

A.W. Pink:

Exposition of the Gospel of John

CHAPTER 22

CHRIST, THE BREAD OF LIFE

John 6:28-40

Below we give an Analysis of the passage which is to be before us:—

1. The Inquiry of the legalistic heart: verse 28.
2. The Divine answer thereto: verse 29.
3. The Scepticism of the natural heart: verses 30, 31.
4. Christ the true Bread: verses 32-34.
5. Christ the Satisfier of man's heart: verse 35.
6. The Unbelief of those who had seen: verse 36.
7. Christ's Submission to the Father's will: verses 37-40.

It is both important and instructive to observe the connection between John 5 and John 6: the latter is, doctrinally, the sequel to the former. There is both a comparison and a contrast in the way Christ is presented to us in these two chapters. In both we see Him as the Source of life, Divine life, spiritual life, eternal life. But, speaking of what is characteristic in John 5, we have life communicated by Christ, whereas in John 6 we have salvation received by us. Let us amplify this a little.

John 5 opens with a typical illustration of Christ imparting life to an impotent soul: a man, helpless through an infirmity which he had had for thirty-eight years, is made whole. This miracle Christ makes the basis of a discourse in which He presented His Divine glories. In verse 21 we read, "As the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them: even so the Son quickeneth whom he will." The same line of thought continues through to the end of verse 26. Thus, Christ there presents Himself in full Godhead title, as the Source and Dispenser of life, sovereignly imparted to whom He pleases. The one upon whom this Divine life is bestowed, as illustrated by the case of the impotent man, is regarded as entirely passive; he is called into life by the all-mighty, creating voice of the Son of God (verse 25). There is nothing in the sinner's case but the powerlessness of death until the deep silence is broken by the word of the Divine Quickener. His voice makes itself heard in the soul, hitherto dead, but no longer dead as it hears His voice. But nothing is said of any searchings of heart, any exercises of conscience, any sense of need, any felt desire after Christ. It is simply Christ, in Divine sufficiency, speaking to spiritually dead souls, empowering them (by sovereign "quickenings") to hear.

In John 6 Christ is presented in quite another character, and in keeping with this, so is the sinner too. Here our Lord is viewed not in His essential glories, but as the Son incarnate. Here He is contemplated as "the Son of man" (verses 27, 53), and therefore, as in the place of humiliation, "come down from heaven" (verses 33, 38, 51, etc.). As such, Christ is made known as the Object of desire, and as the One who can meet the sinner's need. In John 5 it was Christ who sought out the "great multitude" of impotent folk (verses 3, 6), and when Christ presented Himself to the man who had an infirmity thirty and eight years, he evidenced no desire for the Savior. He acted as one who had no heart whatever for the Son of God. As such he accurately portrayed the dead soul when it is first quickened by Christ. But in John 6 the contrast is very noticeable. Here the "great multitude" followed him (verses 2, 24, 25), with an evident desire for Him—we speak not now of the unworthy motive that prompted that desire, but the desire itself as illustrative of a truth. It is this contrast which indicates the importance of noting the relation of John 5 and 6. As said in our opening sentences, the latter is the sequel to the former. We mean that the order in the contents of the two chapters, so far as their contents are typical and illustrative, set forth the doctrinal order of truth. They give us the two sides: the Divine and the human; and here, as ever, the Divine comes first. In John 5 we have the quickening power of Christ, as exercised according to His sovereign prerogative; in John 6 we have illustrated the effects of this in a soul already quickened. In the one, Christ approaches the dead soul; in the other, the dead soul, now quickened, seeks Christ!

In developing this illustration of the truth in John 6, the Holy Spirit has followed the same order as in John 5. Here, too, Christ works a miracle, on those who typically portray the doctrinal characters which are in view. These are sinners already "quickenings," but not yet saved; for, unlike quickening, there is a human side to salvation, as well as a Divine. The prominent thing brought before us in the first section of John 6 is a hungry multitude. And how forcibly and how accurately they illustrate the condition of a soul just quickened, is obvious. As soon as the Divine life has been imparted, there is a stirring within; there is a sense of need awakened. It is the life turning toward its Source, just as water ever seeks its own level. The illustration is Divinely apt, for there are few things of which we are more conscious than when we are assailed by the pangs of hunger. But not so with a dead man, for he is unconscious; or with a paralyzed man, for he is incapable of

feeling. So it is spiritually. The one who is dead in trespasses and sins, and paralyzed by depravity, has no hunger for God. But how different with one who has been Divinely "quickened"! The first effect of quickening is that the one quickened awakes to consciousness: the Divine life within gives capacity to discern his sinfulness and his need of Christ.

Mark, too, what follows in the second section of John 6. The same line of truth is pursued further. Here we see the disciples in darkness, in the midst of a storm, rowing towards the Place of Consolation. What a vivid illustration does this supply of the experiences of the newly quickened and so awakened soul! It tells of the painful experiences through which he passes ere the Haven of Rest is reached. Not yet is he really saved; not yet does he understand the workings of Divine grace within him. All he is conscious of is his sense of deep need. And it is then that Satan's fiendish onslaughts are usually the fiercest. Into what a storm is he now plunged! But the Devil is not permitted to completely overwhelm the soul, any more than he was the disciples in the illustration. When God's appointed time arrives, Christ draws nigh and says, "I am: be not afraid." He stands revealed before the one who was seeking Him, and then is He "willingly received into the ship"—He is gladly embraced by faith, and received into the heart! Then the storm is over, the desired haven is reached, for the next thing we see is Christ and the disciples at "Capernaum" (place of consolation). Thus, in the feeding of the hungry multitude, and in the delivering of the disciples from the storm-tossed sea, we have a most blessed and wonderful illustration of Christ meeting and satisfying the conscious need of the soul previously quickened.

It will thus be seen that all of this is but introductory to the great theme unfolded in the middle section of John 6. Just as the healing of the impotent man at the beginning of John 5 introduced and prepared the way for the discourse that followed, so it is in John 6. Here the prominent truth is Christ in the place of humiliation, which He had voluntarily entered as man, "come down from heaven"; and thus as "the bread of life" presenting Himself as the Object who alone can supply the need of which the quickened and awakened soul is so conscious.[1]

"Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?" (John 6:28). This question appears to be the language of men temporarily impressed and aroused, but still in the dark concerning the way to Heaven. They felt, perhaps, that they were on the wrong road, that something was required of them, but what that something was they knew not. They supposed they had to do some work; but what works they were ignorant. It was the old self-righteousness of the natural man, who is ever occupied with his own doings. The carnal mind is flattered when it is consciously doing something for God. For his doings man deems himself entitled to reward. He imagines that salvation is due him, because he has earned it. Thus does he reckon the reward "not of grace, but of debt." Man seeks to bring God into the humbling position of debtor to him. How unbelief and pride degrade the Almighty! How they rob Him of His glory!

"What shall we do that we might work the works of God?" It seems almost incredible that these men should have asked such a question. Only a moment before, Christ had said to them "Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you" (verse 27). But the carnal mind, which is enmity against God, is unable to rise to the thought of a gift. Or, rather, the carnal heart is unwilling to come down to the place of a beggar and a pauper, and receive everything for nothing. The sinner wants to do something to earn it. It was thus with the woman at the well: until Divine grace completed its work within her, she knew not the "gift of God" (John 4:10). It was the same with the rich young ruler: "Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" (Luke 18:18). It was the same with the stricken Jews on the day of Pentecost: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37). It was the same with the Philippian jailer: "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30). So it was with the prodigal son—"Make me as one of thy hired servants" (one who works for what he receives) was his thought (Luke 15:19). Ah! dear friends, God and man are ever the same wherever you find them!

"Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent" (John 6:29). In what lovely patient grace did the Lord make reply! In blessed simplicity of language, He stated that the one thing that God requires of sinners is that they believe on the One whom He has sent into the world to meet their deepest need. "This is the work of God" means, this is what God requires. It is not the works of the law, nor the bringing of an offering to His temple altar; but faith in Christ. Christ is the Savior appointed by God, and faith in Him is that which God approves, and without which nothing else can be acceptable in His sight. Paul answered the question of the Philippian jailer as the Lord before him had done—"What must I do to be saved?": "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" was the reply (Acts 16:31). But again we say, Man had rather do than "believe." And why is this? Because it panders to his pride: because it repudiates his utter ruin, inasmuch as it is a denial that he is "without strength" (Rom. 5:6): because it provides for him a platform on which he can boast and glory. Nevertheless, the one and only "work" which God will accept is faith in His Son.

But, perhaps some one will raise the question, Is it possible that I can ever enter heaven without good works? Answer: No; you cannot enter heaven without a good character. But those good works and that character of yours must be without a flaw. They must be as holy as God, or you can never enter His presence. But how may I secure such a character as that? Surely that is utterly impossible! No, it is not. But how then? By a series of

strivings after holiness? No; that is doing again. Do nothing. Only believe. Accept the Work already done—the finished work of the Lord Jesus on our behalf. This is what God asks of you—give up your own doings and receive that of My beloved Son. But are you ready to do this? Are you willing to abandon your own doings, your own righteousness, and to accept His? You will not till you are thoroughly convinced that all your doings are faulty, that all your efforts fall far short of God's demands, that all your own righteousness is tarnished with sin, yea, is as "filthy rags." What man will renounce his own work in order to trust to that of another, unless he be first convinced that his own is worthless? What man will repose for safety in another till he be convinced that there is no safety in trusting to himself? It is impossible. Man cannot do this of himself: it takes the work of God." It is the convicting power of the Holy Spirit, and that alone, which brings the sinner to renounce his own works and lay hold on the Lord Jesus for salvation.

O dear reader, we would solemnly press this upon you. Is the finished work of Christ the only rock on which your soul is resting for eternal life, or are you still secretly trusting to your own doings for salvation? If so, you will be eternally lost, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it—"He that believeth not shall be damned." Your own doings, even if they were such as you wish them to be, could never save you. Your prayers, your tears, your sorrowings for sin, your alms-givings, your church-goings, your efforts at holiness of life—what are they all but doings of your own, and if they were all perfect they could not save you. Why? Because it is written, "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight." Salvation is not a thing to be earned by a religious life, but is a free gift received by faith—Romans 6:23.

"They said therefore unto him, What sign showest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? What dost thou work?" (John 6:30). How this exhibits the works of unbelief! How difficult it is, yea impossible, for the natural man, of himself, to accept Christ and His finished work by "simple" faith! Truly, nothing but the Spirit of God can enable a man to do it. The Lord had said, "Believe." They replied, "Show us a sign." Give us something we can see along with it. Man must either see or feel before he will believe. "We do not mean to say that salvation is not by believing on Christ, but we want some evidence first. We will believe if we can have some evidence on which to believe. Oh, perfect picture of the natural heart! I come to a man—one who has probably for years been making a profession of religion—and I say to him, 'Have you got eternal life dwelling in you? Do you know that you are a saved man, that you have passed from death unto life?' The reply is, 'No, I am not sure of it.' Then you do not believe on the Lord Jesus. You have not accepted the finished work of Christ as yours. He replies, 'Yes, I do believe on Christ.' Then remember what He has said, 'He that believeth hath everlasting life.' He does not hope to have it. He is not uncertain about it. 'He hath it,' says the Son of God. The man answers, 'Well, I would believe this if I could only feel better. If I could only see in myself some evidences of a change, then I could believe it, and be as certain of it as you are.' So said these people to the Lord—give us some evidence that we may see and believe. Do you not see that you are thus making salvation depend on the evidences of the Spirit's work within you, instead of the finished work of the Lord Jesus for you? You say, I would believe if I could only feel better—if I could only see a change. God says, Believe first, then you shall feel—then you shall see. God reverses your order, and you must reverse it too, if you would ever have peace with God. Believe, and you will then have in your heart a motive for a holy life, and not only so, you will walk in liberty, and peace, and joy" (Dr. F. Whitfield).

"They said therefore unto him, What sign showest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? What dost thou work?" The force of that is this: You have asked us to receive you as the One sent of God. What sign, then do you show; where are your credentials to authorize your mission? And this was asked, be it remembered, on the morning following the feeding of the five thousand! It seems unthinkable. Only a few hours before they had witnessed a miracle, which in some respects, was the most remarkable our Lord had performed, and from which they had themselves benefitted. And yet, does not our own sad history testify that this is true to life? Men are surrounded by innumerable evidences for the existence of God: they carry a hundred demonstrations of it in their own persons, and yet how often do they ask, What proof have we that there is a God? So, too, with believers. We enjoy countless tokens of His love and faithfulness; we have witnessed His delivering hand again and again, and yet when some fresh trial comes upon us—something which completely upsets our plans, the removal, perchance, of some earthly object around which we had entwined our heart's affections—we ask, Does God really care? And, maybe, we are sufficiently callous to ask for another "sign" in proof that He does!

"Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat" (John 6:31). Here they drew a disparaging contrast between Christ and Moses. It was the further workings of their unbelief. The force of their objection was this: What proof have we that Thou art greater than Moses? They sought to deprecate the miracle they had witnessed on the previous day by comparing Moses and the manna. It was as though they had said, 'If you would have us believe on you as the Sent One of God, you must show us greater works. You have fed five thousand but once, whereas in Moses' day, our fathers ate bread for forty years!' It is striking to note how they harped back to their "fathers." The woman at the well did the same thing (see John 4:12). And is it not so now? The experiences of "the fathers", what they believed and taught, is still with many the final court of appeal.

"Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat." Their speech betrayed them, as is evident from their use of the word "manna." The late Malachi Taylor pointed out how this

was "a name always used by their father, of wilfulness, persistently ignoring Jehovah's word 'bread', and now uttered by them, because it was so written. It is notable that they of old never called it anything at all but 'manna' (meaning 'What is this?'), except when they despised it (Num. 21:5); and then they called it 'light bread.' And Jehovah named it 'manna' in Numbers 11:7 when the mixed multitude fell a-lusting for the flesh-pots of Egypt. What lessons for us as to our thoughts of Christ, the Bread of God! In Psalm 78:24, where God is recounting the evil ways of Israel through the wilderness, He calls it 'manna'; but in Psalm 105:40, where all His mercies pass in review, calling for praise, it is called 'bread'. Again we say, What lessons for us!"

"Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not the bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven" (John 6:32). With good reason might our blessed Lord have turned away from His insulting challengers. Well might He have left them to themselves. But as another has said, "Grace in Him was active. Their souls' interests He had at heart" (C.E.S.). And so, in wondrous condescension, He speaks to them of the Father's "Gift", who alone could meet their deep need, and satisfy their souls. And has He not often dealt thus with thee, dear reader? Cannot you say with the Psalmist, "He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities" (Ps. 103:10)? Instead of turning away in disgust at our ingratitude and unbelief, He has continued to care for us and minister to us. O how thankful ought we to be for that precious promise, and the daily fulfillment of it in our lives, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

"Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven." The error of the Jews here should be a warning to us. They thought Moses gave them the manna. But it was God and not Moses. He was only the humble instrument. They ought to have looked through the instrument to God. But the eye rested, where it is ever so prone to rest—on the human medium. The Lord here leads them to look beyond the human instrument to God—"Moses gave you not that bread... but my Father," etc. O what creatures of sense we are. We live so much in the outward and visible, as almost to forget there is anything beyond. All that we gaze upon here is but the avenue to what eye hath not seen, nor ear heard. All the temporal gifts and blessings we receive are but the finger of the Father beckoning us within the inner shrine. He is saying to us, 'If My works be so beautiful, if My gifts be so precious, if My footprints be so glorious, what must I be?' Thus should we ever look through nature, to nature's God. Thus shall we enjoy God's gifts, when they lead us up to Him; and then shall we not make idols of them, and so run the risk of their removal. Everything in nature and in providence is but the "Moses" between us and God. Let us not be like the Jews of old, so taken up with Moses as to forget the "greater than Moses," whence they all proceed.

"For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world" (John 6:33). The Father's provision for a dying world was to send from heaven His only begotten Son. There is another suggestive contrast here, yea, a double one. The manna had no power to ward off death—the generation of Israel that ate it in the wilderness died! How, then, could it be the "true bread"? No; Christ is the "true bread," for He bestows "life." But again: the manna was only for Israel. No other people in the desert (the Amorites, for instance) partook of the manna; for it fell only in Israel's camp. But the true Bread "giveth life unto the world." The "world" here does not include the whole human race, for Christ does not bestow "life" on every descendant of Adam. It is not here said that the true Bread offereth "life unto the world," but He "giveth life." It is the "world" of believers who are here in view. The Lord, then, designedly employs a word that reached beyond the limits of Israel, and took in elect Gentiles too!

"For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world." Three different expressions are used by our Lord in this passage, each having a slightly varied meaning; the three together, serving to bring out the fulness and blessedness of this title. In verse 32 He speaks of Himself as the "true bread from heaven": "true" speaks of that which is real, genuine, satisfying; "from heaven" tells of its celestial and spiritual character. In verse 33 He speaks of Himself as "the bread of God," which denotes that He is Divine, eternal. Then, in verse 35 He says, "I am the bread of life": the One who imparts, nourishes and sustains life.

"Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread" (John 6:34). This was but the outcome of a fleeting impression which had been made by His words. It reminds us very much of the language of the woman at the well, "Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw" (John 4:15), and those who recall our comments on that verse will remember the motive that prompted her. The words of these men but served to make their rejection of Him more manifest and decisive when they fully grasped His meaning: verse 36 proves this conclusively—"But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not."

"And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life" (John 6:35). The Lord places Himself before us under the figure of bread. The emblem is beautifully significant, and like all others used in Scripture calls for prolonged and careful meditation. First, bread is a necessary food. Unlike many other articles of diet which are more or less luxuries, this is essential to our very existence. Bread is the food we cannot dispense with. There are other things placed upon our tables that we can do without, but not so with bread. Let us learn the lesson well. Without Christ we shall perish. There is no spiritual life or health apart from the Bread of God.

Second, bread is a Food that is suited to all. There are some people who cannot eat sweets; others are unable

to digest meats. But all eat bread. The physical body may retain its life for a time without bread, but it will be sickly, and soon sink into the grave. Bread, then is adapted to all. It is the food of both king and artisan. So it is with Christ. It meets the need of all alike; He is able to satisfy every class of sinners—rich or poor, cultured or illiterate.

Third, bread is a daily food. There are some articles of food which we eat but occasionally; others only when they are in season. But bread is something we need every day of our lives. It is so spiritually. If the Christian fails to feed on Christ daily, if he substitutes the husks of religious forms and ceremonies, religious books, religious excitement, the glare and glitter of modern Christianity, he will be weak and sickly. It is failure at this very point which is mainly responsible for the feebleness of so many of the Lord's people.

Fourth, bread is a satisfying food. We quickly tire of other articles of diet, but not so with this. Bread is a staple and standard article, which we must use all our lives. And does not the analogy hold good again spiritually? How often have we turned aside to other things, only to find them but husks! None but the Bread of life can satisfy.

Fifth, let us note the process through which bread passes before it becomes food. It springs up—the blade, the ear, the full corn in the ear. Then it is cut down, winnowed, and ground into flour, and finally subjected to the fiery process of the oven. Thus, and only thus, did it become fit to sustain life. Believer in Christ, such was the experience of the Bread of God. He was "bruised for our iniquities." He was subjected to the fierce fires of God's holy wrath, as He took our place in judgment. O how wonderful—God forbid that we should ever lose our sense of wonderment over it. The Holy One of God, was "made a curse for us." "It pleased the Lord to bruise him." And this in order that He might be the Bread of life to us! Let us then feed upon Him. Let us draw from His infinite fulness. Let us ever press forward unto a more intimate fellowship with Him.

"And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst" (John 6:35). In verse 33 Christ had spoken of giving life to "the world"—the world of believers, the sum total of the saved. Now He speaks of, the individual—"he that cometh to me... he that believeth. A similar order is to be observed in verse 37—note the "all" is followed by "him." There is, no doubt, a shade of difference between "believing on" Christ, and "coming to" Him. To "believe on" Christ is to receive God's testimony concerning His Son, and to rest on Him alone for salvation. To "come to" Him—which is really the effect of the former—is for the heart to go out to Him in loving confidence. The two acts are carefully distinguished in Hebrews 11:6: "without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is: and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him." I must know who the physician is, and believe in his ability, before I shall go to him to be cured.

But what are we to understand by "shall never hunger" and "shall never thirst"? Does the Christian never "hunger" or "thirst"? Surely; then, how are we to harmonize his experience with this positive declaration of the Savior? Ah! He speaks here according to the fulness and satisfaction there is in Himself, and not according to our imperfect apprehension and appreciation of Him. If we are straitened it is in ourselves, not in Him. If we do "hunger" and "thirst," it is not because He is unable, and not because He is unwilling, to satisfy our hunger and quench our thirst, but because we are of "little faith" and fail to draw daily from His fulness.

"But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not" (John 6:36). Even the sight of Christ in the flesh, and the beholding of His wondrous miracles, did not bring men to believe on Him. O the depravity of the human heart! "Ye also have seen me, and believe not." This shows how valueless was their request: "Lord, evermore give us this bread" (verse 34). It is unspeakably solemn. They trusted in Moses (John 9:28), they had rejoiced for a season in John the Baptist's light (John 5:35); they could quote the Scriptures (John 6:31), and yet they believed not on Christ! It is difficult to say how far a man may go, and yet come short of the one thing needful. These men were not worse than many others, but their unbelief was manifested and declared; consequently, Christ addresses them accordingly. This, indeed, would be the result in every case, were we left to our own thoughts of Christ. Be warned then, dear reader, and make sure that yours is a saving faith.

"But I said unto you, that ye also have seen me, and believe not." Was, then, the incarnation a failure? Was His mission fruitless? That could not be. There can be no failure with God, though there is much failure in all of us to understand His purpose. Christ was not in anywise discouraged or disheartened at the apparent failure of His mission. His next word shows that very conclusively, and to it we turn.

"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me" (John 6:37). Here the Lord speaks of a definite company which have been given to Him by the Father. Nor is this the only place where He makes mention of this people. In John 17 He refers to their seven times over. In verse 2 He says, "As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." So again in verse 6 He says, "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: Thine they were, and thou gavest them me." And again in verse 9 He declares, "I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine." See also verses 11, 12, 24. Whom those are that the Father gave to Christ we are told in Ephesians 1:4—"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world." Those given to Christ were God's elect, singled out for this marvellous honor before the foundation of the world: "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation" (2 Thess. 2:13). But let us notice the exact connection in our passage wherein Christ refers to the elect.

In verse 36 we find our Lord saying to those who had no heart for Him, "ye also have seen me, and believe not." Was He, then, disheartened? Far from it. And why not? Ah! mark how the Son of God, here the lowly Servant of Jehovah, encourages Himself. He immediately adds, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me." What a lesson is this for every under shepherd. Here is the true haven of rest for the heart of every Christ worker. Your message may be slighted by the crowd, and as you see how many there are who "believe not" it may appear that your labor is in vain. Nevertheless "the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his" (2 Tim. 2:19). The eternal purpose of the Almighty cannot fail; the sovereign will of the Lord Most High cannot be frustrated. All, every one, that the Father gave to the Son before the foundation of the world "shall come to him." The Devil himself cannot keep one of them away. So take heart fellow-worker. You may seem to be sowing the Seed at random, but God will see to it that part of it falls onto ground which He has prepared. The realization of the invincibility of the eternal counsels of God will give you a calmness, a poise, a courage, a perseverance which nothing else can. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58).

"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me." But while this is very blessed, it is solemnly tragic and deeply humbling. How humiliating for us, that in the presence of incarnate life and love in the person of the Lord of glory, no one would have come to Him, none would have benefitted by His mission, had there not been those who were given to Him by the Father, and on whose coming He could, therefore, reckon. Man's depravity is so entire, his enmity so great, that in every instance, his will would have resisted and rejected Christ, had not the Father determined that His Son should have some as the trophies of His victory and the reward of His coming down from heaven. Alas that our deadness to such love should have called forth such sighs as seem to breathe in these very words of Christ!

"And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37). Let us not miss (as is so commonly done) the connection between this clause and the one which precedes it. "Him that cometh to me" is explained by "all that the Father giveth me." None would come to Him unless the Father had first predestinated that they should, for it is only "as many as were ordained to eternal life" that believe (Acts 13:48). Each one that the Father had given to Christ in eternity past, "cometh" to Him in time—comes as a lost sinner to be saved; comes having nothing, that he may receive everything.

The last clause "I will in no wise cast out" assures the eternal preservation of everyone that truly cometh to Christ. These words of the Savior do not signify (as generally supposed) that He promises to reject none who really come to Him, though that is true; but they declare that under no imaginable circumstances will He ever expel any one that has come. Peter came to Him and was saved. Later, he denied his Master with an oath. But did Christ "cast him out"? Nay, verily. And can we find a more extreme case? If Peter was not "cast out," no Christian ever was, or ever will be. Praise the Lord!

"For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me" (John 6:38). This is most instructive. The force of it is this: Those whom the Father had given the Son—all of them—would come to Him. It was no longer the Son in His essential glory, quickening whom He would, as in verse 21, but the Son incarnate, the "Son of man" (John 6:27), receiving those the Father "drew" to Him (John 6:44)! "Therefore be it who it might, He would in no wise cast him out: enemy, scoffer, Jew or Gentile, they would not come if the Father had not sent them" (J.N.D.). Christ was here to do the Father's will. Thus does Christ assure His own that He will save to the end all whom the Father had given Him.

"For I came down from heaven not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." How greatly does this enhance the value of the precious words at the close of the preceding verse, when we see that our coming to Christ is not attributed to man's fickle will, but as the effect of the Father's drawing to the Savior each one given to Him in the counsels of that Father's love before the foundation of the world! So, too, the reception of them is not merely because of Christ's compassion for the lost, but as the obedient Servant of the Father's will, He welcomes each one brought to Him—brought by the unseen drawings of the Father's love. Thus our security rests not upon anything in us or from us, but upon the Father's choice and the Son's obedient love!

"And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day" (John 6:39). How blessedly this, too, explains the closing words of verse 37! Eternal predestination guarantees eternal preservation. The "last day" is, of course, the last day of the Christian dispensation. Then it shall appear that He hath not lost a single one whom the Father gave to Him. Then shall He say, "Behold I and the children which God hath given me" (Heb. 2:13).

"And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:40). Christ had just spoken of the Father's counsels. He had disclosed the fact that the success of His ministry depended not on man's will—for that was known to be, in every case, so perverse as to reject the Savior—but on the drawing power of the Father. But here He leaves, as it were, the door wide open to any one any where who is disposed to enter: "that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life." Yet it is instructive to note the order of the two verbs here: "believing" on Christ is the result of "seeing" Him. He must first be revealed by the Spirit before He will be received by the sinner. Thus did our Lord disclose to these men that a far deeper and infinitely

more important work had been entrusted to Him than that of satisfying Israel's poor with material bread—not less a change than that of raising up at the last day all that had been given to Him by the Father, without losing so much as one.

The following questions are submitted to help the student for the next chapter on John 6:41-59:—

1. Wherein does verse 44 rebuke their "murmuring"?
2. What ought to have been their response to verse 44?
3. Who are the "all" that are "taught of God"? verse 45.
4. What is meant by "not die"? verse 50.
5. What are the various thoughts suggested by "eat"? verse 51.
6. What is the difference in thought between verses 53 and 56?
7. What is meant by "I live by the Father"? verse 57.

ENDNOTES:

[1] We do not think the time would be wasted if the above paragraphs were re-read before proceeding farther.