

EXPOSITORY THOUGHTS ON THE GOSPELS.

FOR FAMILY AND PRIVATE USE.

WITH THE TEXT COMPLETE,
And many Explanatory Notes.

BY THE REV. J. C. RYLE, B. A.,

CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD,
VICAR OF STRADBROKE, SUFFOLK;
Author of "Home Truths," etc.

ST. JOHN. VOL. III.

LONDON:
WILLIAM HUNT AND COMPANY, 23, HOLLES STREET,
CAVENDISH SQUARE.
IPSWICH: WILLIAM HUNT, TAVERN STREET.

1873AD

JOHN XVIII. 1-11.

<p>1 When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples.</p> <p>2 And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus oft-times resorted thither with his disciples.</p> <p>3 Judas then, having received a band of <i>men</i> and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons.</p> <p>4 Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye?</p> <p>5 They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus said unto them, I am <i>he</i>. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them.</p> <p>6 As soon then as he had said unto them, I</p>	<p>am <i>he</i>, they went backward, and fell to the ground.</p> <p>7 Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth.</p> <p>8 Jesus answered, I have told you that I am <i>he</i>; if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way:</p> <p>9 That the saying might be fulfilled which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.</p> <p>10 Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.</p> <p>11 Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?</p>
--	---

THESE verses begin St. John's account of Christ's sufferings and crucifixion. We now enter on the closing scene of our Lord's ministry, and pass at once from His intercession to His sacrifice. We shall find that, like the other Gospel-writers, the beloved disciple enters fully into the story of the cross. But we shall also find, if we read carefully, that he mentions several interesting points in the story, which Matthew, Mark, and Luke, for some wise reasons, have passed over.

We should notice, first, in these verses, *the exceeding hardness of heart to which a backsliding professor may attain*. We are told that Judas, one of the twelve Apostles, became guide to them that took Jesus. We are told that he used his knowledge of the place of our Lord's retirement, in order to bring His deadly enemies upon Him; and we are told that when the band of men and officers approached his Master, in order to make Him prisoner, Judas "stood with them."—Yet this was a man who for three years had been a constant companion of Christ, had seen His miracles, had heard His sermons, had enjoyed the benefit of His private instruction, had professed himself a believer, had oven worked and preached in Christ's name!—"Lord," we may well say, "what is man?" From the highest degree of privilege down to the lowest depth of sin, there is but a succession of steps. Privileges misused seem to paralyze the conscience. The same fire that melts wax, will harden clay.

Let us beware of resting our hopes of salvation on religious knowledge, however great, or religious advantages, however many. We may know all doctrinal truth and be able to teach others, and yet prove rotten at heart, and go down to the pit with Judas. We may bask in the full sunshine of spiritual privileges, and hear the best of Christian teaching, and yet bear no fruit to God's glory, and be found withered branches of the vine, only fit to be

burned. "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." (1 Cor. x. 12.) Above all, let us beware of cherishing within our hearts any secret be-setting sin, such as love of money or love of the world. One faulty link in a chain-cable may cause a shipwreck. One little leak may sink a ship. One allowed and unmortified sin may ruin a professing Christian. Let him that is tempted to be a careless man in his religious life, consider these things, and take care. Let him remember Judas Iscariot. His history is meant to be a lesson.

We should notice, secondly, in these verses, *the entire voluntariness of Christ's sufferings*. We are told that the first time that our Lord said to the soldiers, "I am He, they went backward, and fell to the ground." A secret invisible power, no doubt, accompanied the words. In no other way can we account for a band of hardy Roman soldiers falling prostrate before a single unarmed man. The same miraculous influence which tied the priests and Pharisees powerless at the triumphant entry into Jerusalem,—which stopped all opposition when the temple was purged of buyers and sellers,—that same mysterious influence was present now. A real miracle was wrought, though few had eyes to see it. At the moment when our Lord seemed weak, He showed that He was strong.

Let us carefully remember that our blessed Lord suffered and died of His own free will. He did not die because He could not help it; He did not suffer because He could not escape. All the soldiers of Pilate's army could not have taken Him, if He had not been willing to be taken. They could not have hurt a hair of His head, if He had not given them permission. But here, as in all His earthly ministry, Jesus was a willing sufferer. He had set His heart on accomplishing our redemption. He loved us, and gave Himself for us, cheerfully, willingly, gladly, in order to make atonement for our sins. It was "the joy set before Him" which made Him endure the cross, and despise the shame, and yield Himself up without reluctance into the hands of His enemies. Let this thought abide in our hearts, and refresh our souls. We have a Saviour who was far more willing to save us than we are willing to be saved. If we are not saved, the fault is all our own. Christ is just as willing to receive and pardon, as He was willing to be taken prisoner, to bleed, and to die.

We should notice, thirdly, in these verses, *our Lord's tender care for His disciples' safety*. Even at this critical moment, when His own unspeakable sufferings were about to begin, He did not forget the little band of believers who stood around Him. He remembered their weakness. He knew how little fit they were to go into the fiery furnace of the High Priest's Palace, and Pilate's judgment-hall. He mercifully makes for them a way of escape.—"If ye seek Me, let these go their way."—It seems most probable that here also a miraculous influence accompanied his words. At any rate, not a hair of the

disciples' heads was touched. While the Shepherd was taken, the sheep were allowed to flee away unharmed.

We need not hesitate to see in this incident an instructive type of all our Saviour's dealings with His people even at this day. He will not suffer them "to be tempted above that which they are able to bear." He will hold the winds and storms in His hands, and not allow believers, however sifted and buffeted, to be utterly destroyed. He watches tenderly over every one of His children, and, like a wise physician, measures out the right quantity of their trials with unerring skill. "They shall never perish, neither shall any one pluck them out of His hand." (John x. 28.) For ever let us lean our souls on this precious truth. In the darkest hour the eye of the Lord Jesus is upon us, and our final safety is sure.

We should notice, lastly, in these verses, *our Lord's perfect submission to his Father's will*. Once, in another place, we find Him saying, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt." Again, in another place, we find Him saying, "If this cup may not pass away from Me except I drink it, Thy will be done." Here, however, we find even a higher pitch of cheerful acquiescence: "The cup that my Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" (Matt. xxvi. 39-42.)

Let us see in this blessed frame of mind, a pattern for all who profess and call themselves Christians. Far as we may come short of the Master's standard, let this be the mark at which we continually aim. Determination to have our own way, and do only what we like, is one great source of unhappiness in the world. The habit of laying all our matters before God in prayer, and asking Him to choose our portion, is one chief secret of peace. He is the truly wise man who has learned to say at every stage of his journey, "Give me what thou wilt, place me where Thou wilt, do with me as Thou wilt, but not my will, but Thine be done." This is the man who has the mind of Christ. By self-will Adam and Eve fell, and brought sin and misery into the world. Entire submission of will to the will of God is the best preparation for that heaven where God will be all.

NOTES. JOHN XVIII. 1-11.

1.—[*When, Jesus...these words.*] This would have been more literally rendered, "Jesus having said these things." The "things" referred to, seem to me to include the discourse of the fifteenth and sixteenth chapters, as well as the prayer of the seventeenth.

Henry observes, "the office of the priest was to teach and pray and offer sacrifice. Christ, after teaching and praying, applies Himself to make atonement. He had said all He had to say as a prophet. He now addresses Himself to His work as priest."

[*He went forth...disciples.*] The question arises, "From what place did He go forth?" and it receives very different answers.

Many, as Cyril, Ecolampadius, Maldonatus, Doddridge, and Ellicott, think that it only means He went forth from the room where He had held the Lord's Supper and delivered His parting address and prayer. The advocates of this view hold that our Lord did not actually go out of the room, when He said, at the end of the fourteenth chapter, "Arise, let us go hence," and that He probably continued His discourse, and prayed standing. This, to say the least, seems a very unnatural view.

Some, as Burgon, think that our Lord spoke the latter part of His address and prayer within the precincts of the temple, and that the words before us mean that He moved away from the temple. This, however seems hardly probable. It was night, we know. There is no evidence that gatherings of people by night were held within the temple precincts.

The most probable view, in my opinion, seems to be that Jesus went forth out of the city, after concluding His discourse and prayer, and that after leaving the room where our Lord's Supper was held, at the end of the fourteenth chapter, He spoke and prayed near the gates, or within the city walls. He left the room when He said, "Arise, let us go hence." Then having reached some quiet spot near the walls, He continued His discourse and prayed. Then after that he went out of the city This seems to me the more natural account.

[*Over the brook Cedron.*] The Cedron here mentioned, is the same as the Kidron named more than once in the Old Testament. The word "brook" means, literally, a "winter torrent," and this, according to all travellers, is precisely what the Kidron is. Excepting in winter, or after rains, it is merely the dry bed of a water-course. It lies on the east side of Jerusalem, between the city and the Mount of Olives. It is the same Kidron which David passed over weeping, when obliged to flee from Jerusalem by the rebellion of Absalom. (2 Sam. xv. 23.) It is the same Kidron by the side of which Asa burnt the idol of his mother Maachah (2 Chron. xv. 16), and into which Josiah cast the dust of the idolatrous altars which he destroyed. (2 Kings xxiii. 12.)

Lampe says that the way by which our Lord left the city, was the way by which the scape-goat, Azazel, was annually sent out into the wilderness on the great day of atonement.

Bishop Andrews says that "the first breach made by the Romans, when Titus took Jerusalem, was at the brook Cedron, where they took Christ."

[*Where was a garden...disciples.*] There can be little doubt that this garden is the same as the "place called Gethsemane." What kind of a garden it was we know not, unless a garden of olive trees. Probably it was neither a garden of flowers nor of herbs, but simply a place enclosed, where trees were sheltered and encouraged to grow, in order to provide a quiet shady retirement away from the bustle of the city. Whether it was a public garden, or private property, we know not. Hengstenberg conjectures that "the owner of the place must have stood in some special relation to Jesus," and that this accounts for His frequent and free resort to the place. He also conjectures that the "young man" named in Mark xiv. 51, 52, must have belonged to the family of the owner. This however, is pure conjecture.

Almost all commentators notice the curious fact that the fall of Adam and Eve took place in a garden, and Christ's passion also began in a garden, and the sepulchre where Christ was laid was in a garden, and the place where He was crucified was in a garden. (John six. 41.)

Augustine remarks, "It was fitting that the blood of the Physician should there be poured out, where the disease of the sick man first commenced."

Gualter remarks that the first Adam had everything that was pleasant in the Garden of Eden, and yet fell. The second Adam had everything that was painful and trying in the Garden of Gethsemane, but was a glorious conqueror.

The agony in Gethsemane, we may observe, is entirely passed over by John in His Gos-

pel; and for wise reasons, we need not doubt. But it is evident that it took place at this point of the narrative. The order of things is: first, the Lord's Supper,—then the long discourse recorded by John alone,—then the marvellous prayer,—then the going over Cedron into the garden,—then the agony,—and then the arrival of Judas and the capture of our Lord. It is plain therefore that there is a pause in the narrative of John's Gospel at this point, and that we must allow a little space of time for the agony, after our Lord "went out" of the city and crossed the Cedron. This would make the arrival of Judas and the soldiers far on in the night.

Lightfoot mentions a curious fact which he draws from a Jewish writer,—that the blood from the sacrifices in the temple ran down a drain into the brook Kidron, and was then sold to the gardeners for the purpose of dressing their gardens. The blood having been consecrated, could not be put to common uses without sin, and therefore the gardeners paid for it as much as would buy a trespass offering. This is curious, if true.

- 2.—[*And Judas also, etc.*] This verse is one of John's peculiar explanatory comments. He tells us that this garden was a place where our Lord and His disciples were in the habit of assembling together, when they went up to Jerusalem at the great Jewish feasts. At such seasons the crowd of worshippers was very great; and many had to content themselves with such shelter as they could find under trees, or rocks, in the open air. This is what Luke means when he says, "At night He went out and abode in the mount that is called the Mount of Olives." (Luke xxi. 37.) Excepting at the celebration of the first Lord's Supper, we have no mention of our Lord ever being in any *house* in Jerusalem.

Chrysostom remarks, "It is evident from this that Jesus generally passed the night out of doors."

Bucer thinks that Judas specially knew the place where our Lord used to pray. Our Lord's habits of prayer were as well known as those of Daniel.

The fact that the traitor Judas "knew the place," while our Lord deliberately went there, shows three things. One is, that our Lord went to His death willingly and voluntarily; He went to the "garden," knowing well that Judas was acquainted with the place.—Another thing is, that our Lord was in the habit of going to this garden so "often," that Judas felt sure He would be found there.—Another thing is, that the heart of Judas must have been desperately hard, when, after so many seasons of spiritual refreshment as he must have seen in this garden, he could use his knowledge for the purpose of betraying his Master. He "knew the place," because he had often heard his Master teaching and praying there. He knew it from spiritual associations, and yet turned his knowledge to wicked ends

May we not learn from this verse that there is nothing to be ashamed of, nothing wrong, in loving one place more than another, and choosing one place more than another, for communion with God? Even our blessed Lord had one special place, near Jerusalem, more than other places, to which He often resorted. The common idea of some, that it matters not where or in what place we worship, and that it is unspiritual and wrong to care for one seat in church more than another, can hardly be reconciled with this verse.

The Greek words rendered "resorted thither," are literally "were gathered together there."

- 3.—[*Judas then having received, etc.*] This verse begins John's circumstantial account of the taking and subsequent passion of our Lord Jesus Christ. A careful reader will not fail to observe that John entirely passes over several points in this history which are mentioned by the three other Gospel writers, and not least the bargaining of Judas with the priests to betray our Lord for money. But it is evident that John assumes that his readers were acquainted with the other three Gospels, and purposely dwells on points which they had not mentioned.

The expression “a band of men,” can only mean “the detachment of Roman soldiers” which had been lent by Pilate to the priests for the occasion. Some think that it means literally “a cohort,” which was the tenth part of a legion, and consisted of four or five hundred men. This, however, seems doubtful. Yet Matthew speaks of Judas coming, and “a great multitude with him.” (Matt. xxvi. 47.)

The “officers” mean the Jewish servants of the priests and Pharisees, who accompanied the Roman soldiers. The party, therefore, which Judas led consisted of two distinct elements, —Roman soldiers detached from the garrison of Jerusalem, and Jewish servants got together by the leaders of the Jews. Gentiles and Jews were, therefore, equally concerned in the arrest. The number of the party was probably large, from the fear of an attempt at a rescue by the Galilean Jews, who were supposed to favour our Lord. They would be at Jerusalem in large numbers at the Passover, and after our Lord’s recent triumphal entry into Jerusalem, the priests might well feel doubts whether they would allow Him to be made a prisoner without a struggle.

Chrysostom remarks that “these men had often, at other times, been sent to seize Him, but had not been able. Hence it is plain that at this time He voluntarily surrendered Himself.”

The “lanterns and torches “at first sight may seem to have been needless, as the moon at Passover time was full. But they were doubtless intended to assist the party in searching for our Lord if he endeavoured to hide Himself among the rocks and trees. And in a deep valley there would be many dark and shady places.

The “weapons” most probably apply to the Jewish servants of the priests. It is unreasonable to suppose that Roman soldiers would ever move without their arms. For fear of resistance the Jewish portion of the party took arms also.

Burkitt remarks on the activity and energy of wicked men, “At the very time when Peter, James, and John were sleeping in the garden, Judas and his bloody followers were gathering, marching, and planning a murder.”

The confidence of Judas that our Lord would be in the garden, shows plainly how familiar he was with our Lord’s habits on the occasion of his visits to Jerusalem.

4.—[*Jesus...knowing...come upon Him.*] This sentence shows our Lord’s perfect foreknowledge of everything that was about to happen to Him. Never was there a more willing, deliberate, and voluntary sufferer than our Lord. The words “things that should come” would be more literally rendered “the things coming,” in the present tense.

The best of martyrs, like Ridley and Latimer, did not know for certain, up to the moment of their deaths, that something might not occur to alter the mind of their persecutors and save their lives. Our Lord knew perfectly well that His death was sure, by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.

Ford quotes a saying of Pinart, that “what rendered Christ’s sufferings most terrible was the perfect foreknowledge He had of the torments He should endure. From the first moment of His life He had present to His mind the scourge, the thorns, the cross, and the agonizing death which awaited Him. Saw He a lamb in the meadow or a victim in the temple, the sight reminded Him that He was the lamb of God, and that He was to be offered up a sacrifice.”

[*Went forth.*] This must mean that our Lord came forward from that part of the garden where He was, and did not wait for the party of Judas to find Him. On the contrary he suddenly showed Himself, and met them face to face. The effect of this action alone must have been startling to the soldiers. They would feel at once that they had to do with no common person.

Henry remarks, “When the people would have forced Him to take a crown and wished to

make Him a king he withdrew and hid Himself. (John vi. 15.) But when they came to force Him to His cross He offered Himself. He came to this world to suffer, and went to the other world to reign.”

Lampe remarks that the first Adam hid himself in the garden. The second Adam went forth to meet His enemies. The first felt guilty, the second innocent.

[*And said... Whom seek ye?*] Jesus Himself was the first to speak, and did not wait to be challenged or commanded to surrender. This sudden question no doubt would take the party of Judas by surprise, and prepare the way for the mighty miracle which followed. The soldiers must needs have felt, “this is not the language or manner of a malefactor or a guilty man.”

- 5.—[*They answered...Jesus...Nazareth.*] This would be more literally rendered “Jesus the Nazarene.” It is certainly hard to suppose that those who said this could have known that Jesus Himself was speaking to them. It looks as if they did not know our Lord by sight, or could not believe that the bold speaker before them could be the prisoner they came to apprehend. That many of the party did not know our Lord by sight, is clear from the fact mentioned by Matthew and Mark, that Judas had given them a sign: “Whomsoever I kiss, that same is He: hold Him fast.” This sign, therefore, had not yet been given. Probably there was no time for it. The coming forward and question of our Lord had taken place so suddenly that they took the whole party by surprise.

Chrysostom, Cyril, Theophylact, Gualter, Brentius, Gerhard, and Ferus, think that our Lord miraculously blinded the eyes of the party, so that they did not recognize him, as Elisha blinded the Syrians. (2 Kings vi. 18.) They had lights, and they must have known his voice. But they seem to have been unable to know him. Musculus thinks they did not recognize Him, and thought Him a disciple.

[*Jesus saith...I am He.*] Our Lord here makes a plain, bold, full avowal that He is the very person whom they seek. It must have been a most startling announcement.

The words in the Greek are literally “I am.” Some have thought that there was an intentional reference to the famous passage in Exodus, where the Lord says, “I AM hath sent you.” (Exodus iii. 14), to which also our Lord certainly did refer in John viii. 58. But it seems very doubtful whether such a reference would have been used in speaking to such a party as those who came to seize our Lord.

[*And Judas...stood with them.*] It is not quite clear why this little sentence is put in here. It may be meant to show the desperate wickedness of Judas. He stood side by side with the enemies of Jesus.—It may be meant to show that even Judas himself was staggered and confounded by our Lord’s boldness, and did not give his companions the promised sign, not recognizing him any more than the others. The false apostle stood there like one struck dumb.—It may be meant to show that Judas himself was a witness and a subject of one of the last great miracles our Lord wrought. He himself was once more to feel, and experience proof, that the Master he betrayed had divine power. There seems to me much probability in this last idea.

- 6.—[*As soon then as He had said, etc.*] I cannot doubt that the thing here related was a great miracle. I have not the slightest sympathy with Alford and others, who try to explain it away partially, by reminding us of the awe and reverence which a great and good man sometimes inspires in inferior minds. Such an explanation will never account for the fact here recorded,—that the band of Roman soldiers and the servants of the priests, in fact the whole body of armed men who came to seize on our Lord, “went backward and fell on the earth,” on hearing our Lord say, “I am He.” The Roman soldiers, especially, knew nothing about our Lord, and had no cause to fear Him. The only reasonable account of the event is that it was a miracle. It was an exercise for the last time of that same Divine power by

which our Lord calmed the waves, stilled the winds, cast out devils, healed the sick, and raised the dead. And it was a miracle purposely wrought at this juncture, in order to show the disciples and their enemies that our Lord was not taken because He could not help it, or crucified because He could not prevent it; but because He was willing to suffer and die for sinners. He came to be a willing sufferer for our sins, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled. (Comp. Matt. xxvi. 53.) The effect of the miraculous influence put forth by our Lord, seems to have been that the party who came to seize Him were for a little time struck down to the ground, like men struck down, but not killed, by lightning, and rendered so helpless that our Lord and His disciples might easily have escaped. How long they lay on the ground we are not told, but there certainly seems to be some pause at the end of the verse. It seems clear to me that the miracle saved the disciples from being taken prisoners, and so far awed the party of Judas that they were satisfied to seize our Lord only, and either intentionally let the eleven go, or in their fear of some further display of miraculous power, neglected them, and gave them time to escape. That it also made the whole party of Judas without excuse, is equally clear. They could never say they had no evidence of our Lord's divine power. They had felt it in their own persons.

Burgon sees in this incident something which recalls to mind the prophetic words of the Psalmist: "When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell." (Psal. xxvii. 2.)

Augustine remarks, "What shall He do when He comes to judge, who did this when about to be judged? What shall be His might when He comes to reign, who had this might when He was at the point to die?"

The effort of some to lessen the miraculous character of this circumstance, by quoting such a case as the classical story of the soldier being daunted by the appearance of the Roman General Caius Marius, is weak and evasive. A whole cohort of Roman soldiers would not fall down without miraculous interference. If not a miracle, the event is utterly inexplicable and contrary to experience.

7.—[*Then asked He them again, etc.*] Our Lord repeats His question, as if to test the effect of the miraculous exhibition of power which He had just given to His enemies. But they were hardened, like Pharaoh and the Egyptians under the miraculous plagues of Egypt. As soon as they rose from the ground, they proved, that though frightened, they were not turned from their purpose. They still seek to take Jesus of Nazareth.

8.—[*Jesus answered...I am He.*] The dignity and calmness of our Lord at this point are very striking. Knowing full well all the insults and barbarous usage about to begin in a few minutes, He repeats His declaration. "I am He whom you seek. Behold Me: here I am, ready to surrender myself into your hands."

[*If therefore...life...let them...way.*] The tender thoughtfulness of our Lord for His weak disciples is strikingly shown in this sentence. Even at this trying moment He thought more of others than of Himself. "If I alone am the person you seek to make prisoner, if your commission is to seize Me only, then let these my followers go away, and do not harm them." Once more, we need not doubt that the miraculous power accompanied these words, and that insensibly a restraint was laid upon our Lord's enemies, so that they felt obliged to let the disciples escape.

The tender sympathy and consideration of our great High Priest for His people come out very beautifully in this place, and would doubtless be remembered by the eleven long afterwards. They would remember that the very last thought of their Master, before He was made a prisoner, was for them and their safety.

Christ's protecting power over all His believing people is plainly taught in this passage.

Jansenius remarks, that to this saying we may attribute the safety of Peter, though he smote with the sword and got inside the high priest's palace, and of John, though he stood by the cross.

Besser quotes a saying of Luther, that this was as great a miracle as that of casting the party to the ground. To tie the hands of the party of Judas and prevent them touching His disciples, was a mighty exercise of Divine power.

- 9.—[*That the saying might be fulfilled, etc.*] In this verse we have one of those parenthetical comments or explanations which are so often found in John's Gospel. He reminds us that our Lord's interference to secure the safety of His disciples at this crisis was a fulfilment in fact of His expression in prayer, "none of them is lost."

Some persons see a difficulty here, and object that in the prayer our Lord speaks of eternal salvation, while here He is only speaking of temporal safety. Yet there seems no solid ground for the objection. Our Lord's preservation of His disciples included the means as well as the end. One means of preserving them from making shipwreck of the faith altogether, was to keep them from being tempted above what they could bear. Our Lord knew that they would be so tempted, and that their souls were not strong enough to bear the trial. If they had been taken prisoners and brought before Caiaphas and Pilate, with Himself, their faith would have failed entirely. He therefore provides for their escape, and overrules the plans of His enemies, so that the eleven were "let go." And thus He literally carried out what he had mentioned in prayer. He prevented any of them being lost. They would have been lost so far as man's eye can judge, if He had not provided a way of escape, and prevented them being tempted beyond their strength. The care of Jesus over His people provides the means of perseverance and continuance in the faith, as well as the great end of eternal salvation.

Chrysostom remarks, "By loss He doth not here mean temporal death, but eternal.

Calvin remarks, "The Evangelist does not speak merely of their bodily life, but means that Christ, sparing them for a time, provided for their eternal salvation. Consider how great their weakness was. What do we think they would have done alone, if brought to the test? Christ did not choose they should be tried beyond the strength He had given, and rescued them from eternal destruction."

It seems to me most probable that at this point of the history the "kiss" of Judas and His "Hail Master" come in. At any rate it is difficult to suppose that Judas could have kissed our Lord, when he first "went forth," and surprised the band by meeting them. There does not seem time for the salutation, nor does it seem probable that Judas would first kiss our Lord and then fall to the ground. Nor does the repeated answer of the band to the question "Whom seek ye?" give the idea that they had as yet recognized our Lord, or had any sign from Judas. I give this as my own conjecture, and admit that the matter is doubtful. But I must think that as soon as the band of soldiers recovered their presence of mind, Judas came forward and kissed our Lord, and then the capture took place. This is the order of events maintained by Chrysostom, Cyril, Theophylact, Gerhard, Jansenius, Lightfoot, Stier, and Alford.

- 10.—[*Then Simon Peter having a sword, etc.*] The event here mentioned is recorded by all the four Gospel-writers, but John alone gives the name of Peter as the striker, and of Malchus as the person struck. The reason commonly assigned for this is probably correct. John's Gospel was written long after the other three, when Peter and Malchus were both dead, and their names could, therefore, be safely mentioned.

Peter's impetuous temperament comes out in the action before us. Impulsive, earnest, zealous, and inconsiderate of consequences, he acted hastily, and his zeal soon cooled down and was changed into fear. It is not those who are for a time most demonstrative and fer-

vent, whose religion is deepest. John never smote with the sword; but John never denied his Lord, and was at the foot of the cross when Christ died.

The use of the article “the” before “servant” would seem to indicate that Malchus was some person well known as an attendant of Caiaphas.

Whether the ear was cut off entirely, or only so cut as to hang down by the skin, may be left to conjecture. In any case we know that it gave occasion for the last miracle of bodily cure which our Lord ever wrought. Luke tells us that He touched “the ear, and it was instantaneously healed.” To the very end of His ministry our Lord did good to His enemies, and gave proof of His divine power. But His hardened enemies gave no heed. Miracles alone convert no one. As in the case of Pharaoh, they only seem to make some men harder and more wicked.

We cannot doubt that Peter meant to kill Malchus with this blow, which was probably aimed at his head. His own agitation probably, and the special interposition of God, alone prevented him taking away the life of another, and endangering his own life and that of his fellow-disciples. What might have happened if Malchus had been killed, no one can tell.

Musculus remarks how entirely Peter seems to have forgotten all His Master’s frequent predictions that He would be delivered to the Gentiles and be condemned to death, and acts as if he could prevent what was coming. It was clearly an impulsive act, done without reflection. Zeal not according to knowledge often drives a man into foolish actions, and makes work for repentance.

11.—[*Then said Jesus...the sheath.*] This was the language of firm and decided rebuke. It was meant to teach Peter, and all Christians in every age, that the Gospel is not to be propagated or maintained by carnal weapons, or by smiting and violence. Matthew adds the solemn words “All they that take the sword will perish with the sword.” How needful the rebuke, and how true the comment, have often been proved by the history of the Church of Christ. The appeal to the sword can rarely be justified, and has often recoiled on the head of its promoters. The wars of the Protestants on the Continent after the Reformation, and the American war between North and South, furnished melancholy proofs of this. Some of the best Christians have died on battle-fields. Taking the sword, they perished by the sword.

St. John, for wise reasons, does not mention the miraculous healing of Malchus. Burgon takes occasion to remark that even in the hour of our Lord’s apparent weakness He gave His enemies a miracle of power and a miracle of mercy,—power in striking them to the ground, mercy in healing.

[*The cup...Father...given...drink it.*] This beautiful saying is peculiar to St. John’s Gospel. It was meant to show our Lord’s perfect willingness and readiness to drink the bitter cup of suffering which was before Him. It should always be read in connection with the two other expressions about “the cup” which our Lord had very shortly before used in the garden of Gethsemane. First came the prayer, “If it be possible let this cup pass from Me.” Then came the resigned declaration, “If this cup may not pass from Me except I drink it, Thy will be done.” And last of all comes the firm and composed assertion of perfect readiness for anything: “Shall I not drink the cup given to Me by my Father?” The three expressions taken together are deeply instructive. They show that our Lord in His agony prayed for relief. They show that His prayer was first answered by His being able to submit entirely to His Father’s will. They show that His prayer was finally answered by His being able to show complete willingness to suffer. What an example this is for all believers in the time of trouble! Like our Master we may pray about it, and hope that like Him we shall obtain help by prayer. What a proof this is of our Lord’s power to sympathize with suffering believers. He knows their conflicts by experience.

The absolute voluntariness of Jesus Christ’s suffering for us is nowhere perhaps more re-

markably brought out than in this passage. He resents and rebukes the effort of a zealous disciple to repel force by force. He speaks of His sufferings as “a cup” given to Him by His Father, and appointed in the everlasting counsels of the Trinity, and as one which He cheerfully and willingly drinks. “Shall I not drink it? Would you have me refuse it? Would you prevent my dying for sinners?” It is the more marvellous when we reflect that He who thus willingly suffered was God Almighty as well as man. Nothing can account for the whole scene but the doctrine of atonement and substitution.

To the eye of some, our Lord’s sufferings were forced on Him by the Jews. Yet when He speaks of them here, He looks far above second causes. He says, His sufferings were “the cup given to Him by the Father.” Are not all the sufferings of God’s children to be regarded in the same light?

Calvin warns us here that while we ought to be ready to drink any cup appointed by our Father, “we must not listen to those fanatics who tell us that we may not seek remedies for diseases and any other kind of distresses, lest we reject the cup presented to us by our heavenly Father.”

Henry observes on the word “cup” as applied to affliction: “It is but a cup, a small matter comparatively, be it what it will.—It is not a sea, a Red sea, or a Dead sea, for it is not hell; it is light, and but for a moment.—It is a cup that is *given* us: sufferings are gifts.—It is given us by a Father, by one who has a Father’s authority, and does us no wrong,—a Father’s affection, and means us no hurt.”

Bengel remarks that John here evidently pre-supposes the particulars detailed by Matthew about “the cup,” named by our Lord in prayer, to be things known by his readers. Paley also notices the expression as one of the undesigned coincidences of Scripture.