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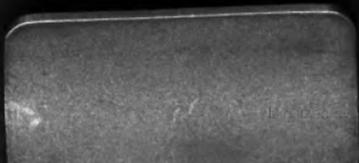
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LOVE TO THE END,

A BOOK FOR

THE COMMUNION SABBATH.

BY THE

REV. CHARLES E. KNOX.



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“Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.” *John* xiii. 1.

“‘His hour was come.’—The history of the passover begins. But with demonstrations and new exhibitions of love to *His own* before He departed from them. And by this expression the evangelist tells us that the inner (esoteric) portion of the gospel, its most essential mystery, is about to follow; awakening in every feeling heart a deep desire to taste at last and see how gracious he is to them who have been made his own,—how he com-

forts and solaces his own heart with them and imparts in all its fullness to them that which others have despised. If the history of the passion is generally the holy of holies in the new covenant, St. John, we would fain say, opens to us the very ark of the covenant—in the heart of the incarnate Saviour. Happy thou, dear reader, if the voice of the Spirit now crieth to thy spirit, ‘*come and see.*’ Thou art worthy to enter: thou also belongest to those who are *His own.*” *Rudolph Stier.*

“All inspired Scripture is not of equal intrinsic value. Some Scripture is but the means, the vehicle to other Scripture. All is not equally inward, equally near the heart of the infinite God, equally warm from the heart of infinite Love. . . . We may say, with all reverence, that the gospel of John is the central light of the Scriptures, even as the Scriptures are the central light of the world.

But this general enclosure embraces another more hallowed still. Within this central region are found the very words of Jesus. A step further brings us into the very holy of holies. Beyond the outward, didactic words of Christ, precious as they are, there are those inward (subjective) Scriptural utterances of the Holy One which are chiefly contained in the gospel of John and which reach their most intense centralization and spiritualization in the seventeenth chapter or in the Redeemer's priestly prayer. Here is the very heart of hearts. Here the human soul meets God, if there can be, in thought and language, a medium of communication between the finite and the infinite."

Taylor Lewis.

LOVE TO THE END.

THE APPOINTED HOUR.

● “When Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own, he loved them unto the end.”

Now within these sacred hours, which here begin and which reach their height in the intercessory prayer, the divine Redeemer sweetly draws the disciples to himself. Girding himself for his great agony, he condescends to take the strong human sympathy of Christian love as solace for the hour of suffering. Himself above all such need, he yet takes large draughts from intimate spiritual affection on earth, and permits his disciples to

quench their thirst—the thirst which he never felt,—with the delicious draught.

All these *sinful* disciples are drawn into sweet, pure intimacy, as if they never had been guilty. Peter who has it in him yet to deny, and Thomas who has it in him to doubt, and John who wished to call fire upon the Samaritan village, and James, who a few days before sought the ambitious place at the right hand of an earthly king: he knows what they all have been, what they all will be. But yet they are one with him. The world is now excluded. He himself is not *above* them, but is *of* them.

This is the intimacy of the deep, sweet, sacred fellowship. *To the end* was his love. To the end of his work: to the end of his life: to the very hour before life itself was given up to the power of sinful man. To the end of his own personal enjoyment, till personal freedom must be surrendered

for the great work's sake. *To the end*, while the mighty work for which he came, lay but a night's watch in advance. *To the end*, when the great agony must press his spirit before the morning light, and the deeper agony of the cross before the sun goes down again.

So calm and so omniscient! So peaceful in his great love for his sinful disciples,—so deeply devoted to his twelve, and taking no leave of them for a single day to prepare in solitude his spirit for its mighty work and mightier anguish!

But the disciples—they knew not as he did. They could not foresee. And they were not prepared yet for the full disclosure of himself to them. And even after they come into that upper chamber, it is by gradual degrees of approach, by tests of purification and obedience, that they come at length to the profoundest intimacy. It is most delightful to see how impercepti-

bly, he leads them, in spiritual intercourse with himself, from one court to another inwards, till he brings them to the ark of the most holy place. It is most delightful for *us now* to see how he there filled their souls with a light and a love, which they in dim consciousness received, but which were to them, forever after the resurrection morning, the source of a continual and an unspeakable joy. Happy will it be for you, dear reader, if to-day as you come to the Lord's table, you can come into this sweet, pure intimacy with Him. Happy will it be if, taking the degrees by which the disciples came, you reach the same inner sanctuary of his love.

Let us take up then, the successive steps, by which Jesus unfolded His love to the end to his disciples, as they are shown in these chapters, and try to have Him lead us to that same sacred confi-

dence, in which He opens to "his own," all his heart.

Let us follow in simple order the narrative of the evangelists during the hours of that Thursday evening.

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THE DESCENT OF HUMILITY.

IN the slow-moving hours of that evening, in which to the disciples, every moment is long from its sacredness and preciousness, we have first indicated to us in the washing of the disciples' feet, *the descent of humility*.

They had come into that upper room, notwithstanding all his instructions, from a worldly atmosphere. Their thoughts even of their Master had been always quick to come back to the worldly character of the Messiah's kingdom. At times, at least, they caught the great conception of the spiritual kingdom, but we are forced to think that the most of them were chiefly intent on the earthly style of the earthly reign. "They understood

none of the things" which he said on his way up to the city,* when he spoke of delivery to the Gentiles, of mockery and spiteful treatment and insults of spitting and scourging. At that very time, James and John, supposing that he was about to proclaim himself, sought the right hand and the left hand of the throne.† And the ten are jealous and indignant. They could none of them comprehend what he meant by saying that he would be put to death and would rise again. They were eager and glad when the acclaim of many voices hailed him king of Israel. At last, all the city was moved, as he came riding, amid welcomes, from Olivet within the city gates. And now, just at that opportune hour, when he might have established his throne in the holy capital, when

* Luke xviii. 34.

† The comparison of the three descriptions will show how harshly inopportune was their request. See Matt. xx. 17-19, 20-29; Mark x. 32-34, 35-46; Luke xviii. 31-34.

he himself was saying, "The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified," they could not rise to the significance of his words, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and *die*, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."* They were still far down on that low level from which the people asked, "We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth *forever*; and how sayest thou that the Son of man must be lifted up?"† From this atmosphere of worldly thought and worldly feeling, the disciples had come in at evening to the private supper of the passover. The pride and ambition of life stirred in them. *With* their king, amidst the multitude of Olivet and Jerusalem four days before, they had thought success to them as well as to Him was come; and they could not see in to-morrow and the cross that transcendent

* John xii. 23, 24.

† John xii. 32-38.

success to which Christ looked. There was need, therefore, if they would come closely into contact with him, that their spirit of pride, ambition, independence, investiture of their Master with earthly rank and dignity, should be taken away.

Still more intense than this was their *feeling*. "There was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted greatest."* Although the paschal lamb had been offered and they were now to eat the portion from the holy altar of the Lord, they were still intent on their selfish plans. Their feelings were moved more intensely than usual at this accustomed feast only because they looked to a kingly coronation. Even the answer of their Lord to their strife, in which he compares the lordship of earthly kings and rulers with the spiritual Kingdom which he appoints for them, falls heavy on their ear

* Luke xxii. 24.

The answer calms their jealousy only because he promises them all thrones on which they shall judge the twelve tribes of Israel.

And now we see them reclining in their places around the table.* Jesus had already reclined at the head of the table. There are no servants to perform the hospitable act of feet-washing. The lingering jealousy keeps each one of them from offering his services to the company, when Jesus himself arises and lays aside his robe or mantle, girds himself with a towel, pours the water into the basin and *begins* to wash their feet. The washing of the feet, designed to bring down their over-

* The translation "supper being ended," in the second verse, is better rendered *supper having come* or *during supper*. "Did not the feet-washing at other times precede the supper? We remark in reply, that the fact that they had all gone to the table, by no means implies that the washing did not precede their eating. It was customary to wash the outstretched feet, as the guest lay upon the cushions, as in Luke vii. 38."—THOLUCK.

excited spirit to lower thoughts and feelings, must have reduced if it did not dissipate their earthly expectations. With a love which has no reproach in it, he takes the humble office! At the act, a flood of self-reproach pours over themselves. The new lesson of humility touches the very depth of their heart. For it penetrates far beneath the outer pride and outer strife. Had they not been long with Jesus? Had they not heard the lesson of humility many times?—"Whoso exalteth *himself* shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted;" "He that is least among you all, the same shall be great;" "Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven;" "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart?" Had they not seen, during all their life with him, his self-denial

and humble spirit? And had they not thought that they themselves had been receiving something of that same spirit? Is it so! *that they* who had so long been received into affectionate confidence, needed such an act as this from the Lord? Yes, disciple, though you have been so long with the Master, the high thoughts of life, even of Christian life, need just such descent as this, until your humility is thorough and entire. You cannot know what *His* love is, in the purest and sweetest intimacy, without coming down first of all into this valley.

Think of that inconceivable act of humility in the Saviour, and apply it to yourself as well as to the twelve. "Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come to God and went to God,"*—here is *divinity*, the

* "The gospel is divided into three parts, of which the sum is, I have come from the Father: I have been in the world: I go to the Father."—BENGL.

indications of his omniscience and omnipotence. "*Knowing*" all this, "*he riseth from supper,*"—here is the man; and laid aside his garment—and took a towel—and girdeth himself,—here is the servant; after that he poureth water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet,—here is the servant of servants; and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded,—the servant's work is a menial office. So simple is the description of the act; so inconceivable is the act itself; so inconceivable the contrast! Whose feet did he wash? the feet of Peter! the feet of Thomas! the feet of him who lifted up the heel against him! "O humility unmatched," says one, "he washes the feet that trod on him."*

Two incidents occur to deepen forever the impression of that great act of lowliness. Peter's pride cries out against his

* Hiller quoted by Stier.

Lord's lowly bearing; and, yielding, gives the example to all disciples—to you to-day—of abasing high thoughts implicitly to the Saviour's self-denying command.* And Jesus declares Judas not clean by the great regeneration which the act symbolizes—an example again to all disciples—to us, to-day,—of a hard, high, selfish pride, untouched, insensitive to any holy, solemn appeal from the Saviour's tenderness,—not susceptible of the principle of that blessed abasement, through which and through which only love divine flows into the soul. To-day, if we gain the inner place of the Saviour's love, it must be, first of all, by consenting as Peter consented, as they all but one consented, to go down the descent of humility.

* "That feeling of distance from the Lord, that, at the very beginning, displays itself in Peter in so heart-moving a form (Luke v. 8, 'Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man,') is aroused here also when he beholds at his feet the Son of the Living God."—THOLUCK.

To refuse the abasement of self, is to have the spirit of Judas, whom no symbols however applied, could make every whit clean! To-day, the Saviour, as he returns again to the head of the table, speaks to you: "Know ye what I have done unto you." "Ye call me Master and Lord." "The servant is not greater than his Lord, neither is he that is sent greater than he that sent him."

THE CLEANSING OF THE COMPANY.

And now follows the second stage in the approach to that condition to which the divine Redeemer will fully reveal himself. This second stage is the cleansing of the company.

Up to this time, the false and the true had been mingled in that sacred company. But there is no unfolding of the doors through which the flood of love pours itself, until the unclean spirit is cast out. Although every loving disciple had been abased by His act of deep humility, yet must Jesus pierce his breast again. What he had already said to excite their alarm, "Ye are not all clean," he now deepens with repeated force, which must have cut suddenly and sharply into their feeling:

“I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen, but that the Scripture might be fulfilled: *He that eateth bread with me, hath lifted up the heel against me.*” Then was Jesus himself troubled in spirit, as if he hesitated to let fall that other dreadful blow on his cherished band.* They had learned to respect so profoundly his divine insight and penetration that they would rather believe his own word *against themselves*, than their own consciousness in their own favor. It was He who knew what was in man, who solemnly sent that piercing sentence through all that circle: “Verily, verily I say unto you that one of you shall betray me;” “Behold the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table.”† Whatever they understood the betrayal or the con-

* “It is in keeping with Christ’s character, that the thought of the faithless disciple mightily agitates his inmost soul.” THOLUCK.

† Luke xxii. 21.

sequence of it was to be, they knew it was the traitorous violation of that solemn holy intimacy to which he had admitted them all. In pain and suspense, the disciples looked at each other. How the self-reproach of deficiency and of active sin must have stirred the heart at that solemn moment! With what quick glance did each look back along his life since he had been with Jesus and before! Not one was free from self-distrust. "And they began to inquire among themselves which of them it was that should do this thing."* "And they were exceeding sorrowful and began *every one* of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?"† The answer of their Lord moves on with firm directness and with clearer emphasis: "*He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me.*"‡ And the awful curse fore-heralding the final judg-

* Luke xxii. 23.

† Matt. xxvi. 22.

‡ Matt. xxvi. 23.

ment follows: "The Son of man goeth as it is written, but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed: it had been good for that man if he had not been born."* The beckoning of Peter to John, the question of John to Jesus,† and the answer of Jesus, ("He it is to whom I shall give a sop,")‡ which was no doubt a private conversation rather than open and aloud, follow here. And even when Judas by *his* question ("Then Judas which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I,") is indicated as the apostate, ("He said unto him, Thou hast said,") the suspense is not entirely relieved. Jesus gives the sop to Judas. Satan enters into him.§ And now that

* Matthew xxvi. 24.

† "Jesus answered:" John xiii. 26—"into John's ear."—BEN-
GEL.

‡ "One of his disciples whom Jesus loved." "It is more desirable to be loved by Jesus than to be distinguished by one's name."—BEN-
GEL.

§ "Up to this moment, we may suppose that there was vacilla-
3

the guilty one is made known, still the purpose for which he is sent from the company is known only to the foreseeing Saviour. "No man at the table knew for what intent" he said unto him, "That thou doest, do quickly." "He then, having received the sop, went immediately out; *and it was night.*"*

The *company is cleansed*. "Now," says Lampe,† "as if the barrier had broken, torrents of grace are poured from the lips of Jesus."

Fearful it is to think that *now* within the church of this divine Redeemer, there

tion in the soul of the betrayer, whether he would execute his agreement or not. The increasing distinctness of our Lord may have been in correspondence with the increasing distinctness of the purpose in the heart of Judas; and not until now, when his determination to give up his Lord is fully ripened, can Jesus no longer endure his presence."—THOLUCK.

* "This close of the narrative concerning Judas has something awful; and its very simplicity and brevity of expression are profoundly impressive."—MEYER.

† Quoted by Stier.

are those who are willing to betray him: who, when the test, by life or by the final trial, is finished, will betray him. The painful declaration must be made again from the lips of the Saviour, to his church: "Truly there are those among you, who will betray me." Painful let it be to your heart; but it is the declaration for the cleansing of the company, that you who *are* "his own," may come nearer to him. There will be no formal separation to-day, it may be, of the apostate from your assembly. The unclean may not go out to leave you an unmingled company of Jesus' "own." *That* condition of the visible company is not necessary for *your* nearest approach to him; but that you should have the cleansing of the company, in your heart, *is* necessary. To the lowly act of abasement must be added the separation of yourself from apostacy and from that disbelief or

that distant confidence which might be the first source of final and complete alienation. While you say in distrust of self and in confidence in Him, "Lord, is it I," put the apostate and the unclean far from you. Cast them and their work out into night and darkness; and in the private act of your own spirit, with the help offered by Jesus, cleanse the company of thought, affection, ambition: that the barrier, being broken, the torrents of grace may be poured from the lips of Jesus on your soul.

THE COMMUNICATION OF HIS PURPOSE.

NEARER still our Lord brings his chosen ones to himself. Now that he has chastened their spirit, now that he has cleansed away the evil thing—now that the vestibule is passed, he takes them within the inner courts of his love. The third advance is in the communication of his own purpose to them. The divine knowledge sees Judas now preparing his plans in the darkness; and parallel with their preparation, Jesus discloses to his disciples what is to be in respect to himself. “When Judas was gone out,” Jesus said, “Now is the Son of man glorified and God is glorified in him. If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself and shall straightway

glorify him." It is at least clear to their imperfect apprehension, that he is not long to be with them; and that the words which he now utters are the farewell words of a departure. "Yet a little while, I am with you." "As I said to the Jews, whither I go ye cannot come, so now I say to you." My farewell address to you, my new and last commandment is, "Love one another as I have loved you." The bold Peter asks, "Whither goest thou?" The Saviour tells him that he goes where *he* cannot follow him *now*. The bolder Peter rashly and ignorantly offers exposure to any peril rather than to leave him. The prediction that Peter would so soon prove false, denying acquaintance with him, then follows. Danger they clearly see; for they all declare that they will prove their attachment by death itself, rather than leave him.* And he says, Now will you

* Matthew xxvi. 35; Mark xiv. 31.

need your purse and scrip and garments.* Two swords are produced; either because some of the disciples had them ready to try strength in establishing the Messiah's kingdom, or because they are found in the chamber. They are pronounced enough. The disciples could not fail to perceive, they *did* perceive, that he was to leave them. And more and more as the conversation goes on is his purpose made clear. From this point onwards in his discourses the idea of separating from them is present in some form. "Let not your heart be troubled"—by my departure. "I go to prepare a place for you." "I will come again and receive you to myself." "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you." "Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away and come again to you."

Another more solemn proof is given.

* Luke xxii. 35, 36.

It is in the midst of such predictions as these in respect to his own departure, that that other most significant scene takes place, unlike the feet-washing to be a perpetual ordinance in remembrance of their *departed* Lord. "This do in remembrance of me." Break this bread. It represents my broken body. This cup is the New Testament in my blood. It is my blood shed in agreement with the new covenant which was made. "This do ye as oft as ye drink it in remembrance of me." And then even more clearly than ever in this symbolized representation of death, does he plainly speak his purpose to *die*, when he says, "For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew the *Lord's death* till he come."* "This is my blood, shed *for you*."† "This is my blood shed for *many*."‡ "This is

* 1 Corinthians xi. 26. † Luke xxii. 20. ‡ Mark xiv. 24.

my blood of the New Testament, shed for *many for the remission of sins.*"*

In more impressive form therefore, than if he had plainly told them that he was soon to die, did he unfold his purpose. By slow degrees did he open it to them that it might be more clearly written in their personal history and that the slow-moving history of those hours might impress all his followers through all ages, till he comes again. Around this great central disclosure, the whole conversation of the fourteenth chapter is wove. The chief thought is that of going to the Father. Let not your hearts be troubled, though I die. In my Father's house† are many mansions, among which I go to prepare you a place. I will come and take you to the place where I am, that I

* Matthew xxvi. 28.

† "'House.'—A rare title of the heavenly habitation, an abode into which the children are admitted, where the Father dwells."—**BENDEL.**

may have you with me. And I have now made known to you both the place and the way to it. The dull Thomas understands yet neither. "Lord we know *not* whither thou goest and how *can* we know the *way*," says the desponding as well as the doubting disciple. "No man can reach the Father's house," says the Saviour, "but by following me; I am therefore the way; and I am the truth, so that it is impossible for him who is with me, to go astray; and I am the *life itself*, so that following me, you cannot miss the end to which the way leads. If ye had *fully* known me, ye would have already known my Father also. The material Philip says: "Lord *show* us the Father and it is sufficient." And Jesus first answering directly his request by asserting the unity of Father and Son, gradually leads their thoughts back again to his departure to his Father: "and greater works

than these shall he do, because I go to my Father." In all these shades of the one thought of going to the Father, associated with the thought of prayer to Him in his Father's House, he gives them the foundation of future comfort—the blessed prospect of meeting him again—a source of comfort which they will deeply appreciate as time goes on. And so also that other great truth next to this central purpose of going to the Father, made known to them in the promise of the Spirit, is connected directly with his departure to the Father. In his Father's presence, he will pray for the Comforter and Truth-giver to be sent. To his people shall he come, that they may be solaced after their Master is gone: that they may be guided rightly by one whom the world cannot receive. Then shall ye know that the Son is in the Father and ye are in me and I in you. By that Spirit, I will be manifest

to you as I will not be manifest to the world. With the thought still in his mind that Jesus was speaking of temporal rule, Judas Lebbeus asks how he can make himself known as King to them and not to the world.* In his answer to Judas Lebbeus also, first directly answering him with the thought of the Father's abode in man, he leads the thoughts of them all to the sending of the Spirit by the Father and to his own departure to his Father. The Comforter, whom my Father will send you thence in my name, will be to you Teacher of all things: he will be Reminder of all which I have said to you.

In thus unfolding the three parts of his one great purpose to his disciples,—first, that he will soon leave them,—

* "How is it possible, thought he, that the king of nations will not show himself to that world which he is to rule and judge."—LUCKE quoted by LEWIS and VINCENT.

secondly, that he is soon to die for many for the remission of their sins,—and, thirdly, that the Holy Spirit will come to them—in unfolding these three parts of his purpose just to that degree to which he did unfold it, he had all the while in mind that principle which he clearly states, when he comes to the end of this part of his discourses with them: “And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe.” They could not grasp the purpose till the *one great fact* should be accomplished. In that event the purpose itself should receive its great chief impulse towards its full accomplishment. But in making known to them so far, this purpose,—in giving them, in the present obscurity, the future light,—in the present imperfection, the future completeness,—in the present narrowness of knowledge, the future greatness of knowledge,

comfort, hope, peace, rest,—he was taking them within another inner circle of his divine love. In their spirit, coming closer than before to his Spirit, calmed by his strong, restful manner towards them and by their ripening confidence in him, they could now feel what afterwards they would feel in increasing measure,—the truth of that blessing when Jesus said: “Peace I leave with you. My peace I give unto you—not as the world giveth, give *I* unto *you*. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” The Father’s great plan however must be accomplished—“As the Father giveth me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.”*

Blessed intimacy of friendship—but from which he will lead them to intimacy more profound.

* “However that the world may see that I love the Father, come, let us go hence.”—ERRARD.

THE CLOSENESS OF CONFIDENCE.

FROM this confidential declaration of his purpose, our Lord now teaches his disciples, as the fourth approach to his most private earthly feeling, the *closeness of their confidence*.

First, the intimacy of their mutual love is illustrated; and then the future, with its tests of persecution and sorrow and joy, is opened.

The branch of the fruitful vine, is no more intimately united to the stalk than is the finite joined to the infinite friend.*

* "That the discourses that follow to chapter xviii. were uttered on the way as they went by night out of the city (Grotius) is hardly supposable, at least in the case of the prayer, chapter xvii. It thus seems probable, that, in the very intent of going, it happened, as is wont with persons about to depart, the impulse to communicate more, still detained the Saviour in the room, (Gerhard.) We may compare the reported forms of closing in Paul's

The closeness of fibre to fibre, is the closeness of the union between the disciple and the Master. In this deeper confidence into which you now enter, must you abide, if you would have its blessed results. "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered." And "*If* you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you."* This is the principle of the deep union into which we now enter.

Epistles, for example in the Epistle to the Romans." See Romans xv. 33; xvi. 20, 24, 27. "To everything that is uttered in this chapter, as in the allegory with which it opens, the feeling that the hour of separation has come, imparts its tone. Departing, yet remaining—this is the thought that lies at the root of this beautiful allegory. We may imagine that it was suggested by some outward occasion, a vine, perhaps, trailing by the side of the window."—THOLUCK.

"This image, introduced so suddenly, may have been suggested by something at the moment, perhaps by a *glance at the cup of wine*, (compare Matthew xxvi. 29,) which at this meal, had been so important."—MEYER quoted by LEWIS and VINCENT.

* "The correlatives are, the words of Jesus which are obeyed and the prayers of believers which are heard."—BENJEL.

He describes the *endurance* of that loving union. The love which my Father has to me, that love bear I to you. To you I solemnly declare it: with my chosen, cherished ones, do I wish its continuance. To them, I pledge my constancy. "Continue ye in my love." That love which I keep towards my Father, by keeping his commandments, may you keep towards me by keeping my commandments. And the reason why I say these things to you, is that the joy* which is in me, which ever remains in me, which is ever full in me, may remain ever in you and may be full.

He opens the *depth* of that deepening union. The love which I pledge to you, must be your bond to each other. And the greatness of my love is the greatness of that love which lays down life for

* Eleventh verse, "My joy." "The joy which I feel at my departure to the Father,—a joy flowing from love."—BENJEL.

friendship's sake. Through all my open life, I have called you to be my servants; but you have now been admitted to such friendship. And it is that friendship in which I make known unto you all things which I have heard of my Father. Into this sacred bond you could not bring yourselves, but into it I have chosen you. And now, united in this bond, you may ask of my Father whatsoever you will in my name and for *my sake, he shall* give it unto you.

This was the sinless Saviour's method of drawing near his heart these sinful men; condescending, as he did, to assert the depth, the compass of that love which he felt towards "his own."

But it is not simply in the *private* declaration of esteem that love is made known. And therefore the Saviour does not stop here. He shows that all things outside themselves shall put to the test the

strength of that bond. The world shall hate you. Persecution shall come upon you. The synagogues shall cut you off. The murderer who strikes you dead, shall think himself in God's service. "In the world you shall have tribulation." And all this shall prove the strength of that inner bond. As the bond of love within is one, the hatred without is one. The union which makes Master and disciple one in filial love to the Father, makes them one in receiving persecution from this world. Because men know nothing of the Father or of the Son, nothing of their love to Each Other, nothing of their love to their "own," therefore will they do these things. Because he knows not God, will he that killeth, think that he doeth God's service. Because their synagogues refuse the presence of the Master, will they cast off the disciple. Because I suffer the agony, will you have

the tribulation. But the outer test will show the inner strength. The world will hate, but I will love. Persecution, excommunication, death, will come; but you shall remember that in this secret place, I told you of them and my love forewarned and fore-strengthened you. Against the world, my Spirit shall come to your help, for the reproof and the conviction of men. Convicting of sin, righteousness and judgment, He shall convert; and converting and guiding you into all truth, He shall glorify *me*. It is best for you that I go away that I may send this Comforter unto you.* While I remain, He will not come.† After a little while, I depart: after a little while, I come

* John xvi. 7, "If I should not take away the tender aliment on which I have fed you, ye would not hunger after solid food." AUGUSTINE quoted by THOLUCK.

† "It was not fitting that Jesus should be present in weakness and the Holy Spirit in power at the same time."—BENGEL.

again: then I go to my Father.* You shall weep and lament, when I depart, but the world shall rejoice; but when I come again, your sorrow shall be turned into joy. "I will see you again and your heart shall rejoice and your joy no man taketh from you." You have loved me, —you have believed that I came forth from God; therefore the Father loveth you. And plainly now I say to you, "I came forth from the Father and am come into the world; and now I leave the world and go to the Father."

Now the disciples understand. "Lo now speakest thou plainly and speakest no proverb." Now since thou hast answered our hearts without our asking thee,† we are sure that thou knowest all things and needest not that any should

* "A little while.—Not without reason is this so often repeated."
—BENDEL.

† Compare verses 17, 18, 19 with 29, 30.

ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God.”

“These things I have spoken to you,” said Jesus, “that when this very hour, you shall be scattered, leaving me alone, every man among you going to his ‘own,’” ye may in me have peace. “In the world ye *shall* have tribulation, but be of good cheer, *I have overcome* the world.”*

Taking them therefore within the inner circle of his love and friendship, he prepares them for the outer conflict. And preparing them for the outer conflict, he proves the strength for the conflict, which comes from intimacy with himself.

* “The three ideas, the spiritual return of Christ in the souls of his disciples, the emancipation to independence of life with the Father, and the victory over the world, form the thread which runs through all the farewell discourses.”—SCHWEIZER quoted by THOLUCK.

“The tranquil clearness with which these discourses terminate, forms the transition to that exaltation of the soul of Christ in prayer which now follows.”—THOLUCK.

THE HEART OF HEARTS.

It is after the disciples have passed through these successive stages of approach to the Saviour's own spiritual life,—their intellect most imperfectly apprehending the wonderful acts and wonderful words of their divine Master, but their spirit wonderfully subdued, softened, purified, as he has led them on,—it is most of all, after he has melted their hearts into one by the copious outflow of his condescending and confiding love, that he opens to them unreservedly, all his heart. It is now—and not till now—that he permits them to see what is the deep, intimate intercourse between the Father and the Son.

In this sublime intercessory prayer,

“the human soul” regenerate, does indeed “meet God,”—and not simply “in thought and language,” but in that subtle feeling which is quicker than forms of thought, in that profound contact of the soul with the divine Spirit which is God’s chosen “medium of communication between the finite and the infinite.” It is vain to try to describe by words that solemn, profound mystery in which the Spirit of the Eternal Creator and the spirit of the creature meet, to the unspeakable, solemn delight of man’s soul. It is the billow meeting the ocean. It is the drop meeting the one all-inclusive sea. It is the soul, in all its capabilities of pure pleasure, dismissed freely to disport in the ocean, in the atmosphere, in the sun-light of divine love,—every ability in action to the fullness of power, penetrating, whithersoever it will, into the divine depths, and every capability drinking

copiously and without cloy, only and only still, of purity and pleasure. But although it is vain to try to catch the feeling which is above and beneath and beyond language, we may still represent to ourselves what the divine expression of the divine feeling was in this its most profound manifestation before men.*

Look now reverently and believably—
O admitted disciple,—into this great prayer. Look freely and devoutly into its parts and see how much it comprehends. It comprehends—the finishing of the

* "It is," says Luther, "assuredly beyond measure, an ardent, heartfelt prayer, in which he opens both to us and to his Father, the depth of his heart and pours it all forth. Plain and simple as it sounds, it is so deep, rich and broad, that no man can fathom it."—THOLUCK.

"No more worthy, holy or fruitful or more touching voice was ever heard in heaven and earth than this prayer of the very Son of God."—MELANCTHON.

"Go, read where I cast my first anchor," said John Knox to his wife, from his dying bed; and she read the seventeenth chapter of John's gospel and afterwards a part of Calvin's sermons on Ephesians.

great work,—the redemption of his own disciples—his intercession for their continual safety—the redemption of saints for all time,—the great, final gathering in the heavenly world.* Before his chosen only, the Holy Saviour prays in holy confidence, lifting his eyes to heaven† and breathing to the Supreme and equal

* “First he prays for himself, then for the whole church and for it he implores the four principal things of the church,—the preservation of the doctrine, concord in the church, the application of his sacrifice and the last and highest good, that the church with Christ may be invested with life, joy and eternal glory.”—MELANCTHON quoted by THOLUCK.

† “The lifting up of his eyes to heaven does not prove that our Lord uttered this prayer in the open air; the eyes of a person in prayer must be turned in some direction. The upward turning of them rests on that natural symbolism, in accordance with which even that man who possesses a clear view of the omnipresence of God, imagines to himself the heavens, in view of their brightness, height and illimitable extension, as the habitation of God. It is possible that through the window, simply closed with a lattice, the look of Christ extended out upon the nocturnal sky, bright with the Easter moon.”—THOLUCK.

‡ “Father—so Jesus addresses him as Father, absolutely, four times in this sweet and prolonged prayer; and twice with an epithet: in all only six times, and that generally at the beginning



Father.‡ He declares to the Father the hour come, his work finished, the work the Father gave him to do, eternal life given to as many as are appointed to receive it, the full knowledge of One God, the Only and the True, and of Jesus the Messiah sent by the Father, the glory of God made fully known on earth. The great mission done, eternal life given to as many as the Father has given him, the infinite Spirit seeks again its throne of life and glory. This! *this!* is made known to finite men!

He declares to the Father, that his "own," his Father's "own," (O sweet word!) are saved. The Father's name has been shown to these men out of a sin—of a new part of the discourse—verses 1, 5, 11, 21, 24, 25. The names of God should not be accumulated in prayer, but addressed to him sparingly and reverentially as Hottinger, in his treatise on the names of God among the orientals, shows that the Hebrews also teach. Such simplicity of address became the Son of God above all: and as each believer has his soul best prepared for confidence in prayer, he can but imitate that simplicity."—BENJEL.

ful world. They have recognized his name, for they have kept his word. They have believed—they have known that all things which the Son has, were the Father's. The words which the Father gave the Son to be delivered to them, they have received. They have known Jesus as the Son who came forth from God. They have believed that God sent Him as their Redeemer.

And then with what varied earnestness, like a man, all-feeling—with what force, penetrating to their hearts, like a God, all-seeing—does he intercede for them: Separating them distinctly from the world—“not for the world, but for them which thou didst give me, I pray”—he pleads; by the Father's redemptive right to them,—“for they are thine”—by the Father and the Son's common right in them—“all mine are thine and thine are mine”—by the Son's glory in redeeming them—“and

I am glorified in them"—by their exposure in the world, left now without his care—"I am no more in the world, but these are"—by the oneness of the result in the redeemed life of the future,—“that they may be one, as we are”—by his own preservation of them while he was with them, the son of perdition only being lost,*—by the joy—"my joy"—to be fulfilled in them, by the hatred of the world, by the evil of the world, by their separation from the world, by their sanctity through the truth-word, by the likeness of their commission to his own—"As thou hast sent me, so have I sent them,"—and greatest, holiest of all, by his own sanctification for their sakes.† Who can

* "In his very prayer, there is a glimpse of, or a sad remembrance of his betrayer."—LUTHER quoted by THOLUCK.

† "I sanctify myself."—"An euphemism (substitution of an agreeable for a disagreeable phrase,) befitting Christ's love: I sanctify myself in coming death, and that death the death of the cross."—BENGEL.

imagine the unutterable emotions of that hour in the souls of the eleven for whom he was interceding.*

For *their* work too he prays: for the redemption of all saints through their witness, for all that shall believe through their word,—the world in extent, the world in time included in one breath of prayer: that all saints may have oneness of heart as Father and Son have oneness: that the world may be convinced of his mission: that by their common glory and their very oneness, the world may *know* that the Father loves the Son's disciples as he loves the Son himself.

The end of earth is reached; and now he goes beyond earth. For the ingathering of all disciples who *now* are, and of all disciples who will be, to himself,

* "How mighty in its effect upon the disciples must have been the memory of that prayer. Our Lord himself intimates this in verse thirteen."—THOLUCK.

where they may know his own divine glory and the Father's infinite love to his infinite Son, he prays.* And so, having compassed, within his own heart, all the children of God's love, redeemed by his own work,—having gathered them finally where they may see his eternal glory and his eternal love, he breathes again the sum of all his desire in the last words. Hear him saying to his righteous Father,—that the world knows not God, that He has known God, that his disciples recognize Him and His mission, that He has declared God to his disciples and will declare Him; *so that*, having knowledge of what God is, having knowledge of what Father and Son are to each other, *the love*

* Twenty-fourth verse.—“‘I will.’ Jesus asks with right and demands with confidence, as Son not as servant.”—BENDEL.

“‘Father, I will that they also whom,’ etc. We should make this sentence our pillow and our bed of down for our souls, and with a glad heart repair to it, when the happy hour draws nigh.”—LUTHER quoted by THOLUCK.

of the Father to the Son, may be the love in *their hearts*.*

This is the fullness of love! Precious beyond all estimation, beyond all conception, are these words. They are the infinite heart, opening on earth its depth of great feeling to human knowledge. They are the weak symbols of human language faintly speaking forth the divine love for sinful men whom God among men has chosen. They are the opening of that dearest intimacy which it is possible for Spirits so unlike as infinite and finite, to form, as well as the opening of the very communion of Infinite with

* "Before the sainted Spenser departed this life, he had this discourse read to him three times, 'meaning thereby to intimate,' says his biographer, 'that this chapter was peculiarly dear to him; yet he never had been willing to preach upon it, declaring that he did not comprehend it and that the full understanding of it transcended the measure of faith which the Lord was wont to dispense to his people in their pilgrimage.'—THOLUCK.

Infinite. They are both the beginning and the sure pledge of the intimacy between the infinite Father and the finite child, which is to last while the infinite life or the infinite love continues to flow.

Oh that love to the end! the love of the Son of God! teaching us, telling us how to love, how to have love in our hearts, *as the Father and Son love and have love to each other*. He loves to the end; not to the end of his mission on earth; not to the end of his resurrection-life on earth; not to the end of his intercessory reign at the right-hand to which he is exalted; no, not this, but love to the end of that life which has no end.

“When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron.”

But it was after He and they had sung a hymn. Already there was deep and

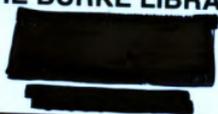
solemn joy. And now He, not they, goes to the agony of the cross.

Go you, his disciple, sing thy solemn, happy hymn in thy heart, go commemorate the love of his suffering and his death.

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And the same night in which he was betrayed :
So runs the record of that feast divine,—
When the *Eleven*, joyous yet afraid,
Scarce knew the meaning of the bread and wine,
And on the Other heavy guilt was laid,
Nor fear, nor knowledge changed that love of thine.
What if thy coming death the hour oppressed,—
No human grief should on the service wait,
Or guilt of one then sadden or abate
The grace and peace that served the loyal guest.
Dear, patient LORD, if at Thy table here
I sit unworthy, let not this withhold
Thy Love from any : unto all appear,
Oh CHRIST, as to thy faithful ones of old !

RANDOLPH.



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