in three sections: (1) The Sermon on the Mount—didactic and very plain, suited to inner disciple and outer hearer alike. (2) Parables proper, which became instruction in proportion to the condition of the hearer, as intimated in what is probably the first parable, that of the sower, with which may be classed those deep sayings concerning His relations with the Father, His own true Deity and special subordination to the Father, as contained in John. (3) The discourse to His disciples immediately before His betrayal—which the betrayer did not hear—which was in the full sense prophetic concerning the future. His discourses after His resurrection were

explanatory of previous Scripture in relation to Himself, and also the great commissions as given in Matthew xxviii. 19, 20, and John xx. 21-23.

We have said that the discourse out of which the text is taken is in the true sense prophetic, for it pointed onward to what was then in the future. Its immediate purpose was to cheer the hearts of the disciples, just now saddened by the announcement that their present Comforter would soon leave them. As the grandest fact in prophet's prediction, Baptist's preaching, and angelic announcement was the promise of Jesus' coming, so the greatest boon and the central glory in this discourse of Christ's is the promise of the Comforter. Jesus "knew what was in man," and in view of what man needs, He gave this promise and fulfilled it at Pentecost. For Peter, in answer to the inquiry of the astonished crowd in Jerusalem, said, "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel, And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh. This Jesus being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath poured forth this which ye now see and hear." What was future, perhaps fifty-two to fifty-five days future when Jesus spoke, is no longer future, but a present privilege and possibility.

I have said that Jesus promised and bestowed this in view of the needs of humanity. Their needs as moral beings, their needs in view of eternal destiny, their needs in view of the divine requirement of holiness, their needs in view of their restoration to the rank and character of children of God. He had already taught the well-disposed to call God by the name of Father. He is now guaranteeing to them the boon which, when received, makes the filial relation a glorious possibility, a triumphant, a realized, a victorious fact.

I. The first great need of man in this view of his position is, reconciliation with God. This was provided for by the incarnate Jesus Himself. But it was never realized in its true significance until He, the Spirit of Truth, came. Just before His ascension, some of His