

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

Part II

Section 2: From the Feeding of the Five Thousand to the Passion Week

THE MIRACULOUS FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND

Jesus resolved at once to leave Capernaum; probably for the sake of his disciples who needed rest, for the people who might have attempted an uprising after the murder of John the Baptist, and temporarily to withdraw himself and his followers from the power of Herod Antipas. For this purpose he chose a place outside Herod's dominions nearest to Capernaum, that is, Bethsaida on the eastern border of Galilee just within the territory of the Tetrarch Philip. Originally a small village, Philip had converted it into a town and named it Julias, after Caesar's daughter. It lay on the eastern bank of the Jordan, just before it enters the Lake of Galilee, and must not be confounded with the other "fisher town", or Bethsaida, on the western shore of the Lake, called Bethsaida of Galilee.

It was natural that Christ and his disciples should have gone by ship, and equally natural that many "seeing them departing, and knowing," what direction the boat was taking, should have followed on foot and been joined by others from the neighboring villages. The circumstance that the Passover was nigh at hand partly accounts for the concourse of such multitudes.

The Lord and his disciples perhaps retired to the top of a height and there rested in teaching conversation with those who had outrun the rest. Presently he saw the great multitude gathering; thousands of men, plus women and children.

There is, at least in our view, no doubt that thoughts of the Passover and of the Holy Supper, of their commingling and mystic meaning, were present to the Savior, and that it is in this light that the miraculous feeding of the multitude must be considered. It was the "first evening," (between the time when the sun began to decline and the ninth hour, or three o'clock) when the disciples asked the Lord to dismiss the people. But instead Jesus would have the disciples give the people something to eat. The disciples' own provisions, carried for them by a fisher lad, amounted to five barley loaves and two small fishes. Jesus took the bread, gave thanks, and broke it. He distributed the food to the disciples, and the provision was miraculously multiplied to feed the entire multitude with twelve baskets of fragments left over.

As the wondering multitude watched, the murmur ran through the ranks: "This is truly the Prophet, the Coming One into the world." And so the Baptist's last inquiry, "Art thou the Coming One?" was fully and publicly answered, and that by the Jews themselves.

THE STORM ON THE LAKE

After the miraculous feeding, "Jesus therefore, perceiving that they were about to come and to take him by force, that they might make him King, withdrew again into the mountain, himself alone." We can almost picture the scene. Christ is on the hilltop praying after that miraculous breaking of bread; fully realizing all that it implied to him of self surrender, of suffering, and of giving himself as the food of the world. Then, as he rises from his knees, he looks out over the lake after the little group of men which embodied and represented all there yet was of his church. It is shortly before the Passover when the moon would shine from an unclouded sky, lighting up the waters far across.

In the clear moonlight just that piece of water stands out, almost like burnished silver, with the boat in danger. Jesus cannot pursue his journey on foot, but now walks on the water to come to their aid. They think they are seeing an apparition until Jesus speaks and calms their fears: "It is I, be not afraid!" We must bear in mind their former excitement, now greatly intensified by what they had just witnessed, in order to understand the request of Peter. They are the words of a man whom the excitement of the moment has carried beyond all reflection.

Presently the two came into the boat, the wind ceased, and immediately the ship was at land. But "they that were in the boat", apparently in contradistinction to the disciples, though the latter must have stood around in sympathetic reverence, "worshiped him saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God."

THE CAVILS (PETTY OBJECTIONS) OF THE PHARISEES

As we follow the narrative, we take time first to summarize Jesus' steps of the previous days.

On Thursday Jesus and his disciples left Capernaum for Bethsaida-Julias on the eastern side of the lake. The miraculous feeding of the multitude took place that evening. In the evening of Thursday to Friday occurred the passage of the disciples to the other side, Christ walking on the sea, and the failure of Peter's faith. On Friday was the passage of the people to Capernaum in search of Jesus. And on Saturday we have the final discourses of Christ in Capernaum and in the synagogue.

To elaborate more about Friday's activities, we read that Christ directed the disciples to steer for Bethsaida, the "fisherton" of Capernaum. Bethsaida of Galilee on the western shore and Capernaum were names that were often used interchangeably. But the boat had evidently drifted off its course and touched land farther south, at the plain of Gennesaret, where it was moored. No sooner had the boat run up the gravel beach in the early morning, than his presence must have become known throughout the district. From all around the country the sick were brought for healing. The greater part of the forenoon passed in this ministry. In the meantime, while they moved, the first tidings of all that was occurring must have reached neighboring Capernaum. This brought immediately on the scene those Pharisees and Scribes who had come from Jerusalem with the intention of watching and orchestrating the destruction of Jesus. As we conceive it, they met the Lord and his disciples on their way to Capernaum. Possibly they overtook them while they were partaking of some food, and here it would be that Christ's reproof would be administered to the Pharisees and Scribes.

Although the cavil of the Jerusalem Scribes may have been occasioned by seeing some of the disciples eating without first having washed their hands, we cannot banish the impression that it reflected on the miraculously provided meal of the previous evening when thousands had sat down to food without the observance of the Rabbinic ordinance. This was all that the Pharisees and Scribes could see in the miracle: that it had not been done according to the Law.

One of the charges against Jesus was that he was "not of God;" that he was "a sinner." If this could be established, it would, of course, prove that he was not the Messiah but a deceiver whom the Sanhedrin must unmask and arrest. The way in which they attempted to establish this was by proving that he sanctioned in others and committed himself breaches of traditional law. According to their fundamental principles, violations of the traditional law involved heavier guilt than sins against the revealed Law of Moses.

The Scribes now blamed Jesus for allowing his disciples to eat without having previously washed their hands "to the wrist." According to traditionalism, the practice was to draw a specified amount of water which was to be poured on both hands which must be free of anything covering them, such as gravel, mortar, etc. The hands were then lifted up so as to make the water run to the wrist thus insuring that the whole hand was washed and that the water polluted by the hand did not again run down the fingers. If the water remained short of the wrist, the hands were not clean.

Let us now try to realize the attitude of Christ in regard to this ordinance about purification and seek to understand the reason of his bearing. That in replying to the Scribes Jesus neither vindicated their conduct nor apologized for their breach of the Rabbinic ordinances, implied at least an attitude of indifference towards traditionalism. This is important as we know the ordinances of the Scribes were declared more precious and of more binding importance than those of the Holy Scriptures themselves. But even so, the question might arise as to why Christ should have provoked such hostility by placing himself in marked antagonism to what, after all, was indifferent in itself.

To answer this question it will be necessary to disclose an aspect of Rabbinism which has hitherto been avoided. We will give only one example. Rabbinism, in the madness of its self-exaltation, represented God as busying himself by day with the study of the Scriptures and by night with that of the Mishnah. In the heavenly Sanhedrin, over which the Almighty presided, the Rabbis sat in the order of their greatness, and the Halakhah was discussed and decisions made in accordance with it.

This one example shows why it was that Jesus could not assume merely an attitude of indifference towards traditionalism. It must be remembered that it was an admitted Rabbinic principle that while the ordinances of Scripture required no confirmation, those of the Scribes needed such, and that no Halakhah (traditional law) might contradict Scripture. When Christ, therefore, proceeded to show that in a very important point--nay, in "many such like things"--the Halakhah was utterly incompatible with Scripture, that, indeed, they made "void the Word of God" by their traditions which they had received, he dealt the heaviest blow to traditionalism. Rabbinism stood self-condemned; on its own showing it was to be rejected as incompatible with the Word of God.

This discussion between Jesus and the Scribes might have taken place while the multitude stood

outside. But when enunciating the grand principle of what constituted real defilement, "He called to him the multitude." In setting forth for the first time the real character of traditionalism, and setting himself in open opposition to its fundamental principles, Christ enunciated also for the first time the fundamental principle of his own interpretation of the Law. That Law was not a system of externalism, in which outward things affected the inner man. It was moral, and addressed itself to man as a moral being, to his heart and conscience. As the spring of all moral action was within, so the mode of affecting it would be inward. The Rabbis also taught, explaining with much detail, how the heart was alike the source of strength and of weakness, of good and of evil thoughts, proving each statement from Scripture. But never before could they have realized that anything entering from without could not defile a man.

THE GREAT CRISIS IN POPULAR FEELING

The narrative now returns to those who had on the previous evening, after the miraculous meal, been "sent away" to their homes. This had been after the abortive attempt on their part to take Jesus by force and make him their Messiah-King. We can understand how the effectual resistance of Jesus to their purpose weakened and in great measure neutralized the effect of the miracle which they had witnessed. In fact, we look upon this check as the first turning of the tide of popular enthusiasm. Let us bear in mind what ideas and expectations of an altogether external character those men associated with the Messiah of their dreams. At last, by some miracle more notable even than that of the giving of the manna in the wilderness, enthusiasm had been raised to the highest pitch, and thousands were determined to give up their pilgrimage to the Passover, and then and there proclaim the Galilean Teacher Israel's King. If he were the Messiah, such was his rightful title. Why then did he so strenuously and effectually resist it? In ignorance of Christ's real views concerning the Kingship, they would naturally conclude that it must have been from fear, from misgiving, from lack of belief in himself. At any rate, he could not be the Messiah if he would not be Israel's king.

Enthusiasm of this kind, once repressed, could never be kindled again. Henceforth there was continuous misunderstanding, doubt, and defection among former adherents, growing into opposition and hatred unto death. Even to those who did not take this position, the words and works of Jesus were thereafter a constant mystery. And so it came that the morning after the miraculous meal the vast majority of those who had been fed were found either in their homes or on their pilgrim way to the Passover at Jerusalem. Of those that remained, there was such selection of grace that all whom the Father had given Jesus would reach him.

Here we are at the parting of two ways. And just because it was the hour of decision, Christ set forth clearly the highest truths concerning himself. "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." "My flesh is the true meat, and my blood is the true drink." Eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of Man was the necessary condition of securing eternal life. Truly this was a totally different Messiah and Messianic Kingdom from what they either conceived or wished.

And so this was the great crisis in the history of the Christ. The result was yet another and a sorer defection. "Upon this many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." Would the twelve also depart? Peter speaks in the name of them all. "Lord, to whom shall we go? Words of

eternal life hast thou." And even more than this, he proclaims the result of what they had learned: "And we have believed and know that thou art the Holy One of God."

But of these twelve Christ knew one to be "a devil." The apostasy of Judas had already commenced in his heart. And, the greater the popular expectancy and disappointment had been, the greater was the reaction and enmity that followed.

JESUS AND THE SYRO-PHOENICIAN WOMAN

Jesus purposed to withdraw his disciples from the excitement of Galilee. They stayed in Capernaum for the Sabbath and then made the comparatively short journey into the borders of Tyre and Sidon. It is within the territory of Israel but near the borders of Tyre and Sidon where the Lord spends very possibly the first two Passover days. A woman of Syro-Phoenicia, a Greek, that is, a heathen, approaches Jesus seeking help for her demonized child. She addresses him, "O Lord, thou Son of David!" This was the most distinctively Jewish appellation of the Messiah. But spoken by a heathen, these words were an appeal, not to the Messiah of Israel, but to an Israelitish Messiah; for David had never reigned over her or her people. The title might be most rightfully used, if the promises to David were fully and spiritually apprehended, but not otherwise. If used without that knowledge, it was an address by a stranger to a Jewish Messiah, whose works were only miracles and not also and primarily signs. This was exactly the error of the Jews which Jesus had encountered and combated on previous occasions: when he resisted the attempt to make him king; in his reply to the Jerusalem scribes; and in his discourses at Capernaum. To have granted her the help she requested would have been to reverse the whole of his teaching, and to make his works of healing merely works of power. Yet he could not refuse her petition.

The disciples do not intercede for her but request that Jesus send her away. Jesus replies that his mission is only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Thus baffled, as it might seem, she now cries "Lord, help me." And then the teaching came to her in a manner which she could understand. If it were as the Son of David that he was entreated, then those *within* were the children and those *without* "dogs." But who were they who were within and those who were without?

She learned two lessons quickly. "Yea, Lord," it as thou sayest: heathenism stands related to Judaism as the house dogs to the children. Thine own words show that if they are house dogs then they are the Master's and under his table. And when he breaks the bread there is enough and to spare for them.

Jesus was no longer to her the Jewish Messiah but truly the Son of David. She now understood what she prayed, and that she *was* a daughter of Abraham. And what had taught her all this was faith in his person and work, as not only just enough for the Jews, but enough and to spare for all.

A GROUP OF MIRACLES AMONG A SEMI-HEATHEN POPULATION

If even the brief stay of Jesus in that friendly Jewish home by the borders of Tyre could not remain

unknown, the fame of the healing of the Syro-Phoenician maiden would soon have rendered impossible that privacy and retirement which had been the chief object of his leaving Capernaum. Accordingly, when the two Paschal days were ended, he resumed his journey, extending it far beyond any previously undertaken. Making a long circuit through the territory of Sidon, he descended, probably through one of the passes of the Hermon range, into the country of the Tetrarch Philip. Then he continued through the midst of the borders of Decapolis until he once more reached the eastern, or southeastern shore of the Lake of Galilee. The extensive "ten cities" district (of the Decapolis) was essentially heathen territory. Their political constitution was that of the free Greek cities.

It is important to keep in view that although Jesus was now within the territory of ancient Israel, the district and all the surroundings were essentially heathen, although in closest proximity to and intermingling with that which was purely Jewish. Matthew gives only a general description of Christ's activity there, concluding with a notice of the impression produced on those who witnessed his mighty deeds as leading them "to glorify the God of Israel."

Among those brought to him was one who was deaf. We are led to infer that the affliction was not congenital, but the result of disease. The plea to "lay his hand upon him" was heathen, and yet semi-Jewish also. It is quite peculiar that the Lord took him aside from the multitude, and that in healing him, "he spat", applying it directly to the diseased organ. We read of the direct application of saliva only here and in the healing of the blind man at Bethsaida. We are disposed to regard this as peculiar to the healing of Gentiles. Also peculiar is the term expressive of burden on the mind, when "looking up to heaven, he sighed," as well as the "thrusting" of fingers into the man's ears and the touch of his tongue. There is this accumulation of means, yet each and all inadequate to effect the purpose, but all connected with his person.

Let us try to realize the scene. These heathens in the land so near to, and yet so far from, Israel have heard of Jesus as the wonder-worker. Many have brought to him the lame, blind, and others. All diseases vanish in his presence. It is a new era. Israel conquers the heathen world not by force, but by love; not by outward means, but by the manifestation of life power from above. Truly, this is the Messianic conquest and reign: "and they glorified the God of Israel."

From amongst the mass of misery Jesus singles out one and takes him aside. The man is to be alone with Christ and the disciples. It is not magic; but means are used, and such as might not seem wholly strange to the man. And quite a number of means. Each act seemed a fresh incitement to his faith, and all connected with the person of Christ. When the man's eyes followed those of the Savior to heaven, he would understand from where the power came; who had sent him and whose he was.

Another miracle is recorded by Mark on a heathen in Bethsaida-Julias. A blind man is brought, and here again the Savior takes him aside. We mark not only the similarity of the means employed, but the same and even great elaborateness in the use of them since a twofold touch is recorded before the man saw clearly. So far as we can judge, the object was, by a gradual process of healing, to disabuse the man of any idea of magical cure, while at the same time the process of healing was markedly centered in the person of Jesus.

A third miracle of healing needs to be considered, related by Matthew, that of the healing of the two

blind men. Peculiar to his history is the testing question of Christ, whether they really believed what their petition implied, that he was able to restore their sight; also his stern, almost passionate insistence on their silence as to the mode of their cure. Only on one other occasion do we read of the same insistence. It is when the leper had expressed the same absolute faith in Christ's ability to heal if he willed it. In both these cases there was an implied rather than an expressed petition on their part. "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean" and "Have mercy on us, Thou Son of David." Thus it is the highest and most realizing faith which is most absolute in its trust and most reticent as regards the details of its request.

It is almost impossible not to connect Christ's peculiar insistence on their silence with their advanced faith. But a profession of faith so wide-reaching as theirs, and sealed by the attainment of what it sought yet scarcely dared to ask, must not be publicly proclaimed. It would, and in point of fact did, bring crowds to Jesus. Crowds which unable spiritually to understand the meaning of such a confession would only embarrass and hinder, and whose presence and homage would have to be avoided as much, if not more, than that of open enemies.

THE TWO SABBATH CONTROVERSIES: PLUCKING EARS OF CORN AND THE HEALING OF THE MAN WITH THE WITHERED HAND

We do not wish to convey that it is certain that what had taken place in the last section occurred in precisely that order nor that it preceded what is about to be related. Yet, inasmuch as the Pharisees are now present whereas before they were not, we believe it probable that they were present at the Passover during the required first two Paschal days but then left immediately to return to their hateful task. Accordingly, we find them once more confronting Christ. The contest now becomes more decided and sharp, and we are rapidly nearing the period when he who had been chiefly preaching the Kingdom and healing body and soul will enter upon a prevailingly negative stage of his work.

On no other subject is Rabbinic teaching more painfully minute and more manifestly incongruous than that of the observance of the Sabbath. For if we rightfully apprehend what underlay the complicated and intolerably burdensome laws and rule of Pharisaic Sabbath observance, it was to secure absolute rest from all labor and to make the Sabbath a delight. This then was their first care: to make a breach of the Sabbath rest impossible by a series of complicated ordinances. The next object was, in a similarly external manner, to make the Sabbath a delight. It involved a special Sabbath dress, the best that could be procured; also the choicest food even though a man had to work all week to obtain it, or have it provided for him through public charity.

It was on the Sabbath after the second Paschal Day that Christ and his disciples passed, probably by a field path, through cornfields, and being hungry, his disciples plucked ears of corn and ate them, having rubbed off the husks in their hands. On any ordinary day this would have been lawful, but on the Sabbath it involved, according to Rabbinic statutes, at least two sins. The plucking of the ears fell under the sin of reaping and that of rubbing the husks would be within the range of sifting, threshing, grinding, or fanning. What the disciples had done was clearly not a breach of the Biblical, but of the Rabbinic Law.

Unlike the other of the Ten Commandments, the Sabbath Law has two elements: the moral and the ceremonial; the eternal and that which is subject to time and place; the inward (spiritual) and the outward. In their distinction and separation lies the difficulty of the subject. In its spiritual and eternal element, the Sabbath Law embodied the two thoughts of rest for worship, and worship which pointed to rest. The keeping of the seventh day, and the Jewish mode of its observance, were the temporal and outward form in which these eternal principles were presented. Even Rabbinism in some measure perceived this. It was a principle that danger to life superseded the Sabbath Law. In other words, the outward mode of observance was subordinate to the object of the observance. Every positive commandment superseded the Sabbath rest. This was the ultimate vindication of work in the Temple, although certainly not its explanation.

The first argument of our Lord as recorded by all the Synoptists was taken from Biblical history: David, when fleeing from Saul, had eaten of the shewbread and given it to his followers. Jewish tradition vindicated his conduct on the plea that "danger to life superseded the Sabbath Law," and hence, all laws connected with it. A second argument is added by Matthew: the priests in their services in the Temple necessarily broke the Sabbath without incurring guilt.

The reason why David was blameless and the Sabbath labor of the priests lawful was because the Sabbath Law was not one merely of rest, but of rest for worship. The priests worked on the Sabbath because this service was the object of the Sabbath; David was allowed to eat of the shewbread, not because there was danger to life from starvation, but because he pleaded that he was on the service of the Lord and needed this provision. And the disciples, when following the Lord, were similarly on the service of the Lord. Ministering to Christ was more than ministering in the Temple, for he was greater than the Temple.

Lastly, the three evangelists record this as the final outcome of his teaching on this subject: "The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath also." The service of God and the service of the Temple, by universal consent, superseded the Sabbath Law. But Christ was greater than the Temple, and his service more truly that of God and higher than that of the outward Temple. And since the Sabbath was intended for man to serve God, therefore, Christ and his service were superior to the Sabbath Law.

The controversy does not end here. It was probably on the next Sabbath that we find Christ in the synagogue together with the Pharisees and a man with a withered hand. In the view of the Pharisees, only actual danger to life warranted a breach of the Sabbath Law. But this opened a large field for discussion as to what actually constituted danger to life and what remedies were allowed.

Even though the man with the withered hand could not be classed with those dangerously ill, it was not difficult to silence the Rabbis on their own admissions. Clearly their principle implied that it was lawful on the Sabbath to do that which would save life or prevent death. To have taught otherwise would virtually have involved murder. But if so, did it not also, in strictly logical sequence, imply this far wider principle, that it must be lawful to do good on the Sabbath? For, evidently, the omission of such good would have involved the doing of evil. Could this be the proper observance of God's holy day? There was no answer to such an argument, and St. Mark expressly records that they dared not to answer him.

We can visualize the scene. The synagogue is crowded. Christ probably occupies a prominent position as leading the prayers or teaching. Eagerly bending forward are the dark faces of the Pharisees, expressive of curiosity, malice, cunning. They are looking round at a man whose right hand is withered, perhaps putting him forward and loudly whispering, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?" The Lord takes up the challenge. He bids the man stand forth, right in the midst of them where all can see and hear. By one of those telling appeals which go straight to the conscience, he puts the analogous case of a poor man who was in danger of losing his only sheep on the Sabbath. Would he not rescue it? And was not a man better than a sheep? Nay, did they not themselves enjoin a breach of the Sabbath Law to save human life? Then, must he not do so? Might he not do good rather than evil?

They were speechless. And Jesus "looked round about on them with anger, being grieved at the hardening of their heart." It was but for a moment, and then, with life-giving power, he bade the man stretch forth his hand. And as he stretched it forth, his hand was restored. The Savior had broken their Sabbath Law, and yet he had not broken it, for neither by remedy, nor touch, nor outward application had he healed the man. He had broken the Sabbath rest as God breaks it when he sends, or sustains, or restores life, or does good: all unseen and unheard, without touch or outward application, by the word of his power, by the presence of his life.

The Pharisees hearts were hardened. They went forth and took counsel with the Herodians against Jesus, how they might destroy him. Presumably, Jesus was within or quite close by the dominions of Herod, east of the Jordan. And the Lord withdrew once more, as it seems to us, into Gentile territory, probably that of the Decapolis. And Isaiah's prophecy blazed into fulfillment: "And in his name shall the Gentiles trust."

THE FEEDING OF THE FOUR THOUSAND AND THE LEAVEN OF THE PHARISEES

This second feeding of the multitude, which took place in Gentile territory, closes Jesus' Decapolis ministry. Comparing this feeding to that of the five thousand, there are numerous differences, but the most noteworthy difference is that on the first occasion they who were fed were Jews while on the second they were Gentiles. A detail in the narrative affords striking, though utterly undesigned, evidence of it. In referring to the blessing which Jesus spoke over the *first* meal, it was noted that in strict accordance with Jewish custom Jesus rendered thanks only once, over the bread. But no such custom would rule his conduct when dispensing the food to the Gentiles. Indeed, his speaking the blessing only over the bread while he was silent when distributing the fishes would probably have given rise to misunderstanding. Accordingly we find it expressly stated that he not only gave thanks over the bread, but also spoke the blessing over the fishes.

A question arises as to the repetition of the disciples' reply: "Whence should we have, in a solitary place, so many loaves as to fill so great a multitude?" It is not easy to transport ourselves into the position and feelings of those who had witnessed such a miracle as that of the first feeding of the multitude. We think of the power as inherent, and, therefore, permanent. To them it might have seemed intermittent, a gift that came and went. And this might seem borne out by the fact that ever since their needs had been supplied in the ordinary way. And that, even on the first occasion, they had

been directed to gather up the fragments.

We must also remind ourselves that the former provision was for Jews, and the disciples might, from their standpoint, doubt, or at least not assume, that the same miracle would supply the need of the Gentiles. But further, the repetition of the same question indicated only a sense of the disciples' own inability and not a doubt of the Savior's power of supply, since on this occasion it was not accompanied by a request on their part to send the multitude away as in the first feeding. Thus the very repetition of the question might be a humble reference to the past, of which they dared not, under the circumstances, ask for a repetition.

We suppose the feeding to have taken place in the Decapolis, and probably on or close to the eastern shore of the Lake of Galilee. As Jesus sent the multitude away, he took ship with his disciples and came into the borders of Magadan, or as St. Mark puts it, the part of Dalmanutha. The place was close to, yet not within the boundary of strictly Jewish territory; for on his arrival the Pharisees are said to "come forth."

It was from the Jewish territory of Galilee that they came with the Sadducees, tempting him with questions and desiring that his claims should be authenticated by a "sign from heaven." But no sign would be given other than the sign of Jonah which was given to Nineveh. The only sign Nineveh received was Jonah's solemn warning of near judgment and his call to repentance. And the only sign unto this generation was the warning cry of judgment and the loving call to repentance.

Jesus left them and departed for Caesarea Philippi in pursuit of his purpose to delay the final conflict. When the Lord touched the other shore, the disciples carried ashore the empty provision baskets; they had only brought one loaf of bread with them. Jesus warned them to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. The disciples misunderstood these words of Christ. They thought his words implied that they had not *forgotten* to bring bread, but purposely omitted to do so in order, like the Pharisees and Sadducees, to "seek from him a sign" of his Divine Messiahship; to show miraculous provision in their need. The mere suspicion showed what was in their minds, and pointed to the danger. This explains why Jesus reproved them, not for utter lack of discernment, but only for "little faith." It was their lack of faith--the very leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees--which had suggested such a thought. The twice repeated miracle of the miraculous provision should have taught them that their needs would be provided by Christ *not as a sign*, but as what faith might ever expect from Jesus when following after or waiting upon him.

PETER'S CONFESSION

From Dalmanutha our Lord passed across the Lake to Caesarea Philippi. It was certainly not for personal reasons, but to call attention to the impression made even on the popular mind, and to correct its defects and to raise the minds of the Apostles to far higher thoughts, that he asked them about the opinions of men concerning himself. Their difference proved not only their incompetence to form a right view, but also how many sided Christ's teaching must have been. Turning from the opinion of the multitudes, Jesus asks, "But you, whom do *you* say that I am?" The words of the confession are given somewhat differently by the three evangelists. The most exact form of the words seems to be that

given in the Gospel of St. Luke: "The Christ of God."

This confession marked the high point of the Apostles' faith. Never afterwards, until his resurrection, did it reach so high. Nay, what follows seems rather a retrogression from it, beginning with their unwillingness to receive the announcement of his decease and their unreadiness to share his sufferings or to believe in his resurrection.

The Lord sets forth the mode of his contest and victory--the Cross and the Crown. Such teaching was the needed sequence of Peter's confession for the correction of misunderstanding and for direction. Jesus had been so constantly in the habit of using symbolic language, and had only lately reproved them for taking "the leaven" in a literal rather than a figurative sense, that it was but natural that they should have regarded this announcement of Christ's suffering in the same light. They could well understand his rejection by the scribes; a sort of figurative death or violent suppression of his claims and doctrines to be followed after the briefest period by their resurrection. But, even so, there was enough of terrible realism in the words of Jesus to alarm Peter. No, never, should he pass through such an ordeal.

Yet the words of Peter were to be made useful by affording to the Master the opportunity of correcting what was amiss in the hearts of all his disciples.

THE ASCENT OF MOUNT HERMON AND THE TRANSFIGURATION

Perhaps it was the Sabbath when Peter's great confession was made. If we reckon from one Sabbath to the next, this would become the eight days of St. Luke when in the evening Peter, James, and John would view the transfiguration of Christ. There can scarcely be any reasonable doubt that Christ and his disciples had not left the neighborhood of Caesarea, and hence the mountain must have been one of the slopes of gigantic, snowy Hermon. In that quiet semi-Gentile retreat of Caesarea Philippi he could teach them without interruption or temptation from Pharisees and Scribes.

The transfiguration of Christ was needful for his own strengthening, even as the ministry of the angels was after the temptation. It was also "good" for those three disciples to be there, not only for future witness, but for present help. Lastly, the voice from heaven was of the deepest importance. Coming after the announcement of his death and passion, it sealed that testimony, and, in view of it, proclaimed him as the prophet to whom Moses had bidden Israel to hearken, while it repeated the heavenly utterance concerning him made at his baptism.

On Hermon the Lord and his disciples had reached the highest point in this history. Henceforth it is a descent into the valley of humiliation and death.

THE FAILURE TO HEAL THE LUNATIC

Only three of the apostles had witnessed the transfiguration. They alone were most fully receptive to

witness it and understand its meaning. Upon finishing the descent from the mountain, Jesus, Peter, James, and John found themselves in view of a scene which only too clearly showed that unfitness of the other disciples for the heavenly vision of the preceding night. A lunatic had failed to be restored due to the disciples "unbelief."

Why had they failed? For the same reason that they had not been taken up to the Mount of Transfiguration; because they were 'faithless,' because of their 'unbelief.' They had the outward faith of the 'it is proved.' But that deeper, truer faith, which consisted in the spiritual view of that which was the unseen in Christ, and that higher power which flows from such apprehension, they had not.

At Jesus' command the lunatic is brought to him. The father speaks: "If Thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us." However, the question can never be answered as the man had put it. It must be ignored. It must ever be, not what *He* can, but what *we* can. When the infinite fullness is poured forth, as it ever is in Christ, it is not the oil that is stayed, but the vessels which fail. He gives richly, inexhaustibly, but not mechanically; there is only one condition, the moral one of the presence of absolute faith.

THE LAST EVENTS IN GALILEE

Now that the Lord's retreat into the utmost borders of the land at Caesarea Philippi was known to the Scribes, and he was again surrounded and followed by the multitude, there could be no further object in his retirement. The time was coming for his decease at Jerusalem, and he had been preparing the minds of his disciples for this. Accordingly, we find him once more with them in Galilee preparatory for his journey to the Feast of Tabernacles. The few events of this brief stay may be summed up as follows: (1) The clear and emphatic repetition of the prediction of his death and resurrection; (2) Jesus' provision of the tribute money wherein he vindicate's his royal title by paying for Peter also and with a *Stater*, or four-drachm piece; (3) the dispute among the disciples as to which of them would be the greatest; and (4) the forbidding of a man to cast out demons when he would not join the disciples, and Jesus' teaching on the subject.

Such were the incidents by the way. On entering the house in Capernaum, the disciples addressed a question to Jesus: "Who, then, is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?" It was a general question, but Jesus perceived the thoughts of their heart. He takes a small child, perhaps Peter's little son, and puts him in their midst. Not to strive for being the greatest, but to be utterly without self-consciousness, like a child, was the condition for entering the Kingdom of Heaven. Greatness centered upon greatness of service, and the greatest service implied the most self-denial. And the smallest service as it might seem, even the giving of a cup of cold water, would not lose its reward.

Yet a further depth of Christian love remained to be shown. So far it had been a question of not seeking self, nor seeking great things, but condescending to the little ones. But what if actual wrong had been done and just offense given by a "brother?" In such case the principle of the Kingdom would seek first the good of the offending brother. It is bitterly disappointing afterwards that Peter could come to the Master with the question as to how many times he was to forgive the offending brother, imagining that he had more than satisfied the new requirements if he extended it to seven times. The

Jerusalem Talmud gives as a settled rule that forgiveness should not be extended more than three times. And so it must have seemed to Peter quite a stretch of charity to forgive seven times. It did not occur to him that the very act of numbering offenses marked an externalism which had never entered into, nor comprehended, the spirit of Christ. Forgiveness is *qualitative*, not *quantitative*.

THE JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM

The part in the evangelic history which we have now reached has this peculiarity and difficulty: the events are recorded by only one of the evangelists. The section in St. Luke's Gospel from chapter 9:51 to 18:14 stands absolutely alone. From the circumstance that Luke omits throughout his narrative all notation of time or place, the difficulty of arranging here the chronological succession of events is so great that we can only suggest what seems most probable.

Happily, the period embraced is a short one and the narrative remarkably fits into that of St. John. John mentions three appearances of Christ in Jerusalem at that period: at the Feast of Tabernacles, at that of the Dedication, and Jesus' final entry which is referred to by all the other evangelists. But while the narrative of John confines itself exclusively to what happened in Jerusalem or its immediate neighborhood, it also either mentions or gives sufficient indication that on two out of these three occasions Jesus left Jerusalem for the country east of the Jordan. Besides these, John also records a journey to Bethany for the raising of Lazarus.

It follows that Luke's account of the three journeys to Jerusalem fits into the narrative of Christ's three appearances in Jerusalem as described by John. *And the unique section in St. Luke supplies the record of what took place before, during, and after those journeys, of which the upshot is told by St. John.*

The subject, then, primarily before us is the journeying of Jesus to Jerusalem. In that wider view which Luke takes of this whole history, he presents what really were three separate journeys as *one*, and that towards the great end. In its conscious aim and object, all--from the moment of his Jesus' finally quitting Galilee to his final entry into Jerusalem--formed, in the highest sense, only one journey.

St. John, indeed, goes farther back and speaks of the circumstances which preceded Jesus' journey to Jerusalem. There is an interval, or as we might term it, a blank, of more than half a year between the last narrative in the Fourth Gospel and this. For the events chronicled in the sixth chapter of John's Gospel took place immediately before the Passover, which was on the fifteenth day of the first ecclesiastical month (Nisan), while the Feast of Tabernacles began on the same day of the seventh ecclesiastical month (Tishri). But, except in regard to the commencement of Christ's ministry, that sixth chapter is the only one in the Gospel of St. John which refers to the Galilean Ministry of Christ. The six or seven months between the Feast of Passover and that of Tabernacles, and all that passed within them, are covered by this brief remark: "After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for He would not walk in Judea, because the Jews [the leaders of the people] sought to kill him."

Jesus did not take the route of the festive pilgrim bands to the Feast of Tabernacles, that is, through Perea. He followed a short time later with his company of disciples intending to take the more direct road to Jerusalem through Samaria. But his intention was soon frustrated. In the very first Samaritan

village to which Christ had sent word to prepare for himself and his disciples, his messengers were told that the Rabbi could not be received; that neither hospitality nor friendly treatment could be extended to one who was going up to the Feast at Jerusalem. This strangely un-Oriental answer was not only an outrage on common manners, but an act of open hostility to Israel, as well as to Christ. The "Sons of Thunder" proposed to vindicate the cause of Israel and her Messiah-King by the open and Divine judgment of fire called down from heaven to destroy that village. Jesus, who had come not to destroy but to save, turned and rebuked them, and they passed from Samaritan into Jewish territory to pursue the journey.

It seems that after this rebuff they were going towards a Jewish village when one of the company, a Scribe, broke into a spontaneous declaration of readiness to follow him absolutely and everywhere. But he had not taken into consideration the utter homelessness of the Christ in this world. Another was asked to follow Jesus, but at that very moment his father lay dead, and Jewish law seemed to impose on him the most sacred duty of first being allowed to bury him.

Yet another hindrance to following Christ was to be faced. One in the company wished permission first to bid farewell to those he had left in his home. It shows that to follow Christ was regarded as a *duty*, and to leave those in the earthly home as a *trial*. It betokens not merely a divided heart, but one not fit for the Kingdom of God.

Thus, these are the three vital conditions of following Christ: absolute self-denial and homelessness in the world; immediate and entire self-surrender to Christ and his work; and an undivided heart with all affections set on Christ, to which there is no other trial of parting like that which would involve parting from him.

THE MISSION AND RETURN OF THE SEVENTY AND THE HOME AT BETHANY

It seems most likely that it was on his journey southwards at this time that Jesus designated those seventy others who were to herald his arrival in every town and village. No power or authority was formally conferred on them as their mission was only temporary and for one definite purpose: to prepare for the coming of the Master in the places to which they were sent, that is, those places he was about to visit.

The address to the Seventy is followed by a denunciation of Chorazin and Bethsaida. Chorazin is not otherwise mentioned in the Gospels, and no miracles are recorded as having taken place in (western) Bethsaida. But no record has been preserved in the Gospels of most of Christ's miracles. The denunciations were in proportion to the privileges. Chorazin and Bethsaida are compared to Tyre and Sidon, which under similar admonitions would have repented. Capernaum, so long the home of Jesus, had truly "been exalted to heaven," and is compared to Sodom. Such guilt involved greater punishment.

The Seventy returned filled with joy in the result of their mission. The result had exceeded their expectations. As they reported, even the demons had been subject to them through his name. Their faith had not been disappointed.

We have little doubt that the words recorded by both Matthew and Luke were spoken on this occasion. All those that labored and were heavy laden were bidden to come to him, and to take his yoke upon them. It seems likely that the next scene recorded by Luke also stands in its right place. Such an inquiry on the part of a certain lawyer as to what he should do to inherit eternal life, together with Christ's parabolic teaching about the good Samaritan, is evidently congruous to the previous teaching of Christ about entering into the Kingdom of Heaven.

We mark the close of Christ's journey to the Feast of Tabernacles with the visit to the home of Martha and her sister Mary. Lazarus is not mentioned as he was most likely in the city attending the feast. The disciples as well were dismissed to go to the feast, and thus Jesus alone was the guest of the two sisters.

According to the law it was required to build booths during this festive week and eat, sleep, pray, study--in short--to live in them. The booth was to become the principal dwelling and the house only the secondary dwelling. Although this was not absolutely obligatory on women, we find that Martha and Mary did so. We can picture to ourselves Martha moving forwards and backwards past the booth which probably stood in the courtyard of the house. Mary had been assisting her, but now she was sitting at Jesus' feet in rapt attention. How best to do him honor was equally the thought of both. To Martha it seemed as if she could not do enough in showing him all hospitality. Mary's homage consisted in forgetting all else but him who spoke as none had ever done.

AT THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES - THE FIRST DISCOURSE IN THE TEMPLE

The Feast of Tabernacles was preeminently the Feast for foreign pilgrims, coming from the farthest distance, whose Temple contributions were then received and counted. Early on the 14th Tishri, corresponding to our September or early October, they arrived, and Jerusalem became a scene of bustle and activity. Hospitality had to be sought and found; guests to be welcomed and entertained; and above all, booths must be erected everywhere. Only that fierce castle, Antonia, which frowned above the Temple, was undecked by the festive spring into which the land had burst. To the Jew it was a hateful sight.

Jesus did not appear in the Temple during the first two festive days. The pilgrims had expected him there, for everyone would now speak of him, although "not openly," in Jerusalem. But now, all at once, he appeared in the Temple and taught.

We do not know the subject of Christ's teaching on this occasion. But the effect on the people was one of general astonishment. They knew about common unlettered Galilean tradesmen. "How does this one know literature (letters, learning), never having learned?" To the Jews there was only one kind of learning, that of Theology. And there was only one road to it, the School of the Rabbis. Among the Jews a Rabbi's teaching derived authority from the fact of its accordance with tradition; that it accurately represented what had been received from a previous great teacher, and so on upwards to Moses, and to God himself.

On this ground Christ claimed the highest authority. His doctrine was not his own invention but was

the teaching of him that sent him; it was God-received, and Christ was sent direct from God to bring it. Everyone who really "willeth to do his will" would know concerning this teaching, whether it is of God or whether it is of man. And there was one other test: "Who speaketh from himself, seeketh his own glory." But Christ did not seek his own glory, but the glory of him who sent him. Thus did Christ appeal and prove that his doctrine was of God and that he was sent of God.

But in that very city the Jews were even then seeking to kill him. This forms the transition to what may be called the second part of Christ's address. Moses was a messenger sent from God, and yet every one of them was breaking the Law which he had given them; for, were they not seeking to kill him without right or justice? Those whose hearts were so little longing to do the will of God not only must remain ignorant of his teaching as that of God, but they had also rejected that of Moses.

'IN THE LAST, THE GREAT DAY OF THE FEAST'

The last, the Great Day of the Feast, was marked by special observances. Let us visualize the scene.

The worshipers are leaving their booths at daybreak to take part in the service. The pilgrims are all in festive array, and each one carries in his right hand what is called the *Lulabh* which consisted of a myrtle and willow branch tied together with a palm branch between them. In his left hand each carried the *Ethrog*, the so-called Paradise apple, a species of citron. Thus armed the festive multitude would divide into three bands. Some would remain in the Temple to attend the preparation of the Morning Sacrifice. Another band would go in procession below Jerusalem to a place called Moza. At Moza they cut down willow branches, and amidst the blasts of the Priests' trumpets, they adorned the altar forming a leafy canopy about it.

The third company was taking part in a still more interesting service. To the sound of music a procession started from the Temple. It followed a Priest who bore a golden pitcher capable of holding a bit more than two pints. It made its way to the Pool of Siloam. At the pool the Priest filled his golden pitcher from the waters. They then went back to the Temple, so timing it that they should arrive just as the pieces of the sacrifice were being laid on the great Altar of Burnt Offering, towards the close of the ordinary Morning Sacrifice service. A threefold blast of the Priests' trumpets welcomed the arrival of the Priest as he entered through the Water Gate, which obtained its name from this ceremony, and passed straight into the Court of the Priests. Here he was joined by another Priest who carried the wine for the drink offering. The two Priests ascended the rise of the altar and turned to the left. There were two silver funnels here with narrow openings leading down to the base of the altar. Into that at the east, which was somewhat wider, the wine was poured, and, at the same time, the water was poured into the western and narrower opening with the people shouting to the Priest to raise his hand so that they could be sure that he was pouring the water into the funnel.

The 'Hallel,' consisting of Psalms 113 and 128 (inclusive) were chanted antiphonally. As the Levites intoned the first line of each Psalm, the people repeated it; to each of the other lines they responded by 'Praise ye the Lord.' But in Psalm 128 the people not only repeated the first line, 'O give thanks to the Lord,' but also these, 'O then, work now salvation, Jehovah,' 'O Lord, send now prosperity;' and again, at the close of the Psalm, 'O give thanks to the Lord.' As they repeated these lines they shook the

Lulabh towards the altar as to remind God of his promises.

And suddenly, a voice cries out, "If any one thirst, let him come unto me and drink!" All who heard would understand that his words must refer to the Holy Spirit, since the rite was universally regarded as symbolic of his outpouring. Jesus did not interrupt the services, for they had for the moment ceased. He interpreted and fulfilled them.

Yesterday the authorities had given directions for Jesus to be taken. Today he is not only in the Temple, but, at the close of the most solemn rites of the Feast, asserting within the hearing of all his claim to be regarded as the fulfillment of all and the true Messiah. Those Temple officers who had been commissioned to watch for an opportunity for seizing Jesus came back without having done their duty. To the question of the Pharisees, they could only give this reply: "Never man so spake as this man."

There was one standing among the Temple authorities who could not hold his peace, yet dared not speak for Christ. Nicodemus asked, "Does our Law judge (pronounce sentence upon) a man except it first hear from himself and know what he doeth?" We know the Pharisees unutterable contempt for the unlettered men of Galilee, and so they respond, "Art thou also of Galilee? Search and see, for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet."

TEACHING IN THE TEMPLE ON THE OCTAVE

The addresses of Jesus which follow were delivered either later on that day, or, what on every account seems more likely, chiefly on the next day which was the Octave of the Feast of Tabernacles. The Temple would once more be thronged with worshipers.

On this occasion we find Christ first in the Treasury and later in one of the porches of the Temple. It was in the Treasury where the Pharisees would alone venture to speak. Here Jesus refers to himself with the words, "I am the Light of the world." The Pharisees could not have mistaken the Messianic meaning in these words. They were an allusion to one of the great ceremonies of the Feast of Tabernacles, that called 'the joy of the feast,' when the Court of the Women was brilliantly illuminated. This festive joy was no doubt connected with the hope of earth's great harvest-joy in the conversion of the heathen world and so pointed to 'the days of the Messiah.'

What Jesus had gradually communicated to the disciples, who were so unwilling to receive it, had now become an acknowledged fact. It was no longer a secret that the leaders of Israel and Jerusalem were planning the Death of Jesus. This underlies all his words. And he sought to turn them from their purpose not by appealing to their pity nor to any lower motive, but by claiming as his right that for which they could condemn him. He *was* the sent of God, the Messiah. But to know him and his mission required moral kinship with him that had sent him. Did Israel possess it? *They did not.* No man possessed it until given him by God.

We are too apt to overlook this teaching of Christ. It is concerning the corruption of our whole nature by sin. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit. That had been

Christ's initial teaching to Nicodemus, and it became with growing emphasis his final teaching to the teachers of Israel. It forms the very basis of Christianity; it is the ultimate reason of the need of a Redeemer and the *rationale* of the work which Christ came to do. It constitutes the starting point in the fundamental divergence between the leaders of the Synagogue and Christ; for the teachers of Israel did not believe in the total corruption of man, Jew as well as Gentile, and, therefore, felt no need of a Savior.

They did not understand their own Scriptures: not the story of the fall, not Moses, and not the Prophets. How could they understand Christ? So we have here the words of Christ, that it needed heavenly teaching and kinship to the Divine to understand his doctrine. It was an appeal to the moral in his hearers, but the Pharisees sought to turn it aside by an appeal to the external and visible by asking for some witness of his testimony. According to the Rabbis, 'a person is not accredited about himself.' But if it were objected that a man could not bear witness in his own cause, the same Rabbinic canon laid it down that this only applied if his testimony stood alone. But if it were corroborated even by only one male or female slave, who ordinarily were unfit for testimony, it would be credited. In accordance with the Law of God, there were two witnesses to the fact of his mission: his own, and the frequently-shown attestation of his Father.

The reasoning of Christ was quite unanswerable from the Jewish standpoint. The Pharisees felt it, and though knowing perfectly well to whom Jesus referred, they tried to evade it by the sneer, "Where was his father?"

Presently we find Jesus in one of the porches of the Temple now teaching 'the Jews,' all of who were aware of the murderous intent of their leaders. His words are intensely sad, "Ye shall seek me, and in your sin shall ye die." "Whither I go, ye cannot come." Again they misunderstood. They thought he spoke of his dying and not, as he did, of that which came after it. But how could his dying establish such separation between them? Would there be anything so peculiar about his dying, or, did his expression about *going* indicate a purpose of taking away his own life?

Jesus corrects their misunderstanding by telling them that the ground of their separation was the difference of their nature: they were from beneath, he from above; they of this world, he not of this world. Hence they could not come where he would be since they must die in their sin, as he had told them, "if ye believe not that I am."

The words were intentionally mysteriously spoken as to a Jewish audience. Their reply, "Who art thou?", whether or not spoken in scorn, showed that they had not yet learned who he was; had not even a conviction on that point but were ready to be swayed by their leaders. Jesus replies that from the very beginning his testimony by word and deed had not swerved on this point. His word was what he had *seen* with (before) the Father. Their deeds were what they had *heard* from their father. Thus their father could not have been Abraham, so far as spiritual descent was concerned.

But why all this misunderstanding of his speech? Because they were morally incapable of hearing it, and this because of the sinfulness of their nature, an element which Judaism had never taken into account. Their descent was of the devil. Which of them could convict him of sin? If therefore he spoke truth, and they believed him not, it was because they were not of God but, as he had shown them,

of their father, the devil, "for he is a liar and the father of such a one (who telleth or believeth lies).

The argument was unanswerable, so they turn it aside with the reply, "Do we not say rightly that Thou art a Samaritan (child of the Devil) and hast a demon?" Jesus did not heed their charge. Once more he pressed home the great subject of his discourse, that only "if a man keep"--both have regard to and observe--his word, "he shall not gaze at death [intently behold it] until eternity."

Once more they misunderstood it as physical death, and since Abraham and the prophets had died, they regarded Christ as setting up a claim higher than theirs. But Abraham had "exulted" in the thought of the coming day of the Christ, and so theirs was not misunderstanding, but willful misinterpretation. He had spoken of Abraham seeing his day; they took it of his seeing Abraham's day and challenged its possibility. Whether or not they intended thus to elicit an avowal of his claim to eternal duration, and hence to Divinity, it was not time any longer to forbear the full statement, and with Divine emphasis, he spoke the words which could not be mistaken: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I AM."

It was as if they had only waited for this. In fury they rushed from the porch into the Court of the Gentiles to pick up stones to throw at him. It had been the first plain disclosure and avowal of his Divinity.

HEALING OF THE MAN BORN BLIND

On the Sabbath after the Octave of the Feast, Jesus and his disciples were going into the Temple when they passed a blind man. He was accustomed to sit here and beg alms, but on the Sabbath he would not have done so, yet his presence there would perhaps lead to many private gifts as the blind were regarded as specially entitled to charity. Yet the disciples were so thoroughly Judaized by their late contact with the Pharisees, that no thought of possible mercy came to them, but only a truly and characteristically Jewish question addressed to Jesus as Rabbi: through whose guilt had this blindness befallen him--through his own or that of his parents?

Adversity comes in the ordinary course of things and is in the last instance to be traced back to the curse which sin has brought upon man and on earth. But Christ has come and is the healer of all disease and evil by being the remover of its ultimate moral cause. If we but open ourselves to his influence, these evils may serve this purpose, "that the works of God may be manifest.

LAST DISCOURSE AT THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES - THE GOOD SHEPHERD

This last discourse was an allegory spoken in the parabolic form. If the scenes of the last few days had made anything plain, it was the utter unfitness of the teachers of Israel for their professed work of feeding the flock of God. They surely were not shepherds who had cast out the healed blind man and who would cast out all his disciples.

The two leading ideas of the allegory were *entrance by the door* and *the characteristics of the good Shepherd*. It was a noble close of those discourses in the Temple which had as their object to show that Jesus was truly sent of God.

THE FIRST PEREAN DISCOURSES

The Perea Ministry extended from after the Feast of Tabernacles to the week preceding the last Passover. It was cut in half by the brief visit of Jesus to Jerusalem at the Feast of the Dedication, thereby each part of the ministry would last about three months. This period is peculiarly lacking in *incident*. It consists almost exclusively of discourses and parables with but a few narrative portions interspersed. This section will be devoted to the briefest summary of the Lord's discourses prior to his return to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Dedication of the Temple.

The first of Jesus' discourses was on the occasion of his casting out a demon and restoring speech to the demonized. This may be the same occasion reported by Matthew when sight is also restored. The Pharisees charge Jesus with being an instrument of Satan. In response Jesus gives an allegory, and being such, the words must not be too closely pressed.

As compared with other nations, Israel was like a house from which the demon of idolatry had gone out with all his attendants. The house had then been swept of all the foulness and uncleanness of idolatry and garnished with all manner of Pharisaic adornments. Yet all this while the house was left really empty; God was not there; the Stronger One, who alone could have resisted the strong one, held not rule in it. And so the demon returned again to find the house swept and adorned indeed, but also empty and defenseless. The folly of Israel lay in this: that they thought of only one demon, him of idolatry, with all his foulness. That was all very repulsive, and they had carefully removed it. But they knew that demons were only manifestations of demoniac power, and that there was a Kingdom of *evil*. So this house, swept of the foulness of heathenism and adorned with all the self-righteousness of Pharisaism, but empty of God, would only become a more suitable and more secure habitation of Satan, because from its cleanness and beauty, his presence and rule there as an evil spirit would not be suspected. So he came back with seven other spirits more wicked than himself--pride, self-righteousness, unbelief, and the like--and thus the last state (of Pharisaic devotion to the study and practice of the Law) was really worse than had been the first with all its open repulsiveness.

THE MORNING MEAL IN THE PHARISEE'S HOUSE

As bitter as the enmity of the Pharisaic party was against Jesus, it had not yet so far spread nor become avowed as in every place to supersede the ordinary rules of courtesy. It is thus that we explain that invitation of a Pharisee to the morning meal which furnished the occasion for the second recorded Perea discourse.

At the entertainment of this Pharisee, as indeed generally, Jesus omitted the prescribed 'washing of hands' before the meal. As this rite was in itself indifferent, he must have had some definite object in

view. When the water for purification was presented to him, Jesus would either refuse it, or if, as seems more likely at a morning meal, each guest repaired by himself for the prescribed purification, he would omit to do so and sit down to eat without this formality. We can understand what bitter thoughts must have filled the mind of the Pharisee when he observed Jesus' neglect of the cherished rite. It was an insult to himself, a defiance of Jewish Law, a revolt against the most cherished traditions of the Synagogue.

Jesus exposes the mere externalism of the Pharisaic law of purification to the utter ignoring of the higher need of inward purity which lay at the foundation of all. Our Lord shows how Pharisaism, as regarded the outer, was connected with the opposite tendency as regarded the inner man: outward purification with ignorance of the need of that inward purity, which consisted in consecration to God, and with the neglect of it.

DISCOURSES TO THE PEREAN DISCIPLES

The first of these discourses is connected with what had passed at the Pharisee's table. "First [above all], beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy." Pharisaism, while pretending to what it was not, concealed what it was. Not that as individuals they were all hypocrites, but that the system was hypocrisy.

In the second discourse, Jesus warns the disciples against all anxiety, even for the necessities of life, learning from the birds and the flowers to have absolute faith and trust in God, and to labor for only one thing, that is, the Kingdom of God. The concluding part of this discourse, "Sell that ye have and give alms," indicates not a general principle, but an application to that particular period when the faithful disciple was required to follow the Lord unencumbered by worldly cares or possessions.

The third discourse is centered on the waiting attitude of the disciples in regard to their Master. He was away at some joyous feast, and the uncertainty of the hour of his return must not lead the servants to indulge in surfeiting nor to lie down in idleness, but to be faithful to their trust and eagerly expect their Master's return.

Besides these discourses, two events are recorded before Christ's departure to the Feast of the Dedication. Each of these led to a brief discourse ending in a Parable. The first event concerns two circumstances not mentioned by the Jewish historian Josephus nor in any other historical notice of the time: the murder of a number of Galileans in the Temple while offering their sacrifices, and the falling of a tower at the Siloam Pool killing eighteen persons who probably had been involved in the construction of an aqueduct by Pilate. But Christ argued that it was as wrong to infer that Divine judgment had overtaken his Galilean countrymen as it would be to judge that the tower of Siloam had fallen to punish these Jerusalemites. The entire nation was guilty; and the coming storm, to the signs of which he had pointed, would destroy all unless there was spiritual repentance on the part of the nation. The wider application applying to all time is the underlying principle that when a calamity befalls a district or group of individuals, we ought not to take to ourselves judgment as to its special cause, but to think spiritually of its general application.

Having thus answered the implied objection, the Lord showed in the *Parable of the Fig Tree*, the need and urgency of national repentance.

The second event was the cure of a woman who had been a sufferer for eighteen years through demoniac agency. "She was bowed together, and could in no wise lift herself up." But the ruler of this synagogue where the cure took place had neither the cunning nor even the courage of the Judean Pharisees in Galilee. In his confusion and anger he bustles forward scolding the people who had done nothing, yet not venturing to silence the woman, now no longer infirm, far less to reprove the great Rabbi, but speaks at him through those who had been the astounded eye witnesses. But he was effectually and easily silenced, and all who sympathized with him put to shame. "Hypocrites!" spoke the Lord. Did not everyone on the Sabbath loose his ox or ass and lead him to water? Should she, a daughter of Abraham, not have that done for her which you do for your beasts of burden? His adversaries were covered with shame and "rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him." And Jesus then set forth the Kingdom as exhibited in the two *Parables of the Mustard Seed and the Leaven*.

AT THE FEAST OF THE DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE

About two months had passed since Jesus had left Jerusalem after the Feast of Tabernacles. It is now the first week of December, or possibly as much as a week or two later.

Like the Feast of Tabernacles, this festival commemorated a Divine victory and had been instituted by Judas Maccabeus in 164 B.C. At that time the Temple had been desecrated by Antiochus Epiphanes, but it was once more purified and rededicated to the Service of Jehovah. Accordingly, it was designated as 'the Dedication of the Altar,' or as Josephus calls it, 'The Lights,' from one of the principal observances of the Feast.

It is winter, and Christ is walking in the covered porch in front of the Beautiful Gate which formed the principal entrance into the Court of the Women. The people are literally barring his way, and they put forth the question, "How long holdest Thou us in suspense?" Their desire that he should tell them plainly if he were the Christ had no other motive than that of grounding on it an accusation.

Briefly he puts aside their hypocrisy. What need is there of fresh speech? He told them before, and they believed not. From words he appeals to the mute but indisputable witness of deeds: the works which he wrought in his Father's name. Their non-belief in presence of these facts was due to their not being of his sheep.

If the work of Christ is really that of the Father, and his working also that of the Father, then it follows that he "and the Father are One." This identity of work (and purpose) implies the identity of Nature (Essence); that of working, the identity of power. And evidently the Jews understood it so, for they took up stones with the intention of stoning him.

In Psalm lxxxii, 6, the titles 'God' and 'Sons of the Highest' had been given to judges as the representatives and vicegerents of God, wielding his delegated authority since to them had come his

word of authorization. But in Jesus' case, the authority was not transmitted by 'the word' but by personal and direct consecration on the part of God. If those who had received an indirect commission were 'gods', the very representative of God, could it be blasphemy when Jesus claimed to be the Son of God, who had received authority not through a word transmitted through long centuries, but by direct personal command to do the Father's work and had been directly and personally consecrated to it?

All would, of course, depend on this, whether Christ really did the works of the Father. That was the test. If he did the works of his Father, then let them believe, if not the words yet the works, and thus would they arrive at the knowledge 'and understand' that "in me is the Father, and I in the Father."

The stones were not thrown, for the words of Christ rendered impossible the charge of explicit blasphemy which alone, according to Rabbinic law, would have warranted such vengeance. But "they sought again to seize him," so as to drag him before their tribunal. However, his time had not yet come, and he escaped out of their hand.

THE SECOND SERIES OF PARABLES

The period between Christ's return from the Feast of the Dedication and his last entry into Jerusalem may be arranged into two parts divided by the brief visit to Bethany for the purpose of raising Lazarus from the dead. The variety and briefness of what is recorded during this period prevents our closely following them in this narrative. Accordingly, we prefer grouping them together as the Parables of that period, its Discourses, and its Events.

The parables of this period look back upon the past and forward into the future. Those spoken by the Lake of Galilee were purely symbolical. They presented unseen heavenly realities under emblems which required to be translated into earthly language. It was quite easy to do so, if you possessed the key to the heavenly mysteries; otherwise, they were dark and mysterious.

It is quite otherwise with this second series of parables. They could, as they were intended, be understood by all. They required no translation. They were not symbolical but typical, in the sense of indicating an example, or, perhaps, more correctly, an exemplification. Thus, they are also intensely practical. Their prevailing character is not descriptive, but hortatory.

Of the parables of the third series, it will suffice for now to say that they are neither symbolical nor typical, but their prevailing characteristic is prophetic.

These parables of the second, or Perean, series, are thirteen in number, and, with the exception of the last, are either peculiar to, or else most fully recorded in the Gospel of St. Luke.

The Parable of the Good Samaritan - This parable is connected with a question addressed to Jesus by a lawyer, probably an expert in Jewish Canon Law. The question was one of theoretic, not of practical interest, nor a matter of deep personal concern as it was to the rich young ruler, who, not long afterwards, addressed a similar inquiry to the Lord.

"Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" At the foundation of this question lay the notion that eternal life was the reward of merit, of works. The only question was what these works were to be. The idea of guilt had not entered his mind; he had no conception of sin within. Jesus responds using the common Rabbinic expression, "What readest thou?" which pointed him to the Scriptures of the Old Testament. The reply of the lawyer is remarkable as it is substantially, and even literally, that given on two other occasions by the Lord himself.

Why did Christ seem to give his assent to the lawyer's answer as if it really pointed to the right solution of the great question? We reply, that no other answer could have been given him. On the ground of works, if that had been tenable, this was the way to heaven. To understand any other answer would have required a sense of sin, and this could not be imparted by reasoning, but must be experienced. The lawyer replies, "But who is my neighbor?" He wished to vindicate his original question, showing that it was not quite so easily settled as the answer of Jesus seemed to imply. And here it was that Christ could in a parable show how far orthodox Judaism was from even a true understanding, much more from such perfect observance of this Law as would gain heaven. Thus might he bring even this man to feel his shortcomings and sins, and awaken in him a sense of his great need.

The lawyer himself is made to enunciate the lesson of the parable. "Which of these three seems to thee to have become neighbor to him that fell among the robbers?" Though unwilling to take the hated name of Samaritan on his lips, especially as the meaning of the parable and its anti-Rabbinic bearing were so evident, the lawyer was obliged to reply, "He that showed mercy on him."

The parable implies a complete change of Jewish ideas. It is truly a Gospel parable, for the whole old relationship of mere duty is changed into one of love. Thus, matters are placed on an entirely different basis from that of Judaism. The question now is not 'Who is my neighbor?' but 'Whose neighbor am I?' The gospel answers the question of duty by pointing us to love. Would you know who is your neighbor? Become a neighbor to all by the utmost service you can do them in their need. The parable points to Christ who, in our greatest need, became neighbor to us, even at the cost of all he had.

Parable of the Importunate Neighbor - The main circumstance of this parable is the sudden, unthought of sense of imperative need, obliging one to make what seems an unseasonable and unreasonable request, which on the face of it, offers difficulties and has no claim upon compliance. It points to the need for continued importunity, which will at last obtain what it needs. The allusion is, therefore, not to ordinary prayer, but to extraordinary.

It is a gross misunderstanding to describe this parable as presenting a *mechanical* view of prayer: as if it implied either that God was unwilling to answer, or else that prayer, otherwise unheard, would be answered merely for its importunity. It must be remembered that he who is within is a friend who would have complied with the request under ordinary circumstances. So the lesson is, that where, for some reasons, there are, or seem, special difficulties to an answer to our prayers, the importunity arising from the sense of our absolute need, and the knowledge that Jesus is our friend, and that he has bread, will ultimately prevail. The difficulty is not to the giving, but as to the giving *then*.

In the circumstance described a man would persevere with his friend, and in the end succeed. And,

similarly, the Lord bids us ask, and that earnestly and believingly; seek, and that energetically and instantly; knock, and that intently and loudly.

Even more than this, God will not deceive by the appearance of what is not reality. If a son asks for bread, will his father give him what seems such, but is only a stone? How much more than shall our heavenly Father give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him.

The three parables which follow may be designated as those of warning. The first to the individual, the second to the nation, and the last to the theocracy.

Parable of the Foolish Rich Man - It appears that one among those that listened to Jesus conceived the idea that the authority of the Great Rabbi of Nazareth might be used for his own selfish purposes. This was all he had profited, that it seemed to open possibilities of gain and stirred thoughts of covetousness. Jesus shows the folly of his thinking by the almost self-evident principle, too often forgotten, that "not in the superabounding to any one [not in that wherein he has more than enough] does life consist." In other words, that part of the things which a man possesses by which his life is sustained consists not in what is superabundant; his life is sustained by that which he needs and uses. The rest, the superabundance, forms no part of his life, and may, perhaps, never be of use to him. Why, then, be covetous or long for more than we need? This folly also involves danger, for the love of these things will engross the mind and heart and drive out higher thoughts and aims.

In the parable the foolish rich man treated as his own what did not as yet even belong to him - the increase in riches from future harvests. But God said unto him, "Thou fool! this very night thy soul is required of thee. But the things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be?"

The wisdom of righteousness in laying up the good treasure which cannot be taken from us appears in Christ's concluding remark.

Parable of the Barren Fig Tree - Allegorically, the fig tree served in the Old Testament as the emblem of the Jewish nation. The vineyard is in the New Testament the symbol of the Kingdom of God, as distinct from the nation of Israel. Thus far, then, the parable may be translated: God called Israel as a nation and planted it in the most favored spot, as a fig tree in the vineyard of his own Kingdom. "And he came seeking," as he had every right to do, "fruit thereon, and found none." When in the third year its crop should have appeared, he came vainly looking for fruit. He turned to his vinedresser, the Messiah, to whom the vineyard is committed as its King, with this direction: "Cut it down, why doth it also deteriorate the soil?" The tree is barren though planted in the best position; it should bear figs, and here the best; it fills the place which a good tree might occupy; and besides, it undermines and deteriorates the soil; its three years' barrenness has established its utterly hopeless character.

Then it is that the Divine Vinedresser, in his infinite compassion, pleads for the fig tree which he had planted and tended, that it should be spared "this year also, until then that I shall dig about it, and dung it." In other words, until He labor otherwise than before by laying to its roots his most precious blood. "And if then it bear fruit" - here the text abruptly breaks off, as implying that in such case it would, of course, be allowed to remain. 'But if not, then against the future (coming) year shalt thou cut it down.'

Between the tree and the ax nothing intervenes but the intercession of the Gardener who would make a last effort for a short and definite period. How speedily the warning came true not only students of history, but all men and in all ages, have been made to know.

Parable of the Great Supper - This parable refers not to the political state of Israel, but to their ecclesiastical status and their continuance as the possessors and representatives of the Kingdom of God. It was spoken at a Sabbath meal of the Pharisees.

There can be no difficulty in understanding the main ideas underlying the parable. The man who made the Great Supper was He who had, in the Old Testament, prepared 'a feast of fat things.' The 'bidding many' preceded the actual announcement of the day and hour of the feast and was an invitation to the chief people in the city. This general announcement was made in the Old Testament institutions and prophecies, and the guests bidden were those chief men of the city, those who knew, read, and expounded these prophecies. At last the preparations were ended, and the Master sent out his Servant. However, the feast to which these men had been bidden and had apparently agreed to come, was not what they had expected; at any rate, it was not what they regarded as more desirable than what they had and must give up in order to come to it. The ultimate ground of their refusal was that they felt no real desire and saw nothing attractive in such a feast and had not real reverence for the host. In short, to them it was not a feast at all.

Accordingly, the servant is now directed to 'go out quickly' into the (larger) streets and the (narrow) lanes of the city where he is to invite the despised ignorant, the maimed, lame, and blind, such as the publicans and sinners. He is directed to 'bring them in,' as otherwise they might naturally shrink from coming to such a feast. But even so, 'there is yet room.' The servant is now bidden to 'go out,' outside the Theocracy, 'into the highways and hedges,' to the heathen world. These he should 'constrain to come in.' Not certainly as indicating their resistance and implying force, but as the moral constraint of earnest, pressing invitation, coupled with assurance both of the reality of the feast and of their welcome to it. For these wanderers on the world's highway had, before the Servant came to them, not known anything of the Master of the house, and all was quite new and unexpected.

"For I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper." This was the final answer to the Pharisee and those with him at the table.

To understand the following three parables, the circumstances which elicited them must be kept in view. As Jesus preached the gospel of God's call, not to those who had, as they imagined, prepared themselves for the Kingdom by study and good works, but as that of an open door and welcome free to all, "all the publicans and sinners were [constantly] drawing near to Him." Jesus not only received them when they sought him, but he sought them so as to bring them to him; not, indeed, that they might remain sinners, but that, by seeking and finding them, they might be restored to the Kingdom.

These three are peculiarly gospel parables 'of the recovery of the lost:' in the first instance, through unwearied labor; in the second, through anxious care of the owner; and in the third, through the never-ceasing love of the Father.

Parable of the Lost Sheep - This parable and the next were intended as an answer to the Pharisees, and

so are addressed to them. In this first one, the main interest centers in the lost, that of one sheep among a hundred; not a very great loss. Yet which among us would not, even from the common motives of ownership, leave the ninety-nine and go after it; all the more since it has strayed into the wilderness? We can picture how the shepherd followed and found the sheep that had strayed so far until it was lost in solitude among stony places; how with tender care he lifted it onto his shoulder and carried it home. And not only this, but when, after long absence, he returned home with his found sheep now nestled close to its savior, he called together his friends and bade them rejoice with him over the once lost but now found treasure. Christ's teaching was: 'There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.' Pharisaism said, and we quote here literally: "There is joy before God when those who provoke him perish from the world."

Parable of the Lost Coin - In the first parable, the loss arose from the natural tendency of the sheep to wander. In this second parable, it is no longer our natural tendency to which our loss is attributable. The coin became lost as the woman was using or counting her money. It is a more serious, and thus more sensible, loss as the coin was one of only ten. It is still in the house, only covered by the dust that is continually accumulating, and now is rendered useless as regards its purpose. But she lights a lamp, sweeps the house, and searches diligently until she has found it.

Parable of the Lost Son - This parable's main interest centers in restoration. The loss is not attributable to the innate tendency of his nature, nor yet to the work and dust in the house, but to the personal, free choice of the individual. He does not stray nor fall aside, but willfully departs and under aggravated circumstances. The younger son's demand for his inheritance is only a secondary trait in the parable, designed, on the one hand, to bring out more forcibly the guilt of the son, but, on the other, the goodness and forgiveness of the Father. We can scarcely doubt that by the younger son we are to understand those 'publicans and sinners,' against whose reception by and fellowship with Christ, the Pharisees had murmured.

When the son is welcomed back by a watching loving Father, the elder son is still in the field. On his return he is informed that his younger brother has come home, and the calf which had long ago been fattened for just this occasion, is now being prepared for this feast of joy. The harsh words of reproach by the elder son to his father could have only one meaning: his father had never rewarded him for his services.

This represented the fatal mistake of Pharisaism. The elder son regarded all as of merit and reward, as work and return. But it is not so. We mark, first, that the same tenderness which had welcomed the returning son now met the elder brother. He spoke to him lovingly as 'son,' and reasoned with him. But the main point is this: there can be no question of desert. So long as the son is in his Father's house, he gives in his great goodness to his child all that is the Father's. This son who had been lost was found, and it was necessary to make merry and be glad, not to murmur. Such murmurings came from thoughts of work and pay, wrong in themselves and foreign to the proper idea of Father and son. The elder brother's thoughts were those of a servant; of service and return. The younger brother's were those of welcome in the mercy and everlasting love of a Father.

The last group of parables, although widely differing in their object and teaching, are, at least outwardly, connected by a leading thought; that of *Righteousness*. There are three parables of the

Unrighteous followed by two of the Self-righteous.

Parable of the Unjust Steward - This parable was addressed to the recently converted publicans and sinners and concerned a steward who made unrighteous use of what had been committed to his administration by his master. The parable's lesson points to what the sinner when converted should learn from his previous sin. We must not expect to find spiritual equivalents for each of the persons or incidents introduced as the parable itself forms only an illustration of the lessons spoken or implied.

Illustrated in this parable is the wisdom with which those who do not care for the world to come choose the means most effectual for attaining their worldly objects. It is this prudence by which their aims are so effectually secured, *and it alone*, which is set before 'the children of light,' as that by which to learn. As children of the new light, they must remember the higher aim for which that prudence was to be employed.

With this in mind, it cannot now be difficult to understand the parable. Its object is simply to show, in the most striking manner, the prudence of a worldly man who is unrestrained by any other consideration than that of attaining his end. The steward was employed for the administration of a rich man's affairs, subject to notice of dismissal. He was accused of wasting, probably by riotous living and carelessness, his master's goods. Convinced of the charge, the master at once gives him notice of dismissal and at the time he must give up his office, an account of his stewardship will be required.

The steward neither denies the charge nor pleads any extenuation. His great concern rather is, during the time still left of his stewardship, before he gives up his accounts, to provide for his future support. The only alternative before him in the future is that of manual labor or begging. For the former he has not the strength; from the latter he is restrained by shame.

Then it is that his prudence suggests a device by which, after his dismissal, he may, without begging, be received into the houses of those whom he has made friends. He is still steward, and as such has full power of disposing of his master's affairs. When, therefore, he sends for one after another of his master's debtors and tells each to alter the sum in the bond, he does not suggest any forgery or fraud, but in remitting part of the debt he acts, although unrighteously, yet strictly within his rights. Thus, neither the steward nor the debtors could be charged with criminality, and the master must have been struck with the cleverness of a man who had thus secured a future provision by making friends so long as he had the means of so doing (before his mammon of unrighteousness failed).

The converted publicans to whom Christ spoke might have thought that theirs was a very narrow sphere of service; one of little importance. Or like the Pharisees, that faithful administration of the things of this world ('the mammon of unrighteousness') had no bearing on the possession of the true riches in the next world. In answer, Christ points out that the principle of service is the same whether applied to much or to little; that the one was, indeed, necessary preparation for, and, in truth, the test of the other. If a man failed in faithful service of God in his worldly matters, that is, if he were not faithful in the mammon of unrighteousness, could he look for the true mammon or riches of the world to come? Would not his unfaithfulness in the lower stewardship imply unfitness for the higher? If they had not proved faithful in the mere stewardship of another's, could it be expected that they would be exalted from stewardship to proprietorship? And the ultimate application of all was that dividedness

was impossible in the service of God. It is impossible for the disciple to make separation between spiritual matters and worldly and to attempt serving God in the one and mammon in the other. There is absolutely no distinction to the disciple. To the secular, nothing is spiritual; he who serves riches in worldly matters cannot serve God in eternal matters. And to the spiritual nothing is secular; he who serves God in eternal matters will serve God in worldly matters. No servant *can* (will be allowed to) serve two masters; he will not be entrusted with serving God in eternal matters who serves riches in worldly matters.

Parable of Dives and Lazarus - The parable falls into three parts. (1) Dives and Lazarus before and after death, or the contrast between 'before men' and 'before God.' (2) Dives and Lazarus after death: the 'great contrast' fully realized, and how to enter the Kingdom. (3) Application of the parable, showing how the Law and the Prophets cannot fail, and how we must now press into the Kingdom.

Parable of the Unjust Judge - Between this parable and that of Dives and Lazarus some momentous events had intervened: the visit of Jesus to Bethany, the raising of Lazarus, the Jerusalem council against Christ, the flight to Ephraim, a brief stay and preaching there, and the commencement of his last journey to Jerusalem.

The inference from this parable of the unjust judge is not that the Church will be ultimately vindicated because she perseveres in prayer, but that she so perseveres because God will surely vindicate her cause. It is not that insistence in prayer is the cause of its answer, but that the certainty of that which is asked for should lead to continuance in prayer, even when all around seems to forbid the hope of an answer. Also, the lesson of the parable is not from the similarity but from the contrast between the unrighteous human judge and the righteous divine judge. "Hear what the unrighteous judge saith. But God [mark the emphatic position of the word], shall He not indeed vindicate [the injuries of, do judgment for] his elect?"

Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican - This parable is not of *unrighteousness*, but of *self-righteousness* as exemplified in trust of one's own state and in contempt of others.

Two men went together to the entrance of the Temple, representing the two religious extremes in Jewish society, the publican and the Pharisee. Within the sacred enclosure "the Pharisee put himself by himself and prayed thus: O God I thank thee that I am not as the rest of men--extortioners, unjust, adulterers--nor also as this publican [there]." Never, perhaps, were words of thanksgiving spoken in less thankfulness than these. For thankfulness implies the acknowledgment of a gift; hence, a sense of not having had ourselves what we have received. The Pharisee's thankfulness merely expressed his attitude of boastfulness; of his own meritorious deeds by which he was separated from those whom he looked down upon, deeds of fasting and tithing.

The publican "standing afar off," from the Pharisee, standing as far back as became one who felt himself unworthy to mingle with God's people, "would not so much as lift his eyes to heaven but smote his breast saying, God be merciful to me the sinner." The Pharisee, having taken a position in front, regarded everyone but himself as a sinner. The publican, having taken a position behind everyone, regarded them all as righteous compared with himself, the sinner. And while the Pharisee felt no need

and uttered no petition, the publican felt only need and uttered only petition.

There could not be imagined a more complete contrast. And so the parable ends with the general principle, "For every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

Parable of the Unmerciful Servant - We are now reaching the point where the solitary narrative of St. Luke again merges with those of the other evangelists. That this parable was spoken before Christ's *final* journey to Jerusalem, appears from St. Matthew's gospel. It belongs to the Perea series and closes it.

We must once again remind ourselves of the need to distinguish between what is *essential* in a parable, as directly bearing on its lessons, and what is merely introduced for the sake of the parable itself to give point to its main teaching. In the present instance, no sober interpreter would regard the King's command to sell the first debtor's wife and children into slavery the essence of the parable. It is simply an historical trait introducing what in analogous circumstances might happen in real life in order to point out the lesson that a man's strict desert before God is utter, hopeless, and eternal ruin and loss.

The parable is familiar to us all. In it is the deepest seriousness in the warning against unmercifulness. Our forgiveness must not be narrowed by limitations and burdened with conditions; for it is the very essence of sectarianism to condemn without mercy he who does not come up to our demands.

CHRIST'S DISCOURSES IN PEREA AND THE CLOSE OF THE PEREAN MINISTRY

The consideration of these discourses will be brief, as throughout there are points of correspondence with previous or later portions of his teaching.

A representative of the Pharisees asks Jesus, "Lord, are they few, the saved ones [that are being saved]?" The word 'saved' did not bear reference to the eternal state of the soul, but to admission to the Messianic Kingdom with its privileges and judgments such as the Pharisees understood it. Jesus tells him that entrance into the Messianic Kingdom is not theirs as a matter of course, whether few or many, but that all must 'struggle' [agonize] to enter in through the narrow door.

The next discourse was occasioned by a pretended warning of certain of the Pharisees to depart from Perea, which, with Galilee, was the territory of Herod Antipas. We have previously shown the reason for supposing secret intrigues between the Pharisaic party and Herod, and for attributing John the Baptist's final imprisonment to their schemes. The danger of which the Pharisees now spoke might have been real enough, but their suggestion to depart stemmed from a wish to get Jesus out of Perea where his works of healing were attracting and influencing people.

The next discourse prefaced the Parable of the Great Supper when Jesus had been invited to a Sabbath meal by one of the rulers of the Pharisees. With full knowledge of their purpose, he healed the man with dropsy, and then after dismissing him, reprov'd the Pharisees.

In the fourth discourse recorded by St. Luke, we pass from the parenthetic account of that Sabbath meal back to where the narrative of the Pharisees' threat about Herod and Christ's reply had left us. Christ did depart from that place, though not yet from Perea. With him went great multitudes. In view of their professed following, it was needful and more emphatic than ever to set before them all that discipleship really involved, both of cost and strength.

We consider now the last discourses before the raising of Lazarus. As addressed to the disciples, we have to connect them with the discourse just commented upon. They form the close of Christ's public ministry in Perea. Four things are impressed upon the new disciples: (1) to be careful to give no offense; (2) to be careful to take no offense; (3) to be simple and earnest in their faith; (4) to absolutely trust its all-prevailing power.

THE DEATH AND RAISING OF LAZARUS

The raising of Lazarus marks the highest point in the ministry of our Lord. It is the climax in a history where all is miraculous. As regards Jesus, we have here the fullest evidence of his Divinity and his Humanity, and as regards those who witnessed it, the highest manifestation of faith and of unbelief. From this high point we have our first clear outlook on the death and resurrection of Christ of which the raising of Lazarus was the typical prelude.

We note as an important fact that this Lazarus, who had not even been mentioned in the only account preserved to us of a previous visit of Christ to Bethany, is described as "he whom Christ loved." What a gap of untold events between the two visits of Christ to Bethany, and what modesty should it teach us as regards inferences from the circumstance that certain events are not recorded in the Gospels!

The story is familiar to us all. When Jesus arrives, Lazarus has already been laid in his own private tomb in a cave, probably in a garden, the favorite place of internment. Though on terms of close friendship with Jesus, he was evidently not regarded as an apostate from the Synagogue, for every indignity was shown at the burial of an apostate. As Bethany was only about two miles from Jerusalem, many from the city had come in obedience to one of the most binding Rabbinic directions, that of comforting the mourners.

It was the common Jewish idea that corruption commenced on the fourth day, that the drop of gall which had fallen from the sword of the Angel and caused death was then working its effect, and that as the face changed the soul took its final leave from the resting place of the body. And now the stone is rolled away. One loud command spoken into the silence, one loud call to the sleeper, one flash of God's own light into that darkness, and the wheels of life again moved at the outgoing of The Life. And still bound hand and foot with graveclothes and his face with the napkin, Lazarus came forth.

What happened afterwards to Lazarus, we know not. But some of those who had seen it believed on Christ, others hurried back to Jerusalem to tell it to the Pharisees. Then a meeting of the Sanhedrists was hastily gathered to deliberate what was to be done. There was no question that he was really doing these miracles. All but one or two had no doubt as to the source of them. Being real, they were of

Satanic agency, and the more tremendous the miracles, the more certainly so. If Jesus were left alone, all men would believe on him. And if he headed the Messianic movement of the Jews as a nation, then Jerusalem, the Temple, and Israel as a nation would perish in the fight with Rome. They had not the courage of, although they had the wish for, judicial murder. Then Caiaphas reminded them of the well-known Jewish adage, that it "is better that one man should die than the nation perish." In thus speaking, God's voice spoke through him, not as regards the counsel of murder, but this, that His Death should be 'for a nation', and as St. John adds, not only for Israel, but to gather into one fold all the now scattered children of God.

This was the first Friday of dark resolve. Plans now only were needed to carry it out. Some one, perhaps Nicodemus, sent word of the secret meeting and resolution of the Sanhedrists. That Friday and the next Sabbath Jesus rested in Bethany. Then he withdrew far away to the obscure bounds of Perea and Galilee to a city, Ephraim, of which the very location is now unknown. There he continued with his disciples, withdrawn from the Jews, until he would make his final entrance into Jerusalem.

ON THE JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM

The brief time of rest and quiet converse with his disciples in the retirement of Ephraim was past, and the Savior of men prepared for his last journey to Jerusalem. It is likely that he made a very brief detour along the northern frontier to some place at the southern border of Galilee, perhaps to meet at a certain point those who were to accompany him, among them many women. The whole company would then form one festive band traveling to the Paschal Feast. During this journey great multitudes followed him, and he healed and taught them. This will account for the incidents and discourses along the way, and how from among many deeds the Evangelists may have selected what seemed to each the most important.

St. Luke records the healing of ten lepers. He had not recorded such healing before, and the restoration of ten at the same time would appear to the beloved physician a matter of the deepest importance.

The discourse concerning the Coming of the Kingdom, which is reported by St. Luke immediately after the healing of the ten lepers, will be more conveniently considered in connection with the fuller statement of the same truths at the close of our Lord's Ministry.

This brings us to what we regard as, in point of time, the next discourse, recorded both by St. Matthew and St. Mark. The subject matter is Christ's teaching in regard to the Jewish law and practice of divorce.

The next incident recorded by the three Evangelists probably occurred in the same house where the disciples had questioned Christ about his teaching on the divinely sacred relationship of marriage. We can understand how Jewish mothers would have brought their little children and some their infants to Jesus, that he might touch, and put his hands on them and pray. We can see how utterly contrary it was to all Jewish notions, and how incompatible with the supposed dignity of a Rabbi, from the rebuke Jesus gives the disciples. Then he gently reminds them of what they had apparently forgotten, that in order to enter the Kingdom of God, it must be received as by a little child. Here there could be no

question of intellectual qualification, nor of distinction due to a great Rabbi, but only of humility, receptiveness, meekness, and a simple application to and trust in the Christ.

THE LAST INCIDENTS IN PEREA

A young ruler, probably of the local synagogue, comes running with all haste, and asks, "Master, what good thing shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" One thing was needful for this young man: that he should not only become his disciple, but that, in so doing, he should come and follow Christ. To do this it was necessary in the present circumstances to part with all that he had. An outward step is often not merely the means of, but absolutely needful for, spiritual decision. The young man was sorrowful, and returned back to his rich home very poor.

Peter, perhaps as spokesman for all, seems to remind the Lord that they had forsaken all to follow him. "What shall we have therefore?" For them there was the promise of special rule and judgment.

The reference to the blessed future with its rewards was followed by a parable which will best be considered in connection with the last series of Christ's parables.

One other incident, more strange and sad than any other, and the Perea stay is forever ended. In a spirit of perhaps unhallowed earnestness, the mother of the sons of Zebedee requests that her two sons should have the place of the most honored guests in Christ's Kingdom, one on his right hand, the other on his left. This request was made not only with James' and John's concurrence, but with their active participation. The Savior bears with the weakness and selfishness which could cherish such thoughts and ambitions even at such a time. The King is to be King through suffering. Are they aware of the road which leads to that goal?

The other ten, when they heard of it, were indignant. They saw only the pre-eminence which the two had sought. And so, in that tremendously solemn hour would the fierce fire of controversy break out among them who should have been most closely united.

Jesus teaches them how greatness must be sought in service. The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. He then speaks fully for the first time of that which was the deepest meaning of his life, mission, and death: "to give his life a ransom for many."

IN JERICHO AND AT BETHANY

Once more, and now for the last time, the fords of Jordan were passed and Christ was on the soil of Judea proper. Behind him was the ministry of the Gospel by word and deed; before him the final act of his life towards which all had consciously tended. And he was coming not privately, as at the Feast of Tabernacles, but openly at the head of his Apostles and followed by many of his disciples; a festive band going up to the Paschal Feast of which he was to be 'the Lamb' of sacrifice.

The first station reached was Jericho, the 'City of Palms,' a distance of only about six hours from Jerusalem. It was the custom when a festive band passed through a place for the inhabitants to gather in the streets to bid their brethren welcome. Only one in all that crowd seemed out of place, alone and unwelcome. The Jew, Zacchaeus, was a publican, and we know in what repute publicans were held and what opportunities of wrong-doing and oppression they possessed. And from his confession afterwards, it is only too evident that Zacchaeus had used them to the full for evil. Was it the irresistible inward drawing of the Holy Ghost that had brought him that day to see Jesus?

We know the story. Jesus is to be a guest at his house. But now the murmur of disappointment and anger run through the accompanying crowd because Jesus has gone to be the guest of a man who is a sinner. It was this sudden shock of opposition which awoke Zacchaeus to full consciousness; to see what his past had been, what his present was, and what his future must be. Standing forth Zacchaeus vows fourfold restoration. According to the Talmud, this was the restoration required by penitents in cases where the malappropriation was open to question, and which, according to strict justice, he might not be obliged to give up. Zacchaeus also vows to give half of all his goods to the poor. Then Jesus spoke to him for his endless comfort, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham; for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." The following morning when the journey resumes, Jesus heals two blind men, one a man named Bartimaeus.

Without concealment, Jesus comes to Bethany on Friday, six days before the Passover. The following day was the Sabbath, and "they made him a supper." St. John seems to indicate that it was a public one, as if the people of Bethany had gotten together to do him honor. We know from St. Matthew and St. Mark that it took place at the house of Simon the Leper who was not, of course, an actual leper, but who had been one. Among the guests is Lazarus; and prominent in service is Martha; and Mary is also true to her character. She has an alabaster of very costly ointment with which she anoints the head of Jesus. Her faith made it a twofold anointing: that of the best Guest at the last feast, and that of preparation for that burial which she apprehended as so terribly near. She poured the ointment over his head, over his feet, and then wiped them with her hair, and this service would forever be a memorial to her.