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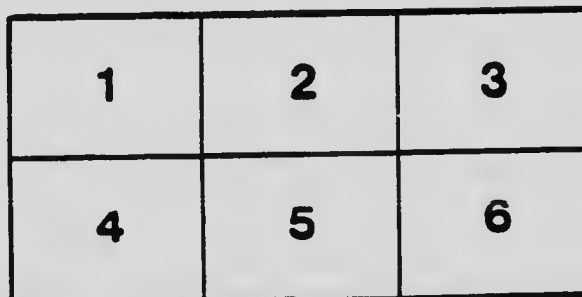
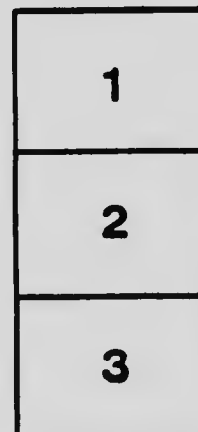
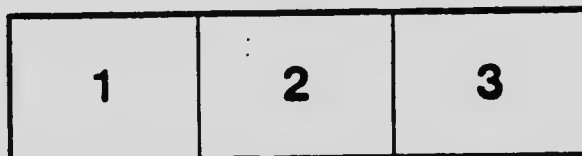
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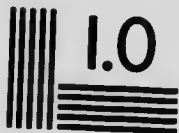
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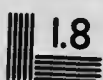
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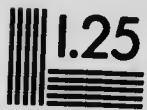
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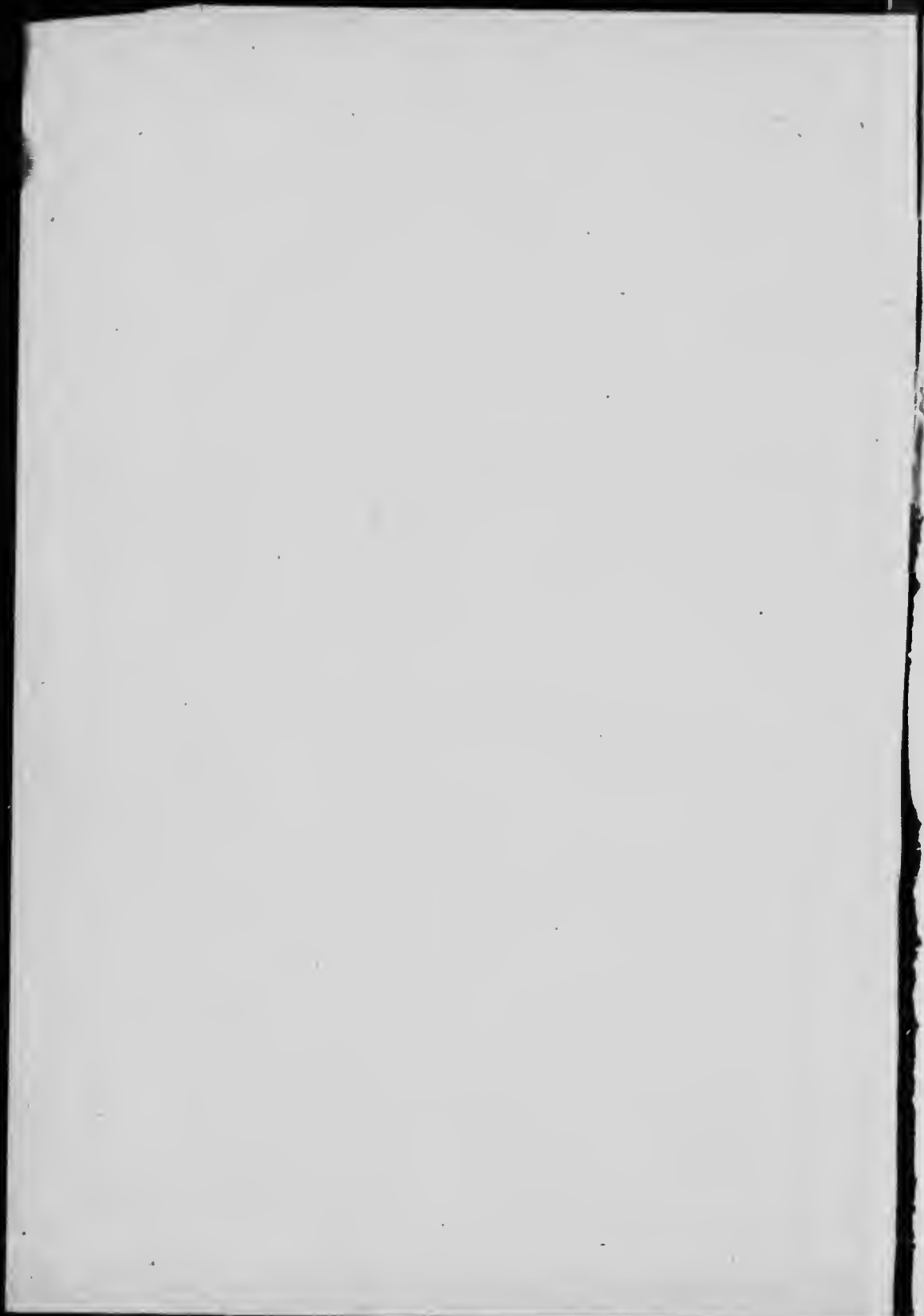
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St. John's
Portrait of Christ



.. By ..
Rev. J. A. Macfarlane
M.A.



**St. John's
Portrait of Christ**

By
Rev. J. A. Macfarlane, M.A.



Quebec :
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—
1909

The Bible Studies presented in the latter half of this little volume were given, first of all, to my Students in the Summer School for Bible Study at Norway Bay, in 1907.

They were repeated in a series of eight addresses delivered before the Frontier Sunday School Association meeting in the Autumn of 1908 ; and a few weeks later formed the basis of four addresses to the Compton County S. S. Association Convention.

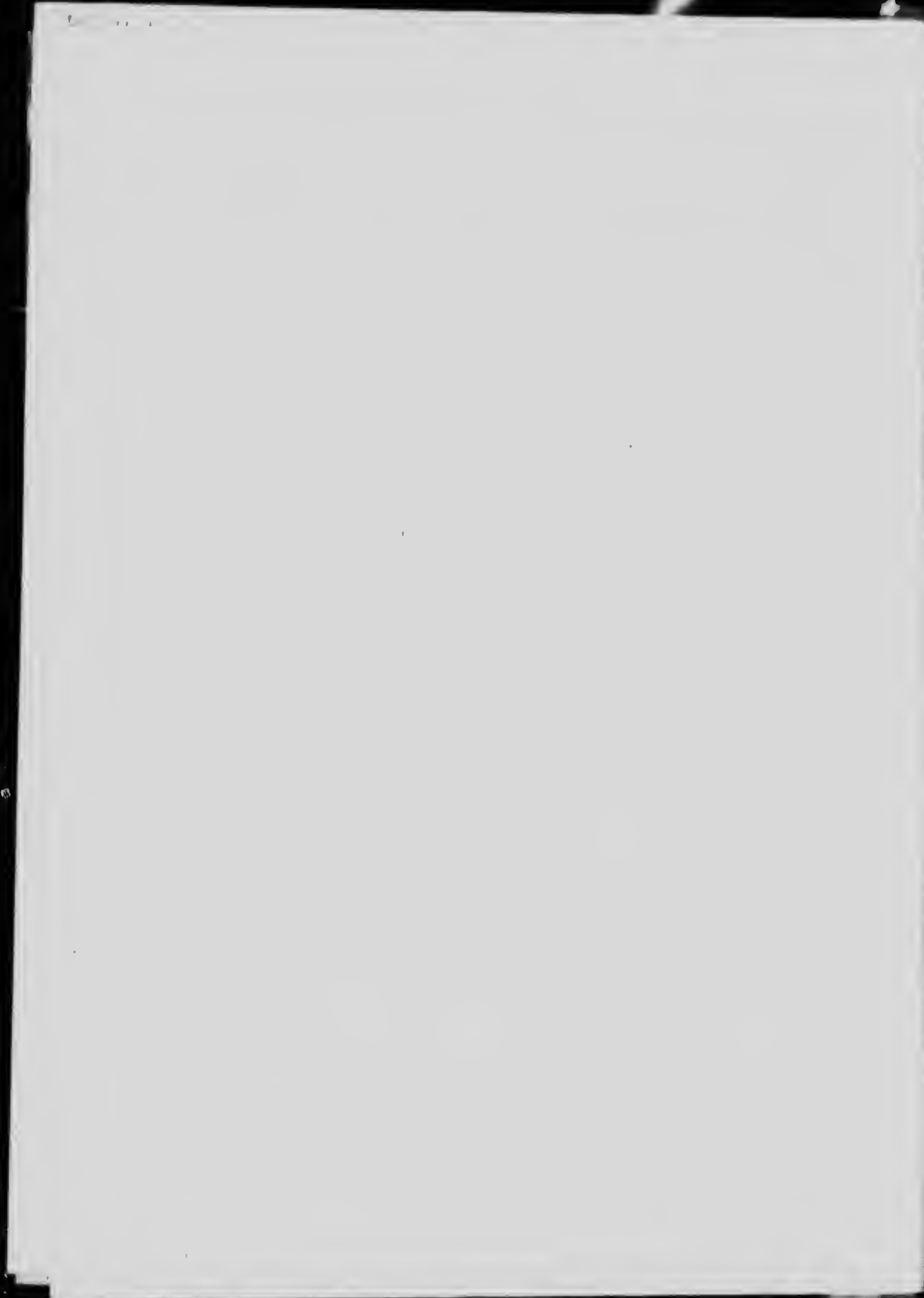
They appeared to be helpful to some, both ministers and laymen. They are given now to the Many in the hope that they may assist in laying upon stronger foundations that Faith in the Divine Son of God, without which the World thinks that life has been shorn of its lustre, and robbed of its shining Goal.

" If ye abide in My Word, then are ye truly My disciples ; and ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free ". (John 8 : 31-32).

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Preface

IT was at first my intention to give **ST. JOHN'S PORTRAIT OF CHRIST** without any discussion as to the authorship of the Gospel. Three circumstances led me to change my plan, and to insert a brief, and necessarily very imperfect, argument on the subject.

First, in the rounds of pastoral visiting, a layman who has ceased to trouble himself about Church-going, seemed to take it for granted that it was now universally conceded that John's Gospel was a second century product, and consequently entitled to very meagre respect as a life of Jesus.

Second, in a group of ministers, one who is a decidedly able preacher either did not believe in the Apostolic origin of the Gospel, or entertained very hazy ideas on the subject. He did not make it clear which view he held ; though he questioned its Johanean character.

Third, at an Alumni Conference, a Theological professor seemed to think it necessary to quote with apologetic timidity anything from John's Gospel.

Haziness and uncertainty are not conducive to power. In a very fragmentary way, I thought well to preface my Portrait with a brief discussion. It may help the Layman ; stimulate the Minister ; and disgust the Professor, who loves to wallow in prolixity.

That Hasting's Dictionary of the Bible, sufficiently saturated with higher criticism in many sections, rings clear on every phase of the Johanean controversy, and presents a most able defence of St. John's authorship, must help to turn the tide, in the English speaking world, towards the shores of an undisturbed faith in the Gospel—a Gospel that fills so large a place in the hearts and affections of those who love to think that we got the tidings of the Many Mansions from the lips of the Son of God, directly through the Beloved Disciple.

DANIEL O'CONNELL, in his day, was credited with such expertness in puncturing the meaning of language, that he is said to have claimed to be "able to drive a Coach and Four through any Law which the British Parliament could frame". In other words, the debate-loving Irishman recognized that all language has its limitations as a vehicle of thought, and that a certain ambiguity lurks beneath every possible transcription of our thinking into speech.

Daniel was not the sole and exclusive proprietor of this serviceable literary gift. Any educated man may easily train himself to expertness in this very questionable method of tampering with words and their meanings. He is but a dullard in literary analysis and synthesis who cannot, by a little torture of his brain, find some construction and interpretation of a group of words different from the meaning which the writer intended to convey. Almost every Lawyer is a miniature Daniel O'Connell in this art. Probably one-half of all the lawsuits in our Civil Courts resolve themselves into the ability of a lawyer to put upon the language of a law a meaning and an interpretation which the country's Legislators never intended it to bear.

The study of language from this standpoint resolves itself into an attempt, not to expound the evident meaning of a writer, but to secure an in-

terpretation which may be made to wear the livery, and voice the opinions, of the astute and purposeful partisan reader.

This Dan O'Connell art of finding highroads through the manifest purpose of a writer, and swinging open its gates to accommodate our own Coach-and-Four, has, within the past century, been reduced to a science,—the Science of Higher Criticism.

Higher Criticism has, however, added to Dan's methods one that would have rejoiced the soul of the bold and talented Irishman had he considered himself honorably entitled to have used it. When Higher Criticism cannot find a road for its Coach-and-Four through the language of some Apostle or Prophet, it calmly proceeds to cut and carve the manuscript into various documents, and then to re-arrange these into a new order to suit its purpose. Had O'Connell learned this trick with British Laws, and felt himself at liberty to change the order of sentences and paragraphs on the ground that he detected traces of the "literary style" of A. B. Jones, M.P., in one section, and that of C. D. Brown, M.P., in another, what an extended field it would have opened up to his adventurous spirit. He could then have built whole highways through any law that the British Parliament could frame. He was but a babe in bending language to his will. He was seriously handicapped as compared with the Higher Critic. The latter, when stuck, merely goes in search of a new author, a new document, and a consequent fresh arrangement of the literature

to suit himself. O'Connell did not consider himself at such liberty with the order of sentences and paragraphs. He felt himself restricted to bending his brain-power to the interpretation of the language *as it stood*.

With this developed modern expertness in successfully making a writer say what he did not say, and thus bear testimony in opposition to his convictions and utterances, we will not be surprised at finding some very clever and scholarly, and apparently convincing, attempts to offset John's affirmations respecting the Divinity of Christ, and to subvert the witness of early Christian writers to John's authorship of the Fourth Gospel.

However, we are not concerned at present either to amuse or confuse the public with a parade of some of these marvellously skilful attacks upon the evident meaning of John's teachings, or upon the statements of the Fathers of the Church as to John's authorship of this Portrait of the Christ. The former is matter for the forceps and scalpel and microscope of an exegete who is writing a critical commentary; the latter is material to be tested and weighed by the compiler of a treatise on Biblical Introduction.

As I feel, however, that a large part of the value of the quotations which I am making from John's Gospel in presenting "St. John's Portrait of Christ", is dependent upon a conviction that these writings are from the pen of "That Disciple whom Jesus loved", I think it advisable to give briefly some of the main reasons which lead me to accept

absolutely the Fourth Gospel as a product from the rich memories and ample manuscripts of that Apostle: a Memoir incorporated by himself into this last of the Gospels.

"A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid". Conspicuous amongst all the citadels of revelation stands John's Gospel. Consequently, its capture has always been the shining goal of the ambitious exponent of rationalistic thought. Under a tremendous assumption of scholarship, and a claim to exceptional literary genius and critical acumen, the attack upon everything that floats the flag of the Holy Land has been made. The glory of John's Gospel must be torn from it. It must be made to appear as not the spirit-filled, living, breathing record of him who leaned on Jesus' breast, and knew his Master so well, but as the product of some second century writer. That is, the wall of Johannine authorship which encircles the Gospel, guarding its highways to the Many Mansions, and guaranteeing the Divinity of its content, must be broken down, in whole or part, that its inspiration may be called in question, its wonderful revelation assailed, and its matchless portrait of the Christ be marred and defaced.

When one considers the mental capacity, and the O'Connell ingenuity of many of these forceful writers; the sleuth-hound persistency of their attack; the microscopic minuteness of their examination of every word and phrase in the authorship breast-works; the conscienceless character of the liberties they take with grammatical structure; the keen-

brained sophistry with which they divert evidence from its legitimate channels; and the commanding effrontery with which they array a puny argument in invincible looking aggressiveness, one is not surprised that they have shaken the faith of many a not too strongly entrenched theologian.

But the defenders of the Johannine authorship of the Fourth Gospel have been more and mightier than its assailants; and the flag of the Beloved Apostle still floats over every chapter of the wondrous story of the Word which was God, and which became Flesh, housing Divinity in the tent of humanity. Volumes upon volumes have been written on the Johannine controversy. Critics have searched every cranny of the wall for flaws; and defenders have piled up the arguments against every place of attack. A whole volume has recently been written to destroy the value of a single early Christian testimony to St. John's authorship of this Gospel, that of Irenaeus. The argument has now grown about as intricate as the labyrinth of Daedalus.

We propose to confine ourselves to the task of looking inward to see what is one strong Internal Evidence that John wrote the Gospel; and then turning our eyes outward, see whether there is satisfactory External Evidence that this was the view of those that lived nearest to John's time.

THE Internal Evidences that the Apostle John wrote the Gospel that has come down to us under the shelter of his great name, are many and clear and very conclusive. To exhibit them would be to go far beyond the limits of space we have assigned ourselves. We propose to pass in silence over the evidences derived from a reading of the Gospel,—

(a) That the writer of it was a Jew ;

(b) That he was familiar with all the phases of Palestinian life in the time of Jesus, its geography, topography, history, customs, &c. ;

(c) That he was manifestly an eyewitness of the scenes and incidents he describes, almost every chapter giving details of a personal character, and inserting exact days and hours, as only a personal witness would do ; and

(d) That he was so intimate with the disciples that he was able to describe in a life-like way the "changing color" of their feelings and thoughts at every turn of the ministry of Jesus.

We propose to pass over also the evidences as to where he wrote and when he wrote ; and to confine ourselves to a *Short Chain of Texts* that we think, of themselves, place the matter beyond question that the Apostle John was the author of the Gospel that bears his name.

(1) That the writer of John's Gospel was an Apostle, a companion of Jesus, an eye-witness, and an ear-witness, of what he records, seems abundantly evident from the following passages in his writings. Which of the Apostles he is, is not indicated in the verses we are about to quote. We note only that it is manifest that he was *An Apostle*. We do not propose to touch the evidence that the writer was an eyewitness of the events he records, except in so far as it is linked to the evidence that he was an Apostle.

JOHN 1:14. "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among *Us* (and *We* beheld His glory...")

The writer was one of those amongst whom Jesus dwelt, and who saw His glory. Just in the next chapter, the writer tells us of one of the occasions when that glory was manifested. "This beginning of His signs did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested *His Glory*; and His disciples believed on Him." (JOHN 2:11). The writer of this Gospel was evidently one of these disciples at the wedding in Cana, where the first miracle was performed.

In Luke's Gospel we learn of another well-known occasion when His glory was seen by His disciples. It was on the Mount of Transfiguration. "Now Peter and they that were with him" (namely, James and John) "were heavy with sleep; but when they were fully awake, they *Saw His Glory*." (LUKE 9:32). Peter makes special reference to this event in his second Epistle (chap. 1:16-19). "*We* were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honor and *Glory*,

when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent *Glory*, 'This is My Beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased: and this voice *We* ourselves heard come out of heaven, when *We* were with Him in the holy mount'. Now when Peter is writing about himself alone, he uses the singular pronoun. For instance, in verses 12 and 13 of this same chapter, he writes. "Wherefore I shall be ready... And I think it right as long as I am in this tabernacle, &c.". When in verses 16-18, therefore, he says "*We*", he manifestly includes James and John who were his companions at the time of Jesus' transfiguration. As this is the most conspicuous occasion in all the earthly life of Jesus when He was glorified before any of His disciples, it is most natural to assume that the special reference in John 1:14 is to this event. The writer of John's Gospel was one, at all events, who saw the glory of Jesus, "glory as of the only begotten from the Father". Therefore, he was at least one of the Twelve. If we require the transfiguration scene to illustrate the full meaning of "glory as of the only begotten from the Father", as I believe we do, then we are able to place the writer of John's Gospel as one of the three on the holy mount, namely, Peter, James or John. When the choice lies there, every Bible student will at once concede that John was the one of these three that must have written this Gospel.

But let us put another link into this chain, which begins with John 1:14, eye-witness-ship. It is acknowledged by all except ultra critics, that it was the same author who wrote what the Church calls

John's Gospel and John's First Epistle. In that case listen to what the author of that Epistle, who is, we believe, the author of the Gospel, has to say about his personal acquaintance with Jesus: "That which was from the beginning, that which *We Have Heard*, that which *We Have Seen with our Eyes*, that which we beheld, and *Our Hands Handled*, concerning the Word of life, (and the life was manifested, and *We Have Seen*, and bear witness, and declare unto you the life, the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested *Unto Us*;) that which *We Have Seen and Heard* declare we unto you also, that ye also may have fellowship with us; yea, and our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son *Jesus Christ*". (1 JOHN 1:1-3).

If the writer of John's Gospel is able to talk like this, there can be no doubt about his being an Apostle, a companion of Jesus, an eye-witness, and an ear-witness of what he records.

Can any other reasonable construction be put upon the words of John 19:32-35? It is the crucifixion scene. "The soldiers therefore came, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him; but when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: howbeit one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and straightway there came out blood and water. *And He That Hath Seen Hath Borne Witness*, and his witness is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye also may believe". The writer of the Gospel was a spectator at the crucifixion of Jesus. Surely we may well say

with himself, "This is the disciple that beareth witness of these things, and *Wrote these things*: and we know that his witness is true". (JOHN 21:24).

But let us next turn to trace the connection of this "disciple" here spoken of. We think it is John. Let us see the evidence.

(2) The writer of John's Gospel was the "Disciple whom Jesus loved", namely, John.

Here is how that disciple is spoken of in the Gospel: "There was at the table, reclining in Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, and saith unto him, Tell us who it is of whom He speaketh. He leaning back, as he was, on Jesus' breast saith unto Him, "Lord, who is it?" (JOHN 13:23-25). Whoever wrote these words was an eye-witness of the scene, and a very close observer. In verse 22, the very look of the disciples is noted, "The disciples looked one on another". That look is photographed upon the memory of the observer, and subsequently written down as a necessary part of the betrayal picture. Peter's "beckoning" is described; and then there is this living touch given to the picture: "He leaning back, *as he was*, on Jesus' breast". That is so manifestly the picture of an observer who is vitally interested in every look and gesture and movement that nothing escapes his eye, that one is charmed with its life-likeness. Now the disciple whom Jesus loved must have been one of the three that constituted the inner group of three disciples, Peter, James and John, who were with him, to the exclusion of all the others, in so many

of the most sacred scenes of the Master's life. We do not need to look beyond this group for the beloved disciple. As in this incident at the table, he is distinguished from Peter, it follows that we are confined in choice to James and John. Let us follow up the notice of this favorite disciple. We pass from betrayal to crucifixion.

In chap. 19 :26-27, we read, "When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple standing by whom He loved, He saith unto His mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith He to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour the disciple took her unto his own home". The beloved disciple is now called "the disciple". In chap. 20 :1-2, this disciple is again associated with Peter, the two being together, and alone. Here he is called, "the other disciple, whom Jesus loved", that is, the one whom Jesus loved. Then there follows a description which again marks not only a personal observer, but a very close observer; for it is most minute and detailed. The manner of running, the stooping, the looking in, the detailed way in which the clothes are lying, everything is photographic in its life-likeness. As there were but two present, one of them must have written the account, either Peter or the disciple whom Jesus loved. Can it be possible that the disciple whom Jesus loved never wrote any account of his dear Master? The next quotation which we select, settles that question.

JOHN 21 :20-24. "Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also

leaned back on His breast at supper, and said, Lord, who is he that betrayeth Thee? Peter, therefore, seeing him, saith to Jesus: Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou Me. This saying, therefore, went forth among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, Thou shalt not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? This is the disciple which beareth witness of these things, and *wrote these things*: and we know that his witness is true."

So the line of proof that the disciple whom Jesus loved is the author of the Fourth Gospel, is complete. The author himself makes the statement in the most explicit terms possible. Whoever the unnamed, but deeply loved disciple was, who is so intimately the companion of Jesus from the first of His ministry clear through to the last scenes of His life, he was the author of this Life of Jesus so lovingly penned under the name of John's Gospel.

We have already seen that we are confined in choice to James or John. As James was early martyred (Acts 12) and the Gospel was not written for many years after this, the loved disciple, who leaned on the breast of Jesus, and who became as son to the mother of our Lord, was no other than John, the author of this latest of the Gospels.

(3) The opinion that John was not the author of this Gospel lands us into an unthinkable hypothesis, as we read over the New Testament.

For instance, in the other three Gospels, we find

John a very prominent figure. Turning to the Acts, we face the same situation. In Paul's Epistle to the Galatians (2:9), James, (the Lord's brother), Peter, and *John*, are "reputed to be pillars". Thus John is always in evidence, and mentioned by name. He is very commonly in all these records a special companion of Peter. Their names are found much together. On the assumption of John's authorship of the Fourth Gospel, and his being the "disciple whom Jesus loved", John's Gospel perfectly harmonizes with the others in the association of Peter and John together. On the hypothesis that he was not the author, we are fronted by two great difficulties: (a) How any one who wrote such a life of Christ should drop so completely out of sight that he was never known, nor heard of, by anybody in his own time, or in later years. (b) How this author should name in his Gospel Peter, Andrew, Nathanael, Thomas, Philip, Judas, son of Alphaeus, Judas Iscariot, Lazarus, two or three Marys, Martha, and many others, and yet not once mention directly any member of the family to which John belonged. that is, John himself, his brother James, or his father or mother. They are introduced only in that indirect way that a man uses who is not desirous of parading his own family into prominence. The hypothesis that John did not write this Gospel is unthinkable in the light of the first five books of the New Testament. I agree with the scholar who, after a wide examination of the subject, said, "While I formerly believed that John wrote the Fourth Gospel, now I am sure that it could have been *no one else*".

TURNING our eyes from the view that John's Gospel gives us of its own authorship to what early Christian writers had to say on the subject, we find,—

(1) That owing to the fact that the major portion of all such writings has perished, there is comparatively but a small amount of material available for evidence of any kind.

(2) That there is, however, no discordant note in the testimony in favor of John's authorship.

(3) That, on the contrary, what testimonies exist, are unanimously in favor of (a) the existence at that time of four Gospels, (b) these being the four we now have, and (c) that John was unanimously and universally regarded as the author of the Fourth.

(4) That these testimonies are sufficiently pronounced and explicit to satisfy the most exacting, provided he be open to conviction. For it would be seriously misjudging some scholars not to recognize at once and cheerfully, that they have made up their minds that the Portrait of Christ given in the Fourth Gospel will not be accepted by them until they have marred its heavenly outline, and sponged out its Divine coloring; and that, consequently, the defending bulwark of authorship by the "Disciple whom Jesus loved", must be dynamited at any cost.

A glance over some of the testimonies in favor of John's authorship of the Gospel, in the hundred years that immediately succeed his lifetime, is all we will attempt. John must have lived almost to the close of the first century. What was the view of John's Gospel that obtained in the second century?

(1) The view of the *Enemies of Christianity*. In the second century Christianity was written against by some very clever and astute controversialists. Any weapon that came to their hand that might be hurled at Christianity was eagerly seized. It is perhaps one of the most convincing evidences of the absolutely undeniable apostolic authority of these four Gospels, that no heretical writer sought to call it in question. Their objection was ever to the doctrine of the Gospels. Never did they dispute their authorship; though to have been able to call their apostolicity in question, would have been the most potent weapon they could have used against orthodox Christianity. Celsus was a bitter enemy to the Christian religion; but his hostility reveals the fact that he fully recognized the four Gospels as the already widespread Scriptures of the Christians. This is evident from Origen's writings in reply to the works of Celsus. The contents of John's Gospel came in for frequent attack by Celsus, specially the belief that 'the Son of God is come down from heaven'. (JOHN 3:13-31; 8:23); that the 'body of a God could thirst at the well of Jacob'. (JOHN 4:7), &c. Thus John's Gospel was known not only to its friends, but to its enemies;

and no hostile writer ever had the temerity to question its apostolicity. That appears to have been universally conceded. And if it was apostolic, it was certainly Johannine.

(2) *The Christian View of John's Gospel.*

(a) Polycarp, a student and disciple of the Apostle John, was born about 69 A.D., and martyred 155 A.D. Papias is a contemporary of Polycarp. Both of these men recognize the Johannine writings. The pupil of Polycarp was Irenaeus. The latter, speaking of his teacher Polycarp, and describing the latter's personal intimacy with John and the others who had known the Lord, says, "The miracles and doctrine of the Lord were told by Polycarp in consistency with the Holy Scriptures", such Holy Scriptures being all the Four Gospels.

(b) The Ignatian Epistles written somewhere between 100 and 116 A.D., make it evident that, at that early date, the Gospel of John was already a familiar and authoritative book throughout Asia Minor, and right down to Antioch in Syria. Mrs. Lewis' recent discovery of Syriac *Mss.* of the Gospels, shows that this was true throughout all Syria.

(c) The Muratorian Fragment is a mutilated manuscript of the second century, which gives a list of books of the New Testament. It includes John's Gospel and ascribes its authorship to John. It regards John's First Epistle as an appendix to the Gospel, thus unifying their authorship; and asserts that John professes to be both an eye-witness, and a hearer of "all the wonderful things of the Lord".

(d) But let us come down till towards the close

of the second century, and make a tour of the countries surrounding the Mediterranean Sea to find what was the impression far and wide in the world about John's Gospel. If there was any question about its apostolicity or authoritativeness, its acceptance would necessarily be limited to a comparatively small area. To be world-wide in its acceptance and recognition at so early a period would demand some valid grounds for men's faith in it. For the reception of a document as apostolic in one part of the world did not involve its acceptance elsewhere. To be universally received, nothing short of incontrovertible evidence of its apostolicity was sufficient.

Visiting France, first of all, (then called Gaul), we go to the city of Lyons, and make the acquaintance of its chief pastor Irenaeus. He was born between 115 and 140 A.D., and was martyred under Septimius Severus in 202 A.D. He was born in Asia Minor, where he had been a student under Polycarp, who had been a student and disciple of the Apostle John. Born within fifty years of the death of John; living amidst the scenes of John's ministry where everything would speak of Him; a student of John's own pupil, Polycarp; acquainted with other old men who had known John, and heard him preach, few men ought to be better qualified to say whether John wrote that Gospel. In a letter which he wrote to one Florinus (preserved for us by the historian Eusebius) he reminds Florinus of having met him in Asia Minor in company with Polycarp; "speaks enthusiastically of Polycarp's teachings; and tells of the great interest with which

he (Irenaeus) listened to Polycarp as he spoke about his intercourse with the Apostle John and the others who had seen the Lord; how Polycarp was wont to "recount their words, and the things which he had heard from these concerning the Lord, and concerning His miracles and teachings". He adds that what Polycarp related as having received from eyewitnesses was "in agreement with the Scriptures".

From other writings of Irenaeus, his ponderous work against "Heresies", we learn that he included the four Gospels equally with the Old Testament as the "Scriptures". The preserved works of Irenaeus contain about 500 citations from the four Gospels, 100 of these being from John's Gospel. Well may Tischendorf ask, "Are we to suppose that Irenaeus never heard a word from Polycarp respecting the Gospel of John, and yet gave it his unconditional confidence? that Irenaeus did this, who, in his controversies with heretics, deceivers, and forgers of apocryphal works, employs against them, before all other things, the pure Scripture as a holy weapon?"

The fact that Irenaeus gives fanciful reasons for there being exactly four Gospels does not invalidate his testimony as to their being the four. His speculative opinions as to why there were just so many Gospels, has no adverse bearing upon his testimony as to the fact of there being this many. On the contrary it shows how absolutely Divine does he consider the authoritativeness of these Gospels; and is thus a powerful tribute to the universality of the recognition in his day of the unquestionable apostolicity of these Gospels, including that of John

If we now cross from France to Italy, we are confronted by the same acceptance of John's Gospel. Irenaeus had himself been a minister in Rome before he went to France. His testimony would, therefore, do for Rome also. But we take another, that of the famous Flavius Justinus, the philosopher and martyr, who is better known as Justin Martyr. Justin had also been at Ephesus and Alexandria, so that his testimony covers a wide area outside of Rome.

Justin, after having been a student of the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle, tells us that at last he found satisfaction for his mind when he came in contact with the writings of men who did not seek to demonstrate truth, but who, filled with the Holy Spirit, spoke of what they had seen and heard. He is manifestly referring to the Four Gospels, which he, however, designates as "Memorials composed by the Apostles and their followers". That phrase exactly describes our four Gospels, two of which (Matthew and John) were composed by "Apostles", and two of which (Mark and Luke) were composed by "their followers".

We cross the Mediterranean Sea to Carthage in the North of Africa, then a light, not a dark, continent,—at least in the north where it was famous for its learning.

In Carthage we meet one of the most distinguished scholars of his day, Tertullian, a most voluminous writer on Christian topics. In all his works is most emphatic in the statement that the C l narrative, and other apostolic writings,

“have been received without corruption, as a sacred inheritance, from the apostolic churches” (Barrows, Introduction). He has “left abundant testimony to the existence and apostolic authority of each of the Gospels. He cites passages from almost every chapter of the Fourth Gospel, and from some chapters almost every verse”. (Reynolds, in Hasting's Dict. of the Bible).

Traversing the Mediterranean Sea along the northern coast of Africa, we next visit Alexandria in Egypt, then world famous as a seat of learning. At the head of the Theological School here we find Clement, known as Clement of Alexandria. He was of heathen origin, and of philosophic bent of mind. After his conversion to Christianity, he made extensive researches under various teachers in Greece, Italy, Palestine, and other parts of the East, until he finally settled in Alexandria.

His testimony to the four Gospels as the universally accepted writings of the apostles or apostolic men, accords with that of Tertullian. From the Gospels he makes extensive quotations, four or five hundred in number. Of the Fourth Gospel he says, “John, the last, observing that physical facts had been set forth in earlier Gospels, divinely moved by the Holy Spirit, composed a spiritual Gospel”.

If we pass to the eastern end of the Mediterranean and go to Antioch in Syria, we find Theophilus echoing the same refrain. St. John he describes as “spirit-bearing” (Reynolds) and on a level with the Law and the Prophets. He quotes as John's

the words "In the beginning was the word".
(JOHN 1:1).

This is the same view held in Antioch that, from the Ignatian Epistles, we saw was held near the beginning of this second century, as an overflow from Asia Minor where John wrote and published his Gospel towards the close of the first century.

We shall conclude our tour round the countries bordering on the Mediterranean Sea, with the words of the scholar with whom we started our journey. I refer to Irenaeus, the disciple of Polycarp, the disciple of John. He says, "Thereafter John, the disciple of the Lord, he who rested on His bosom, also published the Gospel, whilst he dwelt at Ephesus in Asia".

The truth embodied in this remark has borne successfully all the attacks that hostile criticism has been able to hurl against it for the last two hundred years, since this controversy began; and with the rising tide of scholarship, and a more microscopic investigation of what the early Christians believed and taught, confidence in its unassailable impregnability is becoming more broadbased. Out from the titanic struggle the Gospel of John emerges as the undoubted product of the mind and heart and pen of John, the "disciple whom Jesus loved", the intimate companion of the Christ the Son of God in all the most sacred scenes and times of His earthly ministry.

IT is fundamental that a biographer should know the person whose life he is to write. Apart from his literary qualifications, the most important thing in a biographer is his intimate acquaintance with the subject of his story. Did the Apostle John know Jesus Christ intimately? Was there any person who knew so much of his Lord as did John? Did he have any specially close relationship to Jesus, and any inner or exceptional knowledge of our Lord, that gave him an unquestionable right to speak of his Master with authority, and which at the same time forced him into a sacred obligation to tell to the world what no other human being could tell so well? Such are the questions which confront us, as we ask ourselves what St. John knew about Jesus Christ. What were his special qualifications for giving us an exalted and life-like Portrait of our blessed Lord?

It is perhaps well to note the fact that every task that towers high above its fellows in the world, requires for its performance a person of very special gifts and qualifications. The mighty Bridge structures of the world were not built by second-rate engineers. The great Electrical feats have been performed by men who had gone into the inner chambers with Electricity, and who came forth rich in the knowledge of her precious secrets. No man

could give a true picture of the Christ of God who had not gone far into the secret of His presence, and had seen and heard and felt and touched that which brought him very close to the Spirit of the Son of God. For every outstanding task, we must have a man who has had a vision of things that other men have not seen.

Given such a man, how shall we view the revelations of his knowledge and power? Shall we open our minds in sympathetic effort to understand, even though afar off, the greatness of the Electrician's revelations and achievements? Or shall we belittle ourselves in an attempt to pass judgment on what infinitely transcends the sphere of our own knowledge? In other words, shall we assume the attitude of Students who wish to learn, or that of Critics who ape an equality with those who have produced the world's Masterpieces? I submit that the Apostle John stood where no other man has ever been in relation to Jesus Christ; and that his Portrait of the Christ is something that transcends all human criticism; and before we ought to stand with uncovered heads to learn what he has to tell us of the glory of the Son of God.

It is well to note that a prolonged and intimate acquaintance with Jesus was a fundamental requisite in the qualifications of an Apostle. That is clearly brought out by Peter when the Christians were about to select one to fill the gap left by the fall of Judas. "Of the men... which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and went out among us, beginning from the baptism of

John, unto the day that He was received up from us, of these must one become a witness with us of the resurrection", (Acts 1:21-22). These were the qualifications of the Apostles in general. They were to be men that had an intimate and prolonged personal acquaintance with Jesus; who were conversant with all the facts of His life and labors; so that they would speak of Him from a first hand knowledge. The two very first disciples to become followers of Jesus were John and Andrew. They had already been disciples of John the Baptist; and they are the first two of all men to become believers in, and followers of, the Son of God. John's acquaintance with Jesus, therefore, is from the very beginning of the Ministry of the Saviour.

But again John was one of an Inner-circle of the Twelve that got specially close to the Master. Again and again we read of Jesus' taking Peter, James, and John, apart from the others, into some sacred scene of His Ministry. They were the three that were with Him at the raising of the daughter of Jairus to life. They were the three that were with Him in the glory-scenes of the Mount of Transfiguration. They were the three that came and remained closest to Him in the agony of Gethsemane. They saw Him more closely than any of the rest of the Twelve. They saw Him when His Person shone with the glory of heaven on the Mount of Transfiguration; they were near Him when He sank in Gethsemane with His brow stained with blood-like sweat, and His soul was bowed beneath the

burden of its sorrow and agony. These were the three that knew the Master most intimately.

But to know Jesus aright, one had to catch His Spirit as well as to lay hold of His Teachings. When the brothers James and John first became followers of Jesus, He named them "Boanerges", Sons of Thunder. This was doubtless due to the high-strung impetuosity of their characters, which was even capable of flaring out into very un-Christ-like sentiments. We have an illustration of this in their actions when Jesus sent messengers to ask for hospitality in a Samaritan village. The Samaritans refused to allow Jesus and His disciples to find a lodgment with them. Then we read: "When His disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt Thou that we bid fire to come down from heaven, and consume them?" (LUKE 9:54, Revised Version).

The reproof that Jesus gave them, followed by His withdrawal to another village, began to teach them the Spirit of Jesus Christ, which they so sorely needed. How fully John, who leaned his head on the Master's breast at the last Supper, learned this lesson, and caught into his own life this Spirit, is manifest from the reputation he won later in life of being the Disciple of Love. All his writings breathe this Spirit, without which he would never have become a specialist in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and a supremely capable biographer of his Lord's life, and a painter of His Portrait.

But after all the teachings and example of Jesus upon His disciples, they were far short of their

education until they had seen Him crucified, buried, and risen. It was after this that their real knowledge of Jesus began. If one stands beside them in imagination during the Passion and Resurrection scenes, one begins to realize something of the way in which every syllable spoken by our Lord would find a lodgment in their heart after He had risen from the dead.

Up till the time of His crucifixion, the disciples had a pretty worldly conception of the Messianic character and work of Jesus. Till this time, while His words fell into their minds and lay ready for use in their memories, yet their meaning and import were hitherto dulled by the worldly interpretation which the disciples were bound to put upon all their Lord's utterances. But when He had been crucified, buried, and risen, a new conception of His character and person and work came to them. When we read then that He appeared to them after His resurrection during a "space of forty days"; and that during this time He spoke to them of "the things concerning the Kingdom of God", we at once feel that now they must know and understand Christ and His Kingdom.

When this resurrection education and instruction in these wonderful forty days have come to a close, they receive the greatest revelation of all, the witnessing of His ascension. Standing with the eleven on the Mount of Olives, "as they were looking, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they were looking steadfastly into heaven as He went, behold, two men

stood by them in white apparel ; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking into heaven? This Jesus, which was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld Him going into heaven". (Acts 1:9-11). If one reads this record without permitting its intense significance to fill his mind, one may not be much impressed with the influence that this experience would have upon the education of the disciples. But if, on the other hand, one will stand in imagination alongside of the Lord and His Apostles on that Mount of Ascension, and with those disciples actually *see* their Lord ascend ; and still stand gazing with them towards the heavens until the shining messengers of their risen Lord come and bid them now be about that ascended Lord's work, for that He is *coming again*, coming *in like manner* as they have *seen Him go*, one will begin to understand how much the Person of their Lord now means to these disciples. Others may question or disbelieve the Ascension. They cannot ; and for Him henceforth no sacrifice or service is too great.

But still further, when on the day of Pentecost, the Spirit which Jesus had promised to send, was poured in rich fulness into the souls of the Apostles and other disciples, they were fully equipped for the service of their Master. Their education as His Messengers was then complete.

The effect that these experiences, since crucifixion, had upon the characters of the Apostles may be illustrated by a reference to Peter. At the time of the trial of Jesus we find Peter guilty of the most

sinful outburst of all his old unregenerate habits. Again and again with oriental fluency he stoutly denies that he knows Jesus at all. When the matter is still thrust upon him more directly, we read in Mark's Gospel, which is practically Peter's own account of the transaction, that "he began to curse, and to swear, I know not this man of whom you speak". (MARK 14:71). Here then we meet Peter lying, cursing, swearing, all lest he should be thought to be a follower of Jesus Christ. Now follow him over these wondrous forty days when his risen Lord explained to them the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God; stand by him during the uplifting vision of the Ascension; hear him in these morning hours of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, and you will find that you have a new-made Peter, out of whose life the earthy worldly elements have fallen, and into whose heart there has come the nobility of a true son of God and servant of Jesus Christ. All the subsequent record of Peter's life exalts our conceptions of what Christian manhood means. Peter came through the experiences of the Passion and Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus Christ a completely transformed man. And there is no reason to believe that an exactly similar transformation was not wrought in all the others.

Now it must not be forgotten that the Apostle John received all the experiences and training and education about Jesus that any of the other disciples, including Peter, received. But he had from his Lord a recognition and a revelation that vastly

transcended that given to Peter or any of the other Apostles. The record of it begins in the Gospel story. It is one of the scenes during the forty days when Jesus after His resurrection, was speaking to His disciples of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.

Here is the account of the beginning of this special revelation to John over and above what was given to Peter or any of the others. "Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved, following; which also leaned back on his breast at the Supper, and said, Lord, who is he that betrayeth thee? Peter therefore seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man" (namely John) "do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou Me. This saying, therefore, went forth among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, that he should not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" (JOHN 21 :20-23).

Here Jesus makes to John the promise that he, John, is to wait far down in old age till Jesus shall revisit him. Peter is surprised at the promise, and the disciples generally misunderstand the words of Jesus to mean that John shall not die. But John points out that such was not the meaning of the promise of Jesus; but only that John was to wait till Christ should *come* to him.

The years passed by. One after another of the Apostolic band died, or was martyred. Peter and all the others were gone. John alone remained, an

old man in Asia Minor. He was still waiting for the Christ who came not. He is old, and mellowed in character, until the word *love* seemed to be graven upon his very life.

Then there came to him a great blow. He is banished from amongst his beloved congregations of Asia Minor to the lonely, rocky, sea-girt little Island of Patmos amidst the beautiful waters of the Egean Sea. This island, though but 10 miles long and 6 broad at its widest part, was palm-covered in its valleys, but lifted rocky masses of volcanic hills to the height of 800 feet. This was the place to which Domitian banished John to still his voice as a preacher of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He himself tells us, "I John... was in the Isle that is called Patmos, for the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ". (Rev. 1:9). But this place which the heathen Emperor, who had banished him, intended as his prison, became the trysting place with his Lord. It was here that Jesus fulfilled the promise made so many years ago, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" John in the providence of God has tarried, while one by one his fellow-disciples have been called away. Now he is to meet his risen Lord once more; and the glory of it thrills us as we, in imagination, stand on one of the hillsides of Patmos, and see the meeting between the glorified Redeemer, and the Disciple whom He loved.

It was Sunday morning, with all the sacred associations that cluster around the Lord's Day in the minds of devout people. Here is how John tells us

about his first sight of Jesus that day: "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it to the seven Churches;... And I turned to see the voice which spake with me. And having turned I saw seven golden candlesticks: and in the midst of the candlesticks One like unto the Son of Man... and His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as one dead. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying, Fear not; I am the First, and the Last, and the Living One; and I was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of Death and of Hades". (See Rev. 1:9-20).

Then Jesus appeared as the Great High Priest of His people standing amidst the seven golden candlesticks, and holding in His right hand seven stars, proceeds to give John the revelations which He came to impart. These revelations are along two different lines.

First of all, Jesus gives John the proof that though He has gone to the Father, He is keeping His promise to abide with His people forever. He makes it very clear to John that He, Jesus Christ, is ever present in the congregations of His people, noting the minutest circumstances of their lives, and taking a vital interest in all they think and say and do and suffer for His Name and Work. He is keeping His promise, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world".

Then He gives to John a larger vision. The

first series of revelations was intended to show how Jesus was amongst His people upon the earth. The rest of the Book gives large prominence to the Position and Glory of Jesus in heaven, as well as giving beautiful pictures of the Christian's future Home in the life to come.

John enters upon the narrative of these visions which Jesus gave to him in Patmos, in this way: "After these things" (the views of Christ amongst His people on earth) "I saw and behold, a *Door Opened in Heaven*, and the first voice which I heard, a voice as of a trumpet speaking with me, one saying, Come up hither, and I will show thee the things which must come to pass hereafter". Then there follows the glorious Throne-scene which opened first to the view of John as he gazed through the open door into heaven. There he saw the glory of God, and the glory of Christ, God's Son, and heard the heaven's resound with the mighty anthems of the praises of the redeemed. On he sweeps from vision unto vision, until he has given us in the Book of his Visions, the Book of Revelation or Apocalypse, all the pictures of the Better Land that have ever gladdened the eyes of dying saints, or cheered the hearts of those who have lifted their eyes in eager gaze towards the Mansions of the Father's House.

What a Revelation all that was, not only of heaven and the happiness of the redeemed, but of Jesus Christ as well. It is this additional view of Jesus Christ that is given to John, which places him in a position of supremacy over all the other

Apostles in the matter of ability to give to the world a new Gospel of Jesus Christ.

John writes his visions as Jesus bade him, and publishes them as we have them in our Bibles today. Not long after, he is released from his imprisonment in Patmos, and allowed to return to the congregations of Asia Minor.

Did his new and higher knowledge of the Son of God place him, at the same time, under special and solemn obligation to give to the world one more Gospel-picture of his Lord? It is worth discussing. We will look at it in the next chapter.

IT must be remembered that John wrote his Gospel almost at the close of the first century. It was, as far as we know, the very last book of the Bible that was written. By this time the Gospel had been preached throughout the greater part of the Roman Empire.

For almost a quarter of a century the Temple had lain in ashes, and the Jews had been driven out of Jerusalem after the most frightful slaughter that the world had ever witnessed. Christianity was no longer looked upon as an attachment to the Jewish religion. It stood out by itself, clear-cut and distinct.

Already it had passed through years of desolating persecutions, and had won in the midst of them triumphs which distinguished it as a force that was destined to sway the world, and with which empires had to reckon. Already, also, heresies and misconceptions about Christ and His Gospel were abroad,—“Heresies which in the following century yielded such a rank and poisonous harvest”.

All the other Books of the New Testament had been written. But it seemed to John that, out of the wealth of unpublished material about Jesus Christ, material that lay rich in his memory, and graven upon his heart as well as in his manuscripts, a new Book should be given to the world that would

set forth in stronger emphasis some of the eternal verities respecting the Christian's Lord.

It would be the last word by the last surviving Apostle that could ever be given forth about Jesus. The burden lay upon the heart of John to give to the world that last Apostolic account of the life of his Master that could ever be penned. He had known Jesus so intimately; he had loved Him so much; and in Patmos he had just received a new revelation personally delivered by the Son of God, in fulfilment of an old promise. This he had written, and given to the world as his Lord had instructed him to do. But was there not something still to be said, in addition to what had been told of Jesus in the Gospels already written?

Surely one who had lived to the close of the century, and had seen more than sixty years of Christianity's conflicts, with its defeats and its successes, its persecutions and its victories, its martyrdoms and its glorified lives, as well as the world's false and true views of the Life and Teachings of Jesus;—surely such a man might give one more heart-picture of the Life of the Saviour, as he now saw it in all its perspective on the distant canvas of the past.

From such a man, in such circumstances, we expect a transcending and all-absorbing story of our Lord. We shall expect to see mountain heights in His life scarcely portrayed elsewhere. Was there some distinctively new standpoint from which the life of Jesus might be surveyed and described?

Matthew had been a Jewish publican. He had

viewed the life of Jesus as a fulfilment of promises and prophecies made in the Jewish, that is, in the Old Testament, Scriptures. The genealogy of Jesus is traced by him to King David and to Abraham. Jesus is the realization of the Messianic kingdom. He is the completion of the Law, the fulfilment of the Prophecies, the embodiment of the Hope of Israel; and sixty-five quotations are made from the Old Testament to show that this is so.

Mark introduces us to Jesus at once as the Son of God, (MARK 1:1); but immediately begins to paint rapid and vivid pictures of the wonderful Ministry of Jesus. Respecting the birth, childhood, and youth of Jesus he writes nothing. It is the *Ministry* of Jesus that concerns him, and all else falls into the background of his pictures of Christ. So rapidly does he crowd his pictures upon the canvas, that he leaves with us a rare sense of activity and energy and power about the life of Christ, as we rise from the study of his Gospel. That word "straightway", which he uses forty-one times, is the bond that links his pictures together, and helps to produce the impression of rapid movement and activity in the Divine Worker.

Luke was a physician—Paul says "The beloved physician". It was his business to heal and save. In Jesus Christ he saw One Who was the perfect Healer of the world's sorrows and sins, and the Saver, or Saviour, of soul as well as body. He saw Him not only as Son of David and Abraham, but Son of Adam, and thus Brother to the whole human race. He saw this Brother to all mankind, this

Healer and Saviour of men, bringing from the pharmacopeia of heaven by frequent seasons of prayer, those supplics of grace and blessing which alone were capable of curing the ills of humanity. Sin is moral disease; holiness is moral health. Jesus came to seek and to save the most hopelessly sinful and lost. Thus Luke saw Him, and thus he pictured Him, as the Saviour and the Friend of man.

Messianic King (Matthew); Ministering Worker (Mark); Infinitely tender Saviour (Luke). Is there some aspect of the Wondrous Life overlooked? Looking back into the past, John sees that the Divine Sonship of Jesus has not received sufficient emphasis. There is room for a Life of Jesus which will bring more into the foreground His eternal pre-existence and His Divinity. Though all the other Evangelists have spoken with no uncertain sound about the Divine Sonship of Jesus, yet they have been most concerned to shew His relationship to men, and His office as their Saviour. John will not overlook that, but he will take his stand upon the sunlit mountain heights of the Divinity of Jesus, and he will paint a picture of the Christ from that viewpoint.

Dr. Chapman tells of a traveller in the Rocky mountains who once witnessed a storm amidst her valleys and gorges. He was mountain climbing, and had partially ascended one of the magnificent peaks of the Rockies, while still above him towered the snow-covered summits, glorified with the brilliant reflection of the sunlight. The contrast between the heights and the valleys was most remark-

able. For as he looked down from where he stood, he saw that a heavy rain storm was raging in the valleys. The immense heaps of rolling black clouds were entirely beneath him. So thick and impenetrable did they seem, as he stood in the clear sunlit atmosphere above them, that he almost imagined it possible to go down and walk on the back of a storm-cloud that bridged the valley from side to side. Up from the depths below him came the sound of the rain and the storm and the dashing torrents. But he stood in a clear atmosphere, where everything was bathed in sunlight; and from which he looked down, as from another world, upon the storm and struggle and darkness that lay beneath him. As though to give added emphasis to the contrast, while he stood looking with intense interest upon the play of the storm from which he was exempt, he saw something moving in a great circle through the cloud below him, and in a few moments a giant eagle rose out from the cloud, every feather dripping with rain drops. She had been in the valley when the storm broke; but she knew that above the storm-cloud and the tempest that made life so dreary in the valley, there was sunlight and clear air on the mountain heights. She had the power to ascend, and she used it. Up she rose, until she had the storms beneath her, and all the glories of the mountain, with peak after peak, far and near, her undisturbed and unclouded possession.

It seems to me that some such vision of the contrast between the clear mountain heights of Hi

Divinity, and the dark valleys of His human sufferings, must have stood out before the mind of John as he looked back across half a century to the Life and Person of Jesus Christ, as he knew Him. Others had said He was Divine, and every line they wrote attested the fact. But they had begun the story of His life as it was lived in human valleys. John is already an old man, conscious of the fact that he is standing near the portals that lead over to the Many Mansions. From the vantage ground of his age and faith, he begins to catch a new view of Life and Time as they lie between the two eternities.

When one has lived for days with Jesus Christ, as John has revealed Him in the Fourth Gospel, and listens to how Jesus speaks of "Coming from the Father to the world, and going from the world back again to the Father," (JOHN 16 :28), one begins to get a grasp of the idea that seems to have dominated John as he looked back upon the life of Jesus, and wrote His Gospel.

The late Col. Ingersol, one of the most eloquent of infidel writers, once described life in this way: "Life is a fertile valley, stretching between two barren mountain peaks". That, very poetically expressed, is Infidelity's narrow-visioned view of Life. Before life begins, there is only a barren mountain peak. When life is over, there is just another barren mountain peak on the western or sunset side of Life's valley.

It takes a great deal of cramping of one's imagination and intellect to crowd them into the belief

that there is a fertile valley between two encircling mountain peaks, beyond which there are *no more fertile valleys*. We have never known, nor have we ever heard, of that kind of a valley. But we thank Col. Ingersol for the imagery ; for it helps us to describe the conception of Life that John unfolds in his Gospel. To him, too, Life is a fertile valley. But instead of being housed in between two barren mountain peaks, it is encircled by two Eternities. Life, and indeed the whole Valley of Time, is to him but a slight and brief depression between two Eternities, the Eternity that lies before the dawn of Creation, and the Eternity on the other side of Time, where resurrection and life and glory roll onward unbrokenly forever and forever.

So John goes back into the Eternity that lies before Time to meet, and introduce unto us, the Son of God. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that hath been made." (JOHN 1:1-3).

Here Jesus appears back "In the beginning", as Time begins to dawn on the shores of Eternity. He appears as with God, and Himself God, summoning by Divine almightiness into existence all things that have been made. Equally with the Father, He is Creator of the Universe. Thus John introduces Jesus unto us in the prologue to his Gospel.

Then when Jesus comes to earth, John still keeps upon the mountain heights. There is no story of

the birth, no mention of Chi'dhood. Others had sufficiently depicted these. They had gone into all the valleys. John remains upon the heights. Jesus steps from the Eternities upon the shores of Time to "tent" among men. "The Word became flesh, and dwelt (Greek, "tented") among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the Only Begotten from the Father". (JOHN 1:14). "I came out from the Father, and am come into the world;" says Jesus "again I leave the world, and go unto the Father". (JOHN 16:28). It is stepping from World to World; from Eternity to Time, and from Time back again to Eternity. John gives us a sense that we do not get elsewhere of walking on mountain heights, and stepping over valleys without going down into them. Though he brings us into the lowest valleys for a while, as he depicts the sufferings of Christ, and his infinitely tender humanity; for these were necessary to complete the picture; yet the distinctively new feature in the Life of Jesus as John writes it, is His Sonship, His Divinity, His conscious Unity with the Father, His eternal power and Creatorship. We are in a new and heavenly world as we study John's Life of Jesus. We are in a world where the sunlight of heaven falls; where earth flings no shadows or sorrows or weaknesses. We "mount up with wings as eagles" (Is. 40:31) above the clouds of self and passion, and the storms of Time, until we breathe an atmosphere that is pure and clear and heavenly and Divine. There is an uplift of mind and a rapture of soul in the study of John's Gospel, for it brings us up into a new

world—a world of Divine companionship and heavenly life. It was to reveal that world of life and light and glory and God, and to bring men into it, that the Son of God came to earth. This is the thought that John unfolds and illustrates and illumines in his Gospel. "These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the *Son of God*, and that believing ye might have *Life in His Name*". Because Jesus is the Revelation of this Life, and the perfect Revelation of the Father, John calls Him the *Word*; for it is the function of words to carry thoughts from the activities of one mind across all intervening spaces to live anew in other minds. The whole meaning and intent and thought of God, and of the heavenly life, was to be brought down to the minds of men. Jesus Christ was to bring it. He came freighted and infilled with the life of heaven that He might pour its treasures of wisdom and knowledge and love and Godhead into the souls of men. He was, therefore, the *Word*. He brought the full Revelation of God from a World in which He had personally lived, and gave that Revelation to men by simply manifesting Himself to them. "We beheld His glory, glory as of the Only Begotten from the Father".

So we shall expect to find in John's Gospel a recalling specially of those teachings of Jesus wherein He sets forth this larger idea of Life and Sonship and Divinity. We have just read over that Gospel again with this in mind, and have selected some of the utterances of Jesus Himself that illustrate this view of His Life. As a basis for those who

wish to examine the question for themselves, we have arranged some of these teachings under the headings of consecutive propositions. These propositions ramify into one another, and the same texts illustrate several of them equally. But as a basis for study, the division may still be helpful. We confine the quotations almost exclusively to the words that fell from the lips of Jesus Himself, not to the statements made by John as a historian. We begin with the words of Jesus describing His pre-existence before the world was, and pass on consecutively until He crosses over to the other side of Time, and enters the Mansions of the Father's House once more.

Proposition (1) : Jesus affirms *His Pre-Existence before the Creation of the Universe*. He does so in the most explicit terms.

IN His touching and beautiful prayer, just before He passes into Gethsemane, He pleads, "And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine Own Self, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was". (JOHN 17 :5). What a flood of revelation on the life of Christ is here. He is consciously looking back to the time when the ages were unborn, and the Kosmos (world) was unformed. Then He was with the Father in glory. He remembers it all. Now, on the eve of His crucifixion, it comes back to Him as a holy and happy vision. He recalls the happiness, the glory, the companionship with the Father, before the worlds were formed and swung out into infinite space to begin their reeling orbits. Above earth's clouds He sees the far-off Home of the Father in the past; and His Spirit longs to cross over a finished work, to the Home again. "O Father, glorify Thou Me with the glory which I had with Thee, before the world was".

It is such a statement as this that makes clear to us other things from the lips of Christ, which but for this would be obscure. In a discussion with the Jews, He says: "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day; and he saw it, and was glad. The

Jews, therefore, said unto Him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was *I am*". (JOHN 8 :56-58). Note that Jesus does not even say, "Before Abraham was I was". True, that would equally well have proclaimed His existence prior to the birth of Abraham.

But the phrase "*I am*", proclaims alike His pre-existence and His unchangeable being; and identifies Him with the Divine "*I am*" of Exodus 3 :14; and with "The Lord God Who *Is, and Who Was, and Who Is to Come,*" of Rev. 1 :8

What a flood of light this throws on the 18th chapter of Genesis. In John 1 :8, we read: "No man hath seen God" (that is, God the Father, as the following words show), "at any time; the Only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, *He* hath declared Him". All the occasions, therefore, where God is revealed to men, whether in Old Testament or New, it is through Jesus the Son of God, the second Person in the Godhead.

In Genesis 18, we have an account of the appearance of the Lord (Hebrew, Jehovah), to Abraham. Let me quote a few phrases just to show how in the three "men" which stood before Abraham, one is ever called Lord (Jehovah). "Verse 1," And the *Lord* (Jehovah) appeared unto him..... v. 2... and lo, *Three Men* stood over against him..... v. 9... and *They* said unto him, Where is Sarah, thy wife?..... v. 13... And the *Lord* said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh?..... v. 16. And the *Men* rose up from thence, and looked to-

ward Sodom : and Abraham went with them to bring them on their way. And the *Lord* (Jehovah) said, Shall I hide from Abraham that which I do... ?... v. 20. And the *Lord* (Jehovah) said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great..... v. 22... And the *Men* turned from thence, and went toward Sodom ; but Abraham stood yet before the *Lord* (Jehovah)". This is followed by Abraham's touching prayer for the righteous in Sodom. The chapter closes thus : "And the *Lord* went His way, as soon as He had left communing with Abraham ; and Abraham returned unto his place", v. 33.

Here it will be manifest at once that the *Lord*, Jehovah, Who spake to Abraham was the "Only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father", namely, our Lord Jesus Christ.

How much did Abraham understand of all this? How did Abraham recognize in these *Three Men*, or in one of them, the *Lord*, Jehovah? When God said, "Shall I hide from Abraham that which I do?", did He also reveal to Abraham that which *He Was*? Did He explain the Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit? If not, why did He come as *Three* men? Did He tell Abraham of the day when He was to come, born of a woman, to be the Saviour and Redeemer of His people? If not, how much did the *Lord* that day explain to Abraham, so that Jesus was able to say to the Jews, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day ; and he saw it. and was glad"? I have an idea that there was not so much Theological mist and fog around the door of Abraham's tent, as some of our Higher Critical

friends think. To me at least, there is much food for thought in the Scriptures I have quoted, and the questions they suggest; and though unbelief may pooh, pooh them, faith stands before them with uncovered head. The Jesus we worship walked more with Abraham and other saints of old, than perhaps the average Christian can brace his tottering faith to believe. I can understand the 18th chapter of Genesis only in the light of the saying of Jesus, that "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day; and *He Saw It, and Was Glad*".

Another line of passages which bear on this subject of the conscious pre-existence of Christ in heaven before His coming to earth, are those which refer to His being witness to what He had seen and heard with the Father, and which He came to earth to make known unto men. A few illustrations must suffice. In John 8:38 He tells the Jews that His teachings are the result of what He had seen in heaven. "I speak", He says, "the *things* which I have *seen with My Father*". To Nicodemus, He says, "Verily, verily I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and bear witness of *That We Have Seen*", (3:11). Along the same line are the words of chap. 3:31-32, "He that cometh from heaven is above all. *What He Hath Seen and Heard*, of that He beareth witness". Thus in John's Gospel we get, as the very warp and woof of the consciousness of Jesus, a portrayal of His pre-existence, and

of the fact that what He was giving to men was a simple photographic report of what He knew and had seen and heard in heaven with the Father, and which He came down to earth to give to men. How precious to us should such a Book be, which gives us at first hand, tidings from the Father through the lips of the Son.

Proposition (2): Jesus affirms that *He Had Consciously Descended from Eternity to Time, from Heaven to Earth, from Godhead to Humanity.*

IN illustration of this, I propose to quote a number of the sayings of Jesus, and let them tell their own story. To Nicodemus, Jesus says, "No man hath ascended into heaven, but He that *Descended out of Heaven*". (3:13).

In a discourse of marvellous richness delivered in Capernaum, He makes frequent reference to this fact: "The Bread of God is that which *Cometh Down out of Heaven*, and giveth life unto the world *I am Come Down from Heaven*, not to do Mine Own will, but the will of Him that sent Me. The Jews, therefore, murmured concerning Him, because He said, *I am the Bread which came down out of Heaven*. And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How doth He now say, *I am Come Down out of Heaven*? Jesus answered and said unto them. Every one that hath heard from the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto Me. Not that any man hath seen the Father, save *He which is from God, He hath seen the Father*. This is the Bread which *Cometh down out of Heaven*, that a man may eat thereof and not die.

I am the Living Bread which came down out of Heaven". And in reply to a murmur that rose amongst His disciples, He says, "Doth this cause you to stumble? What then if you should behold the Son of Man *Ascending where He was Before?*" (JOHN 6:33-62).

In a discussion in the Temple with the Pharisees, he says, "Ye are from beneath: *I am from above*". And again, "If God were your father, ye would love Me: for *I Came Forth and am Come from God*; for neither have I come of Myself, but *He Sent Me*". (8:23-42). "I know Him; because *I am from Him, and He sent Me*". (7:29). Jesus is from heaven, from God Who had personally sent His Son to this world—and He had come bearing the full recollection of the Father and of the Message with which the Father had entrusted Him.

At the last Passover John recounts that "Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that *He Came Forth from God, and Goeth unto God,*" rose up to act the part of Servant to His disciples, by washing their feet, and otherwise ministering unto them. (13:3).

In that beautiful farewell discourse to His disciples, which has been called the "Holy of Holies in the Life of Christ", Jesus speaks of His coming out from God to this world, and of His going back again, with the same ease and familiarity and naturalness with which we speak of coming from, and going to, the house of a friend. He steps from Heaven on to the Earth, from Eternity into Time, from the presence of God to the dwellings of men

in a way that only God's Son could come. And He goes back again to the Father, stepping across the Valley of the Shadow, as only the Son of God could go. Listen to His Own description of these comings and goings between heaven and earth: "*I Came out from the Father, and am Come into the World: Again I Leave the World, and go unto the Father.* His disciples say, Lo, now speakest Thou plainly, and speakest no proverb (or parable). Now know we that *Thou Knowest all Things*, and needest not that any man should ask Thee:" (that is, they know that Jesus not only can answer all questions that He is asked, but that He knows what men are thinking, and what they would like to ask without their expressing themselves at all). They add, "*By this we believe that Thou Camest Forth from God*". (16 :28-30).

In the prayer by which Our Saviour closes this touching address, He speaks to the Father of His disciples, and says, "Now they know that all things whatsoever Thou hast given Me are from Thee: for the *Words which Thou Gavest Me*, I have given unto them; and they received them, and knew of a truth that *I Came Forth from Thee* and they believed that *Thou didst Send Me*". (17 :7-8).

Such are illustrations of the consciousness which Jesus possessed of His passing down, as God's Son and the Father's Messenger, from heaven to earth.

Proposition (3): Jesus affirms that He came to earth distinctively *to be the Father's representative* in bearing God's *Message* to men.

THE Father loveth the Son, and showeth Him all things that Himself doeth. For as the Father raiseth the dead, and quickeneth them, even so the Son also quickeneth whom He will. For neither doth the Father judge any man, but He hath given all judgment unto the Son; that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. The works which the Father hath given Me to accomplish, the very works that I do, bear witness of Me, that the Father hath sent Me. And the Father which sent Me, He hath borne witness of Me. Ye have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form. And ye have not His word abiding in you; for Whom He sent, Him ye believe not. I am come in My Father's Name''.

From these verses from the 5th chapter of John, it is evident that Jesus claimed to be the Father's Representative, doing the Father's works; judging for the Father; being attested by the works that He did for the Father, and by the Father's direct personal testimony; and in brief, coming distinctly *In the "Father's Name"*. These Jews did not

have God's word abiding in them ; for they received not God's Representative. "Ye have not His word abiding in you ; for Whom He sent, Him ye believe not".

Again in the sixth chapter, when the multitudes said unto Jesus, "What must we do that we may work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him Whom He hath sent". (6:28-29). Your first business is to receive the Father's Representative. "All that which the Father giveth Me shall come unto Me ; and him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out. For I am come down from heaven, not to do Mine Own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." (6:37-38). He represented God more than He represented Himself. Perhaps even more explicit language is used by Him later on, if that be possible. "For I spake not from Myself ; but the Father which sent Me, He hath given a commandment what I should say, and what I should speak". (12:49-50). Jesus, therefore, stands before them as the Representative of the Father, with the Father's commands upon Him, and the Father's message on His lips.

It is of vital importance that men treasure up the words of this Messenger of the Father ; and great spiritual blessings and privileges are coupled with acceptance of this message which Jesus brings from the Father. "Jesus answered... If a man love Me, He will keep My word ; and My Father will

love Him, and We will come unto him, and make *Our* abode with him. He that loveth Me not, keepeth not My words, and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the *Father's Who Sent Me*". (14: 23-24). So then Jesus' message is God's message; for Jesus came to speak the words of the Father, and to act absolutely as the Father's Representative.

Proposition (4): Jesus affirms *His Divinity, and His Oneness with the Father.*

"IF I judge," He says, "My judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent Me..... They said, therefore, unto Him, Where is Thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye know neither Me, nor My Father; if ye knew Me, ye would know My Father also". (JOHN 8:16-19). These words are not conclusive. But they are worth thinking over; and in the light of following passages will be found suggestive of great intimacy at least between Himself and the Father, since if they knew Him, they would know His Father also. But the following passage will be found most explicit: "*I and the Father are One*". (10:30). Now the Jews who were listening to Him, understood Him to affirm here that He was God, and that He and the Father were one God. Christ does not suggest that they were misunderstanding Him. On the contrary, He defends His right to the claim He has just made. But let the record of the discussion tell its own story. "I and the Father are one. The Jews took up stones again to stone Him. Jesus answered them, Many good works have I showed you from the Father; for which of those works do ye stone Me? The Jews answered Him, For a good work we stone Thee not, but for blasphemy; and

because that Thou, being a man, *Makest Thyself God.*

Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your Law, I said, Ye are Gods? If ye called them gods unto whom the word of the Lord came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), say ye of Him Whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said *I Am the Son of God?* If I do not the works of My Father, believe Me not. But if I do them, though ye believe not Me, believe the works: that ye may know and understand that *The Father is in Me, and I in the Father*". (JOHN 10:30-38).

There is an impressive statement from the lips of Christ in the twelfth chapter. "Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on Me, believeth not on Me, but on Him that sent Me. And He that beholdeth Me, *Beholdeth Him That Sent Me*". (12:44-45). This is a declaration that to *See Christ is to See God*. Clever sophistry, dominated by anti-Trinitarian sentiment, may wriggle round this statement; but it can do so, only by making language worthless as a vehicle for the expression of thought. The interpretation here given is buttressed beyond all possible cavil by the statement, whose context makes a bulwark about it, in the 14th chapter. To doubting Thomas, Jesus says, "If ye had *Known Me*, ye would have *Known My Father Also*: from henceforth ye *Know Him, and Have Seen Him*". (14:7. Now the question has come directly to an issue. Philip has not yet quite caught the meaning of Jesus. He has heard Him use the words "*Known*

the Father", and "*Seen the Father*". Ah, that is what they want—to *See* the Father. "Philip saith unto Him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us". Shew us the Father, and we will be completely satisfied. Mark carefully the answer of Jesus. There is evident surprise at Philip's dullness of comprehension. "Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and *Dost Thou Not Know Me, Philip? He That Hath Seen Me, Hath Seen the Father*; how sayest thou, Show us the Father?" (14:8-9). Certainly nothing could be more explicit than the claim made by Jesus that He was Divine, and One with the Father.

That identity He ever asserted. "He that hateth Me, hateth My Father also. . . . Now have they both *Seen and Hated both Me and My Father*". (15:23-24). They have seen Me, and they have seen the Father. They have seen the Father because they have seen Me. They saw the Father when they saw Me—that is Jesus' argument. The likeness between the Father and the Son is so great, that to see the Son is to see the Father; but the likeness is the likeness of a Divine Unity, which we can neither explain nor understand; but which is most unequivocally taught by Jesus Christ, and fully accepted and believed by His people who love and adore Him as Divine Saviour and Redeemer. Truly, we may say with the officers who were sent to apprehend Him, but who were spellbound by His teachings, and returned without Him, "Never man so spake". (JOHN 7:46, R.V). None of the Prophets so spake. None of the Apostles so spake.

Prophets pointed forward to Christ, and Apostles pointed back to Him. The gaze of the past and the future, centres on Jesus. It centres not on man, but on God; on "God manifest in the flesh", the Jesus Christ of the Gospels.

Jesus' words, "If ye loved Me, ye would have rejoiced, because I go unto the Father; for the Father is greater than I". (JOHN 14:28), have been used to try to prove that Jesus' being *less* than the Father, implies that He was not Divine. It must be evident to any thoughtful person that had Jesus not been Himself Divine, any comparison as to whether He or the Father was "greater", would have been blasphemy. While giving the Father a place above Himself, perhaps on account of His being garmented with humanity, His very words here, are a striking proof of His claim to Godhead.

Proposition (5): Jesus affirms that He is the
*Living Avenue Between Heaven and Earth,
and God and Man.*

WE might express that proposition in very diversified phraseology. There are many ways of saying it. He is the Way to God; the Only Mediator between God and man; the Daysman between God and man; the Door into the Sheepfold of the Kingdom. Under different imagery and phraseology all these tell the one story of a Christ Who links heaven and earth, and God and man together; and by Whom alone men pass through the portals of Life, and go to God.

Nothing could be more definite than Christ's direct statements; and nothing more beautiful than the imagery of His indirect references to this fact. We shall look at one of each; the former briefly, the latter more fully.

Christ's most explicit statement is, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life; *No one Cometh unto the Father, but by Me*". (JOHN 14:6). This was in reply to an assertion by Thomas that the disciples knew not the goal to which Christ was journeying; and that consequently the pathway there was also unknown. Jesus informs him that the Father is the goal; and that He Himself is the Way, and that no man cometh unto the Father but

by Him. He is the Way by which men come to God; the only Mediator between God and man; the shining staircase from earth to sky, up and down which the angels of God come and go; the Avenue by which even all prayer must be wafted to the Father. If you will company with Christ, you will find the Father.

In relation to the mind, He is the Truth that leads to God. "This is the work of God that ye *believe on Him* whom He hath sent". He is the fountain of knowledge about God; for He is the Word, God revealed.

In relation to the soul, He is the Life. "In Him was Life, and the Life was the light of men. Living that Life, and walking in that Light, men come to God.

In relation to God, Jesus is everything the heart and mind and soul of man need. Accepting Him, the heart has found the Way to God, the mind has found the Truth about God, the soul has found the Life in God. Jesus has used a trinity of terms to make it clear that He is the all in all between us and God.

Let us look at another way in which He expressed the same truth. The consideration of it will carry us away back to one of the revelations given to a lonely lad, making his first start away from home.

Jacob was going out from Beer-sheba to Padan-aram. On the evening of the second day from home, he lay down to sleep outside of the town of Luz, twelve miles north of Jerusalem. That night Luz became Bethel, the House of God, because of

a vision which God gave to the sleeping lad. In the visions of the night, Jacob saw a wonderful staircase connecting heaven and earth together—a staircase, for the Hebrew, *sullam*, is not necessarily a 'ladder'.

Nothing is said about the appearance of this staircase, whether it was of glorious white marble or of shining gold. But it linked heaven to earth in a wonderful way. Its base is at the fugitive's pillow, and its top reaches to the presence of God. Up and down the staircase bright forms are moving. They are the angels of God, messengers from God to man, and from man to God; from wherever the weary homeless wanderer sleeps, to the God that lives and reigns above him. Jacob learned that night that there is a bridge spanning the space between heaven and earth. Now Jesus claims that honor for Himself. The staircase of Jacob's dream was but a beautiful type of Christ. For to Nathaniel Jesus says, "Ye shall see the heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man". (JOHN 1:51). Jesus then is the Ladder, the Staircase, the vital connection between heaven and earth, and God and men. He is the Way, whose portals are by the pillow of every wanderer, and Whose ascending steps bring men to the Father's House.

This is so, because He is the only one who has bridged the distance between Divinity and humanity, uniting them both in one Person. The cry of the heart that knows not this, is touchingly revealed in the moan of Job in the hour of his trial and

grief. One of the features of Job's distress was the feeling that he had of his inability to come close to God. "For", he says, "He is not a man, as I am, that I should answer him, that we should come together in judgment". That is one trouble. Here is another: "There is no Daysman (intermediary) betwixt us, that *might lay His hand upon us both*". (JOB 9:32-33). He did not know Jesus Christ. He is the Daysman between God and man, laying a hand upon us both, the right hand of Divinity upon God, and the left hand of humanity upon man. For He is God and man Himself, "God manifest in the flesh", at once the living link between God and man, and the Way to God, without Whom "no man cometh unto the Father".



**Death's Conqueror, and
The Son's Home-Going**

Proposition (6): Jesus affirms His *Supremacy
Over Death, Even While Passing Through
Its Gates.*

EARLY in His ministry, He says to the Jews, "Destroy this temple, and in three days, *I Will Raise It Up*..... But He spake of the Temple of His Body". (JOHN 2:19-21). Though dead, He Himself will have power to raise His own body. So later on He says, "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I may take it again. No one taketh it away from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and *I Have Power to Take it Again*". (10:17-18). The laying down of His life was an entirely voluntary act on the part of Jesus. The powers of the Jewish and Roman worlds arrayed against Him were as nothing to the powers that waited His call to defend Him. "Thinkest thou", He says to Peter who had drawn a sword to defend Him, "that I cannot beseech My Father, and He shall even now send Me more than twelve legions of angels". (MAT. 26:53). He goes down to death at the hands of men, because it was His will to die. But even in death, He holds the reins of Life, and rises from the dead when He has accomplished the object of His death. Even in the tomb, He is the Conqueror of Death. His words here are but proclaiming beforehand what He asserts to John

in Patmos, "I am the first and the last and the Living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of Death and of Hades". (Rev. 1:17-18).

It is because He holds Death thus as an instrument of His will, the reins of whose government lie in His hands, that He guarantees the resurrection of His people, and their complete triumph over death and the grave. "Because I live, ye shall live also". (JOHN 14:19).

Proposition (7): Jesus affirms that having thus passed victoriously through the valley of Death, *He Will Ascend Again to the Presence of the Father.*

"Jesus therefore said, Yet a little while am I with you, and *I Go unto Him That Sent Me*". (JOHN 7:33).

"Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that *He Came Forth From God, and Goeth unto God*, riseth from supper" and began to wait upon His disciples. (13:3).

"In My Father's House are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; *I go to prepare a place for you*". (14:2).

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because *I Go unto the Father*". (14:12).

"Ye heard how I said to you, I go away, and I come unto you. If ye loved Me, ye would have rejoiced, because *I Go unto the Father*; for the Father is greater than I". (14 :28).

"*I Came Out from the Father*, and am come into the world; again I leave the world, and *Go unto the Father*". (16 :28).

To Mary after His resurrection Jesus says, "Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended unto the Father; but go unto My brethren, and say to them, *I Ascend unto My Father and Your Father, and My God and Your God*". (20 :17).

How natural all this seems from the lips of Jesus. With what easy familiarity does he speak of coming from the Father, and going back again to Him. Matthew in picturing specially the Messianic King Whom we should love and obey; Mark in describing the Ministering Worker, from Whom we should learn the Work of God; and Luke in portraying the loving sympathetic Friend, the tender Healer and Saviour of sinners, do not find it part of their plan to record the teachings that magnify the Sonship and Divinity of Jesus by showing how He spoke of His passage from heaven to earth, and from the life amongst men back to the presence of God. But this is precisely the aspect of the life of Jesus that John would present, in order that we might have as complete a picture as possible of the Christ of God. So Jesus steps out of the Eternity that lies before the dawn of creation, on to the shores of Time; and then from the glowing evening hills of Time across again into the Eternity that, from the earthly stand-

point lies on the other side of the Valley of Death ; but which, after all, is but one Heaven and one Eternity, of which Earth and Time are but minor incidents.

Viewed from such a mountain height as that from which the ripe age and experience and knowledge of John enabled him to write the earth-story of the Son of God, how appropriate it was that he should have described Him as "tenting" among us, though exhibiting a "Glory as of the Only begotten of the Father". (1 :14).

In the light of John's revelation of the Glory and Sonship and Divinity of Jesus Christ, what paltry tinsel does much of the criticism seem, that wearies itself over minute discussions of the possibilities of miracles, and the supposed impossibilities of the Virgin birth. The vaunt of scholarship of these critics when dealing with such problems, when they tell us that "No scholar" now believes thus and so, even though they seek to hide the skeleton of infidelity under the velvet robes of pious phraseology, jars upon the ear, when it is placed alongside of that knowledge of Jesus Christ which is given by John in His Gospel, a knowledge that was his by personal acquaintance with the Son of God alike in Palestine and in Patmos.

It is all very well to put the stamp of the critic's patronizing approval upon the Jesus who went with loving sympathy among the sick in the streets of Capernaum, or poured forth His blessed beatitudes from the flower-crowned heights of Hattin ; but he is still a stranger to the whole Life and Person and

Character and Mission of Jesus Christ, who does not meet Him with John in the Glory before the world was, and pass back again with Him to the Father's House, as Death's Conqueror, carrying an unbroken consciousness of His eternal past, and an undimmed prescience of His eternal future.

An historical revelation is necessarily housed in language; and all language is capable of being picked and pecked by a hostile criticism. It is conceded at once that it will always be possible for rationalism to present a respectable and seemingly scholarly front, when bending its brain power to explain away the miraculous, and to eliminate the supernatural from the Gospels and other parts of the Bible. But the man who will with open and candid mind, follow the teachings of Jesus as given in this beautiful Gospel story, will receive such a conception of God's Love, and Christ's glory, and the greatness and grandeur of the Revelation which is stored in the Bible, that it will lift his life into the sublime, and make him conscious that he is a partaker of the inheritance that belongs to the children of God.

Proposition (8): Jesus affirms that though going to the presence of the Father, *He Will Retain His Interest in His People, and Continue His Activities on Their Behalf.*

THIS point is the last stage in that line of thought which we have been pursuing ; which was to shew how Jesus described Himself in regard to His Sonship and Divinity ; and how He maintained these in His passage through the earthly life, while journeying from conscious existence before the world was, to continued conscious existence and activity in the resurrection life. With the nature and character of this resurrection life, He professes the utmost familiarity. Amidst its scenes He will carry to completion the work which on earth He began on behalf of His people. There is no obscurity about His vision of the other life ; no uncertainty about what He proposes to do there ; no questioning of His ability to pass as a victor through the grave, and to rise from the dead, and to go in triumph to the Father's House, and there to continue His work. He has the foreknowledge of it all ; and the power and authority to carry out His own plans.

To the Book of Revelation belongs the story of this part of our Saviour's activities. John's Gospel concerns itself with but an announcement of a

threefold work which Jesus there is doing on behalf of His people.

Proposition (a): Jesus affirms that after He has ascended to the Father, He *Will Prepare a Place in the Father's House for His People.*

To the disturbed disciples, worried over the discovery of a traitor amongst their number, and soon to be thrown into black and hopeless despair by the sight of the crucifixion of their supposed Lord, Jesus speaks words of infinite comfort and hope. Soon the disciples will be face to face with a seething maddened mass of humanity, lashing itself into a frenzy as it shrieks out its vindictive cry, "Crucify Him, Crucify Him". The vision has for months burned itself into the eyes of the Saviour; but tonight He stands on the brink, and looks placidly upon the gathering storm. Soon its approach in Gethsemane will bring the sweat, like blood drops, from His brow; but just now His eyes are looking over and across the valley where these things will be enacted, and full upon His gaze falls the rapturous sight of the Father's House and the Many Mansions, as they stand in resplendent glory, the glory which He had with the Father before the world was. He turns to tell the disciples about it, and to give them that sublime discourse, which has so appropriately been called "The Holy of Holies in the Life of Christ".

Out of it we select only the three things that illustrate our present theme—the activities of Jesus while with the Father. The first of these, as we

have indicated, is what He says to these disturbed disciples about the Father's House. They are the words with which thousands of God's people have braced themselves for their passage across the Valley of the Shadow. "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's House are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; for *I Go to Prepare a Place for You*. And if I go and prepare a place for you, *I Come Again*, and *Will Receive You Unto Myself ;That Where I Am, There Ye May Be Also*". (14:1-3).

Before the beauty and comfort and heavenliness of these words, the heart is uplifted in adoration and praise. Under their spell, all doubt and unbelief and criticism steal away abashed. An infinite hunger of soul comes to us to catch the Faith and the Spirit and the Vision of Jesus Christ. To Him life was vastly bigger than the circle of this earth; and our souls strain forth to touch Him by a living faith, and to become sharers in that Life of unending sweep and eternal duration and universal range, with the Father's House as its centre and rallying point. Science dimly suggests infinite possibilities along these lines, until we strain eyes and ears for sight or sound of the upper zones of Life. But Jesus Christ stands before us with the calm confidence of the Man who knows; and tells us of the Father's House in the beyond; of His own going there; of His preparing for our reception in that Home; and of His coming again to bring us there to abide forever and forever.

BUT a prepared Place is worthless without a prepared People. So, lest there should come to us the conviction of our utter unfitness for that Home, Jesus tells us next of the steps He will take to prepare us for that Life and that Home. This leads us to the Second thing that Jesus is doing for us in the presence of the Father.

Proposition (b): Jesus affirmed that when He had gone into the presence of the Father He would send *The Holy Spirit to Take Charge of God's Work in the Hearts of His People.*

Jesus makes reference to His going to the Father, (14:12) and a moment later says, "And I will pray (Greek: make request of) the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter (or Advocate) *That He May Be With You Forever*, even the Spirit of Truth: Whom the world cannot receive; for it beholdeth Him not, neither knoweth Him; ye know Him: for *He Abideth With You, and Shall Be In You*". (14:16-17).

"These things have I spoken unto you, while yet abiding with you. But the Comforter, even the Holy Ghost, Whom the Father will send in My Name, *He Shall Teach You All Things, and Bring to Your Remembrance all That I Said Unto You*" (14:25-26).

“But when the Comforter is come, Whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, *He Shall Bear Witness of Me*”. (15 :26).

Thus the promise of the Spirit is to the effect that He will be *With* Christ's disciples; *Abide With* them; be *In* them; *Teach* them; bring to their *Remembrance* the teachings of Jesus; and finally *Bear Witness of Jesus*. But He will come only when Jesus has gone away. “It is expedient for you that I go away : for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send Him unto you”. (16 :7).

Such was the promise of Jesus respecting what would be done by the Father and Himself after He had gone to the Father. But Promises are easily made, and many a man has tendered immensely large promises, which were worth only the breath that uttered them. Promises are poor coin unless given by those who are both able and willing to fulfil them. How was it with Jesus?

It is the day of Pentecost. It is a week since Jesus ascended to the Father. Before He went up, and the shadowing cloud hid Him from their straining eyes, “He charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to *Wait* for the promise of the Father, which, said he, ye heard from Me”. (Acts 1 :4). His promise of the Spirit, then, was the Father's promise through Him. He represented the Father, and spoke authoritatively for the Father. Then He ascended, and they waited—waited in hope, waited in faith, waited in prayer.

And on the day of Pentecost the Spirit came with power upon the disciples, a hundred and twenty of them, and mighty things were done.

Peter's voice was the channel through which the gift of the Spirit flowed out to the hearts of the listening multitudes; and three thousand that day swept in through the door of the Kingdom. But where does Jesus come in, in all this? Listen to the thrill in the voice of Peter as he recalls the promise of Jesus, and proclaims the true Author of the work of this hour. "This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses. Being, therefore, 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 See and Hear*". (Acts 2:32-33).

How wonderful all this is. And yet how very simple and natural for the Son of God. It is perfectly manifest that we must either drop our faith in Jesus Christ, and make a mock of Christianity; or we must give to Jesus Christ a larger faith, and a fuller recognition in the activities of His Church, than we have been wont to do. If He was not what He claimed to be, and these records are false and misleading, let us cast the Gospel out as a delusion. If Jesus Christ was what He claimed to be, and these records are a trustworthy report of His claims, and of His vindication of His claims; then let us look to our marching orders, and go out with a living vision of an exalted Saviour, all of Whose teachings we ourselves personally believe. If this is falsehood, the New Testament should go

down and out. If it is Truth, the world should know it, and we should tell it with no uncertain sound.

So then, these two promises were made by Jesus, as John quotes Him : first, that He would go and prepare a place for the Home-coming of His people ; and second, that He would send the Spirit to prepare His people for their work here, and their place there.

The third interest that Jesus will take in regard to His people when He has gone to the Father's House, is in relation to their prayers.

Proposition (c): *Jesus affirms His Continued Readiness to Hear and Answer the Prayers of His People, when Offered to the Father in His Name.*

WHEN He has ascended to the Father, He has not severed connection with His people. The other Evangelists emphasized His continued interest in, and communion with, His disciples and followers along one line of His promises; John along another line. The first three Gospels viewed the life of Jesus essentially as to how the Son of God touched men. John writing later, and to supplement what the passing years had shown to be needful to complete men's knowledge of the true nature and character of Jesus Christ, aims particularly to show that, even when the Son of God was thus stooping to touch men, He sustained a continued relationship with the Father that infinitely removed His life above the plane of human existence.

All agreed that He was Son of God and Son of Man. The others wrote the life of the Son of God as He lived it as Son of Man. John wrote it to show that even when He was dwelling amongst men as Son of Man, He still retained and exhibited the full dignity and prerogatives that became the Son of God. None of the other Gospel writers so

clearly express the exact line of demarcation between the functions of Jesus as Son of Man and Son of God, as does John.

Let me quote a single example to show this. It throws a light upon John's teachings about Jesus that is absolutely necessary to enable us to avoid the error into which, with tedious monotony, so many loose-viewed critics fall, when comparing the life of Jesus in John, with the records of the other Gospels. They find confusion and discrepancy, where a more thoughtful study would shew harmony and complement.

John himself has clearly indicated the distinction between the upper and the lower zones in the life of Jesus, which constitutes the real difference between the story in his Gospel, and the story of the Synop-
tists; between the story of the Divine Son of God, and that of the Divine Son of Man.

The distinction is that made by Jesus Himself, while giving instructions about the Raising of the Dead and the Judging of Men. "As the Father raiseth the dead and quickeneth them, even so the the Son also quickeneth whom He will. For neither doth the Father judge any man, but He hath given all judgment unto the Son; that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father which sent Him..... Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour cometh, and now is, when the *Dead Shall Hear the Voice of the Son of God*; and they that hear shall live. For as the Father has life in Himself, even so gave

He to the Son also to have life in Himself : and He gave Him authority to execute *Judgment*, because He is the *Son of Man*''. (JOHN 5 :21-23, 25-27).

Here, where the Almightyness that is required to raise the dead, is spoken of, Jesus will act in His Royal dignity as Son of God. Where the sympathy is required with which the shortcomings of men are to be weighed in the just judgment of God, Jesus will estimate the good and the ill of human lives, as One Who was Himself Man, and Who has drunk humanity's cup to the dregs. It is the law of being Judged by One's Peers, the justest law, when properly interpreted, that was ever placed upon the statute books of men. It may have been framed to permit nobility to be judged by nobility. But it ought equally to mean that men who have been down-trodden and exposed to exceptional temptations, cannot properly be judged, except by men who have tasted of their sorrows and drunk of their woes. It would be easy for the well-groomed dweller in the comfortable avenues of life, to utter a severe condemnation of the life and character of the lad who never breathed any other atmosphere than that of the foul and vicious slums, and around whose threshold the fierce demons of temptation ever battled for his soul. It would be easy ; but it would be unjust to the point of unholiness, unless he had a sympathetic knowledge of the conditions of life in the slums. When God will judge humanity, He will do it by One Who was "in all points tempted like as we are", even if it were yet without sin. God has given to His Son Jesus Christ "authority

to execute judgment", because He became "*Son of Man*". The Voice that will raise the dead, will be the Voice of the Son of God. The Voice that will utter judgment on men will be the Voice of the Son of Man.

It seemed necessary to make this apparent digression from the special topic under discussion, because of the dual lines along which John and the other Evangelists move, when they are selecting out of the abundance of the teachings of Jesus, those statements, even about prayer, which bring out the ideas which they seek to inculcate. Matthew, Mark, and Luke are fond of preserving the sayings of Jesus, which illustrate His close connection with men. John supplements their Gospels by recalling the words of Jesus which illustrate His close connection with God. Nowhere else is this distinction more beautifully and more clearly brought into view, than in the selection they have mutually made out of what Jesus had taught them about their communion with Himself in prayer after He had ascended. The Synoptists fix their attention upon what He said about how He would be *With Men* when they prayed; John upon what He said about how He would be *With God*, when they prayed. These are the two sides of that teaching which it was necessary for Jesus to give, in order to show to His disciples that earth and heaven are alike the sphere of His spiritual domain in His resurrection activities on behalf of His people.

Here is the picture of Jesus in relation to prayer, as He represents Himself as *With Men*. It is pre-

served by Matthew. "Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together *In My Name*, there *Am I in the Midst of Them*". (MAT. 18:19-20). Here is the picture of Jesus in relation to prayer as He represents Himself as *With God*. It is preserved by John. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because *I Go Unto the Father*. And whatsoever ye shall ask *In My Name*, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask Me anything *In My Name*, that will I do". (JOHN 14:12-14). Or, as it is expressed in the next chapter: They are to bear fruit that, "Whatsoever ye shall *ask of the Father in My Name*, He may give it you". (15:16). Or still again, "If ye shall ask anything of *the Father*, He will give it you *in My Name*". (16:23).

Thus John has preserved the words of Jesus that make it evident that, though in glory with the Father, He is conjoined with the Father in hearing and answering all prayer offered "in His Name". This is the aspect of the Ministry of Jesus that John saw fit to depict in His Gospel.

The contrast of language and viewpoint is even brought out in regard to His companionship with His workers. Matthew, while ascribing Divine authority to Jesus quite as fully as does John, lays emphasis on Jesus' presence with His workers.

"All authority hath been given unto Me in heaven and on earth. Go ye, therefore and lo, *I am with you always*, even unto the end of the world". (MAT. 28:18-20). John, on a different occasion, and under entirely different circumstances, of course, preserves for us a statement made by Jesus that gives the other view of our companionship with Christ, as His workers. "If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; and *where I am, there shall also My servant be*". (JOHN 12:26). The words are quoted merely to illustrate that tendency on the part of Matthew, for instance, to preserve words of Jesus, in which He promises companionship by being with, or among, His workers. While John loves to preserve those in which Jesus promises companionship by having His workers with Him.

In the Ottawa valley, on the Quebec shore, there are two routes by which travellers may drive through the Township of Eardley in going from its western side to Ottawa. They may take what is called "The Mountain Road", and skirt the base of the Laurentide mountains by a drive that on a summer's day, is hard to excel for beauty. Or, they may take the ordinary valley road to reach, in about the same distance, the same destination. While the Synoptists (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) have chosen the Valley Road of the life of the Son of God, sketching His pathway as Son of Man, John has chosen the Mountain Road of His Divine Sonship to bring us along the story of His life. Its outlook is surpassingly beautiful. He took that pathway to make the fact of Christ's Divinity unmistakably

clear to all men, that they may be sure that His Name is the way to Eternal Life. John himself says of his Gospel that it was written, "That ye may believe that Jesus is the *Christ, the Son of God*, and that believing ye may have *Life in His Name*". (JOHN 20:31).



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THE Portrait of Christ, as sketched by John, would not be complete without a reference to the *Vital Relationship* that exists between Him and His people. A word of explanation as to the exact meaning of this term may be in order.

"Vital" is simply a Latin word, meaning "living". A relationship between two things is said to be "vital" when their separation causes the death of at least one of these things. For instance, though parent and child are very closely related, yet the relationship is not vital. Their separation does not necessarily mean the death of either. The relationship of husband and wife is very intimate. Yet it is not so intimate as a vital relationship; for their separation does not destroy the life of either. The hand, however, is vitally related to the body. Their separation cuts the cord of life of the hand, and it becomes dead. The relationship between a vine and its branches is vital. The branch depends for its very life upon its connection with the vine.

In the Bible, God is frequently described as our Father, thereby expressing one idea of the relationship between Himself and His people, His children. Again God is described as the Husband of His bride, the Church. Isaiah says, "As the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee". (Is. 62:5). And in the Book of Revela-

tion, an angel says to John, "Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the wife of the Lamb", and then shews him the glorified Church. (Rev. 21 :9).

But Jesus tells us of a still more vital relationship between Himself and His people than is expressed under either of the terms of Husband or Father. John has preserved His words in the 15th Chapter of his Gospel, where Jesus is giving to His disciples that beautiful farewell discourse that has been called "The Holy of Holies" in the life of Christ. The whole point of this part of Christ's discourse turns upon the idea of the Vital Relationship which subsists between Him and those who believe upon Him. He says, "I am the True Vine, and My Father is the Husbandman..... Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; so neither can ye, except ye abide in Me. *I Am the Vine, Ye are the Branches*: He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for apart from Me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned".

That this picture of the vital relationship between Christ and His people was meant by Him as something more than a piece of beautiful imagery, is manifest from His words to Saul, who was called Paul, when Jesus stayed him that day on the road to Damascus.

In the light of Christ's words in John's Gospel, it will be instructive to look at that incident. It is

thus recorded in the 9th chapter of Acts: "But Saul, yet breathing threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and asked of him letters to Damascus unto the synagogues, that if he found any that were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. And as he journeyed, it came to pass that he drew nigh unto Damascus: and suddenly there shone round about him a light out of heaven: and he fell upon the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou *Me*? And he said, Who art Thou, Lord? And He said, *I Am Jesus Whom Thou Persecutest*".

Saul was persecuting the Christians, at least he thought so. Jesus lets him know that He, the Lord and Saviour of His people, is so vitally related to them, that to persecute them, is to persecute Him. He is the Vine; they are the branches. To wound the branch, is to wound the vine.

All through the New Testament this vital relationship, first expressed in John's Gospel, between Christ and His people, is kept steadily in view. It is the outstanding thought of His relationship to His Church. He is the Head; the Church is His body.

Certain hierarchical sections of the Christian Church have tried to tie the word Church up to describe their own particular branch of the Church, to the exclusion of all other believers in Jesus Christ. They thus try to limit the words of Jesus to their own Organization. In order that we may definitely understand that this vital relationship of Jesus is to

every individual believer in Him, in whatever ecclesiastical house they may dwell, or whether they dwell in any, or just worship the Son of God where no Church spire lifts its finger Godward, it may be well just to quote one or two passages from God's Word.

The Apostle Paul sends his first letter to the Corinthians thus: "Unto the Church of God which is at Corinth, even them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, *With All That Call Upon the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ in Every Place*". (1 Cor. 1:2).

Every soul then that is "sanctified in Christ Jesus"; every one who "calls upon the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place", is part of that "Body" of Christ which embraces all His believing people. "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and *All* the members of the body, *Being Many*, are one body; so also is Christ.... Now ye are the body of Christ, and severally members thereof". (1 Cor. 12:12-27). "I would have you know, that the Head of *Every Man* is Christ". (1 Cor. 11:3). And He is "Head over all things to the Church, which is *His* body". (Eph. 1:22).

Thus, now under the likeness of a Vine and its Branches, and again under the relationship of the Head to the Body, is set forth that living oneness that binds Christ and His people together. So that "If one member suffer, all the members suffer with it"; and the pain that is felt anywhere in the body, also pierces the Head. That is why Jesus says to Saul, when he was persecuting the Christians,

"Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" And in response to Saul's question, "Who art Thou, Lord?" replied, "I am *Jesus Whom Thou Persecutest*". (Acts 9:4-5).

It is out of such a thought as this that Paul makes his great appeal: "If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth. For ye died", (that is, when Christ, your substitute, died, you thus died)," and *Your Life is Hid With Christ in God*. When *Christ, Who is Our Life*, shall be manifested, then shall ye also *With Him* be manifested in glory". (Col. 3:1-4). Thus the life of Christ and the life of His believing people are so interwoven together, that when His people are persecuted or wounded, He suffers; and our lives are so "hid with Christ in God" that when "Christ Who is our life shall be manifested", then shall we also "with Him be manifested in glory". It is because of this close, this vital union that binds Christ and His people into one living Head and body, one Vine and its branches, that we find no place for any Head to the Church but Jesus Himself, no Priest for His people but the high Priesthood of our Lord. For to the heart that loves Christ fully, none can come so close as He; and with the Apostle Paul we cry, "Christ is all, and in all". (Col. 3:11).

Wherever I lift my eyes in the universe, I see my Lord. Wherever I scan the page of Revelation

in all the Word of God, there I find my Saviour. Back by the door of Abraham's tent I meet Him. In the Burning Bush of Midian before the startled Moses, He flames forth His glory. From that Throne in the cloud-filled Temple in the days of Isaiah I hear His Voice, while the foundations of the thresholds rock and reel in His presence. "No man hath seen God at any time; the Only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him". All down the page of Old Testament story He walks with His people, as well as in these histories of His earthly ministry in the Gospels; and from thence far on to the beautiful scenes of the Book of Revelation, He stands out an ever-present Figure in the life of His Church.

Ever upon the ear of the preacher who would herald the tidings of His Lord, there falls the sound of His voice: "Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, *I Am With You Always, Even Unto the End of the World*". (MAT. 28:19-20).

Where the faithful preacher lifts his voice, in the quiet of the country church, or in the crowded cathedral of some great city; amongst the palaces of the rich and the great, or in the slum-cursed haunts of vice and poverty; in the white and frozen regions of the north, or in the torrid stretches of equatorial lands, there I hear Him say: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world". And when at life's evening time I shall peer over

earth's last brink, I shall lose sight of the Valley of the Shadow of Death with its grave and its tomb, in the bright heavenly vision that shall fall upon my raptured gaze,—the vision of God's Son, my Saviour and Friend, over there by the portals of the Many Mansions, waiting to bring me, as He has promised, to my fitting place in the Father's House. For it was Himself Who taught me thus to lift my eyes, when He said "*In My Father's House are Many Mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I Go to Prepare a Place for You. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I Come Again, and Will Receive You Unto Myself; That Where I Am, There Ye May Be Also*". (JOHN 14 :2).

St. John's Portrait of Christ has for its background the Eternity before the world was, where Jesus was "with God and was God". Its foreground is the Eternity that lifts itself above the Valleys of Time, where Christ stands in the Mansions of the Father's House preparing places for the Home-coming of His people.

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