

Hope

John 11: 1-5, 21-26; John 14: 1-3; 1 John 3: 1-3.

N. Anderson.

It is essential that the Scriptures referred to in this short paper be read in order to obtain gain from the thoughts suggested.

How precious to the Saviour was that family circle at Bethany. He oft resorted there, sure of welcome, refreshment, and affection. There, too, His affections were freely exercised. Sickness, obviously of a grievous sort, had visited a loved one there. How natural that the sisters of Lazarus should send to our Lord, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick." Jesus said, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified by it." Now, unquestionably, He loved those sisters and their brother and we must keep that in mind as we read, "When therefore He heard, he is sick, He remained two days in the place where He was." There was purposeful intention in His apparent inactivity.

Death and corruption were permitted to invade that family circle. Divine power (and it had been evidenced more than once in our Lord's pathway) was certainly present in Him, the Son of God. He could have prevented the loved one from dying. Neither sister had any doubt as to that for later each said, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." Nor had Martha any doubt as to her brother's ultimate resurrection, for when Jesus said to her, "Thy brother shall rise again," she replied, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection in the last day." She looked forward, as did the proper hope of any Israelite, to "the resurrection of the dead" (see Paul's word in Acts 23: 6).

The Lord, however, was about to manifest the glory of His Person. He would prove that the power which would certainly be exercised in the "last day" (see John 6: 39, 40, 44, 54 for His references to the last day) was resident inherently in His Person — He is the Son of God. As such (see John 5: 21-29) He quickens dead souls, and as such He shall raise the dead. So He says to Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life." Death and corruption must give way before Him. It is in virtue of this truth that we elsewhere read, ". . . the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1 Corinthians 15: 52).

In this world, in the day of John 11, where sin and death were reigning, where death, the judgment of God, was recurrent — for "death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Romans 5: 12); and, "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6: 23); yes, in the very world where the power of death was wielded by the devil to affright and to enslave men (Hebrews 2: 14, 15), the witness would be given that the Son of God is great enough to maintain the glory of God and defeat the devil. This eventually involved for Him the being made sin, sacrificially; and the bearing of sins in "His own body on the tree." As David slew Goliath and cut off his head with the weapon with which he, Goliath, had terrorised Israel, so would the Son of God go into death, defeating the devil and in delivering power bring freedom to those who through fear of death had all their lifetime been subject to bondage.

"He Satan's power laid low;
Made sin, sin's reign o'erthrew;
Bow'd to the grave, destroy'd it so,
And death by dying slew."

His own resurrection is the evidence that God is glorified. All that is for God as the fruit of eternal purpose is established on the ground of resurrection. The Lord is Himself distinguished by resurrection. He is "Marked out Son of God in power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by resurrection of the dead" (Romans 1: 4). The raising of Lazarus was a demonstration of the Lord's power and of the glory of His Person. Satan's power is annulled; there is deliverance for man; the Son of God is glorified. Thus we see the import of His Word, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified by it."

Before referring to verses 25 and 26, which are particularly before us in this paper, we would reverently look at the manifest holy sympathies and feelings of the Son of God in this death stricken world. Verse 33 — When He saw Mary weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, He "was deeply moved in spirit, and was troubled." Such were His holy sensibilities that He felt acutely the awful blight that sin and death had brought into the world. The awful suffering of the creature as the consequence of sin and death caused Him to groan in the presence of it. Though holy, harmless, undefiled, - death having no claim upon Him — He felt in His spirit the dreadful dishonour to God, and the awful distance and desolation of men. As perfect Man, He not only felt for God, but being God in His own proper glory He felt for man as only God in the presence of human misery could.

Verse 34 — "Where have ye put him? They say to Him, Lord, come and see."

Verse 35 — "Jesus wept."

Well may these words stand uniquely alone. What sympathy can compare with His? He entered with sinless sympathy into the feelings and sorrow of the bereaved. His groaning and His weeping bespeak the intensity of His holiness and the reality of His sympathy. May our hearts be bowed in adoration before Him . . . holy, sympathising Lord! Though His circumstances have changed, for He is no longer here (He is glorified above in the presence of the Father) He is just the same today. Every sorrow-stricken saint, feeling the desolation that sin and death have brought in may come to Him and find enduring love and sympathy.

As to verses 25 and 26: "he that believes on Me, though he have died, shall live, and every one who lives and believes on Me shall never die," we might well enquire — "when shall these words of hope be realized?." We know from John 5: 24, 25, that believers have received life from the Son of God; having heard His quickening voice they live to God in a life that death cannot touch. Yet they also live a responsible life in flesh and blood conditions which will come to an end at death or when the Lord comes. According to the words of our Lord in John 14: 1-3, He is coming for His own to receive them to Himself, "that where *I* am ye may be" He has left this world and has entered the Father's presence. He has gone there in a new condition. He came from the Father into the world, and in so doing He became flesh. Having in the grace of His incarnation assumed Manhood, now that He has accomplished redemption, He has carried Manhood into glory (see John 13: 31, 32). He has ascended up where He was before; He has gone there in *abiding* Manhood, and His going there has prepared a place for His own with Himself. In coming forth from the Father into the world He never ceased to be all that He had ever been in the glory of co-eternal and co-equal Godhead with the Father. Now that He has gone back to the Father (see John 16: 28), He has not ceased to be what He became in incarnation — He abides a Man for ever. Blessed be His Name, He has secured a place for men in His own company in the Father's house, and His love will never be satisfied until its objects are with him there. When He comes to receive His own to be with Himself *then* shall those blessed words of hope be realized. Then sleeping saints shall be raised to life immortal and incorruptible; then saints who are alive and remain unto the coming of their Lord shall be changed; the power of Him who is "the

Resurrection and the Life" shall touch their bodies and they shall never die. How blessedly these words of John 11: 25, 26 coalesce with our Lord's revelation given to the apostle Paul in 1 Thessalonians 4: 13-18.

Note how the order in John 11: 25, 26 corresponds with the order in Thessalonians. In John — "he that believes on Me, though he have died, shall live; and every one who lives and believes on Me shall never die." In 1 Thessalonians 4: 16, 17, "and the dead in Christ shall rise first, then we, the living who remain shall be caught up . . . to meet the Lord in the air." As we await that blessed moment may we evidence our love for Him, our absent Lord, in willing-hearted obedience, in keeping His commandments — "If ye love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14: 15). We are empowered so to do by the Holy Spirit, the other Comforter, who dwells in us. He supplies the needed power for sustained communion, and for the apprehension of the revelation which has been brought to light by our blessed lord. He also empowers the fruitbearing and witness of the saints until we are with Christ.

We learn from 1 John 3: 1-3, that our Lord, who at present is hidden from the eyes of men, is to be manifested, and then His own will be seen to be with and like Him. See also the word in Colossians 3: 3, 4 " . . . your life is hid with Christ in God. When the Christ is manifested who is our life, then shall ye also be manifested with Him in glory."

The kind of love with which the Father loves us is learned in the appreciation of the place of children in which He has *now* placed us. Such is the affinity between the saints and the Son of the Father's love that "the world knows us not, because it knew Him not." "What we shall be has not yet been manifested; we know that if it is manifested we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

We are now loved of the Father; the world now knows us as little as He is known; when the Father is pleased to give a universal manifestation of what we shall be it will be apparent to all that Christ's likeness is impressed upon each saint. Then, "He shall have come to be glorified in His saints, and wondered at in all that have believed" (2 Thessalonians 1: 10).

John and Paul are perfectly united in this blessed theme that Christ shall be glorified in the saints (read Colossians 3: 4; 2 Thessalonians 1: 10; and 1 John 3: 2). How blessed to consider that "we shall be like Him" in the day of manifestation! The reason is given — "for we shall see Him as He is."

Yes, we shall be like Him in that glorious day — and God is going to show that forth — but we shall have been made like Him at the rapture. In that very moment, when He raises the sleeping and changes the living saints, we shall "see Him as He is. Surely 1 Corinthians 15: 51-54, agrees with this — "we shall all be changed, in an instant, in the twinkling of an eye."

What a prospect, dear brethren, and how great the privilege of radiating the glory of Christ in that longed for day of manifestation to every bound of the world to come. Blessed hope! we are waiting to see Him! we are looking for Him! and He shall certainly come again *for* His own in view of bringing them *with* Him in His kingdom. Assuredly this is part of the joy which was set before Him when "He endured the cross, having despised the shame."

Without a doubt we shall find full joy and satisfaction in being with and like Him, but "*He* shall see of the fruit of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied" when He surrounds Himself with "many brethren," the gift to Him of the Father's love. Then shall those words of John 11: 25, 26 and 1 John 3: 1-3, be blessedly fulfilled.

Soon the heavens will be opened and Christ be set forth as the supreme Centre of a universe of bliss and glory. Then shall it dawn upon the world which crucified Him that He was of a truth the Sent One of the Father, and that those despised companions of His were loved with the same love which

rested upon Him.

Blessed portion! As we consider this blessed hope it exerts a purifying effect, separating us from the world which rejects Him, and giving us in our feeble measure to live pure and holy lives — the moral transcript of Christ in the world where He has been — until we are with Him where He is, "Everyone that has this hope in Him purifies himself, even as He is pure."

"Not we alone, Thy loved ones all complete
In glory round Thee there with joy shall meet.
All like Thee, for Thy glory like Thee Lord,
Object supreme of all, by all adored."