

them His unfailing readiness to provide for them, when their own resources seemed very bare and uncertain. *The third time*, etc. Probably this refers to appearances of the risen Lord to His disciples in a group (see ch. 20 : 19-23, 26-29, last Lesson). John is much the most precise of the evangelists in describing events in their order.

II. Love Tested, 15-17.

Vs. 15-17. *Simon, son of John* (Rev. Ver.). Some suppose that Jesus addressed Peter by this name, as having in view his natural character, in contrast with that of an apostle. This is possible, but not necessary, for we find that throughout the Gospels, while the evangelists call him Peter or Simon Peter, Jesus almost invariably calls him Simon. (Compare Matt. 16 : 17 ; 17 : 25, etc.) *Lovest thou me more than these ?* It is difficult to see how the word "these" can mean anything else than the other disciples present. To refer it to his boat and former occupation is surely far-fetched. The reason for putting the question is quite plain. A few days before, when Jesus warned the disciples that they would forsake Him, Peter had boldly exclaimed, "Although all shall be offended, yet will not I", Mark 14 : 29. He had exalted himself above all his fellow disciples, and yet before another day had dawned, he had denied his Master thrice. Jesus had certainly forgiven Peter, but He wished solemnly to put him on his guard against his own dangerous weakness. *Yea, Lord ; thou knowest*. Some interpreters have emphasized the fact that Peter uses a different word for "love" from that employed by Jesus, a word supposed to imply a warmer affection, but this is very doubtful. Peter appeals from his own judgment, which had proved so untrustworthy, to the knowledge of his Lord. *Feed my lambs*. Jesus can safely commit to his care those who need special provision. The lambs are weaker than the sheep. *The second time ; to prove Peter's heart* : "Are you sure that nothing but love is the bond between you and Me ?" (Dods.) *Feed my sheep ; rather "shepherd" than "feed"*. *The third time ; as Peter had denied Him three times*. *Peter . . . grieved*. He knew that Jesus was in earnest, and that He had good reason to test him thoroughly, and the knowledge saddens

him. *Thou knowest all things ; a more eager appeal to the perfect spiritual knowledge of his Lord*. Personal love to Christ is the one foundation of Christian work.

III. Obedience Required, 18-23.

Vs. 18, 19. *Verily . . . whither thou wouldst not ; a solemn hint as to that which his personal service would involve*. In his younger days an open course stretched in front of him, he could choose his path ; but his apostolic calling will end in cruel bondage and death. The tradition is probably genuine that Peter was crucified, but there is no reference here to details. *Glorify God ; the remarkable expression used of martyrdom in the early church*. *Follow me*. "If any man serve Me, let him follow Me", ch. 12 : 26. The disciple must tread the road which the Master had trodden.

Vs. 20-23. *Peter . . . seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following*. Jesus and Peter had moved away from the rest, as if acting upon the preceding words. The beloved disciple, so intimate with both, ventures to accompany them. *What . . . this man do ? A curiosity thoroughly akin to Peter's nature*. *If I will, etc.* Do not concern yourselves with others. Your own course requires all your attention. *Then went this saying abroad*. Jesus' reference to His own second coming suggested that this apostle should not die, like the rest. John himself refuses to accept that interpretation. He is content to leave the issue to his all-wise Lord.

In vs. 24, 25, John affirms the truth of his Gospel, and repeats the assertion of ch. 20 : 30 that Jesus did many things not recorded in it.

Light from the East

GIRD—The long, loose dress of the Hebrews, hanging in folds down almost to their feet, seriously interfered with any active exercise, such as fast walking, running, or any manual labor which required stooping, or any swift movement of the body. On such occasions the cloak, if not altogether thrown aside, was tucked up, and secured around the waist by a belt or girdle. This was sometimes merely a cord, sometimes a leather belt, such as is now worn by Eastern monks and many Arabs, and occasionally ornamented with work in colored worsted, or silk, or with metal studs,