

"Comforter." This is the Holy Spirit, that divine Person He promised and described in the preceding chapter. He will come as the Helper. In their witnessing to the world they will have the companionship and fellowship of this divine One. As eyewitnesses they must testify concerning Jesus (cf. Acts 1:21-22, 4:19, etc.). The Holy Spirit would come to them and guide them infallibly in calling to their remembrance, without error, what they had seen with their own eyes and heard with their own ears (cf. I Jn. 1:1-4; II Pet. 1:16-21) and He would guide them into all truth which Christ had not yet taught them. But more than this, the Holy Spirit would accompany the apostles and bear witness to Jesus through the miracles He wrought through them (cf. Heb. 2:4).

If, then, God be for us, who can be against us (cf. Rom. 8:35-39)!

Quiz

1. Why does the world hate Christ and His followers?
2. Name the three ways in which Jesus prepared the disciples for the persecution to come upon them?
3. What is indicated of men today who will not listen and obey gospel preaching?
4. What did Jesus mean when He said "If I had not come . . . they had not had sin"?
5. Why do men, who have had opportunity to hear of Christ, have no excuse for their sin?
6. Why is hatred of Christ irrational and unreasonable?
7. In what ways would the Holy Spirit bear witness to Jesus?

EXPOSITORY SERMON FIFTEEN

THE LIVING UNION OF CHRIST AND HIS DISCIPLES

John 15:1-27

Introduction

- I. WHAT HAS BEEN SAID BEFORE LEADS UP TO THIS
 - A. Chapter 14 speaks of the beginning or birth of the union between Christ and His disciples.
 1. If they love Him and keep His word He will manifest Himself to them, 14:21.
 2. If they love Him and keep His commandments, He will be in them . . . He will dwell in them, 14:16-17, 23.
 - B. He must go away, but He will return to dwell within each disciple who by faith and love keeps His word.
- II. NOW INSTRUCTIONS ARE GIVEN ON HOW THIS LIVING UNION IS MAINTAINED
 - A. There is that which the disciple must do to maintain the union.

- B. There is that which the Lord does to maintain the union.
- C. In each relationship of the Lord and the disciple in this 15th chapter we find that the actions of both are necessary to maintain the union.

Discussion

I. VITAL UNION OF VINE AND BRANCHES, 15:1-11

- A. Pruning needed to produce, vs. 1-3.
 - 1. This "pruning" comes from the Lord and is to the end that the branch may produce even more fruit than it is producing.
 - 2. The chastening of the Lord yields peaceful fruit and assures us that we are His beloved children (cf. Heb. 12:3-11).
 - 3. The Lord does this by two different methods: He cleanses us of extraneous habits and luxuries by pricking our conscience through the Word . . . we put to death the deeds of the body by the leading of the Spirit in His Word; He also chastens us by His providential operations upon our lives in the events of history and nature.
 - 4. **IT IS OUR PART TO "COUNT IT ALL JOY WHEN WE ARE TESTED" (Cf. Js. 1:2-4, 1:12-15) . . . IT IS OUR PART TO LET THE TESTING BEAR FRUIT IN OUR LIVES.**
- B. The Vine the source of Vitality, vs. 4-6.
 - 1. Apart from the Vine is the source of Life, the branch cannot bear fruit.
 - a. There is no power in our testimony unless we are preaching the "power unto salvation" the gospel.
 - b. There is no power in our witness of life unless we are living with the personality of the Spirit in us.
 - c. In Isa. 55:10-11 the Word of God is depicted as a source of life just as the rain which comes down from heaven.
 - d. In John 6, the words of Christ (6:63) are said to be the living bread come down out of heaven which give life. **THE REASON SO MANY "BRANCHES" DO NOT BEAR FRUIT IS THAT THEY ARE SO LOOSELY CONNECTED TO THE VINE THEY ARE NOT RECEIVING ANY OF THE VITAL NUTRIENTS NECESSARY TO FRUIT-BEARING!**
WHEN MEN AND WOMEN AND YOUNG PEOPLE "EAT THE BREAD OF LIFE," AND DRINK THE "WATER OF LIFE" ONLY ONCE A WEEK, HOW CAN THEY BEAR FRUIT?

2. Apart from a living union with the vine, the branch *dies*.
 - a. The branch not only ceases to bear fruit if it does not partake of the life that is in the Vine.
 - b. It withers and dies and is cast into the fire (cf. Matt. 3:8-12, 7:19, 13:42, 25:41) see also our comments on page
 - c. **THERE ARE NO INACTIVE CHRISTIANS . . . NO FRUITLESS BRANCHES. CHRISTIANS CANNOT STAND STILL, THEY EITHER GO FORWARD AND BEAR FRUIT, OR GO BACKWARD WITHERING AND DYING AND BEING BURNED.**

C. Reward of the Relationship, 7-11.

1. Notice that in verse 7 Jesus tells us very plainly just *how* this Vine-branch relationship may be maintained: "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you . . ."
2. One of the rewards is that if our wills are in harmony with Christ's will, then we shall have an answer to every prayer we make . . . **WHAT A POWER THERE IS IN PRAYER.**
3. One of the rewards is that our Heavenly Father is glorified when we bear much fruit. This is our purpose . . . this is our calling . . . when we glorify Him, He will glorify us in Himself.
4. Another of the rewards is that we shall "dwell" in love. **LIVING IN HIS LOVE . . . OVERSHADOWED BY HIS MIGHTY LOVE** (cf. Rom. 8:31-39).
5. The crowning reward is in v. 11: **WE SHALL BE FILLED WITH THE SAME JOY WHICH OUR SAVIOUR KNEW . . . JOY UNSPEAKABLE AND FULL OF GLORY. A JOY, NOT AS THE WORLD THINKS OF JOY, BUT JOY IN THAT WHICH IS ETERNALLY SATISFYING, BEARING FRUIT UNTO HIS KINGDOM!**

II. FRANK UNION OF FRIENDS, 15:12-17

- A. First Jesus gives the one great basic precept: His disciples are to maintain unity among themselves on the basis of love—the same **LOVE WHICH HE HAD FOR THEM.**
 1. The world over, men recognize as the supreme evidence of love that a man will voluntarily give up his own life for the sake of his friends.
 2. This Jesus was about to do. They would be His friends if they were willing to let their love for one another rise to such self-sacrifice and thus keep His precept.

3. Such a love is unlimited. It has no bounds. Such love is God like love for it loves first (cf. I Jn. 4:7-12).
- B. Next Jesus promises to take His disciples into a communion that is enjoyed only by friends and confidants.
 1. Those who believe and trust Jesus and keep His commandments find that their relationship to Him grows into one of fellowship and friendship rather than the drudgery of slavish and unintelligent oppression.
 2. A slave is given orders and is never taken into the confidence of his master concerning the master's plans and purposes.
 3. But Jesus tells His friends (reveals to them) everything He can concerning the plans and purposes of the Father. Thus we know things which the Prophets did not know—things which angels desire to look into.
 4. But there are things which even friends cannot understand and do not need to know (cf. Jn. 16:12; Isa. 55:8-11). A good friend exercises reticence as well as frankness, when reticence is to the loved one's profit. So does Jesus in our case. But, of that which we most certainly need to know, He is very frank to say, "If it were not so, I would have told you."
- C. Friends have access to one another's abundance. Jesus makes the abundant power and resources of the Heavenly Father's storehouse.
 1. If we ask anything according to His will we know that all the resources of Heaven will be sent to fulfill that request.
 2. What a grand and glorious promise that is!
 3. (cf. I Jn. 5:14-15.)
 4. **GREATER THINGS FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD COULD BE WROUGHT THAN ARE BEING ACCOMPLISHED NOW . . . IF CHRISTIAN PEOPLE WOULD JUST BELIEVE AND AVAIL THEMSELVES OF THIS PROMISE FOR THE ONGOING OF THE KINGDOM! BUT WHAT IS THE SMALLEST SERVICE OF THE CHURCH? PRAYER MEETING! THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH DOES NOT BELIEVE IN PRAYER!!! BUT GOD DOES!!**

III. PERSEVERING UNION OF THE PERSECUTED, 15:18-27

- A. Participation with Christ in this living union will bring persecution, vs. 18-21.
 1. If we are united with Christ and stand for what He stands

for; if we are against what He is against; if we live as He lived; **WE WILL BE PERSECUTED BY THE WORLD.**

2. Much of what the Christian regards to be wrong, the world regards as right; what the Christian believes and teaches to be precious, the world regards as valueless. **THE CHRISTIAN AND THE WORLD ARE DISAGREED AND IN OPPOSITION AS TO WHAT IS GOOD, VALUABLE, RIGHT!!**
 3. The righteous living of the Christian is a constant rebuke and judgment upon the unrighteous living of the worldling.
 4. Men of the world walk by sight and not by faith. They are out of harmony with God's will for their lives. If a man loves darkness, he will hate the light (cf. Jn. 3:18-21).
 5. The servant is not greater than his Lord. The world persecuted Jesus and if we live like Him, the world will persecute us (cf. II Tim. 3:12).
- B. Greater Revelation, Greater Responsibility, vs. 22-25.
1. Jesus does not mean to say that if He had not come they would not have had any sin at all.
 - a. All men have sinned against some law of God. They either sin against a revealed law on tables of stone, or against a law revealed to them in nature and on their consciences (cf. Rom. 1 and 2).
 2. What He is saying is, "compared with the sin of not listening to His words, inasmuch as He came with sufficient proof of His Messiahship, all other sins dwindle into nothing."
 - a. As black as some sins are, none are so black as rejecting the claims of Jesus, because His claims are backed and founded on overwhelmingly sufficient evidence!!
 - b. The works that He did offer evidence which cannot be reasonably and rationally denied.
 3. As light comes to man and increases, so does his responsibility to follow and live in the light (cf. Lk. 12:47-48).
 - a. The proof is so clear that men cannot plead ignorance.
 - b. The gospel has been declared to most men so many times that they cannot plead lack of opportunity.
 - c. Thus there is no excuse for their sin of rejecting Him.
 4. The terribleness of this sin is that it is irrational, unreasonable and, as Jesus says, "without cause."
 - a. Who has Jesus ever injured?
 - b. What law has He ever violated, what evil has He ever done?

- c. To the contrary, He and His true church has sought only the good of man, always!
 - d. TO HATE JESUS IS TO HATE HIM WITHOUT CAUSE! TO REJECT JESUS AND HIS MESSAGE IS TO REJECT SOMETHING WITHOUT REASON AND CAUSE!
- C. But the Comforter will come to aid the persecuted disciples of Jesus Christ, vs. 26-27.
- 1. He will come as Helper.
 - 2. In their witnessing to the world they will have the help of the Divine Personality, the Holy Spirit.
 - 3. He would guide them infallibly (and us today if we will adhere to His word, the Bible).
 - 4. The Holy Spirit helped the first disciples of Jesus by the miraculous works which He did through them in order to verify their message.

Conclusion

IF THEN GOD BE FOR US, IN SUCH A LIVING UNION OF FELLOWSHIP, FRIENDSHIP AND DIVINE ASSISTANCE, WHO CAN BE AGAINST US (cf. Rom. 8:35-39)?

EXAMINATION, CHAPTERS 13, 14, and 15

True or False?

1. Jesus established "foot washing" as a practice to be perpetuated in the church.
2. Jesus was sometimes troubled.
3. To "love one another as Jesus loved" was a new commandment.
4. Heaven is not a place.
5. Those who believe in Jesus will do greater works than He did.
6. There is no need to keep every little thing Jesus commands, just so long as we love Him.
7. The dwelling of the Holy Spirit within the Christian is known only when felt.
8. The Holy Spirit comes to us unconditionally.
9. One may be a Christian and never convert anyone else.
10. People of the world do not hate Christians.

Who said this and Why?

1. "Thou shalt never wash my feet."
2. "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me."
3. "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head."
4. "He that is bathed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all."

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

5. "Lord, we know not whither thou goest; how know we the way?"
6. "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us."
7. "No longer do I call you servants . . . but I have called you friends."
8. "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin."
9. "They hated me without a cause."
10. "Arise, let us go hence."

Multiple choice

1. Jesus took the basin and began to wash the disciples feet because:
 - a. It was a religious rite of the church;
 - b. They were arguing about their places around the table and He wanted to teach them humility;
 - c. It was a custom of courtesy for the host to wash the feet of the guests.
2. When Jesus said to Judas, "What thou doest, do quickly":
 - a. No one knew why He said this to Judas;
 - b. Everyone understood by this sign that Judas was the betrayer of whom Jesus had spoken;
 - c. Peter and John knew, but the rest of the disciples did not know that Judas was the betrayer.
3. When the people of the era of Jesus and His disciples came about a table to eat they:
 - a. Sat in chairs or on benches as artists have depicted the Last Supper;
 - b. Sat on mats or pillows on the floor in cross-legged fashion like the Arabs do;
 - c. Reclined on couches as the Romans did.
4. Jesus promised joy to His disciples in:
 - a. Bearing fruit; keeping His commandments; glorifying the Father;
 - b. Abiding in His love; being cleansed by the husbandman (the Father);
 - c. None of the above;
 - d. All of the above.
5. Jesus said:
 - a. The world loves the church and wants it to prosper;
 - b. The church should love the world and be as accommodating to the people of the world as possible;
 - c. The church should be separate from the world and be glad to suffer persecution;
 - d. The world hates the church but will not do anything to harm the church.
6. The Lord said of the branch that does not bear fruit:

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- a. "It is pruned that it may bear more fruit . . ."
- b. "It is cut off and cast into the fire . . ."
- c. "It remains on the vine but does not bear fruit . . ."
7. When Jesus said He would return, after His going away, to manifest Himself to the disciples, He meant:
 - a. He would return and dwell in them by the Holy Spirit;
 - b. He would return and appear to all disciples at the Second Coming;
 - c. He would appear to the disciples after His death (going away) at His resurrection (coming again).
8. Chapter 13 is an incident which took place:
 - a. During the Passover and Last Supper;
 - b. On another night after the Passover and Last Supper;
 - c. One night before the Passover and Last Supper.

Make a List

1. Of five things said of the Holy Spirit in these three chapters.
2. Of three relationships which the disciples have in their union with Christ.
3. Of five things that result from the love which Jesus taught in these three chapters.
4. Of five ways in which Jesus spoke of His relationship to God the Father in these three chapters.
5. Of three figures of speech which Jesus used in these three chapters.

Quote or Paraphrase

1. John 13:13-17
2. John 14:1-6
3. John 15:1-11

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

In chapter fourteen Jesus promised the person of the Holy Spirit to the apostles, both in a miraculous outward manifestation which would be given according to the purposes and will of the Father and an indwelling presence received conditionally and in proportion to the love, obedience and spiritual growth of each disciple. In chapter fifteen Jesus elaborated on the relationship of the disciple to the Master and the indwelling help of the divine Helper. And now, in chapter sixteen, Jesus speaks of the work of the Holy Spirit in the world convicting and convincing and completing the revelation of God's plan of redemption.

The key to the entire discourse of these three chapters is found in 14:18, "I will not leave you desolate, I will come to you." These last precious hours of the Passover midnight are filled with heart-tugging emotion as a Father attempts to strengthen and prepare His bewildered and childish children for the coming hours of despair, shame, separation and persecution. He must leave the little flock and they will become sheep among the wolves. But they will not be left desolate and without help. They will soon know and feel His divine presence among them again in the Personality known as the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit of Christ living in them and working through them in the Word will be equally as powerful and real as the Incarnate Word was among them and will bring to glorious completion and perfection what the Incarnate Word was not commissioned to do!

The private, personal instruction of the Master to the disciples is coming to an end. The appointed time for His voluntary sacrifice is imminent and He must commune with the Father. His final instructions pertain to the revelatory work of the Spirit. He introduces this work by speaking of what He had already taught them. He then proceeds to speak of the progressive nature of God's revelation. When the Spirit comes He will reveal even more than the Son has been able to tell them—not because of the inability of Son, but because of the incapability of the disciples.

As A. B. Bruce puts it, when Jesus leaves them and goes to His Father, two elements of essential importance for the success of their work as apostles will be supplied. They will then have *receptive bearers*, and they, themselves, will be made *competent to preach*. Neither of these elements exist for the present. The world has rejected Him and His words; and they, though sincere, are very ignorant, and understand not what He has taught them. After His ascension, there will be a great alteration in both respects: the world will

be more ready to hear the truth, and the disciples will be able to declare it intelligently.

Chapter sixteen might be titled, "The Revelational Veil Will Be Rent." We believe the important message of this chapter for us today is that we may understand that what Jesus taught (which is recorded in the Gospels) was not the completed and perfected revelation of God's plan of salvation. What He taught before "his going away" could not be completely understood unless the "going away" be completed and the Spirit come to reveal what it all meant!

We continue in our outline of this great fourth gospel, the "Gospel of Belief:"

III. The Word Manifested to The Disciples And Their Acceptance of Him, 13:1—20:31

A. Private Instructions and Encouragements, 13:1—17:26 (cont'd).

4. The Revelational Veil Will Be Rent, 16:1-33

a. He is Teaching Them This Night Many Dark and Foreboding Things, 16:1-11

- (1) To warn them and keep them from falling by showing His omniscience, v. 1-4
- (2) To show them that the darkness is necessary to bring the greater blessing of the Spirit, v. 5-7
- (3) To tell them what the work of the Spirit will be, v. 8-11

b. He Is Withholding Many Things Which He, in The Spirit, Will Reveal Later, 16:12-24

- (1) There were many things they could not now understand, v. 12
- (2) The Spirit would later reveal to them the complete glorification of the Father and the Son, v. 13-15
- (3) The Spirit would later reveal to them the perfected plan of God which would make their joy full and complete, v. 16-24

c. He Is Speaking in Veiled Figures But Will Speak Plainly Later, 16:25-33

- (1) Soon they will have free access to the Father Himself, v. 25-28
- (2) Now they show their failure to comprehend, v. 29-32
- (3) Soon they will know that He has overcome the world, v. 33

TEACHING WHICH IS DARK AND FOREBODING

Text: 16:1-11

- 1 These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be caused to stumble.
- 2 They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the hour cometh, that whosoever killeth you shall think that he offereth service unto God.
- 3 And these things will they do, because they have not known the Father, nor me.
- 4 But these things have I spoken unto you, that when their hour is come, ye may remember them, how, that I told you. And these things I said not unto you from the beginning, because I was with you.
- 5 But now I go unto him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou?
- 6 But because I have spoken these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart.
- 7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth: 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.
- 8 And he, when he is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgement:
- 9 of sin, because they believe not on me;
- 10 of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye behold me no more;
- 11 of judgement, because the prince of this world hath been judged.

Paraphrase

I have spoken to you in these last hours many dark and foreboding things concerning the persecution which is to come your way in order that you may not be caught unawares. They will excommunicate you from the synagogues. They will even go so far as to kill you. And the astounding thing is that those who kill some of you will even believe they are worshipping God and serving Him by such deeds. They will do these things because they have conceived of God as one who would delight in destruction of the followers of Jesus and they have never known the true nature of the Father or of Me. But these things I have spoken to you ahead of time so that when they come to pass you may remember my prophetic revelation and recognize my omniscience. And these things I did not need to tell you so plainly before because when I was with you the world's hatred was directed almost exclusively to-

ward me; but when I am gone that hatred will be directed toward you and so I forewarn you now. And I am about to leave you and return to him that sent me yet none of you are asking me any questions. You were full of questions before but now you do not even ask me where I am going because you are so full of sorrow. Sorrow has filled your hearts but even the most childish question would be better than the gloom of speechless despair. Nevertheless, in spite of your gloom, I am telling you the truth of the matter: It is an advantage for you that I return to the Father for if I do not return to Him the redemptive work of the Father will not be completed and therefore the Comforter will not come and perfect all this redemptive work into one completed message for your sakes; but if I return to the Father, having completed the work, then I will send the Spirit to you with the completed message. And when the Comforter comes He will publicly expose the guilt of the world and call it to repentance by convicting the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment: the Spirit will convict the world of sin in all its terribleness by showing that to reject Me is to reject the Lord of glory; He will convict the world of righteousness by showing that in My return to the Father I have completed the plan of salvation for man and there is now available a God-imputed righteousness; He will convict the world of judgment by showing the world the judgment of its own ruler, Satan, teaching the world thereby an ultimate separation between Me and all who persist in unbelief.

Summary

The many foreboding things which Jesus has spoken to the disciples has filled their hearts with sorrow. They are so filled with sorrow that they have lost all interest in what the Master is trying to tell them of the coming Messianic redemption. He tells them plainly that His going will be to their advantage for the Spirit will return to them with the completed Messianic redemption.

Comment

What Jesus had told them previously concerning the world's hatred and what He shall teach them subsequently about this hatred He teaches in order that they not be *skandalizo*, i.e., caught unawares, tripped-up, ensnared. They must be warned that following Him means they will be enduring the same persecution and hatred which the world meted out to Him. And when these dark and tortuous days come upon them they will know that their Master is not only sympathetic with their plight and is aware of it but that it all falls within His omniscient plan for the redemption of mankind. Their faith will not be tripped-up, they will not stumble.

Jesus prophesies that they will be excommunicated from their synagogues due to their following Him. For a Jew to be excommunicated from his synagogue then meant a great deal more than what we think of excommunication today. For the Jew of old, excommunication from the synagogue carried with it ostracization from social, economic, political and fraternal ties with their society as well as religious. They were the same as "dead" to all their contemporaries. In fact even some Jewish families today go through the form of a mock funeral for any member of their family who leaves Judaism and takes up Christianity!

Not only so but Jesus warns these disciples in verse 2 that the hour is soon coming when they will be killed for their Christianity and the almost unbelievable part of it is, their murderers will justify their crimes by thinking they are offering worshipful service to God. Of course the Old Testament taught that blasphemers were to be stoned to death (cf. Lev. 24:10-16) and the Jewish rulers had already accused Jesus (though it was unproven and unjustly pronounced) of this crime. If He was sentenced as guilty then His followers and those who preached His doctrines would also be sentenced as blasphemers. So the Jews in their ignorance and hardness of heart killed Jesus and His disciples convincing themselves that they were doing God a service. Paul the apostle, formerly Saul of Tarsus, the Pharisee of the Pharisees, was convinced that he was doing God a service by persecuting and imprisoning Christians (cf. Acts 22:3-5; 26:9-11; I Tim. 1:12-16). The Roman Catholic Inquisitions and the inquisitions instituted by John Calvin and his followers in Geneva followed the same line of bigotry and perversion.

These murderous acts the Jews (and others since then) did because they did not know the true nature of God. They failed to behold that God is love, even when Jesus, the Son of God, came to reveal His perfect love. Their sin darkened, materialistically greedy hearts were hardened against the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. Their concept of God and His promises in their Old Testament was one of a God who was going to restore their gloriously prosperous kingdom of worldly blessings. They had made their own God from the thoughts of their own minds like the pagan world around them and like the world of unbelief today. The kingdom of salvation and redemption and regeneration which Jesus preached was not their idea of the kingdom of God. Therefore their God, they believed, would count it a service for them to kill anyone who dared to claim any other type of kingdom. One has only to read the Old Testament Prophets to get a background for the materialism of the Jews of Jesus' time. The people of that day were not, for the most part, interested in righteousness,

justice, regeneration—they were interested in an earthly king and an earthly kingdom of material goods. They were interested in religion only as traditions and outward rituals. They did not even know the meaning of their own prophets of the O.T., let alone the perfect revelation of God in His Son (cf. Jn. 8:34-47).

So Jesus (v. 4) prophesied all these things beforehand so that when they came to pass the disciples would remember that He had foretold them and they would be strengthened in their faith in Him as the omniscient Son of God. Prophecy has always been a tower of strength. When men in the finite limitations can know historically and experientially that future events have been foretold and have been fulfilled they may know historically, empirically and experientially that the Author of such prophecies is omniscient. If the prophecies of judgment and persecution come to pass we know that the prophecies of salvation and victory shall come to pass also. Fulfilled prophecy is perhaps the greatest evidence we have that the Bible is a supernaturally inspired book containing a supernatural revelation from a supernatural God.

Jesus had prophesied persecution for His disciples before (cf. Matt. 5:10-12; 10:16-39) but never quite so plainly as now. And the reason He did not need to reveal them so plainly and openly before was that when He was with them the world's hatred was directed almost exclusively toward Him and they did not feel the brunt of it. But from now on all that will be changed. They will feel all the force of the opposition of evil which He felt. Hendriksen has an interesting note: "One is reminded of Rev. 12:4, 13, 17: first the dragon seeks to devour the child; next he pursues the woman who had borne the child. Angry with the woman, he makes war on the rest of her seed. The book of Acts shows that this prophecy (15:18—16:4) was fulfilled in every detail." Mr. Hendriksen in his commentary on Revelation "More Than Conquerors" believes that the dragon is Satan; the child is Christ; the woman is the early church; and the rest of her seed is the church for the remainder of time.

There was a darkness and foreboding character in all the events and words of the night which caused a perceptible sorrow to fill the hearts of these disciples. The thought of His leaving them and the persecution that was to come to them had so filled their hearts with sorrow and depression that they scarcely heard His promise of the Comforter who was to come at His departure. They were so filled with grief they had not even thought to ask questions. They had asked plenty of questions before when He had spoken of preparing "mansions" for them, but now they were so overwhelmed with sadness at

the *fact* of His leaving them they forgot to be concerned with *where* He was going and *what* His going would mean to them.

But in spite of their gloom and despair Jesus tells them (v. 7) that what they judge to be darkness in His leaving them is, in truth, to their advantage. If He does not return to the Father the Holy Spirit cannot come to them. If He does not complete the redemptive plan in atoning death and victorious resurrection, the Holy Spirit (whose work is that of giving the written revelation and substantiating it with miracles and signs) cannot come. The Holy Spirit was not to be sent to every believer until redemption had been completed (cf. our comments on Jn. 7:37-39). The "greater works" of planting the regenerating word of God in the hearts of men could not come as long as the Word was limited in the Incarnation and as long as the good news had not been consummated in the atonement and resurrection. These "greater works" could only begin when the good news was completed and was preached by mouth and by printed page unto all nations. Thus it was expedient that He return to the Father.

And now in verses 8-11, Jesus gives in essence, the work of the Holy Spirit as it relates to the commission of the disciples to preach the gospel in the whole world. This is what the Spirit will do in assisting these men to regenerate those lost in sin. He will publicly expose the guilt of the world and call it to repentance by convicting the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment.

The Holy Spirit will come and convict the world of sin because of its rejection of the Savior. A man is not convicted of sin until he is convinced there is a standard between right and wrong and he is not convinced of any standards except his own until he is convinced of the Divine Person who has authority to set a Divine Standard. This is exactly the approach the Holy Spirit used through Peter on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) when he proved the deity of Jesus from O.T. prophecy and from eyewitnessed facts of the resurrection. It was only then that the crowds were convicted of their sin in rejecting the Savior and cried, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" So the Holy Spirit, working through the Word, oral and written, when the deity of Jesus is preached—when the divine standard is preached, convicts men of their sin. Especially does the Spirit convince men of their utter lostness if they reject Jesus, the only hope of salvation, for "except ye believe that I am He, ye shall die in your sins." Unbelief in Christ is the greatest of all sin for such unbelief leaves men dead in their sins. This is what the Holy Spirit was to come and convict the world of through the disciples, (cf. Acts 4:12, etc.).

He is to come and convict the world of righteousness because Jesus

"goes to the Father." What did He mean by this? We think He was referring to the world being convicted of righteousness relative to His completing the redemptive work of the Father on earth and then returning to the Father as man's Eternal High Priest. He will convict the world of righteousness by showing that in His return to the Father He has completed the plan of salvation for man and there is now available through covenant relationship to Him a God-imputed righteousness (cf. II Cor. 5:14-21). He died the atoning death for our sins upon the cross, thus all who by faith accept His death for theirs have their sins forgiven there. When we come into covenant relationship to Him by obedience by burial in baptism we are promised by the Word of God that His death is appropriated to us and also His resurrection and so we become new creatures (cf. Rom. 6:1-11). The Holy Spirit, upon the basis of the deity of Jesus, convinces men of the availability of this God-imputed righteousness. The Spirit also tells man of the terms of God's covenant in order that men may obey the terms and come into saving relationship to Christ.

The Holy Spirit comes to convict the world of judgment because the prince of this world has been judged, (cf. Jn. 12:31; 14:30). At the death of Christ sin was paid for and its penalty erased. At the resurrection the victory over death and the grave was won. Christ triumphed over the principalities and powers openly and spoiled them (cf. Col. 2:15). He destroyed him that had the power of death over men (cf. Heb. 2:15) and delivered men from this bondage of fear. Satan has been bound, he has been cast into the abyss (see Hendriksen's commentary on Revelation, "More Than Conquerors"). He came into the "strong man's house" and bound him (cf. Matt. 12:22-30).

Now if the devil is judged, conquered and despoiled by Christ men must be aware that Christ has won the victory over the world and that the world and all who are children of the devil will some day be judged.

One may turn just a few pages in his New Testament, to the 2nd chapter of Acts and he will see an amazing fulfillment of this prophetic promise of Jesus in action. Three thousand souls were convicted of their sin because of their unbelief in Christ; convicted of a God-imputed righteousness through His redemptive work and accepted a covenant relationship with Him by being immersed in water for the remission of sins; and were convicted of the judgment upon the "perverse generation."

Quiz

1. Why did Jesus have to speak so plainly about persecution that was to come to these disciples?
2. Why would some think they were offering service to God by killing followers of Christ?
3. Why would they do such a terrible thing?

4. Why did He not speak to them before this of the terrible persecutions they would have to endure?
5. Why was sorrow upon the hearts of the disciples?
6. Why was His going away to be advantageous to them?
7. How does the Holy Spirit convict the world of:
 - (a) sin
 - (b) righteousness
 - (c) judgment

THE SPIRIT WILL REVEAL LATER MANY
THINGS WITHHELD

Text: 16:12-24

12 I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.

13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come he shall guide you into all the truth: for he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, these shall he speak: and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come.

14 He shall glorify me: for he shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you.

15 All things whatsoever the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he taketh of mine, and shall declare it unto you.

16 A little while, and ye behold me no more; and again a little while, and ye shall see me.

17 Some of his disciples therefore said one to another, What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye behold me not; and again a little while, and ye shall see me: and, Because I go to the Father?

18 They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? We know not what he saith.

19 Jesus perceived that they were desirous to ask him, and he said unto them, Do ye inquire among yourselves concerning this, that I said, A little while, and ye behold me not, and again a little while, and ye shall see me?

20 Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.

21 A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for the joy that a man is born into the world.

22 And ye therefore now have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no one taketh away from you.

23 And in that day ye shall ask me no question. Verily, verily, I say unto you, if ye shall ask anything of the Father, he will give it you in my name.

24 Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be made full.

Queries

- a. Why could the disciples not "bear" other things which Jesus desired to speak to them?
- b. How would He be seen by them again in a little while?

Paraphrase

- c. How would their sorrow be turned into joy?

There are yet many things I need to say unto you concerning the work of the Spirit and the whole scheme of redemption but because the work of redemption is not yet completed and because of your spiritual immaturity you are not able to bear them just yet. But when the One I have spoken to you about comes—the Spirit of truth—He will guide you into all the truth. And He will not be all by Himself in this speaking but He will be speaking what the Father, Son and the Spirit communicate to one another. He will also give you a message of that which He hears is to come in the future. He will glorify Me because He will take from the Divine Mind all that pertains to Me in the redemptive work and declare it unto you in message form. All that which is Mine is the Father's and all that which the Father has is Mine. It is for this reason—the perfect unity of possession and purpose between Father, Son and Spirit—that I said unto you the Spirit takes of Mine and gives it unto you. In a little while you will not see Me any longer and yet in a little while you will see Me! Some of the disciples, when they heard this, began to say among themselves, What is this riddle He is speaking now—A little while and you will not see Me and yet in a little while you will see Me—and—I am going to the Father? What is this Little While that He talks about? We simply cannot understand Him! Jesus, knowing they wanted to ask Him what He meant, said to them, Are you trying to find out from one another the things I said concerning, A little while and you will not see Me and yet in a little while you will see Me again? I tell you most solemnly that you are going to be so sorrowful that you will sob and wail and all the while the world will be rejoicing! Yes, you will be deeply distressed but your distress will be turned into joy! When a woman gives birth to a child she certainly knows pain when her hour to deliver has come. Yet as soon as she has given birth to the child she forgets her agony for the joy of bringing a man-child into the

world. Now you are similarly going to go through a brief time of pain but I will see you again soon and your Little While of pain will be turned into rejoicing and this rejoicing no one shall ever be able to take away from you. In the day when I am seeing you again I will by the Spirit so teach you all things that you shall no longer be perplexed and wishing to ask Me questions. As regards the knowledge of the truth, asking will not be necessary for the Spirit of truth will attend to that. But as regards petitions of all kinds for all the necessities of life I say to you most truly, the Father will give them to you if you abide in My name. As of yet you have not asked anything in My name because all authority has not yet been associated with My name. You must keep on asking the Father, but in a little while you will ask by authority of My name in order that your joy may be completely fulfilled.

Summary

Jesus turns from His previous (16:1-11) discourse on the work of the Spirit in the world, to the specific work of the Spirit in relationship to the disciples as individuals. The Spirit will reveal to them all the truth and He will turn their sorrow into joy.

Comment

Jesus had spoken only a few things in the three years of His earthly ministry and for the most part the disciples were unable to comprehend and bear up under very little of it. Primarily it was because of their Jewish prejudices and presuppositions of a temporal Messiah and a temporal Messianic kingdom that they were unable to comprehend even the few teachings Jesus gave them concerning His work. They refused to accept the prediction of His death (cf. Matt. 16:21-23; cf. Lk. 24:17-27;) and even as late as His ascension they were still wondering about the establishment of an earthly kingdom in Israel (cf. Acts 1:6-7).

Besides their spiritual immaturity making them incapable of bearing the immeasurable riches of all that Jesus wanted to sell them, the work of redemption had not yet been completed and the other things which Jesus had to tell them would have to await the coming of the Spirit.

Although verse 12 has specific reference to the apostles and the forthcoming miraculous revelation of the Spirit the principle holds true for us today. The principle is that revelation of the nature and work of Christ is measured by the moral and spiritual capacities of men to receive it. Paul the apostle had to speak to the Corinthians as babes because they were spiritually and morally incapable of being spoken to as spiritual grownups. They were carnal. They still thought of Christ

and the church as fleshly and worldly. The more we know intellectually and experientially of the Person of Christ from His Word, the Bible, the more we will grow to be like Him and the more prepared we will be to bear the profound and sublime riches of His Word. The more we abstain from the worldly the better prepared we are to receive His revelation of the spiritual.

Jesus lovingly and wisely withholds what can most beneficently be revealed by the Spirit. When the redemptive work is finished, the Spirit will come to them and lead them into all the truth. This promise of Jesus to the apostles concerning *all the truth* is most important! There have been theologians, church councils, latter day prophets in all ages rise up and challenge this promise. Even in our day some who claim to be conservative, Bible-believing people have taught that the Holy Spirit has more truth than that which was delivered to the apostles to give to men and that He is giving new truth even today. If human language means anything at all, we believe the Bible teaches that what the apostles recorded was all the truth the Holy Spirit was to deliver to mankind for man's redemption and for man's temporal existence. In other words, the Bible itself claims that it is sufficient to lead man to saving relationship to Jesus Christ and is sufficient to guide man in all his relationship to living in this world. Compare the following scriptures with what is taught by those today who claim the Holy Spirit has new truth to reveal:

- a. Many things which Jesus did and said were not recorded but enough was recorded to bring men unto saving faith in Him (Jn. 20:30-31)
- b. The miraculous gifts of the Spirit prophecy, etc. in revealing Christ's Word to the early church (before they had the completed New Testament in writing) were to be done away when *that which* (neuter gender in the Greek and cannot refer to Christ's second coming) is perfect (completed written word) came (cf. I Cor. 13:8-13).
- c. No Word of Christ was to be preached (not even by latter day angels) other than that which the apostles delivered and wrote upon the penalty of being accursed from Christ (cf. Gal. 1:6-10).
- d. The scriptures are capable of making the man of God complete and no other revelation is needed (cf. II Tim. 3:14-17).
- e. The Word which brings us into a new birth abides forever and this eternal word is that which was preached by the apostles (I Pet. 1:23-25).
- f. He has granted unto us *all* things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of Christ and that knowledge comes

through the promises of Christ contained in the apostolic truth (II Pet. 1:1-4; 1:16-21).

- g. The apostles are of God and those that know God do so by hearing the apostles. Those that do not know God do not listen to the apostles. **AND BY LISTENING TO THE APOSTLES IS THE ONLY WAY WE KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TRUTH AND ERROR!** (cf. I Jn. 4:1-6).
- h. Who ever goes beyond the teaching of the Christ in the apostolic writings does not have God and those who go beyond the apostolic doctrine are not to be received as brethren in Christ (II Jn. 9-11).
- i. The faith (the complete body of doctrine necessary for salvation and christian living) was once for all time delivered unto the saints in the apostolic books of the New Testament (Jude 3) and that certainly means the apostles were led into all the truth the Holy Spirit deemed necessary for all time!
- j. The book of Revelation was the last book of the New Testament to be written. The last warning and the last invitation is given in this book. The admonition of this book is that nothing shall be added or taken away from what has been written by the apostles lest the judgement of God come upon the usurper.

Christians are commanded to judge between true and false doctrines for many false teachers are constantly teaching false doctrines in the world (I Jn. 4:1). **THE ONLY DIVINE CRITERIA BY WHICH JUDGMENT BETWEEN TRUE AND FALSE DOCTRINE MAY BE MADE IS THE FINAL AND COMPLETE REVELATION OF CHRIST MADE IN THE WRITTEN DOCUMENTS OF THE APOSTLES, INSPIRED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, WHICH WE KNOW AS THE NEW TESTAMENT!**

Furthermore, what the Spirit shall teach the disciples will not be something completely different from what Christ has taught and will teach when He finishes His work. What the Spirit will do is take all that the Incarnate Word accomplished and make it plain and give it in specific commandments in order that men may understand and obey it. In bringing Christ to dwell in the hearts of men by faith the Spirit would cause them to apprehend what is the breadth and length and height and depth and to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge and be filled with all the fulness of God (cf. Eph. 3:14-19). In so doing the Spirit would glorify the Son and the Father. Thus the Acts and the Epistles become divine commentaries on the Gospels.

Verses 14 and 15 are to remind the disciples again of the oneness of Father, Son and Spirit. The Jewish mind tended to separate the

work of the Father from the Son and both from the work of the Spirit.

And now, in verses 16-24, we hear Jesus speak to His disciples a riddle concerning His return that was made plain only after the Spirit came at Pentecost. The disciples were completely perplexed as to the meaning. To them it sounded as if Jesus were talking in circles—contradicting Himself. Soon they will not see Him any more, yet soon they would see Him again. What does He mean? There are a number of things to be considered in interpreting His meaning: (a) the context—the close connection in what He is saying to what He has said before about the coming of the Spirit; (b) Jesus uses two different words for "see" *theoreite* and *hopsesithe* which may indicate two different manners of vision (physical vs. Spiritual); (c) all believers in Christ are to be the ultimate recipients of the full joy promised first to the disciples; (d) their second vision of Christ was to remain with them. The Christ who should return to their vision after His going away no doubt began with the resurrected Christ (but even then He was difficult for some to see, (cf. Lk. 24:17-27), but was primarily the Christ who returned to them in the Spirit. The Christ who filled them with joy is the same Christ seen by all believers today—the Christ of the Spirit who shows Himself to men through His Word.

Jesus can make it no plainer than he does. But the disciples will not know what He means until He is resurrected, ascended and returns in all the power and truth of the Spirit. They will fall into the depths of sorrow but will be lifted to the heights of joy. Could their faith rest solely in His promises they would not sorrow but rejoice knowing that the cross was not the end. But their faith was not that complete (and ours neither, had we been there, I'm sure). Nevertheless, when He should return in a little while from the tomb and in power on Pentecost, their sorrow would be turned to joy.

The parable Jesus gives to describe the complete change that will take place in their lives is beautifully descriptive. One has only to be a parent, and especially a mother, to know it. The disciples will come from the agony of pain to the sublimity of joy. This is all the parable is intended to teach—the contrast between sorrow and joy of the disciples. One need only see the contrast between the disciples at the crucifixion and the resurrection and Pentecost to see the fulfillment of Jesus' prediction.

Verse 23 shows that this whole discourse concerns the coming of the Spirit. In the day that Christ comes to them again *all* their questions will be answered. There were many questions they had concerning all that Jesus had taught and done while they companied with

Him. Their minds were undoubtedly filled with questions. After His victory over the tomb and the coming of the Spirit the meaning of all they had seen and heard would become clear. They would then see that in Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col. 2:3) and that in Him God chose to consummate all things and fulfill all things prophesied and typified in the Old Testament. They would see that in Him all of history—every question of mankind finds its answer. They would see that by faith in Him who conquered all there would be no more questions to ask—no more answers needed.

In verse 23 we have the promise stated again that every prayer for help in the exigencies of life asked according to the will and name of Christ will be granted (cf. our comments on Jn. 14:13-14; 15:7, 16). Verse 24 is a veiled statement (veiled to the apostles before the resurrection and pouring forth of the Spirit on Pentecost) that soon He will bring in a New covenant and henceforward all requests to the Father must be made according to the will and by the authority of the name of Jesus. Those who expect to gain the Father's ear henceforward must abide in the teaching of the Son. Before Pentecost, of course, the disciples prayed to the Father under the Mosaic dispensation and gained the Father's ear as they, by faith, abode in the Mosaic teachings. But after Pentecost the Christian dispensation, the fulfillment of all the promises—the reality of all that had before been only shadow—would make their joy full. Christ would be able to do for them exceeding abundantly above all they ask or think.

May this section be an admonition to us that the Christ we have seen by the Spirit in the Word is more to be desired than the Christ seen with the physical eye. The Christ of the Spirit is the Christ who brings "joy unspeakable and full of glory," because He is the Christ in us, the hope of our glory (cf. II Cor. 3:12-18, 4:16-18; Col. 1:27, etc.).

Quiz

1. Why could the disciples not bear what Jesus had to say later in the Spirit?
2. Is what the apostles taught and wrote (the New Testament) all the truth which the Spirit reveals concerning salvation? Prove your answer!
3. Would the Spirit teach anything new—anything other than what Christ had already taught? If not, what would He teach?
4. How would their sorrow be turned to joy?
5. Why would they ask no questions after the coming of the Spirit?
6. What lesson is there in this discourse for believers today?

HIS VEILED SAYINGS WILL SOON BE MADE PLAIN

Text: 16:25-33

25 These things have I spoken unto you in dark sayings: the hour cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in dark sayings, but shall tell you plainly of the Father.

26 In that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you;

27 for the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came forth from the Father.

28 I came out from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go unto the Father.

29 His disciples say, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no dark saying.

30 Now know we that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God.

31 Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe?

32 Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.

33 These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye may have peace. In the world ye have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

Queries

- a. What are the "dark sayings" and when were they made plain?
- b. Was Jesus critical of the belief of the disciples (v. 31)?
- c. Why would they soon scatter and leave Jesus alone?

Paraphrase

I have spoken to you during My ministry, and especially these last hours, in veiled and disguised sayings. But the time is coming very soon when I shall come to you again no longer speaking in this veiled way but reporting to you plainly concerning the Father. When that time comes I shall no longer have to treat you as children who do not know how to pray to the Father for themselves as they ought, but you will have matured and know to pray in My name—in accord with My will and purpose for you. And you will have your requests answered by your loving Father and He has such love toward you because you have loved Me and have believed that I came from the presence of the Father. It is indeed true that I came from the very presence of the Father and came into the world to accomplish My mission. Now, hav-

ing almost completed My mission, I am about to leave the world and return unto the presence of the Father. His disciples then said, Ah, now you are no longer speaking to us in veiled sayings but in plain words. Now we know that every hidden thing is known by you and you have no need of anyone to ask you a question before you know what he is thinking. Because of this demonstration of omniscience we believe you have come from God. Jesus replied, Are you now so sure of Me as you think—do you now really believe? I say to you the time is very nearly here when you shall all be scattered, each going to his own interests, leaving me alone. However, I shall not really be left alone at all for My Father is with Me. I have told you all of these things so that your faith in Me may be strengthened and thus you may have peace in Me. In the world you have anxiety and pressure but be courageous for I have conquered the world and all its fears and anxieties.

Summary

Jesus promises that the time is coming very soon when all His dark sayings will be made plain. The disciples will not be able to endure the brutal frankness of some of it and will be temporarily scattered.

Comment

The "these things" of v. 25 refers especially to what Jesus had been teaching His disciples that very night concerning His "going away" and "coming again." And, as a matter of fact, He had been speaking the truth of God to them with a veil upon it all through His public ministry (cf. Matt. 11:25-30; 13:10-17). In Matt. 13:10-17 Jesus quotes Isaiah 6 and gives one reason it was necessary for Him to speak in riddles, parables and veiled sayings—the hardness of the hearts of those who listened. Another reason is given in Matt. 11:25-30 and that is the concern of the Lord for the spiritually immature. The disciples fell into one or the other of these categories practically all of their days with Jesus before the resurrection. They had cluttered their minds with thoughts of an earthly kingdom and they were not prepared to be taught plainly (although Jesus did speak plainly with them at times) all the things Jesus had to teach them concerning His relationship to the Father and the Kingdom of God. Of course, Jesus was also prevented from speaking plainly about the whole work of redemption because the whole work of redemption had not yet been accomplished. He had spoken previously in veiled sayings concerning:

- a. His resurrection—"raising up the temple in three days."
- b. His crucifixion—"lifted up as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness."

- c. Partaking of His divine nature—"eating His flesh and drinking His blood."
- d. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit—"the water of life which flows out from future believers."

And in these last hours He had spoken of the "resting places" He was going to prepare; of seeing the Father in Him; of abiding in Him as branches in the Vine; of His going away and coming again by sending the Comforter; of the hatred of the world but His conquest of the world. All the truth represented by these parables and allegories would have been even less comprehensible to the disciples had it been spoken bluntly and plainly. Their immature but growing faith in Jesus might have been wounded beyond healing had He spoken openly. It is highly possible that they would have been so offended (cf. Matt. 16:21-28) at continued plain teaching about His death and the spiritual kingdom as to leave Him never to return.

But Jesus knew just how plain and just how veiled to be with these men and thus fan the spark of faith within their hearts into a fire that would endure. And this fire, after being refueled with the power of the resurrection and the Holy Spirit, would radiate and empower them to spread the flame of the gospel to the whole world.

One only need turn from the parabolic teachings of Jesus in the Gospels to the plain and unveiled teachings of Jesus (through the apostles) in the epistles to see the fulfillment of the promise in v. 25. The atonement, justification, the church, godliness—all are made plain in the epistles. When the Spirit came He led them into all truth. He made the way so plain that even the wayfaring men would not err therein (cf. Isa. 35:8). The way to come into covenant relationship with the salvation provided by Christ is plain enough for children to understand in the book of Acts. Exhortations on living the christian life are just as plainly stated in the epistles. Someone has said that the epistles are amplifications and interpretations by the Spirit openly of all that Jesus taught parabolically and in guarded form in the gospels. There seems to be some justification for this idea in a comparison of the gospels with the epistles.

Be that as it may, one of the important points to notice here is that the One who is going to make the "dark sayings" to become "plain" is none other than Jesus Himself returned to the disciples in the Spirit.

Besides the fact that upon His return in the Spirit will they have the hidden made plain, they will also pray with a new frankness and openness. Before they did not know how to pray as they ought (cf. Luke 11:1-4ff). Jesus had to teach them the things that were within the scope of His purpose and will for which they should pray. He had

to teach them how to pray—persistently, humbly, and forgivingly. And so He informs them that in "that day" (the day when He should come in the Spirit) they would not only know how to pray and what to pray for "in His name" (according to His will), but they would also enjoy a new relationship to the Father through the atonement which Jesus would accomplish for them. Jesus will be their High Priest, constantly interceding on their behalf, but they will approach the Father directly through Him. All barriers would be removed. By prayer they, themselves, might henceforth come into the very presence of God their Father, whereas before His atonement all men were prohibited from the presence of God and approached Him only through an earthly priest.

This new relationship of the disciples with the Heavenly Father is founded upon the Father's love for them because of Jesus. It is interesting to see the "eternal love triangle" worked out here in verse 27. God sent His Son Jesus and loved us first that we might be drawn to love Him. When we then love His Son and believe that He came forth from God, God loves us even more because of our love for His Son, (cf. I Jn. 4:9-10).

In one concise statement (v. 28) Jesus sums up the central act of redemption. He relinquished the glories of heaven for a season to become the obedient servant (cf. II Cor. 8:9; Phil. 2:5-11). He came into the world in flesh incarnate and revealed the love of God. He is about to leave the world by the cross, the resurrection and the ascension. This statement is direct and clear. It is more direct than the statement in v. 16 which caused so much consternation among the disciples (v. 17). So the disciples are highly pleased that He is now speaking plainly. Their pleasure turns into amazement and then into a profession of increased belief of the deity of Jesus as they realize that Jesus did not need to ask any man anything. In verses 16-18 we find them discussing what Jesus had said in verse 16 which was such a puzzle to them. Beginning in verse 19 Jesus begins to answer their questions without asking them what their questions were. Jesus read their hearts like an open book. Suddenly it dawned on them that they were in the presence of One who had truly come forth from God and so they said, "Now we believe . . ."

What did Jesus mean by His reply in verse 31? Does He mean to deny their belief? No. It is not that the Lord is denying what belief they have professed, but that He is warning them not to be too sure of their own estimates of themselves. Jesus constantly warned the disciples against overestimating their own strength and abilities (cf. Matt. 26:31-35; Mark 14:27-31; Lk. 22:31-34; Jn. 14:36-38). So now He

says, "I accept your confession as genuine and sincere, but will your belief be strong enough to weather the coming storm?" When He should willingly surrender and allow Himself to be crucified as a common criminal would they still profess their belief in Him as One sent from the Father? It was not that Jesus was *critical* of what faith they had but He was fully aware of their weaknesses as well as their strengths. He was warning them against the fatal mistake of overestimating their own capabilities. What makes this so fatal is that one puts all his trust in his own capabilities and when failure comes (as it surely does to everyone) all hope for an overcoming power and all assurance of victory is gone. Paul the great apostle found this to be true in his own life. He found that in him dwelt no good thing. He came to the conclusion "Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. 7:15-25). And then he went on to show how victory is possible "in Christ" (Rom. 8:1-39).

Paul was constantly aware of the danger of overconfidence in oneself or the flesh and buffeted his body lest after preaching to others he himself might become a castaway (cf. I Cor. 9:27).

There is a great lesson for us here. We must beware of being too quick to say "We are able" (cf. Matt. 20:22). We must always remember the man who prayed, "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief" (Mark 9:24).

There is a prophecy from Zechariah 13:7 implied here in verse 32. The prophecy was quoted by Jesus in Matthew 26:31 and Mark 14:27. When Jesus was arrested the disciples at first made good their promise to fight for Him to the death. Peter drew his sword and would have fought there and laid down his life for his King. But when they realized that Jesus was going to offer no resistance but that He was going to submit to such humiliation, they forsook him and fled (cf. Matt. 26:47-56; Mark 14:43-52).

Just what Jesus meant when He said they would all be scattered, "every man to his own," is not certain. Probably He meant to say that each would return to his own home and daily pursuits. After having seen Him die they assumed that His work was defeated (cf. Luke 24:13-24) and when the women reported that the tomb was empty and that evidently someone had taken His body Peter and John assumed the women to be correct and went away again to their own home (cf. Jn. 20:10). Luke 24:24 indicates their discouragement even at the empty tomb. They went away and left Him alone, but Jesus was not alone for the Father was with Him in the darkest hours and raised Him from the tomb.

Jesus has spoken these things, foretelling the future, showing the fulfillment of prophecy, so that after they come to pass their faith will be strengthened and thus find peace by trusting in His omniscience and omnipotence. There are two sides to the peace which the believer has in Jesus. First there is the judicial peace which Jesus accomplishes on behalf of man between God and man. This judicial peace is accomplished at the cross where in His body He suffered the sentence and penalty of sin and took out of the way all the commandments that were against man (cf. Eph. 2:11-22; Col. 2:8-15) which we appropriate by being buried with Him by baptism. Having been united with His death by faith and obedience (Rom. 6:1-11; Gal. 3:26-27) and having appropriated that judicial peace to our souls, we find and realize that subjective peace of heart and soul which passes understanding (cf. Phil. 4:7).

We have this peace by trusting in Him even in the midst of a world filled with tribulation. Even though Christians must endure tribulation in the world they may be courageous and cheerful for Jesus has overcome the world. He has conquered and won the victory over all that the world can do. There is nothing that Satan or the world can do to defeat Jesus and His beloved children. Thus Jesus ends the dark and veiled sayings of this ominous night on a glorious note of victory! And the New Testament from the resurrection and appearances to the end of the book of Revelation is one grand *shout of victory!* (cf. for example Rom. 8:31-39; I Cor. 15:50-58; II Cor. 4:16—5:21; I Jn. 5:1-6).

The constant theme of the Old Testament prophets is that of God's ultimate victory over all His enemies.

Let this be the clarion call of twentieth century preaching—VICTORY IN JESUS! Men and women need victory for living in the here and now and victory when death makes its pretense of defeat. The surest way to make the preaching of the gospel relevant for this generation is to convince people of VICTORY IN JESUS!

Quiz

1. Why did Jesus speak to the disciples in veiled sayings?
2. When and how were these veiled things made plain?
3. What did Jesus mean by saying He would not pray for them?
4. What was Jesus' purpose in questioning their belief (v. 31)?
5. How did they scatter and go each man to his own?
6. What theme was used to end His dark sayings this dark night?

SERMON NO. SIXTEEN (TOPICAL)

We have chosen to deviate from expository type sermons in this one instance in order to give our readers a topical sermon which covers

briefly the whole scope of the Holy Spirit dwelling within the Christian.

CHRIST IN YOU THE HOPE OF GLORY

Text: Col. 1:27

Introduction

I. THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE CHRISTIAN IS THE ONE IMPERATIVE

- A. Christians are commanded "be filled with the Spirit . . ." Eph. 5:18
- B. Christians are told plainly, ". . . if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Rom. 8:9
- C. Jesus told Nicodemus, "Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Jn. 3:5

FRIEND, IF YOU DO NOT KNOW THE HOLY SPIRIT IN YOUR LIFE YOU ARE NOT FULFILLING THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH GOD CALLED YOU THROUGH THE GOSPEL.

AS ROMANS 8:9 SAYS, IF WE DO NOT HAVE THE HOLY SPIRIT, WE DO NOT BELONG TO CHRIST

- D. Now a person may have once received the Spirit and then resisted Him, quenched Him, done despite unto Him, lied unto Him, grieved Him

- 1. ONE MAY HAVE ONCE RECEIVED HIM, AND BY INDIFFERENCE OR WILFUL RESISTANCE COMPLETELY CAST HIM OUT OF HIS LIFE!

THIS IS A MOST IMPORTANT THEME . . . ONE UPON WHICH CHRISTIAN PEOPLE OUGHT TO CONCENTRATE AND STUDY AND LIVE

II. THERE IS SO MUCH CONFUSION IN THE RELIGIOUS WORLD TODAY ABOUT THE NATURE OF AND THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

- A. We are not talking about the special miraculous operation of the Holy Spirit
 - 1. This is the lesser and secondary work of the spirit anyway
- B. So many want to confuse this secondary work of the Spirit with the INDWELLING PRESENCE OF THE SPIRIT IN EVERY CHRISTIAN

THIS IS OUR SUBJECT THE INDWELLING PRESENCE OF THE SPIRIT WHICH IS THE MOST IMPORTANT WORK OF THE SPIRIT!

I DO NOT PROPOSE TO LEAD YOU TO A COMPLETE UNDERSTANDING OF THIS DIVINE PERSONALITY, THE HOLY SPIRIT IN ONE SERMON