

XIV.—JESUS AND HIS OWN THINGS

By J. A. Huffman, D. D.

The gospel as recorded by John is the one gospel narrative which majors upon the deity of Christ. When one is in quest of cumulative proof texts on the subject of Christ's deity, it is this book to which he invariably comes. Not that the deity of our Lord is ignored or even neglected in the other of the books of the New Testament, for it is written over its pages, but in this gospel narrative the subject is dealt with in a very unique and emphatic manner.

The Gospel by John begins on a very high level, declaring that the Word, Greek Logos, which refers to Christ, had an eternity of existence, and was God, verse one. In verse three, creatorship is predicated of Him, where it is said, literally translated, "All things by him were created, and without him was not anything created, which has been created."

John gives no human genealogy of Jesus, as Matthew and Luke do, for though Jesus did have a traceable human genealogy, John was not interested in this, for it was the divine Christ whom he was representing, and in His deity He needed and had no genealogy.

Following down this marvelous and classic representation of Jesus by John as found in the early part of chapter one, we come to verse fourteen. Here it is found the epitome of the incarnation of God in human flesh in the following words: "And the Word became flesh, and tabernacled (Greek—eskanosen) among men, and we beheld the glory of him, glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." The King James Version, and even the usually accurate American Standard, translates eskanosen "dwelt," which is inaccurate. The Greek word is from skaneo, the verb form of the noun skana, which is a "tent" or a "tabernacle," and means "tenting" or "tabernacled," which suggests a temporary stay, whereas "dwelt" means a permanent residence. Jesus' presence in the world was not a permanent residence, but a temporary stay, as the word properly translated indicates. The American Standard Version does have "tabernacled" in the margin, as an alternate reading for the word "dwelt" but not all readers observe the marginal readings.

But it is in relation to the exceedingly interesting John 1:11, which introduces to us the Saviourship of Jesus, that we get a thrill to the very fingertips, when the Greek words are properly translated and examined.

The King James Version reads: "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." The American Standard Version reads: "He came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not."

Based upon these indiscriminating translations, the almost universal comments made upon this verse by ministers amount merely to this: "Jesus came unto His own people, the Jews; and His own people, the Jews, received Him not." Of course it is true that He came unto the Jews; that they were His people; and that, as a nation, they did not receive Him. But this is only a small fraction of what is predicated in this great verse.

The words translated "his own" in the first part of the verse are the Greek words *ta idia*, and are neuter in gender and plural in number. Correctly translated the words mean, "His own things." According to Thayer in his Greek lexicon, the phrase means, primarily, "what is one's own as opposed to that belonging to

another," "what pertains to property, family, dwelling or country." The Expositor's Greek Testament quite illuminatingly says: "Perhaps, in this place, his own property might give the sense as accurately."

Accordingly, the first part of the verse with its *ta idia* should be translated: "He came unto his own things." This statement should then be connected with verse three preceding, and in the light of His Creatorship predicated there, a grand, great new meaning of the statement is discovered. The Creator of all things came to His own creation, His own things, His own world of animate and inanimate things, Jews, Gentiles, and all. What a world view of Jesus' visit to this world, but beautifully in keeping with the exalted panorama presented by the apostle John!

In the latter part of the verse, the phrase is *hoi idioi*, which is also plural, but the gender is masculine. The sentence should then read: "And his own people received him not." It is here where a casual reading gives the impression that the Jewish nation only is referred to, and thus Jew is set into contrast with Jew, or possibly the Gentiles, who may be included in the first part of the verse. But the picture is infinitely greater than the first casual, inadequate conclusion. It is not a statement concerning the Jews nor the contrasting of the Jewish nation with the rest of the peoples of the world, but it is the contrasting of that part of the creation which comes within the category of rational, self-determined human beings, Jews and Gentiles (*hoi idioi*, masculine plural), with all of the rest of Christ's own creation (*ta idia*, neuter plural).

John was neither writing for, nor of, Jews exclusively. His vantage point of revelation had moved down somewhere near the close of the first century, and he wrote for all people, everywhere. Of course, looking down the corridors of time, the faces which appear first, and frequently, are those of the Jews. But this picture is longer-range and more inclusive.

Here, then, is what we see by the help that these Greek phrases give us: A Christ who had an eternity of existence, who was Creator, who became flesh and tabernacled among men in order that He might be their Saviour. All creation except mankind received Him and responded to His Lordship. Calm nature reacted to the authority of Christ, when at the wedding feast in Cana "the conscious water saw its Lord and blushed." The elements obeyed when to the wind He said, "Be still," and to the waves He commanded, "Be muzzled," on the Sea of Galilee. Plant life withered away at the roots within a day, when He pronounced an anathema upon the pretentious fig tree. Animal life respected their Creator, when wild beasts became companionable to Him in the wilderness, and the herd of swine in Gadara received the evil spirits into them. Human bodies felt the touch of the master hand when He opened blind eyes, unstopped deaf ears, healed the lame, cleansed the leper, and dried up the issue of blood. Even the dead could not remain so in the presence of Him who is Himself Life.

In contrast to this picture is that statement that man, rational, intelligent, self-determining, made in the likeness of God, possessed of sovereignty, received Him not. As an exception some did receive Him. But as a race they rejected Him (and still do). But to those who received Him, and do receive Him, to them gave He, and He does continue to give, authority to become children of God.

The proper perspective upon this great

verse, John 1:11, with its *ta idia* and its *hoi idioi*, has spoiled many an otherwise perfectly good sermon; and it is our prayer that it may spoil many more sermons which would limit it to the Jew or to a contrasting of Jew and Gentile.

(All Rights Reserved)

"NEVER MAN SPAKE LIKE THIS MAN"

J. B. Chapman, D. D.

Jesus was the leader of the most radical revolution this world has ever seen; for He was not content with a revolution in practice, but insisted upon the complete regeneration of the heart. And yet in a day of political tyranny, He never suggested uprising against the Roman government, and He escaped from those who would have taken Him by force to make Him the centre of such revolt. He was the author of the fullest liberty ever conceived in the minds of men. And yet in a day of universal slavery, He never preached once on abolition. He had little to say on social reforms, quoted no statistics, and never discoursed in generalities and abstractions. He used no graphs and acknowledged no forbidding externalities. When He talked of men at all, He talked only of their hearts.

Christ's method of evangelism was the very simplest. He won the heart of one man, and sent that man to win the heart of his brother. Then the two joined hands to go and win the third. And by such a method He planned to win all He would ever win. Others discourse learnedly about methods, but Christ's method is a man.

Every disciple is attached directly to his Master. There are no supers and no subs in the family of faith. Each is equal with any other, and Christ alone is Master. Believers are branches in a vine and draw their sustenance from sources within. Exterior attachments do not count.

The way into Christ's kingdom is difficult for the strongest and most learned, and yet it is possible to even a little child. Both obscurity and fame are matters of indifference. Christians do not strive simply to think little of themselves, but find their best refuge in forgetting themselves altogether. In the estimates of Christ only goodness differentiates: meekness is strength, gentleness is greatness, dependence is wealth, simplicity is wisdom, purity is power, and service is promotion.

Today, as in the past, Jesus challenges the weary and heavy laden to come to Him for rest. He would answer the prayer that all things might be new by changing the heart of the one that prays from sin to holiness. He would bring to bear upon the heart of a single individual all the force required to transform the universe, and in the heat of this furnace He would burn out all sinful alloy, and set up in the individual heart a throne upon which God could reign without a rival. This is no time to sit about waiting for the dispensations to change. This is the time for coming to Christ for pardon and purity and for all grace required to make our individual hearts moral and spiritual types of heaven. No man ever spoke like this Man, and this Man is the God-man. Let us hear and heed His voice.

BORN

At Fredericton, N. B., Friday, July 23rd, to Rev. and Mrs. Bertram Hicks, a son, Ross Bertram.