

A Concise Summary of Alfred Edersheim's *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*

Part II

Section 1: From Childhood to the Death of John the Baptist

EARLY CHILDHOOD OF JESUS

Of the many years spent in Nazareth during which Jesus passed from infancy to manhood, the Evangelic narrative has left us but briefest notice. Of his childhood we read, "he grew and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him." Of his youth, besides the account of his questioning the Rabbis in the Temple, we read that "he was subject to his parents," and that "he increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man."

From the first days of a Jewish child's existence, a religious atmosphere surrounded him. Admitted into the number of God's chosen people by the deeply significant rite of circumcision, he was separated unto God. The first wish expressed for him was that as he had been joined to the covenant so he might live godly, soberly, and righteously in this present world, a holy, happy, and God-devoted life. And what this was could not for a moment be in doubt. "These are the things of which a man enjoys the fruit in this world, but their possession continues for the next: to honor father and mother, pious works, peacemaking between man and man, and the study of the Law, which is equivalent to them all." This devotion to the Law was, indeed, to the Jew everything: the sum of intellectual pursuits, the aim of life.

The earliest religious teaching would of necessity come from the mother, but it was the father who was bound to teach his son. To impart to the child knowledge of the Torah conferred as great a spiritual distinction as if a man had received the Law itself on Mount Horeb. Every other engagement, even the necessary meal, should give place to this paramount duty. As soon as the child learned to speak, his religious instruction was to begin with special attention given to the culture of the memory, since forgetfulness might prove as fatal in its consequences as ignorance or neglect of the Law.

Regular instruction commenced with the fifth or sixth year when every child was sent to school. There can be no reasonable doubt that at the time of Jesus such schools existed throughout the land. Tradition tells us that despite the fabulous number of schools supposed to have existed in Jerusalem, the city fell because of the neglect of the education of the children. It was even deemed unlawful to live in a place where there was no school. Such a city deserved to be either destroyed or excommunicated.

Roughly classifying the subject of study, it was held that up to ten years of age the Bible exclusively should be the textbook, the first book taught being Leviticus. From ten to fifteen the Mishnah, or traditional law, was taught. After that age the student should enter on those theological discussions which occupied time and attention in the higher Academies of the Rabbis.

The teaching in school would, of course, be greatly aided by the services of the Synagogue and the

deeper influences of home life. We know that even in the times which preceded the rising of the Maccabees, the possession of parts or the whole of the Old Testament (whether in the original or the LXX rendering) was very common. Although perhaps only the wealthy could have purchased a manuscript of the whole Old Testament in Hebrew, yet some portion or portions of the Word of God in the original would form the most cherished treasure of every pious household. Besides, a school for Bible-study was attached to every academy in which copies of the Holy Scripture would be kept.

It was in such circumstances and under such influences that the early years of Jesus passed. We do not know for certain whether the school system had at that time extended to far-off Nazareth, but in all probability it did. If so, Jesus would conform to the general practice of attendance. We may therefore with deepest reverence think of him as learning his earliest earthly lesson from the book of Leviticus. There were not learned Rabbis in Nazareth, but Jesus would attend the services of the Synagogue where Moses and the prophets were read and occasional addresses delivered. That his was preeminently a pious home in the highest sense it seems almost irreverent to say. From his intimate familiarity with Holy Scripture, in its every detail, we may be allowed to infer that the home of Nazareth, however humble, possessed a precious copy of the Sacred Volume in its entirety. The words of the Lord, as recorded by Matthew and Luke, also imply that the Holy Scriptures which he read were in the original Hebrew, and that they were written in the square, or Assyrian, characters. Indeed, as the Pharisees and Sadducees always appealed to the Scriptures in the original, Jesus could not have met them on any other ground, and it was this which gave such point to his frequent expostulations with them, "Have ye not read?"

THE VISIT TO THE TEMPLE

Only once is the great silence broken in the history of Christ's early life, and that is to record his first visit to the Temple. In strict law, personal observance of the ordinances, and hence attendance at the feasts at Jerusalem, devolved upon a youth only when he was of age, that is, at thirteen years when he became what was called 'a son of the Commandment,' or 'of the Torah.' But as a matter of fact, the legal age was in this respect anticipated by two years, or at least by one. It was in accordance with this custom that on the first Pascha after Jesus had passed his twelfth year, his parents took him with them in the company of the Nazarenes to Jerusalem.

Politically, times had changed. The weak and wicked rule of Archelaus had lasted only nine years when he was banished to Gaul. Judea, Samaria and Idumaea were now incorporated into the Roman province of Syria under its Governor, or *Legate*. The special administration of that part of Palestine was, however, entrusted to a *Procurator* whose ordinary residence was at Caesarea. The Jews themselves had desired some such arrangement in the vain hope that, freed from the tyranny of the Herodians, they might enjoy the semi-independence of their brethren in the Grecian cities. But they found it otherwise. Their privileges were not secured to them, their religious feelings and prejudices were constantly, though perhaps not intentionally, outraged, and their Sanhedrin shorn of its real power though the Romans would probably not interfere in what might be regarded as purely religious questions.

At the time when Jesus went up to the feast, Quirinius was Governor of Syria, Annas was High Priest, and Coponius was Procurator. It was the spring of A.D. 9. For a time a brief calm had fallen upon the land. There was nothing to provoke active resistance, and the party of the Zealots (Nationalists whose

real home was Galilee) were for the moment quiet. There could have been no difficulty in finding hospitality however crowded the City. Glorious as a view of Jerusalem must have seemed to a child of twelve coming to it for the first time from the retirement of a Galilean village, we must bear in mind that Jesus was not an ordinary child.

The all-engrossing thought of all would be the Temple, which could hold within its gigantic area not fewer than 210,000 persons. Altogether it measured a square of about 1,000 feet, or to be more exact, 927 feet according to the Rabbis. At its northwestern angle, and connected with it, frowned the Castle of Antonia, held by the Roman garrison. The lofty walls were pierced by massive gates, and within the gates covered double colonnades ran all around. Passing out of these colonnades, or porches, you entered the Court of the Gentiles. Here must have been the market for the sale of sacrificial animals, the tables of the money-changers, and places for the sale of other needful articles. Advancing within this Court, you reached a low wall which marked the space beyond which no Gentile nor Levitically unclean person might proceed. Thirteen openings admitted into the inner part of the Court. Then fourteen steps led up to the Terrace which was bounded by the wall of the Temple buildings in the stricter sense. A flight of steps led up to the massive splendid gates, the most splendid being that to the east termed "Beautiful." Entering the Beautiful Gate you came into the Court of the Women. Fifteen steps led up to the Upper Court which was divided into two parts by a boundary, the narrow part forming the Court of Israel and the wider that of the Priests in which were the great Altar and the Laver.

The Sanctuary itself was on a higher terrace than the Court of the Priests. Twelve steps led up to its porch which extended beyond it on either side. Here, in separate chambers, all that was necessary for the sacrificial service was kept. A two-leaved gate opened into the Sanctuary itself which was divided into two parts, the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place. All around the Sanctuary and each of the Courts were various chambers and out-buildings which served different purposes connected with the services of the Temple.

In some part of this Temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, "both hearing them and asking questions," we must look for the child Jesus on the third and the two following days of the Feast. Only on the first two days of the Feast of Passover was personal attendance necessary. So when the third day commenced, Joseph and Mary availed themselves of the provision to return home.

The presence and questioning of a child of that age did not necessarily imply anything so extraordinary as to convey the idea of supernaturalness to those doctors or others in the audience. Jewish tradition gives other instances of precocious and strangely advanced students. Yet all who heard him "were amazed" at his insight and discerning answers. We scarcely venture to inquire towards what his questioning had been directed, but judging by what we know of such discussions, we infer that they may have been connected with the Paschal solemnities.

On the third day Mary and Joseph found him missing. The next day was spent traveling back, and on the following day they found him in the Temple. The reply of Jesus to the half-reproachful, half-relieved expostulation of them who had sought him "sorrowing" these three days, sets clearly these three things before us. Firstly, he had been so entirely absorbed by the awakening thought of his being and mission as to be forgetful of all around. Secondly, he now realized that this was emphatically *his* Father's house. And, thirdly, it was then and there that for the first time he felt the strong and irresistible impulse to "be about his Father's business."

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

"Repent! for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." That Kingdom had been the last word of the Old Testament. As the thoughtful Israelite viewed even the central part of his worship in sacrifices and remembered that his own Scriptures had spoken of them in terms which pointed to something beyond their offering, he must have felt that the blood of bulls and goats could only sanctify to the purifying of the flesh. Indeed, the whole body of ceremonial and ritual ordinances could not make him who did the service perfect as pertaining to the conscience. It was otherwise with the thought of the Kingdom. Each successive link in the chain of prophecy bound Israel anew to this hope. So closely had it been intertwined with the very life of the nation, that, to all believing Israelites, this hope had been like that eternal lamp which burns in the darkness of the Synagogue.

And now the cry had been suddenly raised, "The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!" It was heard in the wilderness of Judea within a few hours' distance from Jerusalem. No wonder Pharisee and Sadducee flocked to the spot. They would not see anything in the messenger that could have given their expectations a rude shock. His was not a call to armed resistance but to repentance, such as all knew and felt must precede the Kingdom. The hope which he held out was not of earthly possessions, but of purity. There was nothing negative or controversial in what he spoke, nothing to excite prejudice or passion. His appearance would command respect, and his character was in accordance with his appearance. For himself he sought nothing. For them he had only one absorbing thought: The Kingdom was at hand, the King was coming, let them prepare!

It was probably the autumn of the year 779 A.U.C. which, it may be noted, was a Sabbatic year. Released from business and agriculture, the multitudes flocked around him as he passed on his mission. Rapidly the tidings spread from town and village to distant homestead. He had now reached what seems to have been the most northern point of his mission-journey, Beth-Abara (Bethany according to the ancient reading), one of the best-known fords across the Jordan into Perea. Here he baptized.

Why Jesus went to be baptized has been a question from earliest ages. All answers, and there are many, involve a two-fold mistake: they represent the baptism of John as one of repentance, and imply an ulterior motive in the coming of Christ to the banks of the Jordan. But the baptism of John was in itself only a consecration to, and preparatory initiation for, the new Covenant of the Kingdom. *As applied to sinful men, it was indeed necessarily a "baptism of repentance;"* but not as applied to the sinless Jesus. Had it primarily and always been a "baptism of repentance," he could not have submitted to it.

Again, and most important of all, we must not seek for any ulterior motive in the coming of Jesus to this baptism. *He had no ulterior motive of any kind:* it was an act of simple submissive obedience on the part of the Perfect One, and submissive obedience has no motive beyond itself. And thus it was "the fulfilment of all righteousness," in perfect harmony with all his previous life. The one question of Jesus was, as he afterwards puts it: "The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven or of men?" Once the question was answered, there could no longer be any doubt nor hesitation. It was of God. Thus he went voluntarily, and because it became him in so doing to fulfill all righteousness. On his first visit to the Temple at the age of twelve, the consciousness about his life-business came to him. It ripened slowly and fully those long years of quiet submission and growing wisdom and grace at

Nazareth. So at his baptism, with the accompanying descent of the Holy Ghost and the testimony from his Father, the knowledge came to him of the *when*, and in part the *how*, of his life-business. The baptism of Christ was the last act of his private life. Emerging from its waters in prayer, he learned *when* his business was to commence and *how* it would be done.

THE TEMPTATION OF CHRIST

The gospel record tells us that Jesus was driven into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. During the entire forty days his temptation continued, though it only attained its high point at the last, when, after the long fast, he felt the weariness and weakness of hunger. As fasting occupies but a very subordinate, we might almost say a tolerated, place in the teaching of Jesus, and, so far as we know, he exercised on no other occasion such ascetic practices, we are left to infer an internal as well as an external necessity for it in the present instance. The former is easily understood in his preoccupation; the latter must have had for its object to reduce him to utmost outward weakness by the depression of all the vital powers. We regard it as a psychological fact that, under such circumstances, of all mental faculties the memory alone is active, indeed, almost preternaturally active. During the preceding thirty-nine days, the future work to which he had been consecrated must have always been before him. In this respect, then, he must have been tempted.

Day by day, as a sense of utter loneliness and forsakenness increasingly gathered around him, as well as increasing faintness and weakness, the seeming hopelessness of such a task as he had undertaken must have grown upon him with almost overwhelming power. Alternately, the temptation to despair, presumption, or the cutting short of the contest in some decisive manner must have presented itself to his mind, or rather have been presented to it by the tempter.

And this was, indeed, the essence of his last three great temptations, which, as the whole contest, resolved themselves into the one question of absolute submission to the will of God which is the sum and substance of all obedience. If he submitted to it, it must be suffering, and only suffering; helpless, hopeless suffering to the bitter end, to the extinction of life, in the agonies of the cross, as a malefactor, denounced, betrayed, rejected by his people, and alone in very God-forsakenness.

Jesus is weary and faint with hunger. There is nothing strengthening in this featureless, barren, stony wilderness, only the picture of desolateness, hopelessness, despair. Can this be the will of God? One word of power, and the scene would be changed. By his will the Son of God can change these stones into bread. He can perform a miracle and put an end to present need. But it was the Spirit of God who had driven him into that wilderness. To have set himself free from what that implied would have been *despair* of God and rebellion. Jesus does more than not succumb, he conquers. The Scriptural reference to a better life upon the word of God marks more than the end of the contest, it marks the conquest of Satan. Jesus emerges triumphant with this expression of his assured conviction of the sufficiency of God.

In the next temptation Jesus stands on the watch-post of the Temple which the white-robed priest had just left. In the Priests' Court below him the morning sacrifice has been offered. The massive Temple gates are slowly opening, and the blast of the priests' silver trumpets is summoning Israel to begin a new day by appearing before their Lord. Now let Jesus descend, Heaven-borne, into the midst of priests

and people. What shouts of acclamation would greet his appearance! What homage of worship would be his! The goal can at once be reached, and that at the head of believing Israel. Jesus had overcome in the first temptation by simple, absolute trust. This was the time and the place to act upon this trust. But to have done so would have been not trust, far less the heroism of faith, but *presumption*. The goal might have been reached but not the Divine goal, nor in God's way. And thus once more Jesus not only is not overcome, but he overcomes by absolute submission to the will of God.

Once more the scene changes. They now stand on the top of some very high mountain. It is in the full blaze of sunlight that he now gazes upon a wondrous scene, the world in all its glory, beauty, strength, and majesty. It was not worship but homage which the evil one claimed from Jesus, and that on the truly stated and apparently rational ground that, in its present state, all this world "was delivered" unto him, and he exercised the power of giving it to whom he would. But in this very fact lay the answer. High above this moving scene of glory and beauty arched the deep blue of God's heaven, and the fact stood out, "I must be about my Father's business." What Satan sought was the final realization of an empire of which his present possession was only temporary, caused by the alienation of man from God. To destroy the works of the devil, to abolish his kingdom, and to set man free from his dominion was the very object of Christ's mission. It is to be the bringing of worship and not the crowning of rebellion which is the *Kingdom*.

They had all been overcome, these three temptations against the submission to the will of God: present, personal, and specifically Messianic. Yet all his life there were echoes of them. First, in the suggestion of his brethren to show himself. Second, in the popular attempt to make him a king. Third, being most plainly Satanic, in the question of Pilate, "Art thou then a king?"

THE FIRST SIX DISCIPLES

Based on the supposition that the baptism of Jesus took place at Bethabara, and that the wilderness into which he was driven was close by, it would follow that he then returned to Bethabara at the time the deputation of Pharisees from Jerusalem came to question John. This was on a Thursday. The following day, Friday, Jesus approached John, and John proclaimed, "Behold the Lamb of God." When John pointed the bystanders to the figure of Jesus with these words, he meant more than his gentleness, meekness and humility, for he followed them with the words, "who takes away the sin of the world." While regarding his words as an appeal to the prophecy of Isaiah, it also referred to the Paschal Lamb and the Daily Sacrifice. What seems distinctive in his words is his view of *sin* as a totality, rather than sins, thus implying the removal of that great barrier between God and man, and the triumph in that great contest indicated in Genesis 3:15 which Israel after the flesh failed to perceive.

Jesus appeared a second time the following day, Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath. As we picture it to ourselves, in the early morning John the Baptist stood with two of his disciples, Andrew and John, the beloved disciple. They had heard what their teacher John had said of Jesus on the previous day. To hear more about him, they had gathered to their teacher on this Sabbath morning. And now Jesus once more appeared in view. John worshipfully repeats his words, "Behold the Lamb of God," and an irresistible impulse, a heavenly instinct, bade them follow Jesus. What passed on that long Sabbath day we do not know, except that both had gone to search for his own brother, Andrew for Peter and John for James. They had both brought the same announcement, "We have found the Messiah."

Sunday morning began the first of Christ's mission work, the first of his preaching. He was returning to Galilee. It was about 20 miles from Bethabara to Cana. On the way, two more disciples were to be gained, this time not brought, but called, Philip and Nathanael (Bartholomew).

THE WEDDING IN CANA

Marriage conveyed to the Jews much higher thoughts than merely those of festivity and merriment. The pious fasted before it, confessing their sins. It was regarded almost as a Sacrament. Entrance into the married state was thought to carry the forgiveness of sins. The bridal pair, on the marriage day, symbolized the union of God with Israel.

Uniform custom fixed the marriage of a maiden on Wednesday and that of a widow on Thursday. Thus, it was at the marriage of a maiden in Cana where Jesus performed his first miracle. What transpired at the marriage-feast marks the ending of one period of his life and the beginning of another; that of leaving home and family, and that of being "about his Father's business."

As we pass through the court of that house in Cana and reach the covered gallery which opens onto the various rooms, all is festively adorned. In the gallery the servants move about, and the six water-pots are placed, "after the manner of the Jews," for purification; for the washing not only of hands before and after eating, but also of the vessels used. "Purification" was one of the main points in Rabbinic sanctity. By far the largest and most elaborate of the six books into which the Mishnah is divided is exclusively devoted to this subject. The purification of "vessels" consists of not less than thirty chapters.

The bridal blessing has been spoken, and the bridal cup emptied. The festive evening meal is proceeding. And now, there must have been a painful pause, or something like it, when the mother of Jesus whispered to him that the wine had failed. There could, perhaps, be less cause for reticence on this point towards her son, not merely because this failure may have arisen from the additional guests in the persons of Jesus and his disciples for whom no provision had been originally made, but because the gift of wine or oil on such occasions was regarded as a meritorious work of charity.

How are we to understand the implied request of Mary and the reply of Jesus? What was the meaning of the miracle? It may have been that Mary knew of what had passed at the Jordan, and that when she saw him returning with his first disciples, she felt that a new period in his life had opened. But what was there in all this to suggest such a miracle? And if it had been suggested, why not ask for it in express terms if it was to be the commencement of a royal manifestation?

What Mary must have learned during those thirty years in Nazareth was absolute confidence in Jesus. And so when she told him of the need that had arisen, it was simply in absolute confidence in him, probably without any conscious expectancy of a miracle on his part. Perhaps not without a touch of maternal self-consciousness that he whom she could trust to do anything that was needed, was her son. It was a true earthly view to take of their relationship. It was an earthly view which must now forever cease. She had spoken as his mother and placed the maternal relationship in connection with his work. But with his "business," earthly relationships, no matter how tender, had no connection. As in his first

manifestation in the Temple, so in this the first manifestation of his glory, the finger that pointed to "his hour" was not, and could not be, that of an earthly parent, but of his Father in Heaven.

The miracle of the water changed to wine was a sign of the deeper and higher that was to be revealed and of the first manifesting forth of "his glory." That was all, and that object was attained.

THE CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE

Immediately after the marriage in Cana, Jesus and his disciples left for Capernaum, which was to become "his own city". His mother and brothers followed. It would be the first and chief home of Jesus as he entered on his active work. But on this occasion, he "continued there not many days." For already, "the Jews' Passover was at hand." This year was most likely 27 A.D. The preparation for the Passover had commenced a month before. Bridges and roads were put in repair while sepulchres were whitened to prevent accidental pollution to the pilgrims. Some would select the Passover out of the three great annual feasts for the tithing of their flocks and herds, which, in this case, had to be done two weeks before the Passover began. Others would fix this as the time for going up to Jerusalem "to purify themselves" in case of any Levitical defilement. But what must have appealed to every one in the land was the appearance of the "money changers," who opened their stalls in every country town on the 15th of Adar, just a month before the feast. They were, no doubt, regularly accredited and duly authorized. For all Jews and proselytes, with the exception of women, slaves, and minors, had to pay the annual Temple tribute of half a shekel, according to the "sacred" standard, which was equal to a common Galilean shekel. From this tax many of the priests, to the chagrin of the Rabbis, claimed exemption.

This Temple tribute had to be paid in exact half-shekels of the Sanctuary, or ordinary Galilean shekels. When it is remembered that, besides strictly Palestinian silver and copper coin, there was Persian, Tyrian, Syrian, Egyptian, Grecian, and Roman money circulating in the country, it will be understood what work these money changers must have had. From the 15th to the 25th Adar, they had stalls in every country town. On the latter date, which must therefore be considered as marking the first arrivals of festive pilgrims into the city, the stalls in the country were closed, and the money changers henceforth sat within the precincts of the Temple.

The money changers made a statutory fixed charge of a *Maah* on every half-shekel. This was called *qolbon*. But if a person tendered a *Sela*, which amounted in value to two half-shekels of the Sanctuary, or two Galilean shekels, he had to pay double *qolbon*; one for his half-shekel of tribute money, the other for his change. Many foreign Jews arriving in Jerusalem would have need to purchase other items necessary for the feast which were available in the Temple area, and it would be better to get the right money from the authorized changers than have disputes with the dealers. The profits to the money changers must have been immense.

We can picture to ourselves the scene around the table of an Eastern money changer: the weighing of the coins, deductions for loss of weight, arguing, disputing, bargaining. We can thus realize the terrible truthfulness of our Lord's charge that they had made the Father's House into a mart and place of traffic. But even so, the business of the Temple money changers would not be exhausted. Through their hands would pass the immense votive offerings of foreign Jews, or of proselytes, to the Temple. Indeed, they probably transacted all business matters connected with the Sanctuary.

Readers of the New Testament know that the noisy and incongruous business of an Eastern money changer was not the only one carried on within the sacred Temple enclosure. It was a great accommodation that a person bringing a sacrifice might obtain there what was required for the meat and drink offerings. The prices were fixed by tariff every month. Offerers might, of course, bring their sacrificial animals with them, and we know that on the Mount of Olives there were four shops especially for the sale of pigeons. But then, when the animal was brought, it had to be examined as to its Levitical fitness by persons regularly qualified and appointed. Disputes might here arise due to the ignorance of the purchaser or the greed of the examiner. How much labor was given to the requisite knowledge needed by an examiner appears from the fact that a certain teacher is said to have spent eighteen months with a farmer to learn what faults in an animal were temporary and which permanent. All this trouble and difficulty could be avoided by a regular market within the Temple enclosure where sacrificial animals could be purchased, having presumably been duly inspected, and having all fees paid before being offered for sale.

We must now ask two questions: What became of the profits of the money changers, and who were the real owners of the Temple market?

To the first of these questions the Jerusalem Talmud gives no less than five different answers, showing that there was no fixed rule as to the employment of these profits, or at least that it was no longer known at that time. What seems most likely is that the whole profit went to the money changers themselves. But in that case it can scarcely be doubted that they had to pay a considerable rental or percentage to the leading Temple officials. The profits from the sale of meat and drink offerings went to the Temple treasury. But it can hardly be believed that such was the case in regard to the Temple market. On the other hand, there can be little doubt that this market was what in Rabbinic writings is styled "the Bazaars of the sons of Annas", the sons of that High Priest Annas who is so infamous in New Testament history. When we read that the Sanhedrin, forty years before the destruction of Jerusalem, transferred its meeting place from "the Hall of Hewn Stones" (partly within the Sanctuary itself) to the "Bazaars," and then afterwards to the City, the inference is plain that these Bazaars were those of the sons of Annas the High Priest, and that they occupied part of the Temple court. The Temple market and the Bazaars of the sons of Annas are identical.

We gain much light now as regards the purification of the Temple by Jesus, and the words which he spoke on that occasion. For our next position is that from the unrighteousness of the traffic carried on in these Bazaars, and the greed of their owners, the Temple market was at that time most unpopular. Of the avarice and corruption of this infamous High Priestly family, Josephus and the Rabbis alike give a most terrible picture. The Talmud records a curse which a distinguished Rabbi of Jerusalem pronounced upon the High Priestly families (including that of Annas), who were "themselves High Priests, their sons treasurers, their sons-in-law assistant treasurers, while their servants beat the people with sticks." What a comment this passage offers on the bearing of Jesus, as he made a scourge to drive out the very servants who "beat the people with sticks," and upset their unholy traffic.

We can understand now why the Temple officials, to whom these bazaars belonged, only challenged the authority of Christ in thus purging the Temple. The unpopularity of the whole traffic, if not their consciences, prevented their proceeding to actual violence. Nor do we any longer wonder that no resistance was offered by the people to his action, and that the remonstrances of the priests were not

direct but in the form of a perplexing question.

As for "the sign," then and ever again sought by an "evil and adulterous generation," he then as afterwards had only one to give: "Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up." Thus he met their challenge for a sign by the challenge of a sign: Crucify him and he would rise again. A sign which they understood not, but misunderstood, and by making it the ground of their false charge in his final trial, themselves unwittingly fulfilled.

THE DISCIPLES OF JESUS BAPTIZING

The cleansing of the Temple undoubtedly preceded the actual festive Paschal week. During the week itself we have recorded the visit of Nicodemus. But as to how long Jesus may have tarried in Jerusalem after these events we have no means of determining. The Evangelic narrative only marks an indefinite period of time, which, as we judge from internal probability, cannot have been protracted. From the city he retired with his disciples to "the country" which formed the province of Judea.

What at first seems strange is that Jesus should for a time have established himself in such apparently close proximity to the Baptist, and that on this occasion he should have allowed his disciples to administer the rite of baptism. That the latter must not be confounded with Christian Baptism, which was only introduced after the Death of Christ, or, to speak more accurately, after the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, needs no special explanation. But our difficulties only increase as we remember the essential difference between them, grounded on that between the mission of John and the teaching of Jesus. In the former, the baptism of repentant preparation for the coming Kingdom had its deepest meaning; not so in presence of that Kingdom itself, and in the teaching of its King. But, even were it otherwise, the administration of the same rite by John and by the disciples of Jesus in apparently close proximity, seems not only unnecessary, but it might give rise to misconception on the part of enemies, and misunderstanding or jealousy on the part of weak disciples.

Such was actually the case when, on one occasion, a discussion arose "on the part of John's disciples with a Jew," on the subject of purification. Somehow this Jewish objector must have connected what John's disciple said with a reference to the baptism of Jesus' disciples. For immediately afterwards, the disciples of John, in their sore zeal for the honor of their master, brought him tidings, in the language of doubt, if not complaint, of what to them seemed interference with the work of the Baptist and almost presumption on the part of Jesus.

The answer which the Baptist made may be said to mark the high point of his life and witness. "He must increase, but I must decrease." That these were his last words publicly spoken and recorded may, however, explain to us why on this exceptional occasion Jesus sanctioned the administration by his disciples of the baptism of John. It was John's last testimony to Jesus, and it was preceded by this testimony of Jesus to John. This practical sanction on the part of Jesus of John's Baptism, when the Baptist was about to be forsaken, betrayed, and murdered, was Christ's highest testimony to him.

THE SAMARITANS

Of Jesus' early Judean ministry and the journey through Samaria, only St. John gives us details. The shorter road from Judea to Galilee led through Samaria, and this, if we may credit Josephus, was generally taken by the Galileans on their way to the capital. On the other hand, the Judeans seem chiefly to have made a detour through Perea in order to avoid hostile and impure Samaria.

The Biblical history of that part of Palestine which bore the name of Samaria need not be repeated here. The Jews persistently designated the inhabitants Samaritans, a term of reproach to mark that they were of foreign race. Yet it is impossible to believe that, at least in later times, they did not contain a considerable mixture of Israelitish elements, being that the original deportation during the time of Assyrian ascendancy could not have been so complete as to leave behind no traces of the original Israelitish inhabitants. Their number would probably be swelled by fugitives from Assyria and by Jewish settlers in the troublous times that followed. Afterwards, as we know, they were largely increased by apostates and rebels against the order of things established by Ezra and Nehemiah.

The first foreign colonists of Samaria brought their peculiar forms of idolatry with them. But the providential judgments by which they were visited led to the introduction of a spurious Judaism, consisting of a mixture of their former superstitions with Jewish doctrine and rites. Ezra and Nehemiah, when reconstructing the Jewish commonwealth, insisted on a strict separation between those who had returned from Babylon and the Samaritans, which embittered the national feeling of jealousy already existing. This led to that constant hostility between Jews and Samaritans which has continued to this day. The religious separation became final when the Samaritans built a rival temple on Mount Gerizim, and Manasseh, the brother of Jaddua the Jewish High Priest, having refused to annul his marriage with the daughter of Sanballat, was forced to flee and became the High Priest of the new sanctuary. Henceforth, by impudent assertion and falsification of the text of the Pentateuch, Gerizim was declared the rightful center of worship, and the doctrines and rites of the Samaritans exhibited a curious imitation and adaptation of those prevalent in Judea.

The political history of the people can be condensed as follows. Their temple was built in Shechem which became the real capital of the Samaritans. The city of Samaria itself passed back and forth between Syrian and Egyptian hands until the reign of Seleucus IV (Philopator) when it permanently came under Syrian dominion. In the troublous times of Antiochus IV (Epiphanes), the Samaritans escaped the fate of the Jews by repudiating all connection with Israel and dedicating their temple to Jupiter. In the contest between Syria and the Maccabees which followed, the Samaritans, as might be expected, took the part of the former. In 130 B.C. John Hyrcanus destroyed the temple on Mount Gerizim which was never rebuilt. The city of Samaria was taken several years afterwards by the sons of Hyrcanus after a year's siege and the successive defeat of Syrian and Egyptian armies of relief. Although the city was not only destroyed but actually laid under water to complete its ruin, it was rebuilt by Gabinius shortly before our era, and greatly enlarged and beautified by Herod who called it *Sabaste* in honor of Augustus to whom he reared a magnificent temple. Under Roman rule the city enjoyed great privileges with a Senate of its own. The capital Shechem was renamed Flavia Neapolis which has survived in the modern Nablus.

In the New Testament, Western Palestine is divided into the provinces of Judea, Samaria, and Galilee. The Rabbis, however, whose ideas were shaped by the observances of Judaism, ignore this division. For them Palestine consisted only of Judea, Perea, and Galilee. Samaria appears as merely a strip intervening between Judea and Galilee, being "the land of the Cutheans." Nevertheless, it was not

regarded like heathen lands, but pronounced clean. The province of Samaria occupied the ancient territories of Manasseh and Ephraim, and extended about forty-eight miles north to south and forty miles east to west.

The political enmity and religious separation between the Jews and Samaritans account for their mutual jealousy. On all public occasions the Samaritans took the part hostile to the Jews while they seized every opportunity of injuring and insulting them. In retaliation, the Jews treated the Samaritans with every mark of contempt by accusing them of falsehood and folly, and, what they felt most keenly, by disowning them as of the same race or religion in the most offensive terms of assumed superiority and self-righteous fanaticism. Yet they were not treated as heathens, and their land, their springs, baths, houses, and roads were declared to be clean.

Most of the peculiar doctrines of the Samaritans were derived from Jewish sources. They strongly believed in the Unity of God; they held the doctrine of Angels and devils; they received the Pentateuch as of sole Divine authority; they regarded Mount Gerizim as the place chosen of God; they were most strict and zealous in what of Biblical or traditional Law they received; and lastly and most important of all, they looked for the coming of a Messiah in whom the promise would be fulfilled that the Lord God would raise up a Prophet from the midst of them. Thus, while in some respects access to them would be more difficult than to his own countrymen, yet in others Jesus would find there a soil better prepared for the divine seed, or at least, less encumbered by the thistles and tares of traditionalism and Pharisaic bigotry.

JESUS AT THE WELL OF SYCHAR

It was about six o'clock in the evening on an early summer day when Jesus and his disciples reached that parcel of ground which, according to ancient Jewish tradition, Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Here Jesus sat down while the disciples, probably with the exception of John, went on to the closely adjoining little town of Sychar to buy food. A Samaritan woman came to the well, and Jesus made the request, "Give me to drink." Even if he had not spoken, the woman would have recognized him as Jewish by his appearance and dress, as it seems likely that he wore the fringes on the border of his garment. The fringes on the *tallith* of the Samaritans were blue, while those worn by the Jews were white. Any kindly address conveying a request for something not absolutely necessary would naturally surprise the woman; for as the Evangelist explains, "Jews have no dealings with Samaritans." It was, therefore, genuine surprise which expressed itself in her question, "How is it, Thou, being a Jew, of me askest to drink?" How was it that he who had spoken to her was not like what she thought and knew of the Jews? But Jesus was what Israel was intended to have become to mankind, and had she but known it, the present relation between them would have been reversed. The well of Jacob would have been a symbol of the living water which she would have asked and he would have given.

Though she had imperfectly understood Jesus' answer, a rising faith seems to underlie her request for this water. She believes in a satisfaction through him of outward wants, reaching up beyond this to the everlasting life. But all these elements are yet in strange confusion. It is difficult to suppose that Christ asked the woman to call her husband with the primary object of awakening in her a sense of sin. Nor does anything in the bearing of the woman indicate any such effect. On the other hand, we have abundant evidence that, when the Savior so unexpectedly laid open to her a past which he could only

supernaturally have known, the conviction at once arose in her that he was a Prophet. But to be a Prophet meant to a Samaritan that he was the Messiah, since they acknowledged none other after Moses.

All her life she had heard that Gerizim was the mount of worship and that the Jews were in deadly error. But here was an undoubted Prophet, and he a Jew. Were they then in error about the right place of worship? "There cometh an hour, when neither in this mountain, nor yet in Jerusalem, ye shall worship the Father." These were words of prophecy that pointed to the higher solution in the worship of a common Father, which would be the worship neither of Jews nor of Samaritans, but of children. "I know that Messiah cometh. When he cometh he will tell us all things." He then told her plainly what in Judea, and even by his disciples, would have been carnally misinterpreted and misapplied; that he was the Messiah.

She hurried into the city and made the announcement that she had found the Christ. The disciples had returned and now urged the master to eat of the food which they had brought. With divine patience he bore with them. "My meat is, that I may do the Will of Him that sent Me, and that I may accomplish (bring to a perfect end) His work." To the disciples that work appeared still in the far future. To them it seemed as yet little more than seed-time, the harvest of such a Messianic Kingdom as they expected was still months distant. To show their meaning more clearly, we venture to reverse the order of the sentences which Jesus spoke: "Behold, I say unto you, lift up your eyes and look [observantly] at the fields, that they are white to the harvest." (Perhaps at that very moment the Samaritans, coming to him from Sychar, were appearing in sight.) "[But] do ye not say (viz. in your hearts) that there are yet four months, and the harvest cometh?" On the spiritual field, sowing in tears is often mingled with the harvest of gladness, and to the spiritual view both are really one. Four months do not intervene between them.

We do not know what passed during the two days Jesus spent there. Apparently no miracles were worked, but those of his word only. Seed time and harvest mingled, when for themselves they knew and confessed that this was truly the Savior of the world.

SECOND VISIT TO CANA AND THE CURE OF THE NOBLEMAN'S SON

When Jesus returned to Galilee, it was in circumstances entirely different from those under which he had left it. Those prejudices connected with the humbleness of his upbringing were overcome when the Galileans had witnessed at the feast in Jerusalem what he had done. Accordingly, they were now prepared to receive him with the reverent attention which his word claimed.

It appears that the son of one of Herod Antipas' officers, either civil or military, was sick and at the point of death. When tidings reached the father that the prophet, whose fame had preceded him to Galilee, had come to Cana, he resolved, in his despair of other means, to apply to him for the cure of his son. We do not assume that he was actuated by spiritual belief in the Son of God, but rather would we go to almost the opposite extreme and regard him as simply actuated by what, under the circumstances, might be the views of a devout Jew.

We must not suppose that when, to the request that Jesus would come down to Capernaum to perform

the cure, that Jesus' response indicated that his Jewish hearers, in opposition to the Samaritans, required "signs and wonders" in order to believe. The request by the nobleman was in itself an expression of faith, and the cure itself could not be performed without a miracle. What he intended to teach was that he, who had life in himself, could restore life at a distance as easily as by his presence; by the word of his power as readily as by personal application. When the "court officer" had learned this lesson, he became "obedient unto the faith," and "went his way", presently to find his faith both crowned and perfected.

The times involved in this episode require at least passing consideration. The exact time indicated by the servants as the commencement of the improvement is, "Yesterday, at the seventh hour." Now, however the Jewish servants may originally have expressed themselves, it seems impossible to assume that St. John intended any other than the Roman notation of the civil day or that he meant any other hour than 7 P.M. The opposite view, that it marks Jewish notation of time, or 1 P.M., is beset by almost insurmountable difficulties. We can understand how, leaving Capernaum in the morning, a distance of around 25 miles from Cana, the interview with Jesus and the simultaneous cure of the son would have taken place about seven o'clock in the evening. Its result was, not only the restoration of the child, but that, no longer requiring to *see* signs and wonders, "the man believed the word which Jesus had spoken unto him." In his joyous assurance he "went his way," either to the hospitable home of a friend, or to some near lodging place, to be the next day met by the gladsome tidings that it had been to him according to his faith.

THE SYNAGOGUE AT NAZARETH

The stay in Cana, though we have no means of determining its length, was probably of only short duration. Jesus went on to Nazareth while the disciples returned to their homes and ordinary avocations in Capernaum. They were not as yet called to forsake all and follow him.

As the lengthening shadows of Friday's sun closed around the quiet valley, Jesus would hear the well-remembered double blast of the trumpet from the roof of the Synagogue-minister's house proclaiming the advent of the holy day. Once more it sounded through the still summer air to tell everyone that work must be laid aside. Yet a third time it was heard, and the minister put it aside, close by where he stood, so as not to profane the Sabbath by carrying it.

The Sabbath morn dawned and Jesus made his way to that synagogue where he had so often as a child, youth, and man worshiped in the humble retirement of his rank, sitting not up among the elders and the honored, but far back. This Sabbath, as Jesus entered, the chief ruler would request him to act as the *Sheliach Tsibbur*, or messenger of the congregation. For, according to the Mishnah, the person who read in the Synagogue the portion from the Prophets was also expected to conduct the devotions, at least in greater part. If this rule was enforced at that time, then Jesus would ascend the *Bima*, or elevation, and standing at the lectern begin the service by two prayers. The liturgical part of the service was lengthy, and once completed, the primary object of the Synagogue service began. The *Chazzan*, or minister, approached the Ark and brought out a roll of the Law. The time had now come for the reading of portions from the Law and the Prophets. On the Sabbath, at least seven persons were called upon successively to read portions from the Law, none of them consisting of less than three verses. Upon the Law followed a section from the Prophets, the so-called *Haphtarah*. As the Hebrew was generally not

understood, the *Methurgeman*, or Interpreter, stood by the side of the reader and translated. But the *Methurgeman* was not allowed to read his translation lest it might popularly be regarded as authoritative. This may help us in some measure to understand the popular mode of Old Testament quotations in the New Testament. So long as the substance of the text was given correctly, the *Methurgeman* might paraphrase for better popular understanding. He would prepare himself for his work by such materials as he would find at hand, among which, of course, the translation of the LXX would hold a prominent place. This may in part account alike for the employment of the LXX and for its Targumic modifications in the New Testament quotations. The reading of the section from the Prophets was followed immediately by an address, discourse, or sermon.

There is no reason to question the idea that Jesus himself read the concluding portion from the Prophets, or the so-called *Haphtarah*. The whole narrative seems to imply this. Similarly, it is most likely that the *Haphtarah* for that day was taken from the prophecies of Isaiah, and that it included the passage quoted by the Evangelist as read by the Lord Jesus. It is quite certain that the verses quoted by the Evangelist could not have formed the whole *Haphtarah*, for according to traditional rule, it ordinarily consisted of not less than twenty-one verses. However, if the passage was to be 'targumed,' or a sermon was to follow, that number might be shortened to as few as three.

We know the result of this first sermon given in Nazareth. It stirred his hearers to wrath, and they cast him out of the city. Their intention was to crowd him over the cliff, but Jesus constrained them to halt and give way while he passed unharmed through their midst.

AT THE UNKNOWN FEAST AND BY THE POOL OF BETHESDA

During the summer of Christ's first Galilean ministry, when Capernaum was his center of action, the disciples had returned to their homes and usual avocations while Jesus moved about chiefly alone and unattended. This explains the circumstance of a second call, even to his most intimate and closest followers. It also accords best with the gradual development in his activity, the beginning which commenced with the more private teaching, and the later when he is surrounded by his apostles and attended by a loving ministry from those to whom he had brought healing of body or soul. A multitude constantly follows wherever he goes.

The shorter days of early autumn had now come. Jesus passed from Galilee to what we must be content to call "the Unknown Feast" in Jerusalem. This much seems clear: that it was either the 'Feast of Wood-offering' on the 15th of Abh (August) or the "Feast of Trumpets" on the 1st of Tishri (about the middle of September), which marked the beginning of the New (civil) Year.

The narrative at once transports us to what, at that time, seems to have been a well-known locality in Jerusalem, the pool of Bethesda. In the five porches surrounding this pool lay 'a great multitude of the impotent' in anxious hope of a miraculous cure. For the popular idea was that an Angel descended into the water, causing it to bubble up, and that he who *first* stepped into the pool would be cured. This bubbling up, of course, was not due to supernatural, but natural causes. Such intermittent springs are not uncommon, and to this day the so-called 'Fountain of the Virgin' in Jerusalem exhibits the same phenomenon. If, however, the belief about Bethesda arose merely from the mistaken ideas about the cause of this bubbling of the water, the question would naturally suggest itself whether any such cases

as those described had ever really occurred, and, if not, how such a superstition could have continued. But that such healing might occur no one would be prepared to deny, not if he has read the accounts of pilgrimages to places of miraculous cure, or considers the influence of a firm expectancy on the imagination, especially in diseases which have their origin in the nervous system. This view of the matter is confirmed, and Scripture still further vindicated from even the faintest appearance of endorsing the popular superstition, by the use of the article in the expression 'a multitude of the impotent', which marks this impotence as used in the generic sense, while the special diseases, afterward enumerated without the article, are ranged under it as instances of those who were thus impotent. It is, of course, not intended to imply that *all* the distempers to which this designation is given had their origin in the nervous system, but may indicate that they all, so far as those that were relieved, had one common source, and this, as we would suggest, in the nervous system.

The waters had not yet been troubled when Jesus stood among the multitude of sufferers and their attendant friends. It was in those breathless moments of the intense suspense of expectancy, when every eye was fixed on the pool, that the eye of the Savior searched for the most wretched object among them all. This 'impotent' man, for thirty-eight years a hopeless sufferer, without attendant or friend, now seemed the fittest object for power and grace. It is idle to speak either of faith or receptiveness on the man's part. The essence of the whole lies in the utter absence of both. The 'Wilt thou be made whole?' with which Jesus drew the man's attention to himself, was only to probe and lay bare his misery. And then came the word of power, or rather the power spoken forth, which made him whole. He took up his bed, not conscious of it being a burden unlawful to be carried on the Sabbath, and made his way from the pool.

The Jews saw him as he carried his 'burden.' It was this external infringement which they saw and nothing else. It was the person who had commanded him to carry it whom they wanted to know, not him who made whole the impotent man. Jesus furnishes the answer to their angry invectives about his breach of the Sabbath law. The Father's Sabbath was his; the Father worked hitherto and he worked; the Father's work and his were the same; he was the Son of the Father.

Once more it was not his whole meaning but only this one point, that he claimed to be equal with God, of which they took hold. By what he had said, he had silenced the multitude, who must have felt that God's rest was truly that of beneficence, not of inactivity. And for the present the majesty of his bearing overawed them and he could pass unharmed from among them. With this inward separation, and the gathering of hostile parties closes the first and begins the second stage of Christ's ministry.

FINAL CALL OF THE FIRST DISCIPLES

It may have been a bright autumn morning, after a stormy night of fruitless toil, when Jesus "was passing on by the Sea of Galilee." The toil of the fishermen had brought no draught of fishes, and they stood by the shore, or in the boats drawn up on the beach, casting in their nets to 'wash' them of the sand and pebbles with which such a night's work would clog them, or to mend what had been torn by the violence of the waves. It was a busy scene, for among the many industries by the Lake of Galilee, that of fishing was not only the most generally pursued, but perhaps the most lucrative.

Jewish customs and modes of thinking at that time help us more clearly to apprehend what the words of

Jesus would convey to Peter, Andrew, James, and John. The expression "Follow me" would be readily understood as implying a call to become the *permanent* disciple of a teacher. Thus, neither of the four could have misunderstood the call of Christ or even regarded it as strange. On that memorable return from his temptation in the wilderness, they had learned to know him as the Messiah, and they followed him. With the visit to the unknown feast, the Messianic activity of Jesus had passed into another stage, and the time had come for gathering around him a separate discipleship. That call would not come as a surprise to their minds or hearts.

What had passed between Jesus and the sons of Jona, and then those of Zebedee, can scarcely have occupied many minutes. But already the people were pressing around the Master in eager hunger for the word. The boat of Peter shall be his pulpit. We need scarcely ask what he spoke. It would be of the Father, the Kingdom, and of those who entered it. But it would carry to the hearers the wondrous beauty and glory of that opening Kingdom, and, by contrast, the deep poverty and need of their souls.

"Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught." That they toil in vain all life's night, only teaches the need of another beginning. The "nevertheless, at thy word," marks the new trust and the new work as springing from that trust. They let down the nets and caught a "great multitude of fishes."

Many are the truths which the church has read in this history, the following standing out as its final outcome and lesson: "And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all and followed him."

A SABBATH IN CAPERNAUM

It was the Holy Sabbath. The first after he had called his permanent disciples around him; the first after his return from the Feast at Jerusalem. Probably the authorities of Jerusalem had sent some of their own to track his steps in Galilee. This we infer from their presence and activity so soon afterwards. But as yet all seemed calm and undisturbed.

Among the hearers in the synagogue that Sabbath morning was one demonized. This was not a *permanent* state, or possession by the powers of darkness. For a moral element is involved, since during the period of his temporary liberty, this demonized one might have shaken himself free from the overshadowing power or sought release from it. Thus the demonized state involved personal responsibility, although that of a diseased and disturbed consciousness.

In one respect, those who were demonized exhibited the same phenomenon. They all owned the power of Jesus. But it was not by such voices that he would have his Messiahship ever proclaimed. Such testimony was wholly unfitting and incongruous. The same power which gagged the confession also bade the demon relinquish his prey. One wild paroxysm, and the sufferer was forever free. On all of them who saw and heard it fell the utter stupor and confusion of astonishment; a new doctrine, with authority, and obedience of the unclean spirits to his command.

From the synagogue we follow the Savior, in company with his called disciples, to Peter's wedded home. But no festive meal awaited them there. His mother-in-law lay prostrate with a burning fever.

In Jesus' presence disease and misery cannot continue. He rebuked the fever, just as he had rebuked the demon. Then lifting her by the hand, she rose up, now healed, and ministered (*diaconate*) unto them.

It was evening. The sun was setting and the Sabbath past. All that day it had been told from home to home what had been done in the synagogue, and what had taken place at the home of Simon. From all parts the sick and demonised are brought, and Christ heals them. Never was prophecy more truly fulfilled than when on that evening he "took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.

SECOND JOURNEY THROUGH GALILEE AND THE HEALING OF THE LEPER

As the three Synoptists accordantly state, Jesus now entered on his second Galilean journey. There can be little doubt that the chronological succession of events is hereby accurately indicated by the more circumstantial narrative of St. Mark's Gospel.

In treating of the healing of the leper on this occasion, we must consider the circumstances under which a leper existed. They were banished from all relationships except with those similarly stricken. They were forbidden to enter the Temple, Jerusalem, or any walled city. As the leper passed by, his clothes rent, his hair dishevelled, and the lower part of his face and upper lip covered, he was to call out "Unclean! Unclean!" He was to be the first to enter the synagogue and the last to leave, and occupied a separate compartment. No one was to salute him. If he even put his head into a place, it became unclean. No less a distance than four cubits (six feet) must be kept from a leper. Or, if the wind came from his direction, a hundred were scarcely sufficient. Rabbinism carried its inhuman logic as far as to forbid him to wash his face, considering the leper a mourner.

We can now in some measure appreciate the contrast between Jesus and his contemporaries in his bearing towards the leper. A leper would have fled from a Rabbi; but this one came in a lowly attitude of entreaty to Jesus. "If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." And in direct contravention of Jewish usage, Jesus touched the leper and healed him.

It is not quite so easy at first sight to understand why Christ should have with such intense earnestness, almost vehemence, sent the healed man away. Certainly it was not because he disapproved of his worship. Rather do we once more see how the God-Man shrank from the fame connected with miracles; miracles sought by a curious crowd of eager sight-seers, or aspirants for temporal benefits.

The healed man was to appear before the priests "as a testimony unto them." The Lord did not wish to have the Law of Moses broken. And broken, not superseded, it would have been if its provisions had been infringed before his death and ascension, and before the coming of the Holy Ghost had brought their fulfillment.

This course of history shows that the open rupture between Jesus and the Jewish authorities, which had commenced at the Unknown Feast at Jerusalem, was to lead to practical sequences. On the part of the Jewish authorities, it led to measures of active hostility. The synagogues of Galilee would no longer be the quiet scenes of his teaching and miracles. Nor would his words and deeds pass any longer unchallenged. It had never occurred to these Galileans to question the orthodoxy of Jesus' words. But now, immediately after this occurrence, we find him accused of blasphemy. They had not thought it a

breach of God's Law when, on the Sabbath, he had healed a man in the synagogue of Capernaum. But after this it became sinful to extend like mercy on the Sabbath to him whose hand was withered. These new incidents are due to one and the same cause: the presence and hostile watchfulness of the Scribes and Pharisees, who now for the first time appear on the scene of his ministry. Is it too much then to infer, that, immediately after that Feast at Jerusalem, the Jewish authorities sent their familiars into Galilee after Jesus, and that it was to the presence and influence of this informal deputation that the opposition to Christ, which now increasingly appeared, was due? So he replied to the sending forth of the Scribes of Jerusalem, who were to watch, oppose, and arrest him, by sending to Jerusalem his embassy, the healed leper, to submit to all the requirements of the Law. It was *His* testimony unto them.

THE RETURN TO CAPERNAUM AND THE HEALING OF THE PARALYTIC

In the second journey of Jesus in Galilee, no other special event is recorded than the healing of the leper. But if, as we have suggested, the activity of Jesus assumed a new anti-Judaic character after the Unknown Feast, we can perceive the reason for it. The healing of leprosy was recorded as typical. With this also agrees what immediately follows. For, as Rabbinism stood confessedly powerless in face of the living death of leprosy, so also it had no word of forgiveness to speak to the conscience burdened with sin, nor yet a word of welcome to the sinner. But this was the inmost meaning of the two events which the Gospel history places next to the healing of the leper: the forgiveness of sins in the case of the paralytic, and the welcome extended to the chief of sinners in the call of Levi-Matthew.

It was winter when Jesus returned to Capernaum, which accounts for his teaching in the house. He is standing in the covered gallery that ran around the courtyard of one of the better dwellings of the middle class, possibly Peter's house. Perhaps he was standing within the entrance of the guest chamber while the Scribes were sitting within that apartment or beside him in the gallery. The court before him is thronged out into the street. Four men come bearing the paralytic, but access to Jesus is impossible. They felt the preciousness of this opportunity, and in their hearts they knew that Jesus could, and that he would, heal the paralyzed man. And inmost in the heart of the paralytic was, as we infer from the first words of Jesus to him, not only the same conviction, but with it the weight of that terrible fear born of Jewish belief, that his sins might hinder his healing.

Outside, as well as inside, a stair led up to the roof. They may have used this or else reached it by what the Rabbis called the roof of the roads, passing from one roof to the next if the houses on the street were adjoined. It was the roof to the gallery through which the men lowered the paralytic. It would have been comparatively easy to remove the covering of tiles and then dig out an opening through the lighter framework. All this, as done by four strong men, would be but the work of a few minutes.

This energy and determination of faith exceeded anything that had been witnessed before. Jesus perceived the man's unspoken thoughts, knew that there was not only faith, but also fear. His first words, "Be of good cheer," got beyond the coarse Judaic standpoint from which suffering seemed an expiation of sin. Yet another Jewish idea was even more deeply rooted, that recovery would not be granted to the sick unless his sins had first been forgiven him. Jesus needed to speak these words first, "Child, thy sins have been forgiven," before he gave healing, because the inward stroke, or paralysis, in the consciousness of guilt, must be removed before the outward could be taken away.

Let us recall that Jesus was in the presence of those in whom the Scribes would fain have worked disbelief; not of his power to cure which was patent to all, but of his person and authority. In this forgiveness of sins he presented his person and authority as Divine, and he proved it such by the miracle of healing which immediately followed. Had the two been inverted, there would have been evidence of his power, but not of his Divine Personality, nor of his having authority to forgive sins. And this, not the doing of miracles, was the object of his teaching and mission, of which the miracles were only secondary evidences.

RABBINIC THEOLOGY CONCERNING REPENTANCE AND FORGIVENESS

The fundamental idea of all religion concerns the forgiveness of sin and welcome to the sinner. But Rabbinism and every other system down to modern humanitarianism can only generally point to God for the forgiveness of sin. In regards to the sinner himself, they know of no welcome for the sinner until he has, by some means either inward or outward, ceased to be a sinner and become a penitent. They would first make him a penitent, and then bid him welcome to God. Christ first welcomes him to God, and so makes him a penitent. The one demands, the other imparts life.

Thus it is that Jesus puts these two points in the foreground with the cure of the paralytic and the call of Levi-Matthew. The cumbersome observances of Rabbinism, its whole law, were only an attempted answer to the question, "How can a man be just with God."

As Rabbinism stood silent and powerless as regarded the forgiveness of sins, so it had emphatically no word of welcome or help for the sinner. The very term "Pharisee", or "separated one," implied the exclusion of sinners. Their contempt and avoidance of the unlearned, so characteristic of the system, arose from the thought that as "the Law" was the glory and privilege of Israel, ignorance of it was culpable.

Although Rabbinism had no welcome to the sinner, it was yet unceasing in its call to repentance and in extolling its merits. All the prophets had prophesied only of repentance. The last pages of the Tractate on the Day of Atonement are full of praises of repentance. It not only averted punishment and prolonged life, but brought good, even the final redemption to Israel and the world at large. It surpassed the observance of all the commandments, and was as meritorious as if one had restored the Temple and Altar and offered all sacrifices.

Rabbinism knew nothing of a forgiveness of sin, free and unconditional, except in the case of those who had not the power of doing anything for their atonement. Inward repentance only arrested the decrees of justice. That which put the penitent into right relationship with God was *good deeds*. The term must be taken here in its widest sense. *Fasting* is meritorious as an expression of humiliation, as an offering to God, and as preventing sins by chastening and keeping control of the body. *Restitution* was meritorious, and it must be more than was due under strict law. Beyond all this were the really *good works*, whether occupation with the Law or outward deeds, which constituted perfect repentance.

The vital difference between Rabbinic teaching and the Gospel lies in this: that whereas Jesus Christ freely invited *all* sinners, whatever their past, assuring them of welcome and grace, the last word of

Rabbinism is only despair and a kind of pessimism. For it is expressly and repeatedly declared in the case of certain sins that even if a man genuinely and truly repent, he must expect immediately to die. Indeed, his death would be the evidence that his repentance was genuine, since, though such a sinner might turn from his evil, it would be impossible for him, if he lived, to lay hold on the good and to do it.

TAXES

Concerning the system of taxes, we know much, and yet, as regards details, perhaps too little about those "tolls, dues, and customs," which made the Roman administration so vexatious and loaded the very name of publican with contempt and hatred. It was said that repentance was specially difficult for tax-gatherers and custom-house officers.

The Talmud distinguishes two classes of "publicans:" the tax-gatherer in general (*Gabbai*), and the *Mokhes*, who was especially the *douanier* or custom-house official. The *douanier*, such as Matthew, was the object of chief execration. And this because his exactions were more vexatious and gave more scope to rapacity. The *Mokhes* was called "great" if he employed substitutes, and "small" if he stood himself at the receipt of custom. Levi-Matthew was the "little Mokhes" of Capernaum, to whom, as the Rabbis told him, repentance was next to impossible.

THE CALL OF MATTHEW

We now turn to the account of the calling of Levi-Matthew. It was probably early spring following the winter when the paralytic was healed at Capernaum. Sitting before his custom-house, Matthew must have frequently heard Jesus as he taught by the sea shore. And long before that eventful day which for ever changed his life, we believe that Matthew had in heart become a disciple of Jesus. When the word came, "Follow me," the past seemed all swallowed up in the present heaven of bliss. He arose, and followed him.

It could not have been long after this, probably almost immediately, that the memorable gathering took place in the house of Matthew. It was natural that all the publicans around should come to meet Jesus, and that the Pharisees should take this opportunity to attempt to shake the confidence of his disciples in their master. But Jesus not only silenced their gainsaying, but further opened up the meaning of his very purpose and mission. "No need have they who are strong and in health of a physician, but they who are ill."

This call of Matthew was no doubt speedily followed by the calling of the other Apostles. The difficulties connected with tracing the family descent or possible relationship between the Apostles are so great, that we must forego all hope of arriving at any certain conclusion. Of the twelve, 11 were Galilean and only the betrayer was of Judean origin.

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Concerning the Sermon on the Mount, we can here attempt its general outline. Its great subject is

neither righteousness, nor yet the New Law, but that which was innermost and uppermost in the mind of Christ: the Kingdom of God. Notably, the Sermon on the Mount does not contain any detailed or systematic doctrine, nor any ritual teaching, nor yet does it prescribe the form of any outward observances. This marks, at least negatively, a difference in principle from all other teaching. Christ came to found a Kingdom, not a School; to institute a fellowship, not to propound a system.

Christ's teaching in the Sermon on the Mount is utterly unlike the teaching of the Talmud. It matters little what part of the Talmud is chosen for this comparison. Who, that has read half-a-dozen pages successively of any part of the Talmud, cannot help but be shocked, pained, amused, or astounded. There is wit and logic, quickness and readiness, earnestness and zeal, but by its side terrible profanity, uncleanness, superstition, and folly. Taken as a whole it is not only utterly unspiritual, but anti-spiritual. It is so utterly unlike the New Testament that it is not easy to determine which, as the case may be, is greater; the ignorance or the presumption of those who put them side-by-side. He who has thirsted and quenched his thirst at the living fount of Christ's teaching can never again stoop to seek drink at the broken cisterns of Rabbinism.

And so we can understand how in what Jesus taught and what he claimed, "The people were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one having authority, *and not as the Scribes.*"

THE RETURN TO CAPERNAUM AND HEALING OF THE CENTURION'S SERVANT

We are once again in Capernaum. It is remarkable how much not only connected with the ministry of Jesus, but with his innermost life, gathers around that little fishing town. In all probability its prosperity was chiefly due to the neighboring Tiberias which Herod Antipas had built about ten years previously. Also noteworthy is the number of attractive characters and incidents in the Gospel history connected with it, and yet, as a city, it rejected its own real glory, and like Israel and for the same reason, incurred a prophetic doom commensurate to its former privileges.

But as yet Capernaum was still "exalted up to heaven." And now from the Mount of Beatitudes Jesus retired there at his temporary home, but not to solitude or rest. For many of that multitude who had clung to his words followed him, and there was now such constant pressure around him that neither he nor his disciples found leisure for so much as the sustenance of the body.

The circumstances, the incessant work, and the all-consuming zeal led to the apprehension that the balance of his judgment might be overweighted. And so those from his home hastened out from their house in a neighboring street to take possession of him. It is not necessary to include Mary, the mother of Jesus, in this group. The later expression, his "mother and brethren," seems opposed to the supposition.

To the eastern mind this lack of self-possession, this being "beside" oneself, would point to possession by another, by God or a devil. It was on the ground of such supposition that the charge was so constantly raised by the Scribes, and unthinkingly taken up by the people, that Jesus was mad and had a devil. This also explains how, while unable to deny the reality of his works, they could still resist their evidential force.

The heathen Centurion whom we read about was a real historical person. He was captain of the troop quartered in Capernaum and in the service of Herod Antipas. We know that such troops were chiefly recruited from Samaritans and Gentiles of Caesarea. He had learned to love Israel and to reverence Israel's God; one who, not only in his official position, but from love and reverence, had built that synagogue whose remains, even after eighteen centuries, exhibits rich and elaborate carvings of cornices and entablatures, of capitals and niches, showing with what a liberal hand he had dealt his votive offerings.

We do not know that the Centurion had any distinct apprehension of Jesus' essential divinity. In general it holds true that throughout the Evangelic history, belief in the Divinity of our Lord was the outcome of experience of his person and work, not the condition and postulate of it.

The question of the Centurion would not be *could* Jesus heal his servant, but *would* he. He knew that no request from any in Israel, be it even publican or sinner, had been denied. Would he, as a Gentile, be barred from sharing in this blessing? Was he "unworthy," or rather "unfit" for it?

The Centurion sends an embassy of Jewish elders to Jesus, aware that the houses of Gentiles were "unclean," and still more that familiar fellowship would "defile." And so, when we read of Jesus' consenting to come, we read the second message of the Centurion: "Trouble not thyself, for I am not fit (Leviticallly speaking) that thou shouldest enter under my roof; wherefore neither did I judge myself worthy (spiritually, morally, religiously) to come unto thee." But in his self-acknowledged "unfitness" lay the real "fitness" of this good soldier for membership with the true Israel; and in his deep-felt "unworthiness," the real "worthiness for the Kingdom and its blessings.

It was a common belief that in the day of the Messiah, redeemed Israel would be gathered to a great feast together with the patriarchs and heroes of the Jewish faith, and the Gentiles could have no part in it. Israel, in fact, had claim and title to it. The Gentiles were "children of Gehinnom," but Israel "children of the Kingdom."

On this point the words of Jesus in reference to the believing Centurion formed the most marked contrast to Jewish teaching. Never could the Judaism of his hearers have received a more rude shock than by this inversion of all their cherished beliefs. There was a feast of Messianic fellowship, a recognition on the part of the King of all his faithful subjects, a joyous festive gathering with the fathers of the faith. But this fellowship was not of outward, but of spiritual kinship. There were "children of the Kingdom," and there was an "outer darkness" with its anguish and despair. The Kingdom he had opened to all believers; and that outer darkness was theirs, who had only outward claims to present.

THE RAISING OF THE YOUNG MAN OF NAIN

A widow's son has died. In passionate grief she has rent her upper garment. The last sad offices have been rendered to her son. The body has been laid on the ground, hair and nails clipped, and the body washed, anointed, and wrapped in the best the widow could procure. She sits on the floor, neither eating meat nor drinking wine. What scanty meal she would take must be without prayer in the house of a neighbor or in another room, or at least with her back to the dead. She has not neglected what might be regarded as the last tokens of affection: instruments and mourning women.

As the mournful procession starts from the desolate house, chairs and couches are reversed and laid low. Outside the funeral orator precedes the bier proclaiming the good deeds of the dead. Her dead son is laid on a bier, or in an open coffin probably made of wickerwork, his face is turned up, and his hands folded across his chest. The bier is carried by friends and neighbors, all of them unshod, relieving each other at frequent intervals so that as many as possible might share in the good work. During these pauses there is loud lamentation. Behind the bier walk the relatives, friends, and the sympathizing multitude. For it was deemed like mocking one's Creator not to follow the dead to his last resting place.

It was probably the next day after Jesus had healed the Centurion's servant that he left Capernaum for Nain. A great multitude followed him, a distance of twenty-five miles. Jesus and the multitude approached the city of Nain from the northeast, by way of Endor. They met this funeral procession by the city gate, on the road that leads eastward to the burying ground. Ancient Jewish custom would have demanded that respect be shown to the dead by accompanying him to the burying.

Jesus recognized her as she went before the bier. She did not recognize him, probably had not even seen him, because she was still weeping. "Beholding her, the Lord had compassion on her." He speaks to her, "Be not weeping," and touches the bier. Jesus did not dread the greatest of all defilements, that of contact with the dead, which Rabbinism had surrounded with endless terrors by its elaboration of the letter of the Law.

Those who carried the bier stood still. They could not have anticipated what would follow. With a sovereign command, "he that was dead sat up, and began to speak." Upon those that witnessed this miracle fell a fear of the Divine Presence, and over their souls swept the hymn of Divine praise. Fear, because a great Prophet was risen up among them; praise, because God had visited his people.

THE WOMAN WHO WAS A SINNER

The precise place and time of this event are undetermined. It can scarcely have occurred in the quiet little town of Nain, and yet, it must have followed almost immediately upon it.

The invitation of Simon the Pharisee to his table does not necessarily indicate that he had been impressed by the teaching of Jesus any more than the supposed application of his case to the illustration at the end implies that he had received from the Savior spiritual benefit, great or small. If Jesus had taught in the "city," and, as always, irresistibly drew to him the multitude, it would be only in accordance with the manners of the time for the leading Pharisee to invite the distinguished "teacher" to his table.

They were all lying around the table; the body resting on the couch with the feet turned away from the table in the direction of the wall while the left elbow rested on the table. And now, from the open courtyard, up the verandah-step, perhaps through an antechamber, and by the open door passed the figure of a woman into the festive reception room and dining hall. How did she obtain access? Had she mingled with the servants, or was access free to all, or had she, perhaps, known the house and its owner? But we must bear in mind the greatness of Jewish prejudice against any conversation with a woman, however lofty her character, and fully realize the absolute incongruity on the part of such a

woman in seeking access to the Rabbi, whom so many regarded as the God-sent Prophet.

The shadow of her form must have fallen on all who sat at meat, but none spoke. It did not matter to her who was there or what they thought. It was Jesus to whom she had come. And so she "stood behind at his feet." Reverently bending, a shower of tears "bedewed" his feet. As if surprised, or else afraid to awaken his attention, or defile him by her tears, she quickly wiped them away with the long tresses of her hair that had fallen down and touched him as she bent over his feet. She had not come to wash his feet, but to show loving gratefulness and reverence as her poverty and humility would allow. And now that her faith had grown bold in his presence, continuing to kiss his feet, she began to anoint them out of the flask of perfume which the women of her time carried around their necks.

Jesus had read Simon's unspoken thoughts. Presently he would show them to him. Yet not, as we might, by open reproof that would put him to shame before his guests, but with infinite delicacy and in a manner still that could not be mistaken. It is an illustration, not a parable, and so must in no way be pressed. Jesus enters into Simon's own mode of reasoning.

Of two debtors, one of whom owed ten times as much as the other, who would best love the creditor who had freely forgiven them? Though to both the debt might have been equally impossible of discharge, and both might love equally, yet a *Rabbi* would, according to his Jewish notions, say that he would love most to whom most had been forgiven. If this was the undoubted outcome of Jewish theology--the so much for so much--let it be applied to the present case. If there were much benefit, there would be much love; if little benefit, little love. Conversely, in such case much love would argue much benefit; little love, small benefit. Let him then apply the reasoning by marking this woman and contrasting her conduct with his own.

On Simon's own reasoning, then, he must have received but little, and she much benefit. Or, to apply the former illustration now to reality: "Forgiven have been her sins, the many," not in ignorance but with knowledge of their being many. And although the Lord does not actually express it, it would also hold true that Simon's little love showed that "little is forgiven."

And now Jesus turns to her for the first time. "Thy sins have been forgiven." He does not heed the murmuring thoughts of those around who cannot understand who this is that forgives sins also. "Thy faith has saved thee: go into peace."

RETURN TO CAPERNAUM

However interesting and important it is to follow the steps of our Lord on his journey through Galilee, the task of grouping in their order the notices of it in the Gospels seems almost hopeless. Yet, we can trace in outline the general succession of events.

We conclude that Christ was now returning to Capernaum from that missionary journey of which Nain had been the southernmost point. On this journey he was attended, not only by the twelve, but by loving, grateful women who ministered to him of their substance. Among them three are specially mentioned: Mary, called Magdalene; Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward; and Susanna.

It was on this return journey to Capernaum that the two blind men had their sight restored. It was then, also, that the healing of the demonized dumb took place. A new stage of the Messianic course had begun, for it is characterized by a fuller unfolding of Christ's teaching and working, and by a more fully-developed opposition of the Pharisaic party.

We are emphatically told that tidings of the raising of the dead at Nain had gone forth into Judea. No doubt they reached the leaders at Jerusalem. There seems just sufficient time between this and the healing of the demonized dumb on the return journey to Capernaum to account for the presence there of those Pharisees who are expressly described by St. Mark as the "Scribes which came down from Jerusalem."

The Scribes could believe in the "miracles" and yet not in the Christ. To them the question would not be whether they were miracles, but by what power, or in what name, he did them. It was enmity to the *Person* and *Teaching* of Jesus which led to the denial of his claims. They regarded Jesus as permanently possessed by a demon, a constant vehicle of Satanic influence. Their guilt lay in treating as Satanic agency that which was of the Holy Ghost.

We place the visit of the "mother and brethren" of Jesus immediately after his return to Capernaum, and we attribute it to Pharisaic opposition, which either filled these relatives with fear for his safety or made them sincerely concerned about his proceedings. Only if it meant some kind of interference with his mission, whether prompted by fear or affection, would Jesus have so disowned their relationship. We regard the words of Christ as the sternest prophetic rebuke of all Mariolatry, prayer for the virgin's intercession, and, still more, of the strange doctrines about her freedom from actual and original sin.

On the other hand, remembering the deep reverence among the Jews for parents, we feel that Jesus could not have spoken nor done what might even seem disrespectful to a mother. There must have been a higher meaning in his words. That meaning would be better understood after his resurrection.

As Bengel aptly puts it: He condemns not the Mother, but He places the Father first. And this is ever the right relationship in the Kingdom of Heaven!

TEACHING IN PARABLES

There is an ascending scale in the three series of parables, spoken respectively at three different periods in the History of Christ, and with reference to three different stages of Pharisaic opposition and popular feeling.

The *first series* is that when Pharisaic opposition had just devised the explanation that his works were of demoniac agency, and when misled affection would have converted the ties of earthly relationship into bonds to hold the Christ. To this there was only one reply, when the Christ stretched out his hand over those who had learned, by following him, to do the will of his Heavenly Father, and so become his nearest of kin. It was in this connection that, first to the multitude, then to his disciples, the first series of parables was spoken, which exhibits the elementary truths concerning the planting of the Kingdom of God, its development, reality, value, and final vindication.

In the *second series* of parables we mark a different stage. The fifteen parables of which it consists were spoken after the transfiguration, on the descent into the valley of humiliation. They also concern the Kingdom of God, but they have a controversial aspect, as against some vital, active opposition to the Kingdom, chiefly on the part of the Pharisees. Accordingly, they appear among the Discourses of Christ, and are connected with the climax of Pharisaic opposition as presented in the charge that Jesus was, so to speak, the incarnation of Satan. This *was* the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. All the parables bear a more or less direct reference to it, but as yet in a positive rather than negative form; the Evangelic element in them being primary, and the judicial only secondary.

This order is reversed in the *third series*, consisting of eight parables. Here the controversial has not only the ascendancy over the Evangelic element, but the tone has become judicial, and the Evangelic element appears chiefly in the form of certain predictions connected with the coming end.

Why did Christ speak in parables? We find it impossible to believe that Jesus had adopted a special mode of teaching for the purpose of concealing the truth which might have saved those who heard him. Yet his words indicate that such *was* the effect of the parables. The ground of the different effect of the parables on the unbelieving multitude and on the believing disciples was not objective, or caused by the substance or form of the parables, but was subjective, being caused by the different standpoint of the two classes of hearers toward the Kingdom of God. The cause of the hardening lay, not in the parabolic method of teaching, but in the state of spiritual insensibility at which, by their own guilt, they had previously arrived. Through this, what might and in other circumstances would have conveyed spiritual instruction, necessarily became that which still further and fatally darkened and dulled their minds and hearts. Thus their own hardening merged into the judgment of hardening.

We are now in some measure able to understand why Christ now for the first time adopted parabolic teaching. Its reason lay in the altered circumstances of the case. All his former teaching had been plain, although initial. In it he had set forth by word, and exhibited by fact (in miracles), that Kingdom of God which he had come to open to all believers. There were those who believed in him, and those who believed the Pharisees who said that the acts and teaching of Jesus were of Satanic origin. The presentation of the Kingdom must now be for *decision*. It must separate the two classes, leading one to clearer understanding of the mysteries, while to the other class these mysteries would be wholly unintelligible, incredible, and to be rejected. To the one would come the grace of final revelation, to the other the final judgment which, in the first place, had been of their own choice, but which would grow into the fulfillment of the terrible prediction of Isaiah concerning the final hardening of Israel.

The first series of parables are four in number, perhaps five, if we include that which is recorded by Mark only. The five are: ***him who sowed; the Seed growing unobservedly (Mark); the tares among the wheat; the mustard seed; the leaven.*** These were spoken from the ship to the multitude that crowded the shore. They are all such as befit an open-air address during the spring of the year. They were intended to present the mysteries of the Kingdom as illustrated by the sowing, growing, and intermixture of the Seed.

The disciples now had knowledge concerning the mysteries of the Kingdom. But that Kingdom was not a matter of the understanding only, but of personal apprehension. This implied discovery of its value, personal acquisition of it, and surrender of all to acquire it. And this mystery of the Kingdom was conveyed to the disciples in those next parables, especially addressed to and suited only for, them.

These are the parables of: *the treasure hid in the field*, and *the pearl of great price*.

The disciples also needed to know that mere discipleship--mere inclusion in the Gospel net--was not sufficient. And here we have the parable of *the draw net*. That net let down into the sea of this world would include much which, when the net was at last drawn to shore, would prove worthless or even hurtful. To be a disciple, then, was not enough. Even here there would be separation. Not only the tares, which the enemy had designedly sown into the midst of the wheat, but even much that the Gospel net had enclosed when cast into the sea would prove fit only to be cast away when brought to land; cast away into "the oven of the fire where there is the wailing and the gnashing of teeth."

So ended the first teaching in parables, to the people by the lake, and to the disciples in the house at Capernaum. Dim, shadowy outlines, growing larger and more faint in their tracings to the people; shadowy outlines, growing brighter and clearer to all who were disciples.

CHRIST STILLS THE STORM

It was the evening of that day of new teaching, and once more great multitudes were gathering to him. What more, or, indeed, could he have said to those to whom he had all that morning spoken in parables, which hearing they had not heard nor understood? So Jesus resolves to pass to the other side. He and his disciples got into the boat which was always ready for his use and departed. Other boats departed also, carrying those who were anxious to follow him.

In the stern of the ship, on the low bench where the steersman sometimes takes rest, Jesus rested his head. Weariness, faintness, hunger, and exhaustion asserted their mastery over his true humanity. Suddenly a storm arises. Waves rise and toss and break over the ship. The danger increases "so that the ship was now filling," yet Jesus sleeps on in sublime consciousness of absolute safety.

"Lord, save us--we perish!" What was it that the disciples really expected? Certainly not that which actually did occur, since not only wonder but fear came over them. Probably theirs would be a vague, undefined belief in the unlimited possibility of all in connection with the Christ. A belief centered in the inability of apprehension, which would characterize them up until the resurrection morning.

They awaken Jesus, and he commands the seas to be silent. And over them who had awakened him crept wonder, awe, and fear. No longer, as at his first miracle in Capernaum, was it *What* is this?, but now *Who* is this?

THE HEALING OF THE DEMONIZED AT GERASA

That day of wonders was not yet ended. The Savior and his disciples landed on the other side late in the evening, when perhaps the silvery moon was shedding her pale light on the weird scene and laying her halo around the shadows cast upon the sea by the the steep cliff down which the herd of swine would hurry and fall.

From the limestone caverns and rock chambers for the dead a demonized man and his companion came

forth to meet Jesus. His was the extreme degree of the demonized state: violent, impossible to control, and in an almost homicidal and suicidal frenzy.

The demons who controlled the man do not wish to be banished from the country and people, or as St. Luke puts it, again to "depart into the abyss." They entreat Jesus to let them go into a herd of swine on top of the cliff. Jesus does not hinder them from doing so. The unclean spirits enter the animals and panic seizes the herd. They rush down the steep of the cliffs, and being unable to stop their descent, perish in the sea. The real object of the demons was thus attained: they did not leave the country, while Christ was entreated to do so.

The keepers of the herd saw and heard everything. In wild terror they fled into Gerasa to tell what had happened.

The following morning the man is now "sitting at the feet of Jesus," learning of him, "clothed in his right mind." Those from the town and country arrive requesting that Jesus depart from them. It was not only the loss of the swine that prompted the request, but the awe and fear that came over men who were superstitious and unwilling to submit absolutely to the Kingdom which Christ brought.

In such a place and under such circumstances Jesus could not have continued. As he entered the ship, the healed demonized humbly and earnestly entreated that he might go too. But Jesus sends him back to his own, to publish there in the city and throughout the district of the ten confederate cities, the Decapolis, what great things Jesus had done for him.

"And all men did marvel." Presently Jesus himself came back into that Decapolis where the healed demonized had prepared the way for him.

THE HEALING OF THE WOMAN AND THE RAISING OF JAIRUS' DAUGHTER

On the shore of Capernaum many were gathered on the morning after the storm, eagerly looking out for the well-known boat that bore the Master and his disciples. As he stepped on the well-known shore, he was soon thronged by an eager, curious, and expectant crowd.

Jairus, one of the synagogue rulers of Capernaum, had an only daughter who had just reached the age of twelve. But she was on the point of death, "at the last breath," when Jairus appealed to Jesus. He must have known of the healing of the son of the court official and of the servant of the Centurion. For there had been no imposition of silence in regard to them. In both cases the recovery might have been ascribed to coincidence, by others to an answer of prayer. And perhaps this may help us understand one of the reasons for the prohibition of telling what had been done by Jesus, while in other instances silence was not enjoined. Christ's miracles were intended to aid, not to supersede, faith. If only those healings were made known which would not necessarily imply *Divine* power (according to Jewish notions), then the distraction and tumult of popular excitement would be avoided, yet in each case faith in the Person of Christ would still be required, before the miracles were received as evidence of his divine claims. This need of faith was the main point.

As Jesus followed the ruler to his house, the multitude thronged around him in eager curiosity. A

woman was in this crowd who had suffered for twelve years with a disease that would render her Levitically unclean. She touches the fringe of his outer garment. Immediately Jesus turns around, for he knew, "perceived in himself," what had taken place: the going forth of power. This going forth of power was neither unconscious nor unwilling on his part. It was caused by her faith, not by her touch. That he knew who had done it, and only wished, through self-confession, to bring her to clearness in the exercise of her faith, appears from what is immediately added: "And he looked round about," not to see *who* had done it, but "to see her that had done this thing." And as his look of unspoken appeal was at last fixed on her alone in all that crowd, the woman saw that she was not hid and came forward to make full confession. She then learned that it was not from the garment, but from the Savior, that the power proceeded. She also learned that it was not the touch of it, but the faith in him, that had made her whole.

It was during this interval of delay that the messengers came who informed Jairus of the actual death of his daughter. The emphatic admonition, not to fear, only to believe, gives us an insight into the threatening failure of the ruler's faith; perhaps, also, into the motive which prompted the delay of Jesus. His utmost need would require the utmost faith.

For the first time Jesus takes only Peter, James, and John with him. He puts out the mourners, who were no longer needed, and who by their conduct had proved themselves unfit to be witnesses of Christ's great manifestation. He took the maiden by the hand and spoke only two words, "Maiden, arise." And straightway she arose.

THE MISSION OF THE TWELVE

With the departure from the house of Jairus, Jesus and his disciples leave Capernaum for Nazareth. From now on, Capernaum will no longer be the center of his activity.

As he had begun, so he closed this part of his Galilean ministry by preaching in his own Synagogue at Nazareth. With the exception of a few who were receptive, his visit passed away without such mighty works as the Nazarenes had heard of. He will not return to Nazareth again. Henceforth, he will begin sending forth his disciples, to partly disarm prejudices of a personal character, and to partly spread the Gospel tidings farther and wider than He alone could do.

The present Mission of the Twelve was to gather into Christ's fold those that had been scattered abroad; those that were "troubled" as well as "scattered" like sheep having no shepherd. Viewing this discourse in its fullest form, we note the following:

- (1) This discourse consists of *five* parts: vv. 5-15; 16-23; 24-33; 34-39; 40 to the end.
- (2) Many passages in it occur in different connections in the other two synoptic gospels, especially in Mark 13 and in Luke 12 and 21. From this it may be inferred that Jesus spoke the same or similar words on more than one occasion, or else that Matthew grouped together into one Discourse, as being internally connected, sayings that may have been spoken on different occasions. Most probably, both these inferences may in part be correct.
- (3) It is evident that the discourse reported by Matthew goes far beyond that mission of the twelve, beyond even that of the early church, indeed "up to the end."

- (4) This distinction of primary and secondary applications in the different parts of the discourse, and their union in the general principles underlying them, has to be kept in view if we are to understand this discourse. Also, the present and the future seem to often run into each other. The horizon is gradually enlarging throughout the discourse, but there is no change in the standpoint originally occupied. And so the present merges into the future, and the future mingles with the present. This is characteristic of much of Old Testament prophecy.
- (5) It is evidence of its authenticity, and deserves special notice that this Discourse, while so un-Jewish in spirit, is more than any other, even more than that on the Mount, Jewish in its forms of thought and modes of expression.

With the help of these principles, it will be easier to mark the general outline of this discourse. Its first part applies entirely to this first mission of the twelve, although the closing words point forward to "the judgment." Accordingly it has its parallels, although in briefer form, in the other two gospels.

The Twelve were to go forth two and two, furnished with power and authority over all demons and to heal all manner of diseases. They were not to touch either Gentile or Samaritan territory. This direction, so different in spirit from what Jesus himself had previously said and done, and different from their own later commission, was only "for the present necessity." For the present they were neither prepared nor fitted to go beyond the circuit indicated. To have done so would have defeated the object of our Lord of disarming prejudices when making a final appeal to the Jews of Galilee. In the second part of his charge to the disciples, the horizon is enlarged, and Matthew reports that which the other evangelists record at a later stage of the Lord's ministry. For Matthew himself could not have intended to confine the words of Christ to this first journey of the Apostles, since they contain references to division in families, persecutions, and conflict with the civil power such as belong to a much later period in the history of the church. And, besides, it contains also that prediction which could not have applied to this first mission, "Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of Man be come."

It is of the greatest importance to keep in view that at whatever period of Christ's ministry this prediction and promise were spoken, and whether only once or more often, they refer exclusively to a *Jewish* state of things. The persecutions are exclusively Jewish. This appears from verse 18 where the answer of the disciples is promised to be "for a testimony against them," who had delivered them up, here evidently the Jews, as also against "the Gentiles." And the evangelistic circuit of the disciples in their preaching was to be *primarily Jewish*; and not only so, but in the time when there were still "cities of Israel," that is, previous to the final destruction of the Jewish commonwealth. The reference, then, is to that period of Jewish persecution and of Apostolic preaching in the cities of Israel which is bounded by the destruction of Jerusalem. Accordingly, the "coming of the Son of Man," and "the end" here spoken of, must also have the same application. According to Daniel 7:13, it was a coming in judgment. To the Jewish persecuting authorities who had rejected the Christ in order, as they imagined, to save their city and Temple from the Romans, and to whom Christ had testified that he would come again, this judgment on their city and state, on their polity, *was* "the coming of the Son of Man" in judgment, and the only coming which the Jews, as a state, could expect.

That this is the only natural meaning attaching to this prediction, especially when compared with the parallel utterances recorded in Mark 13:9-13, appears to us indubitable. As regards its manner, the "second" coming of Christ may be said to correspond to the state of those to whom he cometh. To the

Jews his first coming was *visible*, and as claiming to be their King. They had asked for a sign and no sign was given them at that time. They rejected him and placed the Jewish polity and nation in rebellion against "the King." To the Jews who so rejected the first visible appearance of Christ as their King, the second appearance would be invisible but real; the sign which they had asked would be given them, but as a sign of judgment, and his coming would be in judgment. Thus would his authority be vindicated and he appear, not visibly, but really, as what he had claimed to be. That this was to be the manner and object of his coming to Israel was clearly set forth to the disciples in the *Parable of the Unthankful Husbandmen*. To render misunderstanding impossible, the explanation is immediately added that the Kingdom of God was to be taken from them and given to those who would bring forth the fruits thereof. Assuredly, this could not, even in the view of the disciples, have applied to the coming of Christ at the end of the present dispensation.

Thus viewed, the passages in which that second coming is referred to will yield their natural meaning. Neither the mission of the disciples, nor their journeying through the cities of Israel, was finished, before the Son of Man came. Nay, there were those standing there who would not taste death, till they had seen in the destruction of the city and state the vindication of the Kingship of Jesus, which Israel had disowned. And even in those last discourses in which the horizon gradually enlarges, and this coming in judgment to Israel merges in the greater judgment on an unbelieving world, this earlier coming to the Jewish nation is clearly marked. The three evangelists equally record it, that "this generation" should not pass away, till all things were fulfilled.

THE DEATH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

It was early spring, shortly before the Passover, the anniversary of the death of Herod the Great and of the accession of his son Herod Antipas to the Tetrarchy. It was a fit time for a feast, and Antipas gathered together his lords, military authorities, and the chief men of Galilee for a banquet. The merriment had reached its utmost height, and now, to complete the excitement the daughter of the king's wife comes in to dance.

Herodias, the king's wife, was the daughter of Aristobulus (son of Herod the Great), and his wife, the ill-fated Asmonean princess Mariamme I. Herodias had been married to her half-uncle, Herod Philip, the son of Herod the Great and another wife, Mariamme II. At one time it seemed as if Herod Philip would have been sole heir of his father's dominions. But the old tyrant had changed his testament, and Philip was left with great wealth but as a private person living in Jerusalem. This little suited Herodias' ambition. An intrigue began between Antipas and Herodias. After Antipas returned from his impending journey to Rome, he would repudiate his own wife, the daughter of Aretas, king of Arabia, and wed Herodias. But Aretas' daughter heard of the plot and fled to her father. This led to enmity between Antipas and Aretas. Nevertheless, the adulterous marriage with Herodias followed. She proved to be the curse and ruin of Antipas.

John the Baptist had dared to publicly denounce her sin, and she sought revenge. After her daughter Salome's dance had finished, Herod Antipas promises to reward her, even to the half of his kingdom. At the instigation of her mother she asks for John the Baptist's head.

"The king was exceeding sorry." For months he had striven against this. His conscience, fear of the

people, inward horror at the deed, all would have kept him from it. But he had sworn to the maiden. "Straightway" he gives the order to one of the bodyguards and the murder is carried out.

As the pale morning light streams into the dungeon, the faithful disciples who had been told of it come reverently to bear the headless body to the burying. They go to tell it to Jesus, and henceforth remain with him.

But the people ever afterwards cursed the tyrant, and looked for those judgments of God to follow, which were so soon to descend on him. There followed a war with Aretas, in which Antipas was bested. And, last of all, his wife's ambition led him to Rome to solicit the title of king, lately given to Agrippa, the brother of Herodias. Antipas not only failed, but was deprived of his dominions and banished to Lyons in Gaul.