

37. 'The river' here, as elsewhere, must mean the Euphrates, and Rehoboth is the Assyrian *rébit*, the 'squares' or open places outside the walls and the temples. There was a Babylonian divinity called Savul (a form

of the sun-god), whose name may be the same as Saul.

43. Iram is possibly the same as \hat{A} -rammu ('the god \hat{A} is exalted'), the name of the king of Edom in the time of Sennacherib.

The Great Text Commentary.

THE GREAT TEXTS OF ST. JOHN'S GOSPEL.

JOHN xvii. 24.

'Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou has given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world.'

EXPOSITION.

THE prayer for the Church has been moving onwards through continuance in the Name, preservation from the evil, sanctification in the truth, unity in the Spirit, conquests in the world; and now, by a sudden ascent, it passes from the present to the future, from earth to heaven.—BERNARD.

'Father.'—The repetition of the invocation, *Father*, reveals the increasing emotion of Jesus, in proportion as He draws near to the close of His prayer.—GODET.

'I will.'—Jesus no longer says, *I pray*; but, *I will!* This expression, which is nowhere else found in the mouth of Jesus, is generally explained by saying that the Son thus expressed Himself, because He felt Himself on this point so fully in accordance with the Father. But this He felt in every prayer, and this unique expression must be taken in its relation to the unique character of the situation. It is the saying of a dying man: 'Father, My *last will* is . . .' It is truly His testament which Jesus thus deposits in His Father's hands.—GODET.

It is further interesting to contrast this expression of Christ's own will in behalf of His disciples with His submission to His Father's will in His prayer for Himself (Mk 14³⁶).—WESTCOTT.

He demands with confidence as a Son, not as a servant.—BENGEL.

'They also whom Thou hast given Me.'—Lit. 'That which Thou hast given Me,' *i.e.* the community of believers.—DODS.

'Be with Me.'—The will of Christ for His people includes two things: first, that they may be where He is (12²⁶ 14³), and so attain in the end to the sphere for the time unattainable by them (13³⁶ cf. 7³⁴); and, secondly, as dependent on this, that they may behold His glory. Each of these two issues contains an element not contained in the corresponding gifts already described. Presence with Christ, as involving personal fellowship with Him in the sphere of His glorified being, is more than a union effected

by His presence with the Church. And the contemplation of His glory, in its whole extent, by those lifted beyond the limits of time, is more than the possession of that glory according to the measure of present human powers.—WESTCOTT.

'That they may behold My glory.'—The crown of all the petitions of Jesus for His own. They form an ascending series: deliverance from the evil in the world; sanctification in the truth, realized in purity, knowledge, and consecration to God; the perfection of unity in God and among themselves; finally, the being with Christ and seeing His glory. The prayer embraces, therefore, all that concerns us here and hereafter, from our redemption from sin onward to our eternal glory.—REITH.

'Which Thou hast given Me.'—The glory *here* intended is in His exaltation after the completion of His work, since it concerned His entire person, including its human side, that *given* to Him by the Father from love (Ph 2⁹), from that love, however, which did not first originate in time, but was already cherished by the Father toward the Son before the foundation of the world.—MEYER.

As communicated to the human nature, it is *bestowed*, but in itself it belongs to the essence of Godhead, and is called 'My glory,' and is described before (v. 5) as that 'which I had with Thee before the world was,' and here again is thrown back into eternity by the added clause, 'For Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world.'—BERNARD.

THE contemplation of Christ's glory is the condition of being changed into the same image from glory to glory. Christ's deepest desire is to have His people with Him. He interprets *their* deepest desire in praying that they may behold, and so receive into themselves, His glory (1 Jn 3², Ro 8¹⁷). That glory, as stated above (v. 22), is the Father's love to Him; that eternal love as ground of all the communication of Himself which the Father has made to the Son (see Eph 1⁴, 1 P 1²⁰).

METHOD OF TREATMENT.

By the Editor.

The Glory of Love.

1. Throughout this intercessory prayer Jesus speaks as from the other side of the grave. He says, 'I am no more in the world'; and again He

says, 'I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do,' though the greatest act of it was yet unaccomplished. For He has surrendered Himself to the Father's will, and He knows that that will is the Cross; therefore it is to His Divine thought accomplished already. So, when He prays, 'Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am,' He speaks from His place in heaven. He will have them with Him there, where He is seated at the Father's right hand.

2. He claims this, He does not ask it. 'Father, I will,' He says. It is the only thing He ever said 'I will' about. For it is the only thing He came into the world to accomplish. He came to seek and to save the lost. To save them. To bring them home safe. To have them with Him where He is. And having gone through all the shame for the sake of them, having drunk the dregs of His cup, He has the right to them, and He says, 'I will.'

3. Now that 'I will' is our comfort. If we are of those whom the Father has given Him, if we are of those who believe on His name, then it is sure and certain that we shall find our place in heaven with Him. For that is the one thing He claims as His due from the Father. And the Father will not deny it.

4. In heaven with Him. For to be with Him is heaven. What is our conception of heaven? It is mostly taken from figures of speech probably—robes and palms and an eternal Sabbath, and even streets of gold and gates of pearl. There is no figure of speech in this: Heaven is to be with Jesus. Do we know Him? Have we found Him to be the chiefest among ten thousand? Then to be with Him *will* be heaven.

5. And what to do? 'That they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me.' But what is glory? To our common thought it is the splendour of kings and their courts. Is it here the magnificence of heaven? Is it to see the great white throne and Him that sits on it; to behold the cherubim with their many wings, and hear their cry of 'Holy, Holy, Holy'? No, says Jesus, it is to behold the love of the Father for the Son. 'That they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world.' So that is to be our occupation in heaven—to behold the love the Father has to the Son, a love that He has always

had, but now has new occasion for. And it is not merely to behold it. For beholding means transforming. 'We all, as in a mirror, beholding the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory.' 'Beloved, it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when it doth appear, we shall be like Him: for we shall see Him as He is.'

ILLUSTRATIONS.

IN taking to ourselves the joy of this promise, a question arises as to when and where we are to expect the fulfilment of the blessed hope. Is it at the time of departure and in the disembodied state? St. Paul taught, and the first Christians thought, that to depart was to be with Christ, and to be absent from the body was to be present with the Lord. That is enough for us to know of that unexplained stage of existence, and we, too, may say with full assurance, 'It is far better.' Yet is it only an interval, and a life not yet made perfect, on the margin of the world which is and the world which is to be. Saints at rest as well as saints on earth are 'looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.' Then will they be ever with the Lord in quite another sense than that in which they have been conscious of His presence before. Having 'the perfect consummation and bliss both in body and soul in His eternal and everlasting glory.' Then will be fulfilled the promise that 'where I am, they also shall be with Me, and behold My glory which Thou hast given Me.' And that beholding will be a partaking, and will complete the change which the beholding by faith had begun. So in words of serene certainty the evangelist in his Epistle interprets and appropriates the promise which he has here recorded, 'Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be: but we know that, if He shall be made manifest, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is' (1 Jn 3²). Who will not answer Amen?

'As for me, I will behold Thy presence in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness' (Ps 17¹⁵).—T. D. BERNARD.

A MINISTER of the gospel was one day visiting a pious old woman, who was in the parish workhouse. While in conversation with her on the comforts, prospects, and rewards of religion, he saw an unusual lustre beaming from her countenance, and the calmness of Christian triumph glistening in her eyes. 'Will you tell me,' he asked, 'what thought it was that passed through your mind which was the cause of your appearing so joyful?' The reply of the old disciple was, 'Oh, sir, I was just thinking what a change it will be from the poorhouse to heaven!' Ah! and what a change it will be for us, who are saved by the blood of the Lamb, from the temptations, the conflicts, the sorrows, the weariness of this life to the 'palace halls of God'!—A. C. PRICE.

WHEN all that is corrupt, corrupting, corruptible has been laid aside in the 'putting off' and the 'putting on' of the great transition—when nothing is but the holy and the beautiful and the loving—when the world itself is lightened by God and the Lamb, and all its false and lying lights are extinguished and annihilated by that lustre 'above the brightness of the sun'—then 'they that shall be counted worthy' shall grow apace in all knowledge and in all virtue—'old things shall have passed away, and all things shall have become new.' 'That they may behold My glory' is, in other words, 'that they may behold My face in righteousness, and be satisfied, when they awake, with My likeness.'—C. J. VAUGHAN.

LET me be with Thee where Thou art,
My Saviour, my eternal rest;
Then only will this longing heart
Be fully and forever blest.

Let me be with Thee where Thou art,
Thy unveil'd glory to behold;
Then only will this wandering heart
Cease to be treacherous, faithless, cold.

Let me be with Thee where Thou art,
Where spotless saints Thy name adore;
Then only will this sinful heart
Be evil and defiled no more.

Let me be with Thee where Thou art,
Where none can die, where none remove;
Where neither death nor life will part
Me from Thy presence and Thy love.

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Requests and Replies.

I have been reading with interest the volumes on 'Nippur' by Dr. Peters, Director of the American Expedition to Babylonia in 1888-90. He considers that the excavations have brought to light remains of buildings as early as 6000 or 7000 B.C., and inscriptions of about 4000 B.C. Are these very early dates (which Dr. Peters confesses are 'conjectural') generally accepted by Assyriologists as proven, as against the usual Bible chronology? Is Nippur identified with any city mentioned in the Old Testament? Where can the latest and most reliable information on the subject be obtained?—A. W. W.

As far as I have been able to ascertain, the early dates given by Peters, and by Hilprecht in his *Babylonian Expedition of the University of Pennsylvania*, are generally accepted by Assyriologists. Prominent among the dissentients, in all probability, should be mentioned Lehmann, who, as he contends that Sargon of Agadé (owing to a mistake on the part of Nabonidus and his scribes) ought to be placed 1000 years later (2800 B.C., instead of 3800 B.C.), would also say that the foundation of the city of Niffer took place at a proportionately

late date, *i.e.* 6000 B.C., instead of 8000 B.C. I think that Lehmann is wrong in attributing error to Nabonidus or to his scribes, and I am inclined to accept the high dates proposed by Peters and Hilprecht, but more written chronological material is needed before we can say that those high dates are placed beyond a doubt. At present we cannot do otherwise than accept them as being probably correct in the main.

I notice that your correspondent speaks, in the usual way, of Bible chronology, by which, I take it, he means Bishop Usher's. As so many people seem actually to pin their faith to the dates given in the margin of our reference Bibles, the cause of religion and science would, it seems to me, be served at one and the same time, if we could induce the authorities to omit from the Bible *all the marginal dates prior to the time of Abraham*. Any chronology whatever of this earliest period is so uncertain that it does not deserve a place in any authoritative publication. Scientific men, as a rule, disregard it, and religious people, having