

THE NEW TESTAMENT PERIOD

  AND ITS LEADERS  

FRANK T. LEE



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The New Testament period and
its leaders

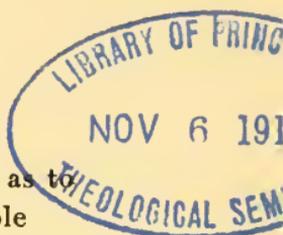
THE NEW TESTAMENT PERIOD AND ITS LEADERS

HOW CHRISTIANITY WAS PREPARED FOR,
INAUGURATED, EMANCIPATED
FROM JUDAISM, AND BECAME UNIVERSAL

BY

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TO
MY WIFE

FOREWORD

The casual reader of the New Testament, or even the superficial student of it, little realizes the tremendous obstacles which Christianity was obliged to overcome before it could gain a permanent foothold in the world and enter upon its mission as a universal religion. A study of its inception and of the successive stages of its progress—both in its mighty struggle to free itself from its Judaic envelopment and in territorial expansion—during the New Testament period, cannot fail to be of interest and profit to anyone who is interested in Christianity at all.

In the following pages, both the movement itself of Christianity, and its early leaders have come under review. In Part I the providential preparation for it among the Jewish people and in the world at large, together with its actual inauguration, is set forth. In Part II, in connection with a series of character studies of its first leaders, the gradual development of Christianity as it outgrew and thrust aside its Jewish swaddling clothes and made its way among the Gentiles, is traced. The contribution which each of these leaders made toward this development, is, so far as possible, pointed out.

Within the limits proposed, an exhaustive

FOREWORD

treatment of the subject has been impossible. The aim has been to afford to the general reader and student a clear idea of the New Testament movement as a whole, and of the character and work of its main promoters during that period.

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PART I
THE NEW TESTAMENT PERIOD

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Considering its nature, the manner of its introduction into the world, its morally transforming power, its expansion through the centuries, its influence in promoting the highest civilization, and its promise for the future,—the greatest world-movement ever inaugurated in human history was Christianity. It was long foreshadowed and with growing distinctness in the particular race through which at length it came, and in which, as also among mankind at large, there had been some measure of providential preparation. The real roots of it are to be found in the religious ideas and institutions of the Jewish people. These formed a soil out of which Christianity may be said to have sprung, and in which it could for a time develop. Finally, by a hard struggle, in which Paul was the central figure, it outgrew, passed beyond, separated itself from these ideas and institutions, until, free and untrammelled, it stood forth as the one absolute and universal religion. There had been other religious movements, so-called, pagan though they were, outside of Palestine, each one of which, along with more or less of superstition, false teaching, or idolatrous practice, or all combined,

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embodied something of truth within itself. But this new movement, freed from their errors and incumbrances, gathered up and included whatever of permanent value these other religions contained, added vastly more, and at the same time left room for its future development from within, and for the reception of any possible revelations from without. Its object was nothing short of the ultimate moral revolution of the life of the world in all its relations.

As was contemplated in all the foreshadowings of it, this movement was definitely launched in the "fullness of time,"—i. e., when the world was ripe for it, or when the conditions were most favorable for its reception and success. The One by whom it was inaugurated claimed to be, and gave every evidence of being, the divine-human Son of the Most High. For the time being he dwelt in the midst of human conditions, and was not altogether freed from human limitations. His plan was to establish a kingdom—not like the material and tangible kingdoms of the world, but a spiritual kingdom rather, of which he should himself be the head, and whose seat should be in the hearts of men. It was to be made up of those who were prepared to share in its nature which was righteousness, in its purpose which was human redemption, and in its spirit which was love and good will toward God and men. It was to continue through time not only, but as well through all eternity.

During the brief period in which the Founder of this kingdom—Jesus as he was called—remained upon earth, he addressed himself to the task of gathering together a number of persons who should constitute a nucleus for it, and of training a selected few to carry it on after his withdrawal from them. His efforts were necessarily circumscribed, both from the fact of his self-imposed limitations, and the almost insuperable obstacles, growing out of his environment, by which he was confronted. Preëminent among the latter were the sinfulness and opposition of wicked men, to which he himself at last fell a victim. In spite of all, however, he accomplished the task he had set for himself to perform and for which he had been sent into the world. He planted, as it were, a seed in the soil of the human heart and life which would germinate and grow and communicate itself to others. It had not been his purpose to complete, but only to begin the movement, which would be world-wide in its scope and ultimately cover the earth.

Though put to death by his enemies, Jesus rose from the grave triumphant, appeared to his disciples from time to time for a number of weeks, then ascended to heaven, where, clothed with all authority and power, and as the invisible yet living Head of his earthly kingdom, he has continued ever since to administer it. The responsibility for carrying this movement forward in the world after him, was, humanly speaking, com-

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mitted to the men whom he had chosen and trained for that purpose. Their preparation for their mission was completed by the impartation of the Holy Spirit, whom, according to his promise, Jesus sent upon them after he had ascended. As their Master had been, so these men were confronted with innumerable obstacles, which would effectually have checked and crushed any movement which was not possessed of a more than human vitality. These obstacles, in the first instance, sprung from the hostility and prejudice, the bigotry and pride of the Jewish race. Yet notwithstanding all the obstructions which were placed in its way, the Christian movement finally broke through the barricade of Jewish exclusiveness, pushed its way among the nations round about, until, at the close of the New Testament period, it had gained wide recognition as the one supreme and universal religion.

Since then it has been steadily making its way through the centuries, gaining victory after victory over hindrances to its progress—whether from oppositions without or corruptions within—gradually increasing in momentum and power, until now, in its entirety, made up of many component parts, it has become the mightiest moral force in all the earth, and promises, in its ultimate triumph, to bring all mankind under its influence.

CHAPTER II

THE PROVIDENTIAL PREPARATION OF THE WORLD FOR CHRIST

If there was ever reason for a providential preparation for any movement or event in human history, it would clearly seem, in view of the tremendous interests involved for all the future, as if there must have been with reference to the advent of Jesus Christ. In fact, the attention of the most thoughtful students of ancient history has long been arrested by a manifest purpose in it; that this purpose has had to do with the preparation of the world for this supreme end; and that never had there been such a combination of favoring conditions for it as at that particular juncture. The development of these various conditions, each in its own way, had been going steadily forward for a long period. At this time they had attained their climax, had converged at the Christian Era, and had formed the combination referred to above. If any would attribute this to mere coincidence or chance, insist that everything simply "happened," it is one of the most remarkable coincidences or chance combinations in human history. The marvel is, not

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only that there should have been such a remarkable combination, but that everything should have occurred at the precise time at which it did. A generation or so earlier or later would have presented an entirely different situation. Prior to this time the preparation would have been incomplete, later the time would have been past. Christ came not a moment too soon or a moment too late. It was in the fullness of time that he appeared.

Far more rational, satisfactory and easy to accept is the view, long held and never with stronger conviction than at present, that there is an intelligent purpose back of all history: that God, by his over-ruling providence, and for the high ends he has in view, has had a hand in the shaping of events; that there was a remarkable converging of favoring conditions for this particular event; and that these ends involved the giving to the world the gospel of his love, with all the marvelous present and future blessings which are wrapped up in it for mankind.

This would seem satisfactorily to account for the coming of Christ and the inauguration of the Christian movement when providential conditions, long developing, were at length fully ripe for it. His coming as he did, and his active entrance upon his work when all things were ready, was no mere accidental coincidence. No such explanation is at all adequate. God does not work by chance but by an eternal plan.

We may notice some of the favoring conditions which, entirely apart from the question of their providential character, actually existed and reached their climax at a time when Christ was born and the Christian religion was introduced into the world.

THE DIVINE PLAN

In the light of subsequent events — which is our only means of judging—it was manifestly not the plan of God, in giving the perfect and final religion, long foreshadowed, to mankind, either that it should take on the form of an entirely new movement, or that it should be presented in its complete development to a race of people entirely unfitted to receive it. Rather it was to delay it until, after a long preparatory process, a particular race, chosen by reason of a certain adaptedness for the purpose, should at length, by the vicissitudes and discipline of a long experience, be fitted to receive, to appreciate, and to propagate the new faith. Not that there has not been a certain preparatory element in the history of every nation for the ultimate coming to it of Christ and his religion, but that throughout the history of this particular people there was a special preparation for this great event. Then, too, instead of involving a distinctly new movement, the coming religion was to be closely related to, have its roots in, the past of this people, really to be the outgrowth of an antecedent or

rudimentary religion. It was, in fact, to be the culmination of a long line of religious history in this race, during which a progressive revelation of God should lead up to, be merged in and swallowed up by, a new, larger, and final revelation. As related to that which had preceded, this would be as the full light of day in comparison with the faint light of early dawn.

To this gradually increasing revelation, as recorded in the Old Testament, this new movement could attach itself and advance to its own complete unfolding. In the earlier stages or the childhood of this race, a partial or fragmentary revelation was all that could be appreciated. Yet even in this, something more complete to come was foreshadowed. That which existed but in germ before could now unfold and develop. Here was a soil favorable to its nourishment and growth until it should come to its full fruitage. In this way the rudimentary religion, the Mosaic law, would not be destroyed, but fulfilled, i. e., filled out, carried on to completion. Then, separating itself from everything local, temporary, or provincial in the old, this new religion would at last stand forth in its universal aspects, adapted, as was originally intended, not for a single people alone, but for all mankind, regardless of race, color, or genealogical descent.

Such in general seems to have been the far-reaching plan of God with reference to giving the full revelation of himself and the gospel of his

love to the human race for its redemption. More specifically, it was to send into the world at length on this mission, among this particular people, his "only begotten Son" who should embody this revelation, this religion, this gospel, in his own person. He was to come in human form, through human birth, and with human sympathies, dwell in the midst of human conditions, subject himself in a degree to human limitations, until his work of inaugurating this new movement should be accomplished. In this way, not only would God's revelation of himself to men reach its climax, but the long-cherished expectations of the chosen race, as foreshadowed by its prophets, be in their true sense realized.

For this event, so momentous, and destined to exert so far-reaching an influence upon subsequent ages, there was, as might naturally have been expected and as has long been recognized, what may be termed a providential preparation. This pertained not only to the particular race through which Christ came, in its religion, its institutions, and its history, but also to the political and other conditions existing in the world at large. As a matter of history, three peoples in particular shared in this preparation, the Hebrew, the Greek, and the Roman. Each of them had an important part, made a definite contribution—religious, intellectual, or political—towards making the world ready for the advent.

THE HEBREW RACE

First, as to the Hebrew race, *the Jewish people*. Their contribution to this preparation was especially large, the most important, in fact, of all. Through them the Messiah was to come; his gospel was to be the ripened fruitage of their religion; they were to be the agents, primarily, of the world-wide dissemination of his message of salvation.

(1) There are many interesting facts pertaining to the *land* which became the abode of this people, and which had no small influence in preparing them for their mission, which had been foreshadowed at the call of Abraham; which had been kept before them with more or less clearness through their history; which was especially emphasized in the "servant" passages of the book of Isaiah. It was the scene of a large part of their providential training. It afforded the seclusion necessary to preserve their identity and to shield them from the moral corruption of the great empires of the time, and furnish them at length with a center for the easy dissemination of the new religion and its hopes. The physical features of the land were particularly favorable to this end. It was not easily invaded, yet it was close to the great highways of travel, over which, from the earliest times, great tides of humanity had passed. Situated as it was at the junction of three continents, its position was pivotal among

the nations of the East. Moreover, owing to its varied character, made up of highlands and lowlands, valleys and plains, and with a climate correspondingly diversified, everything essential to the well being of the people could be produced.

That a land the most favorable of all for the purpose in view should have become the home of this people, would seem to be a strange coincidence, if that were all.

Then as to the people themselves, various things may be said. The choice of them for their high mission was not, as is too commonly supposed, an arbitrary one. They were selected in view of certain qualities which they had possessed and certain advantages which they had enjoyed, which peculiarly fitted them for the high function which was to be theirs. Their persistent physical and intellectual vigor has frequently been noted. No race has so preserved its distinctive character through hundreds, even thousands of years. Deeply reverent and religious in temperament, the Jews were peculiarly adapted to be the agents for the custody and transmission of religious truth. Their language, too, had exceptional elements of fitness for its purpose. Its range of expression went far beyond most others of its time. Especially was it capable of conveying abstract truth. So that, considering all things, the strong religious and ethical element in the nation, the flexible character of its language, and the purity and persistence of the race, the selection

of this people for the high end in view is more than justified.

There was also the peculiar schooling or history of this people. Whether or not there was an intended purpose in all this, it could hardly have been more effective. Doubtless all the nations with which they were associated had a share in preparing the way of the Lord—there was more of divine influence at work to this end than appears in purely Jewish history—but we are specially concerned with this people. We may trace what seems clearly to have been a guiding providential purpose all through their history. Each stage of it had a significance of its own. When the little clan in Canaan was in danger of being swallowed up by the corrupting heathenish population about them, they were led into Egypt, there, for a period, to be under the sheltering care of a great power. Here, still in seclusion, in a land set apart for them,—for they had no social relations with the Egyptians, who hated them,—they could multiply and develop, undisturbed and uncontaminated. Moreover, the time of their going to Egypt was peculiarly favorable, for the Hyksos, a kindred race, were in control of the land. When at length, after a long period, the Egyptians themselves regained control and the Hyksos were driven out, the changed conditions, which resulted in the severe and protracted oppression of the Hebrews, tended to wean them from the land in which otherwise they might have

been contented to remain. Now they were ready and anxious, when a leader was raised up, himself providentially prepared for his great task, to go forth and seek the country to which they had long looked forward as one which was ultimately to be theirs. Unfitted at once to enter in and possess it, they were subjected to the discipline of the wilderness, as a result of which they became organized, received the moral law, were led to enter into special covenant with God, to establish suitable religious institutions, and to cherish a more intelligent faith. The retirement of the wilderness was precisely what was needed to prepare them for the responsibilities of the land of promise.

Even in the matter of entering into and possessing this land, the way had been prepared before them. The Egyptian monarchy had so declined in power and was so disturbed by internal dissensions, as to be unable to molest them or hinder their conquest, as at an earlier time it most likely would have done. Then, the conditions which had come to prevail in the land itself were such at this time as to render its subjugation less difficult than it might otherwise have been. The tribes had become small and were for the most part lacking in unity of action.

So at length the chosen people are established in their own land, and now for some centuries and through the vicissitudes of a varied experience—whether as an independent people, or as vassals

of a great empire, or as captives in foreign lands—they are brought to clearer and better conceptions of God, of religion, of moral and spiritual truth, and gradually fitted for receiving and for disseminating the revelation which was to be made to them in “the fullness of time.” Through the period of the Judges, of the united kingdom, of the divided kingdom, through Exile and Return, this training went on, all having direct or indirect bearing upon their preparation for that which was to come. Sometimes there was serious retrogression, but there was never a time when there was not a faithful few, a “remnant” through whom the knowledge of the one God and of his relation to his people and to the world was handed down to those who were to come after.

The influence of the prophets, with their lofty ideals, their clear moral perceptions, their fearless preaching, can hardly be overestimated. They seemed to appear at just the needed junctures, and each one of them adapted himself and his message to the needs of his time, yet all the while looking forward to a better era to come, a Messianic age. So at length when the fullness of time had come, and other conditions were ripe, a people, prepared by a long and peculiar training, was in readiness for its great mission.

(2) THE MOSAIC LAW. During all this long period of discipline through the exigencies of their external history, the Mosaic law, with its moral, civil and ceremonial requirements, was a

powerful molding influence upon the Hebrew people internally, i. e., upon their thought and life. It did much to impress upon them certain great and fundamental religious ideas in regard to the one supreme God; his holy, righteous character; the moral law, human obligation, sin and its penalty, the need of salvation. In this way, there was a gradual preparation for receiving the more complete revelation which was to come later. In this preparation was the germ of that revelation. The rites of the Hebrew religion were typical of it. It awakened in men a sense of sin and the need of deliverance from its guilt and power, something which the Mosaic law itself could not impart. Many perversions and corruptions of this law came in through the centuries, by which the thought of the people was often deflected from the course which had been marked out for it, still there was always the faithful "remnant" of those who were loyal to the highest religious ideals, and in Christ's time there were some whose hearts were prepared spiritually to receive and to appreciate the new faith. They were, indeed, longing for the very salvation which it promised, but which the Jewish religion could not give. They were feeling their way toward something better than the best which Judaism afforded.

But there were numerous and serious obstacles to the realization of all this. One of them grew out of the fact that the drift of religious thought had at this time been turned from its proper chan-

nel, by which current religious conceptions and the corresponding religious life were grossly perverted. The earnest spirit of earlier periods had died out, and a zealous formalism prevailed. The letter of the law was worshiped, its spirit had been lost. The thought, for instance, with reference to the expected Messiah and the nature of the kingdom he was to establish, was largely material and mixed with much earthly dross. The spiritual aspects of the kingdom, which should have been made to stand out as its most conspicuous feature, were relegated to the background. The prevailing interpretation of God's law, which is what the Mosaic law was termed, and the significance of the institutions connected with it, were decidedly unspiritual. Then there were the useless, lumbering, burdensome additions of the scribes, the traditions. It was these "traditions of the elders," to which the Pharisees clung so persistently, but which Christ repudiated, which more than any other one thing stood in the way of his progress.

Furthermore, the people, conscious of having been chosen of God to be the medium of his special revelation to men, were, in consequence, steeped in bigotry and self-conceit. As being the descendants of an illustrious ancestor, the recognized founder of their race and the recipient of numerous divine communications, they regarded themselves as the special favorites of heaven. This overweening pride led them to look down

upon all other peoples, and this, together with their complicated and minute legal system, constituted a barricade which separated them from all others not of their race. Gentiles, in their view, could only share in the exalted blessings of their religion by first being naturalized among them through submitting to certain rites and adopting certain views and customs which were distinctively their own.

It is not difficult to perceive how serious an undertaking it must have been to try to disabuse the popular mind of all these misconceptions, and to establish the idea of a purely spiritual function for the coming One, and of a kingdom purely spiritual in its nature. As a matter of fact, it was the spiritual quality of Christ's work, and of the kingdom which he proclaimed, which so scandalized the Jewish leaders. With their perverted views, they were not looking for that kind of a Messiah or that kind of a kingdom. In such circumstances, before the new movement could make effective headway, these various obstacles would have to be removed or overcome. The barricade of Jewish pride and exclusiveness would have to be broken down; deep-seated prejudices and errors would have to be uprooted; current rabbinical exegesis of the Old Testament Scriptures would have to be corrected, and no end of traditional rubbish would have to be cleared away. Still, with all its choking growth of perverted religious conceptions, and the wide prevalence of an

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unspiritual and hollow formalism, this was the best soil for the purpose to be found in all the world. If the new movement could not strike root here, if it could not find attaching points in the religious thought and life of this people, it could not do so anywhere.

At the same time, it was also true that there were not a few conditions which were distinctly favorable for such a movement. Notwithstanding its perversions and misinterpretations, the Mosaic law did much toward preparing the minds of the people for the final and more spiritual religion, which was foreshadowed by it, and of which its varied rites were symbolical. While the prevailing religious customs were largely unspiritual, it was also a fact that scattered here and there among the population were some persons who were of a truly spiritual character, whose hearts were prepared to receive the seed of the new kingdom, and who were ready to take up and carry forward the movement which was about to be inaugurated. Here at least was a point of contact with the chosen people. Here, so far as it went, was a fertile soil in which the new movement might take root.

(3) MESSIANIC EXPECTATION. Perhaps the most important feature of the preparation of the Jewish people for Christ and Christianity was the existence in the popular thought of what was known as a Messianic expectation. There was a confident anticipation, a deep and widespread

hope, whose origin antedated their existence as a nation, going back even to the founder of their race, that the future held great blessings in store for them as a people, that their golden age was in the future rather than in the past. This hope crystallized at length into the expectation of a universal kingdom which should be inaugurated by one specially anointed for this purpose, and who was to be God's vicegerent on earth. This kingdom was to be a kingdom of Jews; Jerusalem was to be its seat, and all other nations and peoples were eventually to become subject to it. Through some direct divine interposition, the great world empires, especially the Roman power by which the Jewish people were at that time oppressed, were to be overthrown, and a worldwide dominion of its own, which had long been reserved for it, was to be established. Just when all this would be brought about was not clear, but at the time of the advent, all were on the alert for signs of its consummation. This idea in general—which the apocalyptic literature of the generations immediately preceding helped to foster, with more or less vagueness as to details, and with all the more spiritual elements of it largely eliminated—was in the popular mind at the time of Christ's advent.

And yet this view of the coming King and kingdom, crude and material as it was, might still afford a foundation for something higher, for the material idea spiritualized might indicate the true

conception. It might be a long and difficult process to bring this about, but it could be done, as afterward it was done. Even the forerunner of the coming One may not have fully grasped the purely spiritual conception of the kingdom, yet his thought of it was far in advance of his age, and his work was vitally important as helping to prepare the public mind for it. It was reserved for Christ himself to set forth and to propagate the bold idea of a kingdom which should be purely spiritual, and to make, as it may have seemed to many, a rash attempt to realize it. Without some groundwork in the popular thought of a material kingdom of God upon which to build, it would have been far more difficult, if not impossible, to have impressed a purely spiritual conception of the same. What the Jews were looking for in a material sense, Jesus came to inaugurate in a spiritual sense, a worldwide, everlasting, spiritual kingdom. The seat of this new kingdom would be, not the material Jerusalem below, as was the popular thought, but rather the invisible spiritual Jerusalem above.

(4) THE DISPERSION. Another fact which had much to do with the extension of the Christian faith after it came, was the wide dispersion of the Jews throughout civilized countries. Partly as a result of the Babylonian captivity and other forcible deportations; but as much perhaps through their own impulses as an enterprising people, Jews at length came to be found every-

where. Following the lines of trade, they had settled at all the main seats of industry. But, although they were thus brought under the broadening influence of the civilizations with which they came in contact, and especially under the influence of Greek culture, so widely prevalent, adopting the language of Greece even to the forgetting of their own, they preserved their Jewish peculiarities and institutions wherever they went, and were faithful to the religious teachings and moral standards of their fathers. Their attendance upon the great annual festivals at Jerusalem from time to time, often making long pilgrimages to do so, did much to keep up this loyalty. Although dwelling among foreign peoples, they were not of them. Synagogues, in which the Mosaic law was expounded, were found in every city of consequence. It was literally true, as stated in the book of Acts, that Moses, from generations of old, "had in every city them that preached him, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath." Everywhere, too, the Jews made proselytes to their faith from the surrounding Gentile population,—they were, in fact, exceedingly zealous to this end. Some of the proselytes subjected themselves wholly to the requirements of the Mosaic law, including circumcision, and so entered into the full privileges of the Jewish faith. Most of them, however, did not go as far as this, being content with partial conformity.

The Jewish synagogues or worshipping places,

which were found in all the larger cities at least, furnished a center of missionary operations wherever the apostles of the new religion went. Not only could the widely dispersed Jews be reached in this way, but access was also afforded to such Gentiles, called proselytes, as had become more or less affiliated with them in worship. It was among the latter indeed, influenced already by the ideas of Judaism, but not bred to its exclusiveness or finally and fully drawn into its circles, that the Christian faith found its first and best field. Through the latter, also, access would be less difficult to the Gentiles in general. These dispersed Jews thus formed a connecting link, a mediator, between the early Jewish Christians and the Gentile world. They became a most important factor in the promulgation of the gospel. In fact, it was the multitude of these Greek-speaking or Hellenized Jews of the dispersion, quickened and broadened by their contact with foreign life and thought, rather than the narrow and exclusive minority in Palestine, who were to become the real missionaries of the world.

Thus there was a measure of preparation in the conditions then existing among the Jewish people, a starting point, a vantage ground, a "seed plot" for the new movement, a soil in which it could take root and grow. The need for which the Mosaic system failed to provide, it was to be the function of the new religion to meet. The movement might not at once be generally under-

stood, might be much misapprehended, still, in no other land and among no other people were the conditions so favorable as among the Jews, and at the very time when it actually began.

THE GREEKS

But while there had thus been for a long period a steadily advancing preparation among the Jewish people for the coming kingdom and its Messianic King, it was eminently fitting that for an event which was to be universal in its scope there should be corresponding preparation in the world at large. Accordingly we find in the historical situation at the time a condition of affairs peculiarly favorable for the inauguration and extension of the new movement.

It was so among the *Greeks*, especially along intellectual lines. They were a maritime and colonizing people. Their settlements were dispersed among the islands and along the seacoast of the Mediterranean as far west as Spain. This colonizing process had been going on from the time when the authentic history of Greece began. But wherever Greeks went, their language and culture went with them. Especially was this the case in connection with the conquests of Alexander the Great three centuries before the Christian Era. Greek influence and the Greek tongue were extended far to the eastward. They thus became widely prevalent both east and west. The Greek language was very generally spoken in the cities

and towns of the Empire. It became at length the language of commerce and of polite intercourse. It was a means of communication between the people of the many diverse tongues which were spoken in the Roman Empire. Moreover, this language was specially adapted to the uses of the new religious thought. It was one of the richest and most delicate tongues ever spoken, fitted as no other to express the highest thoughts and the worthiest emotions. It was a language ready at hand for the revelation which Christ came to make, adapted to its ends as no other. From its almost universal use, his teachings, wherever carried, would be intelligible to the people. Wherever in fact the apostles went in their missionary journeys later, they could, with their familiarity with the Greek—which they had doubtless learned along with their native tongue—be readily understood.

But this was not all that Greece contributed to the world's preparation for the new faith. In its mythical religions—which was also true of those of Rome—the subjective sentiments which enter into religion were brought into play, crudely manifested though they may have been, and defective as were the popular conceptions of the true objects of devotion. In all this, there was an unconscious groping after God, an effort to meet an unfulfilled but real need of the religious nature. Then, too, there early began to be a drift toward monotheism, ignorant and superstitious

as men's ideas and their worship were. This tendency grew in strength as the years advanced. Then at length Greek philosophy made marked steps of progress toward some of the great truths which lie at the foundation of the Christian faith. Not only did the philosophic spirit tend to undermine and dissipate the superstitions which had preceded, causing a widespread skepticism concerning them to prevail, it originated ideas and habits of thought which had more or less direct affinity with the religion of the gospel, which found indeed, at length, in this religion, their proper complement or counterpart. Such ideas as the following came to be held by many leaders of thought: the doctrine of theism, or of one supreme personal God over the many gods, and the duty of absolute obedience to him; the existence of a universal providence and a moral government of the world; a belief also, though not confidently held, in a future life and immortality; and the need of redemption, though not in the full Christian sense of deliverance from sin.

But with all that was congenial with Christian truth in Greek philosophy, and which has always been recognized by the church, it came far short, in its resources and ability, of the power to prepare the soul for the exigencies of life, whether in the way of help in moral weakness, comfort in trial and sorrow, or relief from the fear of death which held men in bondage. Though it approached, it never reached the religious concep-

tions of either the Old Testament or the New. The mind had been brought to the borders of Christian doctrine, but that was all. The Christian religion alone, which was the revelation of God as given in Jesus Christ, could meet these questions which philosophy failed fully to answer, and provide the needed grace and deliverance which it was unable to supply. Redemption, in the highest and fullest sense of that term, is the distinctive feature of Christianity, something which neither in the past nor in the present has philosophy been able to provide, and which is not to be found in any of the great religions of the world outside of the Christian faith. Yet the contribution of Greek philosophy as well as of the Greek language, to the general preparation of the world for Christ and his teachings, was both real and very manifest.

In this connection we may refer to the Septuagint, a remarkable work which was to find acceptance among Greek speaking Jews, especially in Egypt, and to influence, also, many Gentiles and others, and in a singular way, help to prepare for the coming One. It was a Greek translation of the Old Testament produced at Alexandria, one of the most noted centers of the scattered Jews. It probably originated in the need of those Grecian or Hellenized Jews—most of whom were ignorant of the Hebrew language—of some version of the Jewish Scriptures which they could

read and understand. Its use became widespread among this class, thus becoming a peoples' Bible for the large Jewish world outside of Palestine. By means of this translation, a knowledge of the hope of Israel was also extended to the Gentiles.

This translation, together with the large mass of literature which grew up immediately after in the way of comment or explanation of it, may be regarded as a great step in the movement of the Jewish faith, under the direction of divine providence, toward the Gentile world, and of preparation for that which was to follow. Largely through this, the Gentile world was brought to the threshold of the church.

THE ROMAN EMPIRE

The close relation of the Roman Empire to the introduction and extension of Christ's kingdom in the world, has not failed to strike thoughtful minds who have studied the subject. It had been built up by incessant wars for many generations. Nation after nation had been subjugated by it, and together were now connected in one vast political system. These nations included all the civilized peoples of the world at that time, while the relation of most of them to the Mediterranean, which now became an inland Roman sea, gave to her dominions a certain geographical unity. Moreover, in its policy toward the various provinces which had been incorporated in it, the Roman power was exceedingly liberal. For the

most part, local laws, e. g., were left undisturbed. This naturally tended more and more to the unification and assimilation of these nations. Preceding world empires had been little more than agglomerations of diverse peoples, in which there was no mixture or coherence, no actual unity. But the Romans, from the beginning, had manifested a rare faculty for organization, a genius for lawmaking, and had pursued a policy looking toward assimilation, so that in the time of Christ the Empire had in some true sense become bound together into a homogeneous whole.

The influence of Roman jurisprudence, which was the principal legacy of Rome to subsequent ages, had much to do with bringing about this result. It had been a gradual growth, and under its provisions, the impartial administration of justice was not only possible, but was made a constant aim. This naturally exerted a leveling influence, tending more and more to the effacement of the distinction between subject and citizen. Furthermore, under these laws, Roman citizens could claim protection anywhere within the Empire. More than once the apostle Paul availed himself of his special privileges as a Roman citizen.

Then, too, facilities of travel were never better, and these did much to help on this result. A system of paved roadways—some of which may still be traced—extended from the capital into all the leading provinces of the Empire. These, with

their branches, were connected at the seaports with the routes of maritime travel. By this means, the most remote cities of the Empire were bound together and connected with the capital; intercourse between the various provinces was rendered easy; while under the protection of Roman law, life and property were generally secure. As all religions were tolerated, paths were thus opened for the diffusion of the Christian faith. The machinery of travel was ready to its hand. All of Paul's missionary tours were on well known lines of Roman travel. These roads were used by other apostles also, and such was the public habit of traveling, that any large city like Corinth, Ephesus, or Thessalonica, would afford opportunity of contact with persons from places remote as well as those near by. From such centers the gospel could readily spread into the surrounding territory.

Furthermore, it was a period of universal peace. The time for which the Roman people had long sighed had at length come. The doors of the Temple of Janus were closed. The Empire was enjoying a season of tranquillity such as the world had never known before. Its pacification and unification had been accomplished. A condition most favorable for the spread of the Christian faith and without which its world-wide extension would have been impossible, prevailed.

Still further, the thought of a universal empire no doubt had its influence in accustoming men to

the idea of a universal faith. Otherwise such a thought would have been foreign to early Christian thinking. The Empire formed a soil in which such a conception could grow. The separation of religion from the state was likewise a possibility to their thought by the conditions which prevailed. Hitherto each nation had its own religion, which was intimately related to its body politic, entered indeed into its warp and woof. This was now changed, and it was seen how religion could be distinct from political institutions, and how one universal religion might prevail independently of any particular system of government, or the fact of many governments. This was a great advance upon previous provincial thought, and the conception of one spiritual religion and kingdom for all the world was no longer a fanciful one.

But perhaps the most notable feature of the preparation of the world for the reception and spreading of Christianity, was the general sense of religious need. There was widespread skepticism in regard to existing religions, of which there were many, all of which were showing signs of decay. Old beliefs were crumbling. The old paganism was practically dead. Serious minded, thoughtful people, recognized the inadequacy of all existing religions to meet the soul's need, and were eager for something more satisfying, even more so than the Jewish faith itself. This skepticism was deep and incurable. There seemed to

be a real hunger for a knowledge of the true God. Humanity sighed for deliverance. Indeed, it is true, as some one has said: "Christianity came into a world which was hungering and thirsting for a spiritual religion." What Judaism partly supplied, Christianity was to offer with completeness.

Then, too, the morals of the people were at an extremely low ebb, perhaps never more so. Paul's description of the moral condition of the world at that period in his epistle to the Romans, has been demonstrated not to be overdrawn. Religion and morality were divorced. The time was manifestly ripe for something better, something able to change all this, if there was any such thing, something to supersede the effete religious systems which then prevailed.

We have now, in a cursory way, covered the ground of the providential preparation of the world for the coming of Christ and the introduction of Christianity. We have seen how a particular people was chosen, not arbitrarily, but on the ground of a native fitness above other peoples; that this people dwelt in a land peculiarly fitted, in location and in natural characteristics, for their development; that the varied experiences through which they passed had much to do with their preparation; that the Mosaic law was given as a preparatory system or religion, to develop in them a sense of sin and of the

need of salvation, but was to be superseded at length when the full revelation of God was given to the world in Christ. Among this people there came to prevail at length a general expectation of a Messiah to come when the time was ripe for it, while the dispersion of the Jews throughout the civilized world would be helpful toward giving the gospel to the Gentiles by whom they were surrounded or in the midst of whom they lived.

We have seen what contribution the Greeks made to this general preparation for Christ's coming, in the fact that the Greek language, which was specially fitted to express spiritual thought, had become well-nigh universal at this time, so that those who were able to speak it could find access to people everywhere with the gospel. Greek philosophy also helped to prepare the way by the ideas which it developed, many of them being but rudimentary forms of great truths which lay at the foundation of Christianity, and which Christ promulgated.

The Roman Empire had much to do in the preparing of the conditions for the advent of Christ and the dissemination of the gospel by its unification of many races under one government; by the prevalence everywhere of just laws; by the facilities of travel at that time; by the universal peace which prevailed; and by the undefined sense of religious need. The existing religions were decaying, and the moral condition of the people made manifest the need of some new force ade-

quate to the bringing about of a new and higher order of things.

Then, the conditions being ripe, all these preparations having converged to a single point of time, as had never before been the case, and has never been since, Christ came, and with his coming a new spiritual force was introduced into the hearts of those who received and acted upon his message. Nor was this something which would be operative only at that period. Rather it is still working, the movement then inaugurated is still going forward, directed by the same intelligent purpose, the divine spirit coöperating with a view to the final triumph of the kingdom throughout the world.

But immediately preceding the advent, as a concluding feature of the preparation, there was a precursor, a forerunner, a heralding voice, to make announcement of the event and to make local preparation for it. To this, after a chapter devoted to the general conditions which prevailed among the Jewish people at that time, some knowledge of which is essential to a clear understanding of what is to follow, we must next give attention.

CHAPTER III

THE HISTORICAL, POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Some knowledge of the political and religious conditions which prevailed in Palestine and the Roman Empire at the time when Christ entered upon his public ministry is essential to a clear understanding of the New Testament records. From the nature of the case an acquaintance with these conditions must throw much light upon the narrative itself which contains many allusions to them. Some of these allusions can only be understood in this way. These facts constitute the setting or the background of the New Testament picture.

HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL

The Roman Empire at this time embraced the entire civilized world as then known. Nation after nation had been brought under the power of Rome, until its sway extended from the Atlantic Ocean eastward to the Euphrates River, a distance of 3,000 miles and more, and from the Desert of Sahara and the cataracts of the Nile on the south as far as Scotland and the Danube to

the north. The Mediterranean had thus become an inland sea, entirely surrounded by the Roman Empire.

Toward the subjugated provinces the Roman policy was liberal and sagacious. So far as practicable, local laws and customs in each case were left undisturbed. This tended to the gradual unification and assimilation of the heterogeneous elements composing the empire. This was materially aided by the system of paved roads which was gradually covering the territory embraced. A number of lines went out from the capital to the extremities of the empire, by which intercourse between the various peoples was rendered easy and safe, while business, pleasure, official duties, and the movements of troops led to their constant use. Another influence tending to the same result of unification, was the wide prevalence of the Greek language at this time, introduced in connection with the conquests of Alexander three centuries before. To a large extent it had become a common medium of communication.

The Jewish nation was one of the many which were subject to Rome at this time. The independence which it had enjoyed for less than a hundred years under the Maccabees, had given place to this subjugated condition in B. C. 63, or about one hundred years before Christ began his public ministry. At different periods of its history (after B. C. 721 when the Northern Kingdom fell) it had been under the Assyrian, the

Egyptian, the Babylonian, the Persian, and the Greek powers. During all this time, however, the Jews had preserved their customs and peculiarities essentially unchanged. Wherever they were found—and they were numerous in all the large cities of the empire—this was the case. They did not assimilate with other races even if they dwelt among them. As a rule they remained loyal to their religion, and many of them made long pilgrimages to Jerusalem to attend upon the great annual religious festivals which were held there from time to time.

Palestine was really only indirectly under Roman rule. The policy of leaving the administration of local affairs largely to the subjugated peoples, prevailed. In the year B. C. 37, Herod I—sometimes called Herod the Great, an Idumean by birth—became king, his reign continuing 33 years. He was a man of ability and a great builder. Among other things he rebuilt and decorated the Temple in order to conciliate the people, to whom his tyranny and brutality had rendered him odious. It was he who, after Christ was born at Bethlehem, issued an edict for the slaughter of all the male children of the place under two years of age, hoping in this way to include him among them. His death occurred soon after. By his will, which was practically, though not entirely confirmed at Rome, his kingdom was divided among his three sons.

The first of the three parts into which the king-

dom was divided was called the province of Judea, which included both Samaria on the north and Idumea on the south. This district was assigned to Archelaus, who, after a few years, was deposed for his barbarity and cruelty. His territory was then made an imperial province and was ruled by a Roman procurator or governor. The second part of Herod's kingdom, comprising Galilee and Perea—the latter east of the Jordan and south-east of the sea of Galilee—was given to Antipas, who is referred to in the New Testament as Herod Antipas, or Herod the Tetrarch. His capital was Tiberias which he himself built. He was the Herod under whose sway Jesus lived while in Galilee, and he it was who executed John the Baptist. He was finally deposed and banished. Galilee was an exceedingly prosperous region, full of vineyards and gardens, cities and villages. Its dense population was made up of both Gentiles and Jews, the latter, no doubt, predominating, yet their life was freer and broader than that of their brethren in Judea. Perea was somewhat larger than Galilee, but was of little importance politically. The third portion of Herod's kingdom comprised Iturea and Trachonitis, the district, generally speaking, to the east and northeast of the sea of Galilee. It was assigned to Philip, who is referred to by Luke as "Philip the Tetrarch."

But the most important of these three provinces into which Herod's dominions were divided, was the first, the *Province of Judea*, with its three

parts, Judea, Idumea (originally Edom), and Samaria. Between the inhabitants of the latter and those of Judea, a long time feud, extending back for centuries, existed, and this still continued in the time of Christ. "The Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans."

At this time the province of Judea was governed by the Roman procurator, Pontius Pilate, whose official residence was at Cæsarea, the Roman capital of the province, although he spent not a little of his time at Jerusalem. A prominent part of his responsibility was to look after the Roman taxes. These were "farmed out" to speculators who bought the right to collect them. They were gathered by men who were called "publicans," who, in case they were their own countrymen, were regarded by the Jews as traitors or apostates. They were usually drawn from the most unscrupulous classes, and "graft," as a rule, was practiced by all of them. But in addition to his fiscal duties, the procurator had military and judicial functions as well. As a judge, he had the power of life and death—appeal to the emperor being granted only in the case of Roman citizens, as of Paul at Cæsarea. The Jews were not allowed to sentence any one to death without the approval of the Roman official at the head of the province.

An important feature of the political conditions in Palestine at the time of Christ pertained to the High Council of the Jews, or the Sanhe-

drin, and the parties composing it. In addition to various administrative functions, it had come to be the supreme court for the trial of all cases of importance, civil, criminal, religious, under the Mosaic law. This body, through the two political parties which composed it, the Pharisees and the Sadducees, exerted an important political as well as religious influence. It was made up of seventy-one members, who were men of pure Hebrew descent. The judgment of the Sanhedrin was final except in capital cases. This explains why, after Christ was condemned by this Council, the consent of Pilate must be secured before he could be put to death.

Such in general were the historical and political conditions in the Roman Empire and in Palestine at the time of Christ.

RELIGIOUS THOUGHT AND LIFE

We turn now to the religious conditions which prevailed at this time.

That which was fundamental in Jewish thought and life was the Mosaic law, with its varied requirements, moral, civil, ceremonial. It regulated the entire life of the people, and its scrupulous observance was the supreme duty of every loyal Israelite. Everything centered in it, all the hopes of Israel gathered about it. God had given it to the descendants of Abraham at the hands of Moses, and had covenanted to bless them as a people on condition of loyal obedience to it. For

centuries it was the molding influence of Jewish life.

But the Mosaic law, in its broadest sense, had come, in Christ's time, to include also the "traditions of the elders." In the course of time a body of men had arisen whose business it was to copy and study the law and to instruct the people in its requirements. These were the scribes, called sometimes in the New Testament, "teachers of the law," or "lawyers." The opinions, or interpretations and applications of leading scribes, were preserved along with the law, and at length came to be regarded as equally sacred with it, and of corresponding authority. These decisions or precedents pertained to every imaginable phase of daily life. They were elaborated to an extent hardly to be conceived by us, and were frequently of the most fanciful and absurd character. To carry them all out was next to impossible, while to the conscientious the sense of obligation to do so constituted an unbearable burden. A few concrete examples will make this manifest, and show how they tended also to make the religious life superficial, reducing it to a mere formal and lifeless externalism.

Take the matter of Sabbath observance. This was one of the duties insisted upon with great emphasis. The original prohibition of work on that day specified but few things. But the scribes, with great ingenuity, had developed these prohibitions into thirty-nine subdivisions, by which a

large number of things in particular were forbidden. Some of these were plowing, reaping, sowing, binding sheaves, kneading, baking, making or putting out a fire. Many of them were senseless in the extreme. Then each of these subdivisions was still further defined, that there might be no mistake as to their meaning. To gather a few ears of corn, for instance, on the Sabbath, was regarded by the scribes as reaping, hence was proscribed. The disciples were criticised for this very thing.

It was forbidden under the Mosaic law to carry a burden on the Sabbath from one tenement to another. Thereupon the scribes undertook to determine the exact bulk of what might be carried, and he was guilty of Sabbath desecration who carried out so much food as was equal in weight to a dry fig, or milk enough to swallow, or ink enough with which to write two letters, or reed enough with which to make a pen! If a woman looked into a mirror on the Sabbath, she might see a gray hair and be tempted to pull it out. To wear false teeth on that day was to carry a burden. In fact, one could hardly turn around on the Sabbath day without running against one of these Pharisaic laws.

But these scrupulous guardians of the law, a large part of whose religion seemed to consist in seeing to it that other people carried out to the letter all the petty rules which they had laid down, went even farther. Not only did they declare

what was forbidden on the Sabbath itself, which began on Friday evening, these prohibitions were extended to every transaction which might possibly lead to a desecration of the day. A tailor, for instance, was not to go out at twilight on that evening with his needles, lest he might forget just the hour when the Sabbath—our Saturday—began. Similar prohibitions and regulations were to be observed with reference to a score of other things equally infinitesimal and absurd. No risk must be run of any unpermissible work being done during the sacred hours of the holy day.

Yet some exceptions were permitted for the sake of humanity, or on account of some higher and more sacred command. All transactions necessary for the offering of sacrifices which the Temple ritual required, were allowed,—but, with a few exceptions of this kind, these Sabbath prohibitions were strictly insisted upon for those who would be truly religious. This accounts for the hostility of the Pharisees against Jesus, because he healed on the Sabbath.

Even deeper than the law of the Sabbath, was the influence on the daily life of the manifold and far-reaching ordinances concerning ceremonial cleanness and uncleanness. Not less than twelve treatises of the time dealt with the subject. With each of the chief kinds of uncleanness, the inquiry was raised and determined as to the circumstances under which the uncleanness was incurred, in what manner and to what extent it was

transferred to others, what objects and interests were and were not capable of contracting uncleanness, and what means and regulations were required for its removal. A main question, first of all, was concerning the material of which the cooking utensils was composed, and next concerning the form, whether hollow or flat. In the case of hollow, earthen vessels, the air in them contracted and propagated ceremonial uncleanness, but not their outside. Purification of these vessels could only result from their being broken. But as a fraction only was still esteemed a vessel, and was capable of imparting defilement if it held only enough "to anoint a little toe with," it is plain to see how thorough the breaking must be in order to effect its purification. Of wooden, leather, bone, and glass vessels, the flat ones were susceptible of defilement. The deep ones contracted defilement in their atmosphere. If they broke, they were clean.

As to the removal of defilement, the main question was as to what water was adapted to the different kinds of purifications, to the sprinkling of the hands, the washing of utensils, the bath of purification for persons. Several grades of water reservoirs were distinguished—a pond, spring water, collected water, running water. Directions concerning the washing and correct pouring on to the hands were extremely minute. The question was also discussed as to the vessels from which such pouring should take place, who should

do it, and how far the hands must be poured upon. Repeated allusions in the Gospels show with what zeal all these enactments were observed in the time of Christ.

To external correctness of action the greatest importance was attached. Three mementos by which every Israelite was to be reminded of his duties toward God, were in use. One of these consisted of tassels or fringes of a prescribed character, which were worn at the four corners of the upper garment, "that ye may look upon them and remember all the commandments of Jehovah to do them." Another was an oblong box fixed to house and room doors above the right hand or post, on which was written, according to Deuteronomy, in twenty-seven lines, two paragraphs from that book (Deut. 6:4-9, and 11:7 et. seq.) which refer to the duty of loving God with all one's soul and might, and of teaching the words of his law diligently to their children.

Then there were the phylacteries, from a Greek word meaning amulet or charm, which were supposed to possess the property of protecting the wearer against evil spirits and similar malign influences. This term was then, and by Jews is still given to two small cases of leather, containing small rolls of parchment, on which were written certain Old Testament passages, which were worn, one upon the forehead, and the other upon the left arm. Our Lord, in his great anti-Pharisaic discourse, charges the scribes and Pharisees

with ostentation in their religious duties, "for they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders (fringes) of their garments, and love the chief places at feasts."

Even in prayer and fasting many rules had to be observed. A certain prayer was to be recited twice a day in addition to the usual daily prayer, which was to be said morning, noon, and evening. The time of the prayer was exactly defined, and various regulations pertaining to the prayers themselves and the manner of offering them, were prescribed. It was a good custom which required the offering of thanksgiving in connection with partaking of food and drink. But there, also, regulations were made down to the pettiest details—pointing out the particular form to be used for the fruits of trees, what for wine, for the fruits of the ground, for bread, vegetables, vinegar, for unripe fallen fruit, for milk, cheese, eggs. Scholars contended as to when this and when that form of prayer was suitable. In such circumstances it is not strange that prayer was degraded into a mere external mechanical performance, without significance, save that of fulfilling a supposed duty. The service of prayer was even sunk so low as to become a manifestation of vanity and the cloak of inward impurity. Vital piety was largely lost sight of, and of course there could be no real freedom of action.

The Pharisees were much given to fasting and laid great stress on its value, but Christ declared

that their fasting was of no avail if their hearts were not right. Generally they did their fasting in the most public manner, "to be seen of men," thus to make a show of pious zeal religiously, which of course subjected them to the most scathing rebukes on the part of Christ.

These facts, selected from many, will give some idea of the state of things religiously in the time of Christ—the lifeless ceremonialism, the superficial, often frivolous and meaningless requirements of the law, as then interpreted, with all the traditions added. There were some—a few—who took a more spiritual view of religious obligation, but for the most part the people were concerned chiefly with the Sabbath, the varied ablutions which were regarded as necessary to maintain ceremonial purity, with the distinction between ceremonially clean and unclean food, with the times and ways of fasting and prayer, and with the wearing of fringes and phylacteries on their garments. Formal accuracy in fulfilling the letter of these requirements was sufficient. There was little concern, as a rule, about the spirit of them. It was not a question of motive, but of external act. The interior or heart life was of little or but secondary concern. So the religious life of the people became largely externalized and paralyzed. Inward piety was smothered.

Yet as a result of all, many were led to long for some way of deliverance from these intolerable burdens, at least were prepared to appreciate the

glad tidings which Christ announced, which did away with these exacting requirements, and made the great inner and comprehensive principle of love—love to God and love to man—the one supreme law for every one. Jesus, of course, had no sympathy with these extreme views and practices, and more than once told the scribes and Pharisees that by their endless and fanciful interpretations and applications of the law, they were destroying its real purpose. As a matter of fact, their “traditions” were no part of the law proper, and had no binding force. It was Jesus’ ignoring of them in his teachings and practice which started the opposition of the leaders, and led, ultimately, to his condemnation and death.

The views which prevailed in Christ’s time in regard to great doctrinal subjects constituted an important feature of the background of his teachings. Many of his conversations with his disciples and many of the controversies which he carried on with his critics, turned upon points of current opinion on these questions. Their thought of God, for instance, was far wide of the truth, as he presented it. To them, God was afar off, remote from the world; too holy to have anything to do with it directly, or even with the people in it, the gap between being bridged over by angels or other intermediaries, and all his acts were performed by his representatives rather than himself. It was declared that the law was given

to Moses at the hands of angels. God was partial to the Jewish nation, they were his people in a peculiar and exceptional sense, not from the fact of a great mission entrusted to them, but on their own account. The New Testament declaration that God is no respecter of persons was in direct contradiction to this idea. Furthermore, those who would worship him did not enter into vital communion with him, but performed their round of tasks and ceremonies, he having prescribed in detail all that men were to do. Religious duty, hence, to them, was literally to carry out these commandments. Having done this, they had performed the "good works" of the law, and nothing more was required of them. Everything in the religious life was thus formal, legal, prescribed. Such views as these naturally tended to the virtual exclusion of the living presence of God among men and the reality of his grace, and the denial of the great truth that religion is primarily a thing of the inner life, of disposition, motive, a certain attitude of mind and heart and purpose. God's fatherhood had to do with the race or nation, not with the individual as Christ so constantly and emphatically affirmed. Salvation with the Jews was practically by merit. Righteousness consisted in the doing of the commandments, which were thought to lay main stress upon expiations and ritual requirements. The belief that they had perfectly fulfilled the requirement of the law was not at all uncommon among the people. In such

a case nothing could properly be charged against one. If there was, if there had been failure to render what was due to God, various acts, like repentance, suffering, alms giving, were thought to have atoning significance. By such means the account with him was balanced.

“No contrast could be greater than that between Jesus’ teaching concerning religion and this Pharisaic theory. He taught that trust is what God requires, that the humble and teachable disposition is what is most pleasing to him. Men do not climb up into God’s favor by works of righteousness or ceremonial performances which they do, but they receive his salvation as a gift of pure grace.”

The Jewish ideas of the kingdom of God and of the Messiah were also far wide of the mark. They looked forward to a golden age in the future, but in their conception this had primarily to do with both political and material prosperity. Whatever view may have been entertained in times preceding, this was the dominant thought in the time of Christ. The prophetic references to the nation’s prosperity and glory in the coming age were interpreted with a crude literalism. The kingdom to come was a renewed and triumphant Israel. The nation, humiliated and suffering under Roman oppression, thought only of deliverance, and the glorious future kingdom to which they looked forward meant freedom and power, Israel becoming the great ruling power of the

earth, with Jerusalem for its capital. Naturally the Jewish conception of the Messiah corresponded with this material view of the kingdom. He was to usher in this new era and be a worldly ruler or prince. It was expected that God would intervene to bring all this about, and this by startling supernatural manifestations. Thus not only had the doctrine of the kingdom become material and worldly, their thought of the coming Messiah had in like manner become worldly and political.

Traces of these ideas of the kingdom and the Messianic King are found throughout the New Testament, Christ's own disciples even holding to them. When, after the resurrection, they asked him: "Wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"—this is what was meant, viz:—to establish the nation in strength and prosperity by overthrowing the power which was holding them in subjugation. One of them desired to sit on his right hand, another on his left, in this material kingdom.

With a knowledge of some of these leading doctrinal views which were current in Christ's time, we are enabled to appreciate the better, by contrast, the spiritual views which he sought to inculcate. From the nature of the case he could not do otherwise than oppose them, and thus antagonize those who held them. Yet it was always in the constructive way of presenting the positive truth to take their place.

JEWISH INSTITUTIONS

The Temple was located on the east side of the city, and faced to the east. It was the center of most of the rites and ceremonies provided in the Mosaic law. It was surrounded by chambers and apartments which were more extensive than the Temple itself. Outside were spacious courts of various names.

The outermost court, called the Court of the Gentiles, was said by some to have covered fourteen acres or more. It was surrounded by a high wall and was entered by six gates. It completely surrounded the Temple and all the other courts. It might be entered by persons of all nations, but it was death to anyone not a Jew to advance beyond it, and notices to this effect, written in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, were conspicuously posted. Guards were stationed at the entrance to the next court to the west to see that this regulation was strictly complied with. It was from this outer court that Jesus drove the men who had established a cattle market there for the purpose of supplying those who came from a distance with sacrifices. It was surrounded by a "porch," or covered walk. The one on the east or front side was called "Solomon's Porch."

The next court west was the Court of the Women, so called because Jewish women, as well as Jewish men, could enter it. It was also called the Treasury. The gate leading into this court

was the "Beautiful Gate" as it was called. Here the Pharisee and the publican were supposed to have come up to pray, and hither the lame man, after he was healed, followed Peter and John. The Court of Israel was directly west of this Court of the Women. It was reached by a flight of fifteen steps. The rock on which the Temple stood rose in height toward the westward. Only the men of Israel were allowed in this court. Here they stood in reverent silence while their sacrifices were burning in the inner court, and while the services of the sanctuary were being performed. The Court of the Priests came next. It was raised somewhat above that of Israel. Within it stood the brazen altar on which sacrifices were consumed. It was accessible to other Israelites than the priests only for certain special purposes connected with the sacrifices.

From the Court of the Priests the ascent to the Temple was by a flight of twelve steps, which led to the sacred vestibule or porch, which extended across the front of the structure. The Temple itself was by no means a large structure—only ninety by thirty feet. In it were the Holy and Most Holy Places, which were separated by an impervious veil. The former was thirty by sixty feet, and forty-five feet high. Here were the golden altar of incense, a table for the shewbread, and a golden candlestick. The Most Holy Place, or Holy of Holies, was a square room thirty by thirty feet, into which the High Priest

alone entered, and that only once a year, on the Great Day of Atonement. In the midst of the Most Holy Place of Solomon's Temple the sacred Ark was placed. Connected with the Temple in Roman times, at the northwest corner of the Temple area, was the strong castle called the Tower of Antonio, with its various courts and fortifications. A Roman garrison was stationed here. Its presence was of special importance at the time of the Jewish festivals. Paul, when rescued from the infuriated mob which had dragged him out of the Temple, was taken into this castle.

The daily worship of the Temple was conducted by the Priesthood, a body of men specially set apart for that purpose. Each of its twenty-four divisions officiated a week at a time. The Levites were a subordinate class of officials, really assistants to the priests. They performed various minor offices, including the care of the Temple, and slaying and preparing the sacrifices. But only the priests were permitted to minister at the altar and within the sanctuary.

The offering of sacrifices was a custom which came down from the earliest time. The Mosaic law simply gave directions with reference to a practice which was already in existence. In the Temple, sacrifices were offered in behalf of the people by officiating priests. Their main work indeed was that of sacrifice and its attendant services. Public sacrifices were offered in the name of the people and were purchased with a part of

the people's own gifts. Private sacrifices were those in which private individuals only were concerned. A fire was kept burning on the altar continually. The one place appointed in the law for the offering of sacrifices by the Jews was around the one altar of the only true God in the Temple. Yet though established by divine appointment, they were at best only typical. They were incapable of themselves of purifying the soul or atoning for sin. They foreshadowed the true sacrifice to come, the Lamb of God, which would really take away the sins of the world. Accordingly, when Christ came, all these material sacrifices were set aside as no longer needed. He made an offering of himself once for all.

There were three great annual feasts with the Jews. The Feast of the Passover commemorated the exodus from Egypt and was celebrated by eating a slain lamb with unleavened bread. It continued seven days. The deliverance which it commemorated was a type of the great salvation or deliverance from sin achieved for men by Christ through his sacrifice. The Feast of Pentecost marked the completion of the corn harvest, and according to the later Jews, the giving of the law as well. It was at the time of a Pentecostal feast that the Spirit was poured out upon the disciples. The Feast of Tabernacles commemorated the life in the wilderness. It was also the harvest home at the close of the year, an expression of thanksgiving for harvest, the people living

in booths meanwhile. There were various other and lesser festivals to perpetuate the memory of other important events of Jewish history, but these were the main ones. Fast days were also observed from time to time.

We have now covered, in a cursory way, some of the main features of the New Testament background, indicating the general historical and political situation both in the Roman Empire and in Palestine; have explained somewhat in regard to the thought and life of the people religiously—the Mosaic law with its varied requirements, including the “traditions”; also in regard to the institutions of the Jewish people, the Temple and its courts, the priesthood, sacrifices, feasts. With a clear grasp of these facts, let one read afresh the Gospel narratives, and he will be surprised at the new light which will be thrown upon many of the references to them and to the utterances of Christ himself. Indeed it is now generally recognized among students of the New Testament that for a right understanding of it, it is necessary to become familiar with all these things, which constitute a background, from which the life and work and teachings of Christ and the apostles stand out in bold relief.

CHAPTER IV

THE FORERUNNER

From ancient times it has been the custom with oriental monarchs, when about to travel through any part of their dominions, to send heralds before them to announce their coming and to see that the roadways over which they were to pass were in order. All obstacles must be removed, rough places be made smooth. If no roadway existed, one had to be made, even if, for the purpose, it required the filling of valleys and the leveling of hills and mountains. In this way an easy and pleasant highway was provided for the royal travelers. This custom is alluded to in Isaiah xl, 3, 4. —“The voice of one that crieth, Prepare ye in the wilderness the way of Jehovah; make level in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the uneven shall be made level, and the rough places a plain.” In the New Testament this passage is applied to John the Baptist as the herald or forerunner of the Messiah.

I

The coming of a Messianic king to inaugurate a better state of things, a new and righteous

kingdom, a golden age in very truth, for their race, had long been anticipated among the Jews. Their Scriptures had for centuries foreshadowed it. Such an expectation, indeed, was deeply embedded in the very structure of their religion. The character of this coming One and the nature of his mission may not have been fully understood, was sometimes even definitely misapprehended—it certainly was at this time—but the fact itself of a promised Messiah had long been the hope of the Jewish race. Now at length the time for the realization of this hope was at hand. The fullness of time for it had come.

But in order to arouse and quicken the consciences of men at the time and lead to a spiritual preparation for this event, an immediate precursor or herald was needed. To accomplish this special work, to discover, as it were, and point out the Messiah to men, was the exalted function of John the Baptist. Not much is known of him, not much was recorded, yet even the fragmentary accounts which have come down to us in the New Testament are sufficient to set before us a unique and mighty personality, and to afford a clear insight into his motives and spirit.

Before this time, dark days had come upon the Jewish people. The civil authority had passed entirely out of their hands, and they were suffering under a galling subserviency to the Roman power. Those who had been appointed to rule

over them were not men to command their respect. Lawlessness prevailed in the land to an unusual degree. The religion of the people had degenerated into a lifeless formalism. Routine observance of rites and ceremonies had come to hold the chief place in their thought, while the weightier matters of moral obligation and righteous conduct had been relegated to the background. Especially was this the case with the religious leaders of the people. The religion of the Pharisees, though professedly one of devotion to the law of Moses, was without vitality or power—a vain and empty thing. With the Sadducees, the materialists of that age, there had come to be practical skepticism concerning spiritual verities, and the reality and certainty of the future life. Others still went to the opposite extreme, and, hating the world, withdrew from society and lived an ascetic life in the desert. With the perverted views which these latter entertained, their spiritual condition was anything but wholesome. Thus on every hand there were depression, unrest, dissatisfaction. There was no hope to cheer the political aspiration of the people: for the spiritually minded there had never been a darker time.

But, just as when it was darkest with the chosen people in Egypt, a brighter day was about to dawn, and just as when, in the Middle Ages, the church had become corrupt and religion had pretty much lost its significance, a new and better era was soon to appear—so in this depressed con-

dition of affairs among the chosen people, when despair was fast settling down upon the more earnest spirits among them, it was but the darkness preceding the dawn. Better things were in store. The Sun of Righteousness was about to rise. It was at this time that a voice began to be heard in the wilderness, calling upon men everywhere to turn from their sins and make ready for the kingdom of God which was declared to be near at hand, and for the advent of him who, in the highest and truest sense, was to be the nation's deliverer and the Savior of the world. This voice was that of John the Baptist, for whom, even at his birth, in view of the unusual circumstances connected with it, a great and notable career had been foretold. Early in life he had consecrated himself to God, and later had retired to the wilderness of Judea, west of the Dead Sea, to live in solitude and in communion with the Most High. He made no merit of his self-denial and his austere life, as did the ascetics of his time, but, as a man of thought, devout and prayerful, he doubtless meditated deeply upon the things of God, upon the teachings of the prophets, and upon the conditions then existing among the Jewish people. He perceived clearly the superficial character of their religious life, saw the need of radical reformation before the favor of God could rest upon them, and by faith discerned the near approach of that kingdom of righteousness and truth, and of the King himself who was to inaugurate it, of which

the ancient prophets had borne witness, but for which he clearly saw there was no adequate preparation.

Then he began to declare his convictions. The day of Jehovah was at hand. The long expected Messiah was about to appear and sit in judgment upon all. Every unworthy member of the community was to be cut off, the chaff to be separated from the wheat. There was no time to be lost. Only by repentance, radical and thorough, could the divine favor be hoped for, and men were called upon to prepare for the new day by abandoning their sinful ways and committing themselves to lives of righteousness. So intense was John's earnestness and with such power did he speak, that reports of him spread like wildfire among the people, who began to flock from all directions to hear him. All Jerusalem, we read, and Judea, all classes and conditions of men—Pharisees, Sadducees, scribes, soldiers, priests, publicans—went out for this purpose to the valley of the Jordan which was the scene of his preaching. Here, also, he performed the baptismal rite for such as desired in this way to signify their purpose of personal reformation and of dedication of themselves to the new kingdom. Washing with water was a natural and beautiful symbol of spiritual cleansing, and whatever may have been its original application and import, John appropriated it for his own use in preparing men for the new relationship.

With his coarse wilderness garb and his leathern girdle, John's appearance must have been striking. This, however, was incidental. With burning earnestness he declared the message which possessed his soul. With startling boldness he rebuked the sinful practices of those who came to hear him. He was fearless in his denunciations of high and low alike. The hearts of men were laid bare. The hypocrisies of their religious leaders were exposed. Men listened with accusing consciences until they were overwhelmed with a sense of condemnation and guilt. Such preaching had not been heard in the land for generations. Not since the prophets—Elijah, Amos, Isaiah, Jeremiah—had anyone ventured thus to probe the moral condition of the people. What John demanded was that his hearers should stop sinning and live righteously. It was not a question whether they were descendants of Abraham. Mere hereditary descent carried no moral quality with it, and would avail nothing as a protection against the judgments which were to come upon the guilty. Righteousness alone would entitle men to recognition in the coming kingdom.

More than this, John declared that the King himself was about to appear. Some of his hearers wondered if he might not himself be the long expected One, but he promptly disclaimed any such distinction. His mission was simply that of a forerunner. The One to come after him, whose shoes' latchet he felt himself unworthy to stoop

down and unloose, was far mightier and holier than he. John had baptized with water, but this coming One would baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire. Such an announcement must have powerfully stirred the hearts of all who heard it. A profound impression was certainly made. Whether John spoke simply out of a deep and long-standing conviction which had gradually come to him, or, in addition, was borne along in his thought under the influence of the Spirit at the moment beyond what he personally knew, we need not inquire.

As he worked his way northward in the Jordan valley, the news of his work reached Nazareth. Jesus, recognizing him as a messenger of God, went out to hear him. Although he and John were kinsmen by birth, they had been entirely separated by the circumstances of their lives, and probably had not known each other. At any rate, John did not recognize Jesus when he came to the Jordan. Yet there was something in the latter's appearance which at once arrested the Baptist's attention. With a prophet's insight he read the character of Jesus at a glance. In other cases he may have refused to administer baptism because repentance did not seem to be sufficiently deep and thorough. In this case he hesitated because the applicant impressed him as one who had no need of the rite. John finally yielded to the request of Jesus, to whom it seemed best in this way, as he himself expressed it, to "fulfill all

righteousness." He would thus identify himself with the movement which the Baptist had inaugurated.

It was in this connection that it was made known to John the Baptist that the One before him was none other than the great Successor whom he had been heralding, and for whom he was simply preparing the way. It had already been intimated to him that the One upon whom he should see the spirit of God descending and remaining—a sign evidently intended for himself alone—the same was the One who was to baptize with the Holy Spirit. This sign now appeared. When Jesus came out of the water, the heavens opened, and John beheld—perhaps in vision only—the Spirit descending on him in the form of a dove. At the same time a voice from heaven was heard declaring, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." It was a moment of revelation to John, as it was a transfiguring moment to Jesus himself—the point of transition from a private life to an official career. It is hardly probable that all this took place in a way to be recognized by the assembled multitude, but it was at least made plain to John and Jesus. To the latter it was a formal consecration to his work, an initiation into it. Whatever may have been his thought before, whether or not he had experienced a growing conviction as to the mission that was before him—as it would seem likely that he must have done—now, at least, under the illumination

of the Spirit who had been imparted to him without measure, the full significance of his mission burst upon him. John had been his discoverer, the first to recognize the Messianic King, but for the present the time was not ripe for a public declaration of his Messianic function, or for John publicly to point him out to men.

It was probably not long after the baptism of Jesus that a deputation of officials from Jerusalem waited upon John to ask him who he was—certainly a not improper inquiry for those to make whose duty it was to guard the religious interests of the nation. Was he the expected One? Or was he Elijah who had reappeared? What precisely, might be his function? John confessed and denied not. He was not himself the Messiah—he was simply a voice, the voice of one crying in the wilderness, calling upon men to prepare, through personal repentance, for the coming of One who was far greater and mightier than he, who already stood among them though they knew it not. Thus, with more definiteness than before, John began to bear testimony to the One whom he had recognized, but who, as yet, had given no sign to the world.

It was shortly after this, very likely, or rather just after Christ's return from his wilderness temptation, that John pointed him out to two of his own disciples whom he bade them to follow. "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." Thus two of John's best

disciples were constrained to cast in their lot with the new teacher. It was, in fact, from the circle of John the Baptist that the first nucleus was formed of that company which, later, comprised the chosen companions of Jesus. Thus unselfishly did John seek to help on the new movement; thus loyal was he to the One whom he declared must henceforth increase, while he, his mission now practically ended, must decrease.

Another emphatic testimony John bore to Christ, when a question arose among his own disciples in regard to purifying. His own popularity was on the wane, and that of Jesus was rising like an incoming tide. Yet trying as the situation must have been for John, he abated nothing of his loyalty, and faithfully declared the truth in regard to their relations.

From this time on we hear little if anything further of the work of the Baptist. His public career was brought to an untimely end through his imprisonment by order of King Herod. In his outspoken boldness, John had denounced the king's guilt in living unlawfully with his brother's wife Herodias of whom he had become enamored, and for which purpose he had put away his own wife. This censure may have been administered publicly, or even privately to the king's face. In either case it would have been entirely in keeping with John's character. Then Herod—very likely under the prompting of Herodias, who seems to have been more deeply stung by the

Baptist's rebuke than even Herod himself—caused him to be confined within the dungeon of a fortress which Josephus states to have been the fortress of Machaerus, situated in the mountains of the eastern side of the Dead Sea, a few miles north of the river Arnon. Here he languished for a number of months. The trial which it must have been for one of his temperament to be thus shut off from active life among men and condemned to suffer can well be imagined. Yet some privileges seem to have been permitted him. His old disciples were allowed free access to him, and by this means he was able both to keep himself informed as to what was going on in the outside world, and to send a message to Jesus.

But as John in his confinement reflected upon all that had taken place and was even then going forward, certain questionings seem to have arisen in his mind. Perhaps it was the natural effect of his physical depression upon his mental condition; or it may have grown out of his own imperfect conception of the Messianic functions, or of the kingdom which was to be established; or it may have been from both these causes combined. Perhaps he was disappointed that the new movement was not taking on the shape which he had anticipated. If Jesus were really the Messiah, why had not some demonstration taken place? Why did he not take to himself his great power and reign? Or, why was he, John, left to pine

away in prison, with no effort made for his release? At any rate, to reassure himself by some direct word from Jesus, John concluded to send two of his disciples to him with a message of inquiry: "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" Are you really the expected Messiah, or is there some misapprehension in regard to it?

Jesus did not answer the inquiry directly, but permitted the messengers to see, with their own eyes, some of the works which he was doing, but of which, hitherto, they had only heard. Then with a reference to the Messianic prediction in Isaiah LXI, he bade them take back to their Master the message that all these things which the ancient prophet had declared that the Messiah, when he came, would do, were now being done. "Go your way and tell John the things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good tidings preached to them. And blessed is he whosoever shall find no occasion of stumbling in me" (Matt. XI, 2-6). In proof of his claims he appealed to what he was doing. It was as if he had said, "The prediction is being fulfilled to the letter, and surely one who has fulfilled so much of the programme sketched in Isaiah, may be trusted to fulfill the rest of it." We can well believe that such an answer must have caused John's mind to come out from under its tempo-

rary cloud, and that from this time on to the end it was at rest in the confidence that Jesus clearly understood his Father's will and plan concerning him, and how he was to carry it out.

It was after the departure of these messengers that Jesus launched forth into an eulogy of John's character and work, which represents him as an uncompromising witness, who had shrunk from no hardship or suffering, whom no threats could intimidate, and whose insight into the spiritual character of the new kingdom placed him in the very front rank of the teachers of the old dispensation. He was the latest of the old prophets, the earliest herald of the new order of things, whose high mission it was to announce and to introduce the Messiah himself.

The next and final scene presented in the narrative of John, is the one preceding and immediately connected with his martyrdom. Herod himself, notwithstanding the Baptist's faithfulness in pointing out and denouncing his sins, seems to have borne him no enduring ill-will, and would doubtless gladly have shielded him from harm. He did, in fact, for a considerable period, stand between him and the persistent hate of Herodias. But she bided her time, and at last the coveted opportunity was presented. It was in connection with a sumptuous feast held in honor of Herod's birthday, to which all his courtiers and other dignitaries had been invited. As

the feast advanced and Herod and his guests were half intoxicated with wine, the daughter of Herodias, young and beautiful, came in and danced before them. In his drunken admiration of her, and in the presence of all the company, Herod made the rash promise that he would give her anything she might desire, even to the half of his kingdom. Retiring to confer with her mother, the girl soon returned with the shocking request for the head of John the Baptist. Realizing what he had done, but lacking the manliness of character and the moral courage to refuse a request he had no right to grant or even to recognize, with a despicable and cowardly fear of criticism and against his better judgment, Herod gave the order which brought the life of the noble and heroic Baptist to a tragic termination. But the hate of the wicked Herodias was gratified. She had compassed her revenge.

As for Herod, we have evidence from the narrative of the suffering which he afterward experienced, and the morbid terrors which a guilty conscience forced upon him. Small and mean as he was as a man, and contemptible in many ways, his conscience gave some signs of life. It is not impossible, indeed it is quite probable, that he experienced the deserved retribution of an ever-present sense of having been the murderer of this faithful friend, and that the horrible and bloody sight which he had witnessed, haunted him to his dying day. History tells us that both he and

Herodias came to a wretched and disgraceful end in exile.

While the name of John is perpetuated and honored, and his influence continues to be felt for righteousness in the world, the names of this guilty couple are only remembered with contempt and execration, and only for their connection with John's life. Thus, often, does history reverse judgments, and help to right the wrongs which good men sometimes experience at the hands of those in exalted station.

II

One of the first things which impresses us as we review the Baptist's life and character, is his faith. The Spirit of God seems to have wrought deeply within him, as he ever seeks to work in receptive natures. As he began early to meditate upon religious things, to review God's dealings with his people through their history; as he observed the emphasis which was everywhere in the divine Word laid upon righteousness as the condition of divine favor, and the condemnation which always rested upon sin; as he reflected upon the prophetic intimations of a coming King and kingdom, the conviction deepened within him that God is in the affairs of this world, and that his kingdom of righteousness and truth must ultimately prevail. This conviction grew until it became to him a mighty and burning reality, that that kingdom was about to be inaugurated in a

deeper and more definite sense than at any time before, and that the one condition of membership in it and of the reception of its blessings, was a righteous life. He perceived the shallowness of prevailing religious teachings and religious observances, and the false security of those who based their hopes of experiencing God's favor upon the mere question of genealogical descent from Abraham. It was rather an individual and personal matter, regardless of ancestry or any external conditions whatsoever, between each soul and God. Thus in his solitary life apart from men, and unhindered by any relations of dependence upon them, the realm of truth became more and more real to him, his faith in unseen things more vital, his confidence in God and his law and its final triumph, more deep and abounding. The things of God were, in fact, the most real to him of all things, and obedience to him the one law of his being. When at length the Spirit of God had come mightily upon him and he felt moved to proclaim his convictions, it was with a zeal and earnestness and spiritual force which produced a most profound impression upon all who heard him. His heart-searching plainness of speech, laying bare men's sins and hidden motives, must have been, to his hearers, a foretaste of the judgment day.

This fearlessness and courage were but the natural outgrowth of his strong and vital faith. With all his soul he believed in God and in the

triumph of his righteousness. He believed in future retribution too, and well might he urge men to repent and by so doing flee from the wrath to come. As for himself, what was there to fear from the threatenings of men? His life and all his interests were bound up in God.

Another quality in the character of John the Baptist, which grows upon us as we study him, is his humility. He was not tempted by his popularity to entertain any higher idea of his own function than that with which he set out. He was simply a forerunner of the Christ. His one and only thought was to give prominence to him and to point him out to others. "He must increase," he said, "I must decrease." Although it must have been a bitter experience to see the same multitudes which had crowded to listen to himself now rallying with even greater enthusiasm about the standard of another, there was no envy, no jealousy, on his part. No murmur escaped him. He remained loyal to the interests of the kingdom. Though one of the boldest of men, he was at the same time one of the humblest. Humility, indeed, was his distinguishing grace. And this, too, was a fruitage of his faith. Believing in Christ as he did, how could he feel otherwise? Christ's glory was his own, and he rejoiced unselfishly in whatever tended to promote it.

But even the strongest faith sometimes suffers eclipse. Hours of weakness and depression come

to the greatest and most devoted men of God. It was so with the Psalmist at times. "Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me?" It was so with Elijah, hero of the faith that he was—he had his juniper tree experience, when he seemed to be in the depths of despair. Even our Lord himself once seemed to feel that he was left by his Father to suffer alone. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" So with many good men to-day. It may be the result of physical depression, disease, or the outcome of mental distress, or doubt, or of deep sorrows which sometimes come with overwhelming force into the life, but however that may be, periods of spiritual obscuration come to them. So it was with John the Baptist after his strenuous public life in the interests of the new kingdom and the coming One. He, too, had his season of depression and doubt, which is perhaps but another way of saying that he was only human. Yet just as the natural sun continues to shine even when the clouds from earth hide his face for a season, so the Sun of Righteousness, though his face may seem to be obscured for a time for no other reason than that the mists of doubt, or trial, or physical ill, have risen to hide it, this Sun nevertheless continues to shine just the same. In due time, when these mists have cleared away, his face will again appear, as was no doubt the experience of John the Baptist after his season of depression.

The real greatness of John's character has not always been appreciated. This may be owing to the meagerness of our information concerning him. And yet, although the records and the details of his life are few, the picture presented of him is drawn in the clearest lines. From every point of view he is seen to have been a remarkable man. He was a pioneer in a realm of thought and effort which at that time was essentially new and untried. He was great in his insight into truth, and although his views of the Messiah and his kingdom may not have been entirely developed, they were far in advance of the prophets of the Old Testament, and of the best thought of his time. He was great in his character, and it was this, primarily, which gave him his power. That there may have been imperfections in it should not be surprising in view of his intense nature, his lofty ideals, his devotion to righteousness, his uncompromising hatred of evil, and his impatience with the hypocrisies and sins of those in high places. But any defects of narrowness or uncharitableness on his part may have been but the marks of crudeness and undevelopment, and do not seriously detract from the lofty grandeur of his character as a whole. Especially was he great in his self-effacement. He seemed to have no consciousness of himself apart from the cause which he espoused. His life was merged in that of his Master.

And yet, great and honored as he was in char-

acter and spirit, and in his providential mission, John stood on a lower plane of divine revelation than even the least or humblest of those who were actually in the kingdom. Not that he was not, in spirit, or did not become, a member of this kingdom himself, but that as to position, or point of view, he stood on a lower plane—at the transition point between the old and the new. He was the greatest of the old order of prophets, which included some of the most notable names in Jewish history, but in the matter of privilege, the humblest in the new kingdom was in advance of him.

As to the relation more particularly of John's work to the great movement which was soon to be inaugurated, and which was inaugurated even before his own work was completed, it was many-sided. It helped to break up the fallow ground of Jewish formalism and religious hollowness. His message was startling, in the best sense sensational. The attention of the people was turned to their own condition, and to the need of a radical change in their lives not only, but in their thought also, before the new and hoped-for better state of things could be brought about. There must be repentance, first of all, more deep and radical than mere ceremonial purification. There must be an actual breaking off of sins, a veritable revolution in men's lives. More than this, there must be the uprooting of ideas which were fundamentally erroneous, like that, for in-

stance, which could make mere genealogical descent the condition of divine acceptance. There must be a new and higher idea of the kingdom, too, and of the function of him who was to inaugurate it, than the merely material conception which so largely prevailed at the time. All, in fact, which the Baptist said and did, was called for, grew out of existing conditions, and had a most direct relation to that which was to come. It may be questioned indeed whether Jesus would have had the immediate hearing which he did, had not it been for John's work of preparation, which filled the heart of the nation with expectancy and hope. He helped to prepare men for it mentally and morally, and to prepare popular sentiment for it also, and for its spiritual character. Imperfect as his work was, it nevertheless completely fitted in with the movement which followed.

CHAPTER V

CHRISTIANITY INAUGURATED

Christianity, as a religious movement, had an historical beginning. Its founder, Jesus Christ, stands before us as one of the definite personages of human history. The facts in regard to his race, country, birth, and times, are as well attested as any other facts of the period in which he lived. Attempts to account for the inception of this movement—which is now the most vital factor in the world's progress—on any other than historical grounds, have signally failed. In the words of another: "His name was Jesus; his time, the latter part of the eighth century of the Roman period, and the beginning of the Christian era; his race the Hebrew people; his country, Palestine in Syria; the place of his death, Jerusalem; the Roman procurator at the time, Pontius Pilate; the emperor, Tiberius."¹

Says Dr. George P. Fisher of Yale University:

"The facts pertaining to Jesus Christ and his life, his mighty deeds, remarkable as they are, his resurrection from the dead, are all established, as they must

* Outlines of Theology—Dr. W. N. Clarke, p. 261.

be, if at all, in precisely the same way as facts in regard to any other historical character; as Julius Cæsar, Alexander, Socrates, Plato, Cromwell, and others, only with far greater certainty. The records of his life, written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and to some extent by Paul, regarded simply as any other historical documents, and entirely apart from any thought of their relation to the Bible, as they must be in matters so momentous—considered simply as secular or profane history, on the same footing with it—these records have been subjected to the severest imaginable tests, and to the fires of a remorseless criticism, as no other records ever were, and this for ages; and yet so strong have they proved themselves to be, that some of the most able and determined opponents of the inspiration of the Scriptures and of the supernatural, have been constrained to acknowledge them as truly historical and entitled to credit on grounds entirely apart from any theory of inspiration.”

This is the situation in regard to the place in human history of the Founder of the great world movement of Christianity.

EARLY LIFE AND PREPARATION OF JESUS

The advent of Christ had long been foreshadowed by the Hebrew prophets, as we have seen. Everything in the life of that people, their religion and their history, pointed forward to this event. When at length it occurred, it was at an opportune time, both in the world's history and in that of the Jews, although, as a matter of

fact, but a very few devout souls, out of the earth's teeming millions, were prepared to receive him. He grew up in the midst of human conditions. He was born in Bethlehem of Judea, though the home of his parents was in Nazareth of Galilee. Both Matthew and Luke give accounts of his birth, the latter more full in details, and expressed with rare beauty of language. The infant Christ was visited by the shepherds, also later by the wise men from the East. When Herod, concerned for the stability of his throne, heard rumors of the birth of a prospective king and ordered the slaughter of all the male children of Bethlehem, his parents fled with him to Egypt for safety. Upon the death of Herod not long after, they returned to Palestine and to their Nazareth home, bringing the child with them. Here the years of his youth and young manhood were spent.

We know but little of this period of his life. For the most part it is a blank. But from our knowledge of that time, of that land, and of the customs which then prevailed, we confidently infer what some of the influences were in the midst of and by means of which his mental and moral development took place.

There was, first, the home life of Jesus, with its religious atmosphere, even at a time when Pharisaism dominated the life of the people. The example of godly parents was constantly before him. By them moral precepts were inculcated, a knowl-

edge of the Jewish Scriptures was imparted, and a love for them was fostered. Then there were all the influences which proceeded from the synagogue and its worship, where for many years Jesus heard the law read and expounded, and from the school connected with it which he doubtless attended. There was, further, the influence upon him of the social life about him and in the midst of which he grew up, with the knowledge of human nature which he must have gained from contact with it. He had a genuine sympathy with men, and when he entered upon his ministry he understood their nature and their needs. Added to this was the influence upon him of the trade which he followed and the relations into which this naturally brought him with his fellow men. Moreover, there was nature, with all its attractions—and these were many in the vicinity of his Nazareth home—whose effect upon one of his temperament and receptivity could hardly have been otherwise than constantly uplifting and ennobling. In the truest, fullest sense, he was a lover of it. That it was thus enriching to him is abundantly confirmed by the frequent allusions to scenes in nature in his public discourses later.

His visits to Jerusalem could not but have exerted a molding influence upon his development. The historical and religious associations of places passed through on the way thither, of the Holy City itself and the Temple services, would naturally produce a profound impression and con-

tribute not a little to the unfolding of his deeper life. These impressions would be strengthened by every succeeding visit, if, as is likely, they were made either annually or only from time to time in addition to the one visit at twelve years of age of which we have account. Above all, there were the workings within him of the Spirit of God, influencing his thought, deepening his nature, imparting to him spiritual insight and by which he was enabled to discern the real significance of the Old Testament Scriptures, upon which he must have meditated much, but whose real meaning many of the teachers of his day utterly missed.

Thus the mental powers of Jesus gradually unfolded, his character slowly ripened, and his spiritual nature developed. He was subject to his parents, an obedient son. By the spirit he manifested he grew in favor with both God and men. He owed much to the molding influence of external agencies, but more to the inworking of God's Spirit. No doubt from this latter, in connection with his study of the Scriptures, he became growingly conscious of the mission which lay before him. He very likely came to recognize in himself the living counterpart of the picture of the coming One—which had been clearly outlined by the ancient prophets—who was to redeem his people.

And yet, with all his preparation, which had been long continued at Nazareth, something fur-

ther was still required before he should finally be fitted for entering upon his great mission. This final and completing preparation was now to take place.

FORMAL ENTRANCE UPON HIS MISSION

The event which terminated the private life of Jesus and ushered him into his Messianic work, was his baptism in the Jordan. It was in connection with this that his real character was made known to the Baptist. The latter had hesitated to perform the rite upon him because of something which led him to feel that he had no need of it. Jesus' request for baptism was finally yielded to, however, on the ground that he wished in this way formally to fall in with the new movement. When immediately thereafter John perceived the Spirit of God descending and resting upon him in the form of a dove—which had already been made known to him as the sign by which the coming One was to be recognized—he knew that the One whom he had been heralding was before him. In confirmation, a voice from heaven was heard declaring, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." John did not, perhaps could not, foresee how widely the Messianic work of Jesus was to differ from his own, but both he and Jesus recognized this as the formal call and setting apart of the latter for his great mission and his spiritual anointing for it. Its full significance now burst upon him. Through all his

private life he had been moving toward this very experience, but whether or not he had fully grasped the nature of his mission before, there was no uncertainty in his mind about it now. His work was to be primarily spiritual. The kingdom which he was to found was to be a spiritual kingdom. His own headship of it was to be a spiritual headship. This, however, was distinctly contrary to the prevalent conceptions and expectations of his countrymen, contradicting them at nearly every point. In their thought, the coming kingdom was to be essentially political and material. It was in fact to be, or rather to become, a world wide empire, with Jerusalem as its center, and the Messiah, God's direct representative and a wonder worker, its temporal head. But while it was to be a kingdom of God, it was yet to be, primarily, a Jewish kingdom.

In these widely divergent conceptions of the kingdom and of the Messiah, we are doubtless to find the real significance of the temptation which Jesus underwent immediately following his baptism. For the Spirit, we read, at once drove or impelled him to go into the wilderness. It was the final stage of his preparation. It was to be a season of testing. As Jesus meditated upon his new and strange recent experience and upon the future which lay before him, various questions were suggested. What course should he pursue? How employ the miraculous powers which had been imparted to him? Should he in any degree, or

how far, fall in with the prevailing conceptions as to the kind of kingdom which the Messiah was to be instrumental in founding? Or should he hold to the purely spiritual conception, which he fully believed to be the divine thought? To remain loyal to the latter would be to disappoint the people, who would resent and resist such a scheme. On the other hand, to take the leadership of his people, put himself at their head, and raise the standard of the new kingdom in the popular understanding of that term, would mean a personal popularity, a speedy success, and a full realization of the highest earthly ambition. The temptation as a whole—which is ascribed to the Evil One—had reference to just this, the three separate temptations described being but different phases of the same thing. From this struggle, which continued for a period of forty days, Jesus emerged completely triumphant. The adversary was defeated at every point. From the purpose to remain loyal to his convictions and stand for the purely spiritual, Jesus never afterward for a single moment swerved. He was ready now, after this successful test, to enter upon his ministry in full view of its possible and probable consequences, perhaps even discerning its final outcome in his own death. He did not count upon an easy or speedy triumph. He clearly perceived the obstacles, growing out of the selfishness and blindness of men, which were in the way. But the die was cast. There was nothing for him to do but

to go forward to the task which his Father had given him to do, and to follow on in the path of obedience to that Father's will wherever it might lead, even, if necessary, unto death.

From the very first Jesus assumed, in his own mind, the rôle of the true Messiah, and there was nothing on his part in his entire course which was inconsistent with this fact. He was not recognized by others in this character, at once, or for a considerable period, did not expect to be, saw that it was better, as things were, that he should not be. On more occasions than one, in fact, he distinctly attempted to prevent it. Until the time was ripe for it, he could better carry on his work *incognito*, as it were, save as the impression of his own character and life upon individuals here and there might awaken conviction as to who he really was. That he had been definitely called of God to the Messianic mission, he had not the slightest doubt, and if he had been divinely called to it, there was not the slightest question that he would be enabled to accomplish it, however difficult it might be. The gift of the Holy Spirit, who had been given to him without measure at his baptism, would fully equip him for his task, imparting all needed girding, insight, wisdom, power.

Whether at the outset he had a perfectly clear and detailed plan of procedure in his mind to cover his entire career, or whether much was left to the development of circumstances, it is not vital

to determine. He certainly had a clear conception of the central aim of his ministry—to found a spiritual kingdom whose seat should be in the hearts of men—and no doubt the main features of a plan for realizing that purpose had been definitely formulated by him. He was not to depend upon political and material weapons, but rather upon the power of love and the force of truth. The passive rather than the sterner and more aggressive virtues were to be his reliance. The kingdom which he was to establish was to be a fraternity whose members were to be bound together by a moral and spiritual bond, with love toward himself as its head. In general he would seek to promote it by public and private teaching, by his works, especially of healing, and not least of all by his own example and spirit, winning men to himself.

As for the future of this kingdom and to promote it, he would train up a company of men who should be specially commissioned to be its ambassadors. Until the spiritual nature of this kingdom should, in some degree, have supplanted in the popular thought the prevailing but mistaken conceptions of the people, he would refrain from calling attention to himself as its divinely anointed spiritual head. Later he could do so to better advantage. So in his earlier ministry he laid chief emphasis upon the kingdom, its nature, and the conditions of membership in it, following somewhat along the lines of the preparatory work

of John. He knew well that he himself would be misunderstood and was prepared for it. Even his nearest friends would imperfectly comprehend him, and this he must endure. They would be unable to appreciate his own explanations of himself and his mission save in the most rudimentary way. His life would be a solitary life even in the midst of his most devoted followers. They would fully understand him only after his departure from them when the Spirit had come upon them. But though unappreciated by men, he would have the companionship of his heavenly Father, with whom he spent whole nights often, in communion. His life was to be on a far higher plane than that of those about him. But his vision covered long ranges, and he was indifferent to many things which would naturally disturb others. Even about his own success, humanly speaking, he seemed largely unconcerned—the future would take care of that. His work was really only to set the great movement of the kingdom in motion. True, he prepared the conditions and gathered a nucleus of adherents for it, but at the time of his death he may be said to have given it only a start.

So he lived his wonderful life, breathed forth his sweet and beautiful spirit, bore patiently the ill-treatment and abuse accorded him by the Jewish leaders, was not carried away by the superficial enthusiasm of the people which from time to time arose, worked miracles in the interest of

suffering humanity but never for the advancement of his own personal ends, least of all to gratify the curiosity of men for a sign. He taught the loftiest sentiments, met and controverted his opponents as they sought to entangle him in his talk, never for a moment forgot who he was, whence he came, the nature and purpose of his exalted mission, and with fitting dignity and rare insight adjusted himself to the various exigencies as they arose. With a sublime confidence he awaited the final judgment of men. Sometime, it might be ages hence, the whole world would know and recognize him as its Lord and King.

While the general order of events in the life of Jesus may be determined with a good degree of probability, we must be content to remain uncertain concerning the place to be given to many incidents and to much of his teaching. Any attempt to arrange an orderly account of the way in which he set about his work is beset with difficulty. Still, there are a few landmarks by which we may gain a sufficiently correct outline for all practical purposes.

THE JUDEAN MINISTRY

The records of the earlier work of Jesus, sometimes called the Judean ministry, are exceedingly meager and fragmentary. From the fourth Gospel alone we learn of it. It was confined to Jerusalem and Judea and covered perhaps eight

or nine months. It was fitting that the Messiah should begin his ministry at Jerusalem, the religious center of the land. Here, in connection with a passover feast, he first publicly presented himself to the people and began to teach. He made no claims. It would have been unwise to do so at this early stage. His plan seemed rather to be to leave the people to draw their own inferences in view of the manifestation of himself which he made and the things which he did. His initial act was to drive out the traders who were profaning the holy precincts of the Temple. This seems to have been performed with such an out-flashing of his righteous indignation that they could but quail before him. Although the leaders challenged his authority, he went steadily forward, teaching, working many "signs," winning for himself a more or less enthusiastic though doubtless unintelligent following. Although the leaders in general manifested no sympathy, antagonism rather, a few of them were deeply impressed. Among the latter was Nicodemus, who came to him by night to inform himself more fully as to his character and aims. To him Jesus made it plain that the kingdom of God was essentially spiritual, and that no one could realize its privileges save through a moral change so radical that it could only be described as a new birth.

But there was not much receptivity for spiritual truth in Jerusalem, where the people were under the domination of the scribes and Phari-

sees, and the impression made proved to be only superficial, in reality, however deep it may have seemed at the time. So Jesus betook himself to the country, the regions round about Jerusalem. Here the people were more impressionable, and multitudes attended his preaching. The common people, i. e., the people in general, we read, heard him gladly. So far as we can learn, his work here was of much the same nature as that of John, who still continued his public ministry, though with diminishing crowds as compared with those which flocked to listen to Jesus. If the latter wrought any miracles at this time, we have no account of them. As to the real spiritual results of his work, they were no doubt limited. With its intense conservatism, Judea was not ready for his mission, and he was led to feel that, at present, further effort in this region would be unwise. The hostile influence, also, of the leaders at Jerusalem would naturally be felt outside the city, through the province, to a greater or less extent. It is very probable that this fact—this all-pervasive spirit of prejudice and opposition—had not a little to do with his determination to seek the freer atmosphere of Galilee as the scene of his future labors. Moreover, it was about this time that John the Baptist, because of his plain speaking in denunciation of the open and flagrant sins of Herod Antipas, was arrested and imprisoned. This also doubtless had its influence in determining Jesus to leave Judea, es-

pecially if, as is supposed, the Pharisees had any part in bringing it about. He may have apprehended similar treatment for himself were he to remain.

On his way northward from Judea to Galilee, Jesus went by way of Jacob's well in Samaria. Here he had opportunity of showing his freedom from the Jewish prejudice against the Samaritans, also against women, for it was here that occurred the incident of his conversation on the water of life with the woman who came to draw from the well. To her he made the first explicit announcement of his Messiahship. Many of the Samaritans believed on him during the two days that he was constrained to remain here. After this, in Galilee he entered upon a new and more advanced stage of his work.

THE GALILEAN MINISTRY

Jesus' ministry in Galilee was characterized by incessant activity; often he had not time either to eat or to sleep. His fame as a public teacher had preceded him, and curiosity to see and to hear him was widespread. Great crowds attended him wherever he went. In a short time all Galilee was ringing with his name. Reports of him spread also beyond its borders, and multitudes from all the surrounding provinces joined with the native population in following him on his tours through the country. Then there were his mighty works, especially in healing the sick and

diseased and casting out evil spirits. Instead of being isolated as before, miracles were now common,—his ministry was rich in them. Many are recorded, doubtless many more were performed. His preaching here was less of the preparatory order than in Judea;—more of the direct, positive, constructive gospel.

The reason of this great and widespread interest was not due to any declaration on Jesus' part that he was the Messiah, which in itself would have stirred the people deeply. On the contrary he, for the most part, held this fact in reserve. So grossly materialistic were the popular expectations and hopes on this subject, that any such declaration as yet would have been misinterpreted and could only have resulted in infinite mischief. Until there was preparation to receive such an announcement in its true inward and spiritual meaning, it was wiser to hold it in abeyance. Jesus prudently withheld the full disclosure of his claims until he should have time to lay the foundations deep and broad of the new kingdom. At the same time, the more thoughtful among the people could hardly fail to infer much from his character, his work, and his utterances, as to who he was, and this he did not discourage. It was, in fact, what he wished them to do.

That which in particular awakened the enthusiastic interest of the people was no doubt to be found in the nature and method of his teaching. It was different from that to which the people

had been accustomed. It was upon the most vital themes, was presented in the most simple and winsome way, was always concrete, never abstract, and was given with a freshness, a depth of conviction, and with a sense of authority which were entirely new to them. Never before had they heard one speak as he did. "He spake as one having authority and not as their scribes." The teaching of the latter was purely mechanical, merely a repetition of what some scribe or scribes of the past had said. His illustrations were exceedingly simple and were very numerous, constituted, in fact, the great bulk of his teaching. They were drawn from every source—from nature largely, even, also, from the commonest affairs of every-day life. With its peculiar charm, to which his own attractive personality was to be added, his teaching was calculated to arrest the attention of all who listened to him. The profoundest truths were made intelligible to the common people, while the spirit in which they were presented was so kind, so sympathetic, so pervaded by love, that all classes, even the depraved, were drawn to him and heard him gladly. Then, too, the mighty deeds of Jesus did much to intensify the popular excitement. In addition to works of healing, occasional miracles were wrought in the realm of nature, such, for instance, as stilling the tempest and raising the dead to life. Two instances of the latter belong to this period. Such stupendous works as these would naturally

produce a most profound impression. Yet they were never wrought merely to gratify curiosity—they were but the spontaneous outgrowth or expression of the divine fullness which resided within him. It was as natural to him, being such as he was, to work miracles, as ordinary deeds are natural to ordinary men. They were not by themselves proof of his Messiahship, but since he made claim to be the Messiah sent from God, this was a divine indorsement of his claim. They were always wrought to bring benefit and blessing to others. At the same time Jesus did not consider these works, astonishing as they were, as his most important function. They were distinctly subordinated to other expressions of his character and purpose. Faith founded on them alone, he regarded as of an inferior quality.

Thus everywhere the interest grew, and the popularity of Jesus continued during all that year of his Galilean ministry. This was particularly the case in the cities and towns about the shores of the sea or lake of Galilee, the most populous part of the country, where much of his time was spent. The Gospels give many interesting details of this period.

After healing the nobleman's son at Capernaum, Jesus himself being at Cana at the time, he visited his Nazareth home. Here his implied Messianic claims led his former townsmen to try to kill him. Escaping, he took up his abode at Capernaum on the sea of Galilee, the commercial

capital of the province, making this his home during all his subsequent ministry in this region.

Among the notable events of this period was Jesus' choice of the twelve after a night of prayer, with a view to the perpetuation of his work after his own death which he now clearly discerned would be the outcome of his ministry. So bitterly hostile were the Jewish leaders at Jerusalem, their influence early began to make itself felt even at this distance, and it soon became evident that they would be satisfied with nothing less than his life. In addition to some who were already loosely his followers, he chose others to make up the number twelve. These he now formally set apart for their great mission. At once he began to instruct them as to the nature of the kingdom which he was seeking to establish. This instruction is embodied in what is termed his sermon on the mount. Though primarily designed for the twelve, it was also addressed to the larger number of disciples from whom they had been chosen, together with the greater multitude who had gathered to listen to him. He made authoritative statement as to the spiritual character of this kingdom, his own relation to it, the condition of membership in it, and the spirit by which members should be actuated. The relation of men to God and to each other was pointed out. The underlying thought of the sermon was *righteousness*, rectitude of the inner life primarily, in sharp contrast with the prevailing emphasis upon mere

external correctness of action. At every step it came into collision with the superstitious and ostentatious teachings of the scribes and Pharisees, whose "righteousness" must be exceeded by anyone who would become a member of this kingdom.

The disciples thus set apart were now to be continuously with Jesus, to listen to his public teaching, to witness his works, to receive his private instructions, and in order, also, that he might make his own personal impress upon them more effective. In these various ways they would gradually become fitted to carry on the work of the kingdom after him. Among these were the two pairs of brothers, James and John, Andrew and Peter, who had been among the first to seek a closer acquaintance with him. All were from the middle and lower classes of society, were evidently possessed of a reasonable education for the time, and all were chosen upon the ground of a certain moral aptitude for the mission which was later to be committed to them. They were not at once to understand all that Jesus said and did. There was much for them to unlearn as well as positively to be taught, and they were slow of apprehension. Still, the form of Christ's teaching was such as would lodge great principles in their minds. These would gradually be grasped by them, especially later, when, under the Spirit's influence, they would be brought to their recollection and be rendered luminous.

The year was crowded with incidents. Even

those which are given in the Gospels probably constitute but a small proportion of those which actually occurred. At one time the press was so great that men let down one who sought healing through the flat roof of the house in which Jesus was teaching. At another he crossed the lake, calming the storm which arose on the way, and on the other side healed the Gadarene demoniac. On his return to Capernaum he raised Jairus' daughter from the dead. On many occasions he showed his power over evil spirits by casting them out. When the Jerusalem leaders charged him with accomplishing this result through being in league with Beelzebub, the chief of evil spirits, he showed the absurdity of the charge. It would simply mean a house divided against itself,—he invading the realm of Satan and overcoming some of his subjects, Satan himself coöperating.

Not only did Jesus himself make a number of evangelistic tours through the country, attended by his disciples, crowds following, he at one time sent the disciples themselves out two by two, to heal the sick, to announce the nearness of the kingdom, and to relieve the spiritual destitution of the people. When at length they learned of the murder of John the Baptist by Herod Antipas, at the instigation of his acting wife Herodias—a murder which shocked the whole country—the disciples returned to their Master, perhaps fearing violence to themselves. It was at this time that Jesus proposed that they all go

apart and rest a while on the northeast shore of the Sea of Galilee just east of where the Jordan River flows into it. But they could not escape the multitudes who immediately followed the course of the boat on foot along the shore.

The culminating point of Christ's public ministry may be said to have been reached at this time—for it was here that the great miracle of feeding the 5,000 was wrought which so roused the enthusiasm of the people that they were clamorous to make him king. He seemed to them, at that moment, completely to fulfill their conception of the expected Messiah. Under such a leadership as his, their nation could certainly free itself from the hated Roman dominion, soon take its place as the one great power of the world to which all nations would gradually become subject. The kingdom of God, as they regarded it, would be set up.

But such a career and such an outcome were the farthest possible from Christ's thought and purpose. To have yielded to the enthusiasm of the people would not only have been to invite instant trouble with the Roman government on the ground of treason and rebellion, it would have been to bring his entire mission to naught. All this seems to have been foreshadowed in his wilderness temptation at the beginning, when the battle between the material and the spiritual was once for all fought out in his mind. There was no temptation now. The thought of such a thing as

setting up an earthly kingdom was not to be, and was not tolerated for a moment. So Jesus sent his disciples away, quietly dismissed the multitude as soon as practicable, while he himself withdrew to the retirement of a mountain near by to spend the night in communing with his Father. It was a time when it was necessary to save himself from his misguided friends. It was that same night, toward morning, that he went to the storm-tossed disciples who were unable to make headway, walking on the water.

When the people realized that Jesus did not listen to their proposal, and more than ever after they heard his sermon the next day at Capernaum on the bread of life—in which the true spiritual nature of his mission was set forth, but which they in their unspiritual state were unable to grasp—they were filled with disappointment, even chagrin. He was not the kind of a man, after all, they were looking for as the Messiah of their hopes. Then that happened which would doubtless have happened at an earlier time but for Jesus' caution and tact in holding off the crisis as long as possible,—the popular enthusiasm subsided, and there was a general falling away among those who had followed and supported him before. The time of sifting had come. It would now be made evident how many could really be depended upon. About this time, also, the embitterment of the Pharisees against Christ seemed especially severe, and their antagonism was open and de-

clared. This was a distinct turning point in his ministry. It was a kind of watershed, as it has been termed, marking the summit of the ascent and the beginning of the descent. Not before this had the popular enthusiasm reached such a height, not afterward did it attain so high a point again. His public ministry might almost be said to have practically ended, certainly so in Galilee.

CONTENTS OF HIS TEACHING

The subject matter or contents of Christ's teaching may be referred to here as well as anywhere. It was focused upon a few burning questions of the time of which the central was the kingdom of God, which was specially dwelt upon in the sermon on the mount. This, indeed, lay at the foundation of all his teachings, as was the case with John the Baptist. The latter was soon left far behind, for while the teaching of the forerunner could be summed up very briefly, that of Jesus expanded and ramified in a thousand different directions. It attached itself to what was most central and vital in the Old Testament and carried it forward to its legitimate outcome. Truths which appeared there only in germ, now blossomed out in their fullness and beauty. The one element of the popular conception of the kingdom which Jesus took pains definitely to discard, was the idea that it was to be political and material. That which he came to inaugurate was

to be entirely spiritual in its character, its seat to be in the hearts of men, its controlling motive love, its membership to be made up of all those, of whatever race or rank, Gentile as well as Jew, who would renounce their sins, be loyal to the new kingdom and its interests, and to himself as its founder and head.

Christ emphasized the fatherhood of God in his teaching. He was not simply the creator, or a distant and unapproachable ruler or king, rather he was the loving father of all, interested in them individually, easily accessible, and in his providence he had made provision for their wants, as he had, indeed, for all created life. While the idea of the divine fatherhood was not unknown to the Jewish people, their thought was rather of his relation to the nation than to the individual. But although God was the father of all men, not all, in Christ's use of the term, were his sons, although all might become so if they would. As to himself, Jesus employed the expression, "Son of Man," no doubt with Messianic import, even though not currently so understood, as a self-designation. As "Son of God," his divine character in the fullest sense was the recognized significance of the expression.

Christ laid stress upon the Paraclete or Holy Spirit, whom he declared he would send, after his departure, to be his invisible representative among men. It would be a new spiritual force in the human heart, whose function would be to com-

fort, to inspire, to transform, to empower for bearing witness, and to direct the disciples' activities for the kingdom. As to the nature of this new life, it was to be primarily inward, which in turn would make righteous the life without. Salvation was to be release from the dominating power of sin, this to be realized in growing degree, the simple condition being repentance and faith. This insured both forgiveness for the past, and the inworking of divine grace for present and future needs. The future life with its two conditions, its rewards and punishments, was set forth as a mighty reality. These were some of the great doctrinal teachings of Jesus, in most cases the direct opposite of the views then current. The fact of a future life, however, was admitted by the Pharisees, but was rejected by the Sadducees, who were the materialists of the period.

In regard to prevailing practices among the Jews in their daily living, Jesus did not hesitate to criticise and denounce them if occasion seemed to require it, as was often the case. In regard to their strict Sabbath observance, he disturbed Jewish conceit by declaring that the law expressly provided for acts of mercy even on that day, thus justifying his own works of healing on the Sabbath, which so often offended them and aroused their hostility. The Sabbath, he said, was made for man, for his good, to be his servant, rather than that man was made for the Sabbath, to be his exacting master. Finally he, Christ, was him-

self greater than the Sabbath, and was not to be bound by mere rules in regard to it.

Again, the possibility of evading filial obligations through some technicality of scribal origin, was severely condemned. The duty to care for dependent parents was clear, the dictate of the commonest gratitude and justice, and yet by the process of dedicating one's possessions to God—pronouncing the word "Corban" (meaning dedication) over them—one might still retain them. This, Jesus declared, set at naught the plain commandment of God to honor one's parents. So in regard to the binding character of certain oaths, their practice in regard to this was denounced in the severest terms. If a man swore by the Temple, for instance, he was not obliged to keep his oath, but if by the gold of its adornment, he was bound by it. The oath had no value if one swore by the altar, but it was sacred if taken upon the offering. Such was the casuistry by which the scribes settled questions. Christ declared that the only safe way was to discard the use of oaths altogether. Communications between men should be yea, yea, and nay, nay.

In the matter of eating and the prohibition of certain kinds of food as unclean—on the strict observance of which the Jews prided themselves—they must have been greatly shocked at Christ's saying that a man was not defiled by that which entered into his mouth, but rather by what came out of it—not by what he ate, but by what

he said and did. In regard to the many costly sacrifices and offerings which prevailed in connection with the Temple worship, he saw no special value in them. The most acceptable offerings which could be made were inward, the sacrifices of a broken and a contrite heart, as had long before been declared. To him, the Temple was a house of prayer rather than a place for the slaughter of beasts. So outraged did he feel by the traffic which was carried on there, that he called it "a house of merchandise and a den of thieves."

As to the acts of men, these were to be judged by the *motives* which inspired them. Only in this way could their moral quality be determined. Anything prompted merely by a desire for the praises of men was of no value in God's sight. This was true whether, as was not unusual, one prayed in public in order to be seen of men and to receive credit for his piety, or gave alms, or fasted. There was no merit whatever in deeds prompted by such motives. A tree could only be known by its fruits, and Judaism, as it then existed, judged by this standard, was worthless. The time for its overthrow had come. Already the axe of destruction was laid at its roots. So much was made of the non-essentials of conduct, Christ said, that the greater and graver things pertaining to it were frequently entirely ignored. He went so far in his condemnation of those who were responsible for this state of things, or for continuing it, as to accuse them

of making clean the outside of the cup and platter, and of being entirely neglectful of that which was within. They were like whited sepulchers—outwardly beautiful, but within full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness.

It is not strange that by such teachings Jesus should have brought himself into disfavor, but there seemed to be no other way. The situation was one which called urgently for a new order of things and a more spiritual religion. This he gave to them in his gospel, whose principles went to the foundation of things, and must, from the nature of the case, entirely revolutionize prevailing views and practices.

SPECIAL TRAINING OF THE TWELVE

The Galilean ministry proper having been practically completed by the feeding of the five thousand and the incidents immediately following, and the way not being open for continuing his public work further for the present, Jesus embraces the opportunity of devoting himself more specifically and systematically to the important task of training the disciples for their future responsibilities. Upon them will rest the burden of carrying on the work which he has begun, but as yet they are far from being prepared for it. This training, however, was not an easy undertaking. Their minds were full of the perverted religious ideas of the time, and these must be uprooted. They were saturated with the spirit of

pride, prejudice, and exclusiveness, peculiar to their race, and this must be put away. They had little conception of a true spiritual life and a spiritual kingdom, and they were slow to apprehend spiritual things. Moreover, they were men of differing temperaments and tastes and varying powers of appreciation, so that no one type or method of training would be adapted to all. Each one, in addition to the general training which all were to receive in common, would require a special training suited to his own peculiar needs, if the best that was in him was to be brought out. Still, through constant association with Jesus in his public and private life, listening to his teachings, sharing in his work as they were able, being brought into constant contact with his beneficent and unselfish spirit, helped, too, by their own deep and growing love and confidence toward him personally, the disciples would in due time be measurably fitted for the work for which they had been chosen. Perhaps the most important part of their training, after all, would consist in the simple fact of their being with such an one as himself. The unconscious influence upon them of his own daily life and spirit, would be beyond computation and of priceless worth. Moreover, by observing his tactful ways of dealing with men, of adapting himself and his methods to individual needs, and of embracing, even making opportunities for kindly ministry to others, they could not fail to learn much in the way of

practical wisdom for their own future guidance. Thus gradually they would be enlightened in understanding, broadened in their sympathies, emancipated from the mere customs, superstitions, traditions, and commandments of men, their tempers purged of worldly ambition, selfishness and pride, and they became measurably fitted at length for their great mission of being leaders of a spiritual and universal religious movement. This preparation would be completed, after Christ's departure from them, by the bestowment upon them in special measure and power, of the Holy Spirit.

As it would be difficult to devote himself exclusively to the disciples at Capernaum or in Galilee, where distractions and interruptions would be likely to be numerous and frequent, Christ concluded to go with them into a kind of semi-retirement for a season by journeying beyond the borders of the province. First, they went into Phœnicia. It was here, in the regions of Tyre and Sidon, that the incident occurred of the healing of the Syro-Phœnician woman's daughter. Although Jesus was constantly devoting himself now to teaching his disciples, he did not refuse to engage in helpful ministries to others if occasion seemed to demand.

After remaining in this section of the country for a time, Christ and the disciples journeyed eastward across the Lebanon mountains in the direction of Damascus, but turned to the southward,

evidently, before reaching there. They go to the east side of the Sea of Galilee by way of the northern portion of Decapolis. Here also they remain for a considerable period, Christ all the time continuing his instructions. Then the people again began to come to him, sometimes in large numbers, somewhat as before in Galilee. Here the feeding of the four thousand took place. The fact that all four of the Gospels record the feeding of the five thousand, some months before this, and two of them this incident in addition, together with the fact of numerous differences in the details, and that Jesus himself referred to them as separate incidents, would seem clearly to make this a transaction independent of the other.

Later still, Jesus is with the disciples in the vicinity of Cæsarea Philippi. It was here that the notable incident,—which may be regarded as marking a definite crisis or climax in the training of the twelve,—of the great confession of Christ's Messiahship by Peter, speaking for the entire company of the disciples, took place. The time had come when Jesus felt that a probing of the disciples in regard to their estimate of his own character and claims was important. They had learned much, but there was much more to be taught, and of a much more advanced nature. They had heard his teachings, had seen his mighty works, had lived with him, coming into closest

contact. What was their real thought concerning him? Had they any convictions on the subject of his Messiahship which were deep and strong, which were spiritual and abiding? He first inquires of them as to the opinions of people in general concerning himself. He would in this way introduce the subject. They report the differing views which were entertained. Then he asks abruptly, "But whom say ye that I am?" It was a crucial moment with them, and no less so with Jesus himself. Much depended upon their answer. It was true that they had taken him as the Messiah at the start, but their views then were extremely superficial and crude, for they knew little or nothing about him. What do they think now, after all that they have seen and learned concerning him? It was Peter, Peter-like, who promptly answered, speaking for the twelve, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus' heart was rejoiced by the confession. God himself, he declared, had inspired it within them. They may not have risen to the highest point of faith even yet, there was still room for advance, but this was a distinct step of progress, and with this question settled in their minds, he can go forward to other and more advanced stages in his instructions. It was upon this great truth, uttered by Peter in a representative capacity, speaking for all,—viz: faith in himself as the divine Son of God, that the kingdom

which he was establishing was to rest. This was its corner stone and against it the gates of Hades would not be able to prevail.

The question settled as to the attitude of the disciples toward him and his Messiahship, Jesus now seeks to prepare their minds for his coming death, which he clearly foresaw. They do not fully apprehend the significance of what he says, least of all in regard to his resurrection from the dead, of which he speaks. Only through the quickening and enlightening influence of the Holy Spirit later, will they be able fully to grasp the meaning of his words.

The transfiguration took place shortly after the great confession, probably on some spur of Mount Hermon. The conversation of the heavenly visitants, Moses and Elijah, with Jesus, had to do with this same subject, viz.: the decease which he was to accomplish at Jerusalem. Although even yet their minds did not fully take in the fact, over which they would stumble later, a profound impression was made upon the three disciples, Peter, James, and John, who were privileged to be present. As for Jesus himself, he seems to have become girded afresh by the experience for the ordeals which awaited him, and to become much more bold than usual in his public utterances as to coming judgments upon the Jewish people and with reference to the progress and ultimate triumph of his kingdom.

THE PEREAN MINISTRY

After Jesus had devoted some months, in his partial retirement, to the training of the twelve, he began slowly to advance southward through Perea, on the east side of the Jordan, teaching, preaching, healing as he went. His goal was Jerusalem, where the tragic ending of his career was to take place. We are indebted to Luke's Gospel almost entirely for our knowledge of this period, which also covered several months.

He did not confine himself to this region, although his work was mainly here. From time to time he went into other sections, Samaria, or Judea, with occasional visits to Jerusalem. Nor are we certain as to the order of events chronologically. The incident of James and John proposing to call down fire from heaven upon a Samaritan town because it would not receive the Master, is recorded, the healing also at Jerusalem of the man born blind, the raising of Lazarus from the dead at Bethany, the giving of the parables of the Good Samaritan and the Prodigal Son, —all occurred during this portion of his ministry. Early in this period he sent out the seventy two by two to prepare the way before him. In his teaching now he lays less stress upon the kingdom, more upon the person of the King. The Messiah of prophecy was to be a suffering Messiah, although this aspect of his life and experience had been strangely missed in the prevailing

interpretations of the Jewish Scriptures. Yet Jesus understood it, and much in what he said during this period bore upon this fact. Especially did he seek to prepare the minds of the disciples for the inevitable end which he now clearly foresaw. The Son of Man must suffer, he said. He would be put to death as a result of the hostility of the Jewish leaders. And yet, that the feeble faith of the disciples might not be entirely overwhelmed, he assured them that after his death he would rise again. They demurred at the suggestion of his death—it could not, must not be. Yet it was a part of God's plan concerning him, and there was no escaping it. The declaration as to his resurrection seems not to have made any very profound impression upon the disciples' minds. They did not understand what it could mean. Even the transfiguration experience before this, in which three of them had participated, meaningful as it was, seemed to make no lasting impression upon them. Not until the death and resurrection of Christ had actually taken place, did the full significance of these foreshadowing utterances and events dawn upon the minds of the disciples.

Christ's ministry in Perea was much like his earlier ministry in Galilee. Again the people flocked to hear him, and he wrought many cures upon those who were diseased. The population was more sparse, and there was little embarrassment from hostile officials. In Christ's teaching

there was a more continuous and stern note of judgment than hitherto. He seemed to realize that his work was nearly accomplished, and although the shadow of the cross was upon him, he nevertheless steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem. The data of the period are meager.

When finally the Passover festival drew near, crowds of people began to make their way from all parts toward the holy city. Jesus and his company fell in with many from Galilee, so that by the time they reached the Jordan opposite Jericho, there was a large company. At Jericho occurred the incidents of healing a blind man and of Jesus' experience with Zacchæus, who, though he had been a chief publican, now became a disciple. After this Jesus went on to Bethany, and made his headquarters with Mary, Martha, and Lazarus during the fateful closing days of his life.

THE LAST DAYS

There was much suppressed excitement among the crowds of people who had already reached Jerusalem as well as among those who had journeyed with Jesus. The name and fame of the great Teacher and Wonder-Worker were well known, and it was believed that some demonstration would be made by him at this time. Reports of the miracle of the raising of Lazarus, recently performed by him at Bethany, a miracle which none could gainsay, had already filled the city.

It had awakened a mighty enthusiasm among the visiting multitude, and their demand was insistent that he should declare himself king. To this demand he was no longer unwilling to yield. Hitherto he had refrained from all public declarations, direct or indirect, of his Messiahship, although from many things he said it might have been inferred. But now he would restrain the popular enthusiasm no longer. The time for reserve had passed. And so he made his triumphal entry, amidst the hosanna shouts of the attending multitudes, and by which the city was greatly stirred. Yet he accepted this popular welcome with full knowledge of its transitory and superficial character. He was not deceived by it. Most of those in the throng had but a slight understanding, at best, of these things. They were still in the twilight of old Jewish expectations, mistakenly supposing that the time for the realization of them had come. Nothing came of the demonstration. Christ did not put himself forward as the leader the crowds were looking for, and there was disappointment. The enthusiasm died away.

As for the Jewish leaders, as they saw the unmistakable signs of Jesus' popularity, they became more and more determined in their hostility, and deliberately laid their plans for putting him out of the way. Formally or informally, the Sanhedrin had decreed his death already.

These last days, spent in Jerusalem, were

crowded with activity. Jesus seems to have driven out the traders from the temple again. Now he was teaching, bearing witness to the truth. Frequently he was interrupted by the Jewish leaders as they persistently, through pre-arranged plans, sought to entangle or in some way to entrap him in his statements and thus give ground for definite charges against him. He proved himself, however, to be more than a match for them. With all their artifice and cunning, he discomfited them in every instance. More than once he himself took the aggressive, and turned upon them the most scathing rebukes which ever fell from human lips, for perverting God's truth, for their hollow pretense of righteousness, and for misleading the people as they did. Now he commends the sincere though trifling gift of the devout widow, which was far more in God's sight than the ostentatious offerings of the wealthy. Again, he converses with the Greeks, foreign proselytes probably, who sought to see him of whom they had heard much. At another time he was devoting himself to his disciples, who were no doubt perplexed by the things they saw and heard, and by the temper of the people toward him which could not be mistaken. All the occurrences of those days gave him added opportunity to impress needed truths upon them, both to relieve their minds because of the opposition and hostility which were manifested toward him, and to cheer them with the more glorious pros-

pects of the future, of which the present ordeals were a necessary prelude.

Then there was that last tender, loving, uninterrupted interview between them on the evening of the betrayal. The disciples had gathered in an upper room where preparation had been previously made for them to eat the passover meal together. It was a memorable interview, both because it was the last, although the disciples did not realize it, and because of the things said and done during its continuance. Jesus knew that his end was near, had already discerned the traitorous designs of one among the disciples, who later, however, passed out, and in all that he said he kept this fact steadily in view. The unseemly dispute of the disciples concerning precedence at the table, was met by his washing their feet, a most menial service, by which he gave them an object lesson which they could never forget as to the true spirit of the Christian disciple. Rather than selfishly and ambitiously to seek their own advantage, their mission was that of humble ministry to others. The boast of Peter of his own loyalty, even though all the rest should forsake their Master, was met by the prediction, afterward fulfilled to the letter, of his own denial of him, thrice repeated, before the morning's dawn. The paschal memories of the occasion furnished Jesus opportunity to establish the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, as it is termed, which would symbolize the new covenant which he was soon to

seal with his own blood, and which he bade his disciples observe in remembrance of him, as it has been done in the Christian church ever since.

Of the long and full discourse of admonition and comfort which Jesus gave to the disciples at that time, and the marvelous prayer which followed, in which among other things, he besought that all his believing ones might be one, as he and the Father were one, we have account in two of the Gospels, particularly in that of John. (John 14-17). Then, after a hymn, the interview ended, and they went forth from the city across the ravine of the Kedron, eastward, to the garden of Gethsemane. Here the burdened heart of the Master poured itself forth in communion with his Father. He endured unspeakable agony of spirit so much so that he sweat, as it were, great drops of blood. But although the cup which he was about to drink might not pass, he was girded with fresh strength for the ordeal which was immediately at hand.

Then the arrest—the traitorous disciple guiding the armed band which had been sent for the purpose by the Jewish authorities—took place, and Jesus was in the hands of his enemies. The disciples in their fear, all forsook him and fled, although two, John and Peter, returned later and remained near by during the trial. When the High Priest, after the failure of the suborned witnesses to make out anything definite against him, demanded that Jesus should tell, under oath,

whether he was the Messiah or not, he answered affirmatively, declaring also the glorious vindication which his words and cause should have in the future. This claim was enough for the Sanhedrists. It was regarded as blasphemy, and at once Jesus was declared worthy of death and the sentence was pronounced. The trial had been entirely irregular—those who were his judges having previously determined upon his death—and was attended by mockery and abuse of the dignified captive. But what did the technicalities of the law signify to men who were determined upon his death at all hazards? What was it to them that their whole procedure was a travesty upon justice? The two opposing parties of the High Council, the Pharisees and the Sadducees, each for ends of its own, had united in a vote of condemnation of Christ upon the unproven charge of blasphemy.

But before the sentence could be carried out, the approval of the Roman governor must be secured—such was the law in regard to criminal cases involving the death penalty. In order to secure this approval, some offense must be charged which the Roman law would recognize. The accusers of Jesus, therefore, in the same unscrupulous spirit as before, set forth his claims in a false light, sought to make him out a political Messiah, hostile to the Roman rule and seeking to pervert the nation—the very thing of all others which he was not, and which he refused to

become. Pilate soon perceived that the charge was trumped up for the occasion and sought in every way to escape the responsibility of giving sentence against him, though endeavoring meanwhile to retain the good will of the people. But the Sanhedrists persisted, clamorously declaring that if Pilate refused their request, he was not Cæsar's friend. This pierced the weak spot in Pilate's armor. At last he gave way, washed his hands of all responsibility—as if this were possible—and the sentence of death was allowed to stand. In this way he hoped to make his own political future more secure.

Jesus was now hurried to the place of execution. As the procession, headed by the Sanhedrists, passed through the streets, it was joined by a great multitude. The actual executioners were Roman soldiers, but in moral significance the deed belonged entirely to the Jewish authorities, who, with the heartless throng, crowded around, gloating over the shameful spectacle. Crucifixion was the most humiliating and distressful form of death under the Roman government. The death of Jesus, in the circumstances, was one of the saddest spectacles in human history. And yet, through all, and suffering as he did, he bore himself as the exalted personage he was might be expected to do, with dignity, patience, self-reserve, and self-control, and without the slightest manifestation of any spirit of hatred or revenge. Rising above all, his great compassionate heart

was touched with pity for his murderers, for whom he even prayed in his dying agony. Various touching incidents occurred about the cross, among them the committal of his mother to the care of the beloved disciple; the conversion of the penitent thief; his sense of loneliness expressed, as when it seemed as if the Father himself had forsaken him; his final commitment of his spirit into that Father's hands; his death at last. The story is presented with great vividness. Later the body of Jesus was taken from the cross by Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, placed in the new tomb belonging to the former, and the awful tragedy was over.

To all human appearance, the work of Jesus had been a failure. The movement which he had come to inaugurate had seemed utterly to collapse; the disciples lost confidence; everything was demoralized. They had indulged the confident hope that he had come to restore the kingdom—in their imperfect understanding of the term—to Israel. Now his enemies had triumphed over him, his career was at an end, their hopes had not been well grounded. They were a company of disappointed, disheartened men. True, Jesus had endeavored to prepare their minds for what was to take place, to remember that victory would follow, that he would rise from the grave, which would be the crowning attestation of the Father to the Son and to his Messiahship, but the disciples had not grasped his meaning, and all that he had said

was forgotten in this hour of disappointment and gloom. Christ's death was the destruction of their hopes. As for the Jewish authorities, they were thoroughly satisfied that his death was the end of the whole matter, and they were full of complacency. The controversies between him and them had been triumphantly settled in their favor. His followers were few and unimportant. Now he was in his grave; nothing more was to be feared from him; the nation was rid of a dangerous disturber of the peace. No doubt these Jewish leaders kept the passover feast with satisfaction. They had not conscience enough to feel sorrow or repentance for the cowardly crime they had deliberately committed, least of all were they able to appreciate Christ's holy and godly character and spirit.

THE RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION

But the hour of Christ's victory is at hand. Although he had been put to death and buried and his sepulcher carefully sealed, the tomb could not hold him. What his words—though not understood or appreciated at the time—were intended to foreshadow, came to pass. He rose from the dead—God raised him up. The tragedy by which his enemies thought to end his career, was turned into signal triumph. None were more surprised than the disciples. They could hardly credit the reports which reached them of his appearances—first to the women, then to one and

another. They seemed like idle tales, until the fact of the resurrection was made personal to each one. To two disciples on the way to Emmaus, Christ not only manifested himself, but showed at length from the Scriptures that the Messiah who was to come would enter into his glory through suffering. This in itself would sufficiently explain the mystery of a suffering Messiah, which was so contrary to the popular belief. His resurrection was implied if not expressed. Hence instead of being cast down, they ought to have been expectant, hopeful, confident. Paul said in writing to the Corinthian Christians, that in addition to Christ's appearances to individuals and to the whole company of his disciples, he also manifested himself in Galilee to above 500 persons at once, mentioning also that more than half of these were still living at the time he wrote, which was some twenty-five years after the event.

So at last the disciples were all satisfied. Even Thomas, doubter that he was by nature, was convinced. There was no possible room for questioning the fact. So thoroughly indeed, were they persuaded, that they never afterward for a moment wavered in their conviction, but continued to the very end of their lives to bear their testimony to the great and mighty fact which confirmed their Master's claim that he was the Son of the Most High and which gave hope to the world, and this in spite of persecution and abuse and threatened death. Most of them, indeed, it

is believed, sealed their testimony with their lives. A fact of such stupendous significance needed to be supported by evidence which could not by any possibility be gainsaid, and it was. Conviction among people to-day dates from the very morrow of the resurrection itself. It sprang into existence suddenly, after the preceding dark and deep depression. No doubt there were many more appearances of Christ to the disciples than have been recorded. Each Gospel writer probably selected such as were most personal to himself, or which specially appealed to him, without attempting to cover the whole ground. The fact of the resurrection is one which is too obstinate and too strongly attested to be set aside. It never has been. It is safe to say that it never will be. As a crowning mark of the divine approval of what Christ claimed to be and was, the resurrection was a necessary complement of the crucifixion.

But the resurrection was not the goal of the Messiah: it was only the way to it. The goal was the return of the Son—his earthly mission accomplished—to the Father. His final separation from the disciples, after he had lingered long enough on earth fully to satisfy their minds and to give them his final instructions, is described as an ascent to heaven. They were together on Olivet. Jesus, in his parting words to the disciples, spoke of their equipment by the Holy Spirit whom he would send upon them for their mission, and of how they were to be witnesses of

him to all men. Then he blessed them, was separated from them, and, slowly ascending, a cloud received him out of their sight. This was their last view of their Lord.

And there, in the heaven to which he went, and at the right hand of the Father, all power committed to him, he still is, still continues to live, still directs the affairs of his earthly kingdom, which was definitely inaugurated before he left the world, and for whose continuation he made provision by his Spirit and his providence. There, too, he will continue to live and to reign until all his enemies are put under his feet, and he appears a second time to judge the world in righteousness.

Thus we have glanced at the Christian movement in its beginnings, or as Christ inaugurated it, and the steady, consistent course, from the first to the last, of him who was sent into the world to inaugurate it. Living as a man among men, and with human limitations in some degree, divine though he was, he yet comported himself through his life as the exalted being he really was, but whom the world did not recognize. He had come with all necessary credentials for such as were open-minded enough to consider them, had been discovered and pointed out by a person divinely chosen for that purpose, had done all that he could do to impress himself in his true character upon his countrymen, except by openly and

publicly declaring and claiming his high prerogatives, but which it seemed wise to him, for the most part, or save on rare occasions, not to do. He did not deny that he was the Messiah, sometimes asserted it, frequently left it to be inferred from what he said, although as his ministry advanced, he spoke with less reserve about it, and at the very last he made no pretense of reticence. Still, save as here and there some one of more spiritual discernment than the majority recognized him, the Jewish people as a whole did not do so, and he came to his end with but a comparative handful of followers, even including those who professed to have believed in him outside of the band of disciples.

We little realize the tremendous difficulties of the situation, the hard, tough crust of conservatism and perverted views and pride of ancestry, which must be broken through before Christ's true nature and mission could be appreciated and he be recognized in his true character. But he realized the situation perfectly, and with the greatest wisdom and skill sought to adjust himself to it, making his way carefully between extremes of opinion—the hostility of the leaders on the one hand, and the enthusiasm, though superficial often, and unthinking, of the people on the other. He avoided obstacles whenever possible, faced and overcame difficulties when they were thrust in his way, varying his method of procedure as circumstances demanded, but comporting

himself in all situations as the real Messiah would naturally do. He was able to look beyond the mere present to the glorious triumph which awaited him, confident of the ultimate outcome, however great the humiliation and suffering through which he must pass before that outcome could be realized. But he finished the work which his Father gave him to do, which he knew if his contemporaries did not, had set the great movement in operation and provided a trained company of followers to carry it on after him, and was at length received up into the glory whence he came, henceforth to be the unseen though real and living head of his people and his kingdom.

TOTAL IMPRESSION

What was the total impression, or the aggregate of results, humanly speaking, of Christ's life and work at the time he left the world? He came to inaugurate a great world movement: to what extent was he successful?

If we are to judge by the tangible results which were apparent at the time of Christ's death, comparatively little would seem to have been achieved. To all appearances, his effort had been a failure. If, however, we estimate the results from the vantage ground of the twentieth century, looking back over the history of Christianity since its inception, we might well exclaim, what did he *not* accomplish? And yet it is not difficult to see now, that

even at that time, certain definite results, all bearing directly upon the progress of the movement, had been achieved, and influences had been set in operation or were in process of development, by which these results would be conserved, and the work be taken up and carried forward with a momentum and power which nothing could withstand. To be sure, Christ left but a handful of followers, even if we include those who were scattered here and there, not to exceed a few hundred at most—and the real loyalty of all these was not fully established—but these few were sufficient to form a nucleus. A dozen of them had been specially trained by him to take up and carry forward the movement in a definite and formal way, after their enduement by the Spirit as their final preparation for the great mission which had been committed to them. They were then to herald the glad tidings and bear witness of Christ's resurrection, in Jerusalem, the regions round about, even to the ends of the earth. Before this, the whole movement had centered in himself. Christ was himself the embodiment of Christianity. Now it centered primarily in the apostolic company. The movement was still to go forward, but under different conditions. The disciples were to bear witness to Christ and the new faith wherever they went, and those who might be led to believe through them were in turn to become witness bearers to their fellow men, and so the movement

was to go forward through that and succeeding ages, until the whole world should be brought under its sway.

One result of Christ's ministry was to impress, in some measure, multitudes of people with the truth. If not all were convinced, many at least were impressed, and conditions were prepared for a favorable reception of the truth later. Some had already become secret if not open followers of Christ. Still further, reports of Christ's teaching and work had gone out in all directions, as travelers had come in contact with him, and especially as the Jews of the Dispersion had visited Jerusalem to attend the annual Jewish festivals. Not all had seen and heard him, though many had, yet there were few, probably, who had not heard of him. The reports of his teaching and of his mighty works which they would carry back to their own countries, could not fail to exert an influence in the way of preparing the people for the gospel message later, as the apostles and others might go forth to proclaim it. This was another distinct result of Christ's work. The influence of his life also, his silent example, was not inconsiderable upon the people of his time. No unselfish, holy, consecrated life is without its influence. To say nothing of those who experienced spiritual uplift from contemplating it or from contact with it, it was the setting up of a standard, a model, an ideal life, incomparable and blessed, which would be a legacy to the world, as it has been ever

since. This must be reckoned as one of the assets of Christ's life and ministry.

Moreover he had left a body of teachings, ethical and otherwise, which far transcended anything which had hitherto been given to the world. Nothing from this body of teachings had as yet been recorded, but it was all there, in substance, in the apostles' minds, and the Spirit would bring to their recollection whatever they failed to remember, and continue to illumine their minds and guide them into all the truth. Later, in the providence of God, the essentials of this teaching were recorded for the world's benefit. While not a little of it was of a local and temporary character, no teacher ever uttered so much that was eternal and abiding. Further, this teaching was of a character to be universally applicable to men, and the religion Christ sought to introduce was intended to be, was at least fitted for, the whole world. True, it was a movement among the Jews only, at first, and this by design. Even the disciples for a time seemed not to think of it other than as a movement among Jewish people and bound up with the Jewish religion. But while it was, in a sense, a development of the latter, it had in it all the elements and all the potency of an independent, universal religion, a religion for humanity. In due time it would emancipate itself from its local environments and stand out before the world in its true light as a gospel for all mankind. It might require conflict and struggle be-

fore this was accomplished, but this it was bound, from its very nature, to do, and as a matter of fact it not long afterward did. A prominent feature of Christ's work was to set men to thinking. The ideas he promulgated were seminal ideas. Much that he did was, as it were, out of sight, as the frost works out of sight for a time, or as seeds sprout and begin their growth before pushing their way into the light. But though results of his work did not appear at once, they began to show themselves immediately after his death and have continued to do so ever since.

Thus although there was not much, seemingly, in the way of tangible results from Christ's life and work to be noted at the time of his departure, the seeds of a great movement were planted. Mighty influences were set in operation which would shortly begin to make themselves felt in the world at large. The movement which he inaugurated has now become the mightiest moral and spiritual force in the world, with a demonstrated potency in itself which warrants the confidence that it will ultimately, as originally intended, bring the whole world under its sway, and Jesus Christ be recognized as King of kings and Lord of lords, and his will be done universally on earth as now it is in heaven.

PART II
THE LEADERS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

We have seen how Christianity originated. It was born of Judaism, the Old Testament religion, the religion of the Jewish nation. This formed its background, its soil, its "seed plot." From this it unfolded. That which it found in germ in the Jewish religion, it carried forward to its full development, completing its intention. But although Christianity was the offspring of Judaism, and at first and for some time seemed even to the apostles to be but an advanced stage of it, not to be separated from it, it was nevertheless intended to be a complete and independent religion by itself. Instead of being for Jews only, as was Judaism, it was designed for all races and nations, for humanity. It was to be the one universal and final religion. This, however, it could not be, so long as it was connected with Judaism. It must first be extricated from it.

How could this separation be effected? How was Christianity to break away from its Judaic entanglement and thus be prepared to go forth upon its world-wide mission? This was the problem which confronted it. A sudden and violent rupture with the parent religion would be likely

to do much harm, might indeed result in its being crushed out at the very outset, and was, if possible, to be avoided. What was manifestly intended was that the new religion should emancipate itself gradually, by its own expansive, expulsive power. The development of its own ideas would in due time bring about this result. Whatever in the old religion was temporary or provincial, would fall away. Those elements in it which were eternal and universal, would more and more become manifest. In this way the old would gradually be replaced by the new. Judaism, having fulfilled its preparatory mission, would be superseded by Christianity.

We are now to trace the successive steps by which the liberation of Christianity from Judaism was brought about—how it emerged at length from its Judaic shell, how it cast off the swaddling clothes which enveloped its infancy, until it stood forth in the vigor and strength of its maturity, how, in short, it became at length free and independent. The struggle was long and bitter, but it resulted in the complete emancipation of Christianity. In the progress of the movement, each of the leaders of the early church seems to have had an appointed part. Each one made a contribution to it peculiar to himself.

Two tendencies early became manifest among Christ's followers. On the one hand, Christianity was regarded as a movement within the sphere of Judaism, not inconsistent with it, and not calling

for any relaxation of its rules and regulations. This appears to have been the thought of the apostles and other Christians for a considerable time after Christ's departure from them. Accordingly, even while prosecuting their work in Jerusalem, they continued to attend the regular services of the Temple and to engage in its rites. To them Christianity was but a purer, more spiritual form of Judaism, which was for Jews alone, save as Gentiles first became Jews through accepting Judaism and submitting to certain rites of initiation or naturalization. That Judaism was merely a preparation for Christianity seems not to have entered their thought.

But another and more liberal tendency also soon became apparent. It was the natural outcome of the working in men's minds of the vital truths or principles of Christianity, and of providential circumstances which seemed clearly to call for a broader conception of it than prevailed among Jewish Christians. This larger view had begun to dawn upon the mind of the martyr Stephen. He recognized the preparatory character of the Mosaic system, and perceived that with the advent of Christianity its mission was accomplished. The same thought began to take definite shape in Peter's mind also, after his vision at Joppa and his experience at Cæsarea, although it seems not to have been given special prominence by him afterward. As a result of his preaching, the Gentile Cornelius and his family became be-

lievers in Christ. The manifestations of the Holy Spirit's presence which attended the conversion of this Roman soldier and his household were regarded as an evidence of the divine approval.

But other minds also were led in the same direction. Philip, catching the thought and spirit of Stephen, entered upon a campaign of evangelism among the Samaritans. These, though neither strictly Jews nor wholly Gentiles, gladly received the gospel, and the divine approval was again made manifest as at Cæsarea. Soon the expanding movement, which resulted from the scattering of Christians from Jerusalem to escape the persecution which broke out after Stephen's death, reached the Gentile city of Antioch. Here a church was formed and many Gentiles were received into it on the same conditions as the Jews—repentance and faith—and the two classes of Christians dwelt together in harmony.

From Antioch, which shortly became the center of Gentile Christianity, the movement extended into the Gentile regions beyond. Paul and Barnabas, who had been laboring here with marked success, were formally set apart for an evangelizing mission. As a result, many Gentiles became believers and numerous churches were formed at important centers in the interior of Asia Minor. When, later, some of the more conservative of the Jerusalem Christians learned that Gentiles were being received on the same terms as the Jews, they sent a commission to Antioch to inquire into the

matter. Their assumption that no Gentile could be received into Christian fellowship or be saved without first conforming to Jewish rites, particularly that of circumcision, precipitated a controversy. This became so spirited that it was decided to refer the question to Jerusalem for an apostolic opinion. Paul and Barnabas, who were the most conspicuous champions of the broader view, headed the delegation from the Antioch church. To their minds to compel Gentile Christians to submit to the requirements of the Jewish ritual—which was meaningless to them, and which even the Jews themselves recognized as extremely burdensome—was clearly unreasonable and contrary to the spirit and teachings of the Master. No such conditions of salvation had been laid down by him. The outcome of the Conference was a complete vindication of the practices both of the Antioch church and of Paul and Barnabas in their missionary tour among the Gentiles.

Thus one of the most burning questions of the times was settled. Henceforth Gentiles might receive the gospel and be admitted to all its privileges upon the same terms as the Jews. At the same time, to promote harmony and good will, Gentile Christians were advised to make certain concessions—which would require no sacrifice of principle—to the prejudices of the Jews. It was not that Paul and others were opponents of the Jewish ritual for the Jews themselves, if they chose to retain and to practice it—that was a

matter of indifference—but that they were jealous of the rights of Gentile Christians, and were not willing to yield anything in the controversy which would imperil those rights. The struggle had been bitter, and some of the defeated party at Jerusalem sought to keep it up for some time afterward. They even sent emissaries to follow in Paul's footsteps to undermine and discredit his work, thereby causing him no little anxiety and trouble. This is evident from the epistle to the Galatian Christians especially, among whom these Judaizing efforts were chiefly carried on, and from his epistles to the Corinthians and Romans. Finally the edict of the Jerusalem Conference appears to have been generally accepted, and in the latest New Testament utterances the victory for the broader view seems to have been acknowledged.

There were other conflicts and trials in those early days of Christianity which grew out of false views which sprung up and which had to be corrected. Sometimes persecutions raged against the Christian sect. But the conflict between Judaism and Christianity was the greatest of all, and the consequences of it were the most momentous. Christianity was now free. It had emerged from its Judaic shell, had thrown off its Mosaic yoke, and this freedom was Paul's legacy to all succeeding generations. The book of Acts closes with the great apostle a prisoner at Rome, the capital of the Roman Empire, yet preaching

the emancipated, universal gospel to such as came to him, regardless of race, or nation, or circumstances, on the simple conditions of repentance and faith as laid down by the Lord himself. Christianity had proved itself possessed of the attributes of a universal religion.

The numerical and territorial expansion of Christianity during the New Testament period was exceedingly rapid. Under the mighty impulse which it received at Pentacost, its original handful of adherents soon grew to large proportions at Jerusalem, in the very heart of Judaism, though not without serious opposition from the Jewish authorities. The reports of the visiting thousands upon their return home from their attendance upon the Pentecostal festival, naturally did much toward publishing the glad tidings broadcast and preparing the way for the labors of the apostles and their successors. The persecution of Christians, which sprung up immediately after the death of Stephen with a view to stamping out the new movement, proved to be the means of extending it all the more effectively. It imparted an added impulse to it and helped to increase its momentum and power. Wherever these persecuted Christians went, they continued to bear witness to Christ, and so believers were multiplied all through Judea, and Samaria, and in regions beyond. Later, under a powerful foreign missionary impulse at Antioch, the gospel was proclaimed in Asia Minor, later still in Mace-

donia and Greece, finally in Italy. It was to the world-wide and unceasing activity of Paul more than to any other person, and this over a period of some thirty years or more, that the introduction and establishment of Christianity in Asia Minor and in Europe were primarily due. Opposition to the movement, whether on the part of the Roman government or the conservative Jews, seemed only to help it on.

While Paul and those associated with him were giving the gospel to the Gentiles until it had been planted in most of the great centers of the Roman world, the other apostles were by no means idle. After completing their work in and about Jerusalem, which extended over a period of several years, they scattered, according to tradition, into other lands, laboring especially among the Jews of the Dispersion whom they found in large numbers in the more important cities. Peter's first epistle appears to have been written from Babylon where we know there were many Jews at that time. No report of the labors of the apostolic band has come down to us. The book of Acts was evidently not written to give a complete history of the Christian movement and its numerical and territorial expansion, so much as to trace the successive steps by which Christianity became emancipated from its Judaic fetters and spread among the Gentiles. Accordingly, great areas of apostolic history, which we would

be glad to know about, are passed over without a reference.

Thus the Christian movement went forward, enlarging, extending, expanding, until it had spread pretty much over the whole Roman world. Two centuries later it had become the recognized religion of the state.

In the following pages, in connection with studying the character of the early leaders of the Christian movement, some of whom were raised up as the work progressed, an attempt is made both to show more in detail the part of each in extending its bounds, and the particular contribution which he made toward its emancipation from Judaism. Repetitions here and there are only such as are inevitable in an independent study of those whose work sometimes overlapped, or who were more or less prominently related to the same events.

CHAPTER II

PETER

Perhaps no one of the disciples affords a more interesting and suggestive character study than Peter. He early took his place as the leading spirit among them, as afterward, for a considerable time, he was the recognized leader of the apostles—one of the few great leaders of the early church. Along with numerous and marked elements of strength in his character, there were also many pronounced defects and weaknesses. But Christ recognized unusual possibilities in him and took special pains with his training. No one of the twelve received from him more rebukes than did Peter, and no one, perhaps, more commendations. Although at the most critical and trying time in the experience of the Master Peter's courage and confidence failed him, and he was even tempted to deny his Lord, he speedily recovered himself, and subsequent events of his life abundantly vindicated the wisdom of his selection to be one of the disciples.

The case of Peter affords a notable instance of the most diverse and contradictory traits of character existing side by side in the same person. At one time one spirit or one set of principles

seems to control, at another time another, so that it is not always possible to know just where to find him. There were some of the strongest qualities in Peter's character, and some of the weakest; some to commend our highest admiration, and some deserving only pity and contempt. By nature he was warm-hearted, impulsive, generous; at the same time he was boastful, over-confident, often reckless and fiery. Now he was bold and courageous, again he was weak, vacillating, cowardly. At one time he seemed to rise to the heights of spiritual insight, at another he was sluggish, dull, unappreciative of spiritual things. He was naturally a man of action, and possessed many elements of leadership, yet he was so unstable, rash, and full of inconsistencies, that he could not safely be trusted. It was such a person as this, along with the other disciples, that Christ undertook to train in preparation for the grave responsibilities which were in due time to be committed to him. With all the weakness of character which he sometimes manifested, no one would more quickly appreciate the truth inculcated by Christ, or the significance of an object lesson, than he.

I

Of Peter's early life we know little beyond the fact that he was reared as a fisherman on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. He belonged originally to Bethsaida but afterward removed to

Capernaum, where, with his wife, her mother, and his brother Andrew, he occupied a house. It is believed that he, along with John and others, had been among the followers of John the Baptist. When the latter pointed two of his disciples, John and Andrew, to Jesus, one of them, Andrew, went at once and reported to his brother Peter, whose original name was Simon, that they had found the Messiah. Thereupon Peter returned with him and was presented to the new Teacher. So far as we know, this is Andrew's chief claim upon our remembrance. With prophetic insight, Jesus at once conferred upon Simon the surname of Cephas, or Peter, meaning a rock, which was afterward to supersede the name which he had received in his infancy.

We have no information as to Peter's early education. The fact that he had not been sent to study the law or the "traditions of the elders" at Jerusalem, would by no means imply an entire absence of education. It is probable that in common with other Jewish boys, he attended the school connected with the synagogue of his native town. Great pains were usually taken with education in these synagogue schools. If schools of a higher grade existed at that time in Galilee, as they did later, it is not impossible that Peter may have gone to one of them. At home he would be carefully instructed in the Scriptures, as was the custom of Jewish parents. In the public services of the synagogue he would hear the law read and

expounded and listen to discussions upon it. He may have made pilgrimages from time to time with his parents to attend some of the great annual festivals at Jerusalem. This in itself would be of large educational value. In ways such as these, including the discipline of constant association with men in his business relations, and frequent contact with visitors and travelers, Peter must, to say the least, have become an intelligent, well-informed man. From residing in Galilee, he would be sufficiently removed from the influence of the Pharisees and scribes to escape much of the narrowness and bigotry which prevailed in Judea. If he was a disciple of John the Baptist, as is supposed, he would enjoy the added advantages which training under such a teacher for a season would impart.

In addition to the general training which the twelve in common received under Christ, each one also received a discipline which may be termed purely personal, something adapted to his own peculiar temperament. This was specially needed in the case of Peter, if his more serious defects of character were to be remedied, and the nobler possibilities of his nature were to be developed. Time would be required for all this, and the exercise of rare skill and patience, but Christ thoroughly understood Peter's disposition and needs. Some lessons would require many repetitions and might frequently involve no little humiliation on

Peter's part, but the outcome, as Christ foresaw it, would abundantly vindicate the effort. The transformed character of Peter's later life and the effectiveness of his service for the kingdom, together with the ripened fruitage of his maturer experience as it appears in his epistles, make it evident how thorough the lessons were which he received, and how well he profited by them. A few specific instances will illustrate the nature of this personal training.

There was Peter's over-confidence, for instance, which called for correction. The fault was a serious one and often brought him into trouble. An opportunity to impress a needed lesson on the subject was afforded at the time when Christ, walking on the waves, went to his imperiled disciples on the lake. They were frightened as he drew near to them, supposing him to be a ghost, but they were reassured after hearing his familiar voice: "It is I, be not afraid." Then Peter was seized with a sudden desire to go to him. "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come to thee on the water." It was a venturesome impulse, and evinced the height of presumption. To carry it out would require a large faith on Peter's part, and as yet his faith had not been tested. It would also involve the performance of a special miracle in his behalf. Christ appreciated the situation and bade him come. It was as if he had said, "Come if you will, make the experiment if you desire." In his abounding self-confidence, Peter over-esti-

mated his own faith, and immediately on receiving permission, stepped over the vessel's side into the water. So long as he kept his gaze fastened in confidence on his Lord, all was well, but the moment he withdrew it, as presently he did, he was filled with fear and began to sink. In his distress he cried out, "Lord save, I perish." Whereupon Jesus stretched forth his hand and rescued him, at the same time administering the deserved rebuke, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" Peter had confidence enough before he started, but in the actual test it proved inadequate. Everything depended on his faith, yet at the critical moment it failed him completely. The outcome was a most effective rebuke to his rashness and presumption. The disclosure of his weakness must have been humiliating, all the more so that the incident occurred in the presence of the whole company of the disciples. Perhaps no one among them needed such a lesson as much as he.

At another time, when they were in the regions of Cæsarea Philippi, Christ asked the question of the disciples as to the popular impression concerning himself. Their reply was that it was varied: some thought one thing, some another. "But whom say ye that I am," Christ continued. Thereupon Peter, as if with a sudden divinely inspired spiritual insight, declared that he was the Messiah. "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." This reply was warmly commended

by the Master as being an utterance directly prompted by God himself. Such knowledge could not have been gained in any other way.

Then Christ sought to prepare the disciples' minds for the distressful ordeals which were to come upon him later. It had been a notable advance that they, through their own observation of the Master, had been led to the deliberate conclusion that he was the Messiah whom the Jewish people were looking for, but now he seeks to broaden their view of what the Messiahship involved. One thing was suffering. As the Messiah, he must suffer many things at Jerusalem at the hands of the Jewish leaders, even be put to death. Suffering was a necessary part of his mission, without which his work for human redemption would not be complete. This, indeed, was foreshadowed in the Jewish Scriptures. But Peter, seemingly unable to appreciate this necessity, began vigorously to remonstrate. "Be it far from thee, Lord. This shall not be unto thee." The remonstrance was no doubt prompted primarily by his love for his Master, nevertheless it was the acme of presumption for him to dispute his Lord's declaration and try to dissuade him from the clear path of duty which had been marked out for him. Moreover, with his clear spiritual insight, Christ discerned the subtle influence of the Adversary at work within Peter's heart to make him the unconscious instrument of trying to divert his Lord from his heaven-appointed mission.

The effort of the Tempter in the wilderness to allure him from this purpose had utterly failed, but now by another means and in another way he seeks to effect the same result. Christ's reply to Peter was in terms very similar to his reply to the Adversary at the beginning. "Get thee hence, Satan, thou art an offense to me, for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." If before this Peter's confession of Christ as the Messiah had given evidence of being from above, this interruption of him and remonstrance seemed to have been prompted from below. He was being used by the Adversary to put obstacles in Christ's way. To have yielded to Peter's suggestion would have meant failure in his office as the world's Redeemer.

The lesson which Christ gave to all the disciples in humility—and which all needed, for all were ambitious in a worldly way—in washing their feet, was at the same time turned specially to Peter's account. When, with towel and basin, Christ came to the latter, Peter said, as if in surprise, "Dost thou wash my feet?" As if to indicate that he had a sufficient reason for what he did, and which should have satisfied Peter, Jesus replied, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt understand hereafter." Thereupon Peter exclaimed with emphasis, "Thou shalt never wash my feet." It was nothing discreditable to him to be disturbed at the thought of such humiliation on the part of his Lord, but to persist in his re-

sistance after what had been said was simply stubborn disobedience. Such a disposition deserved, as it received, a sharp rebuke. "If I wash thee not," said Christ, "thou hast no part with me." This declaration, and the thought of being cut off from his Master's sympathy and favor, brought Peter at once to his senses, and now he was ready to go even farther in submission than had been required. "Lord," he meekly said, "not my feet only, but my hands and my head"—a reply which illustrates the quick alternation of feeling and of purpose which was characteristic of him. One thing certainly very much in Peter's favor, was the spirit in which he accepted these rebukes, the reason for which, when once pointed out, he was not slow to perceive or to appreciate.

But not all the lessons which Peter received under this direct and personal tutorship of Christ were of this negative character. Not only were excrescences to be pruned off, the positive virtues needed also to be developed. This indeed was an aim never lost sight of, whether in Christ's training of the whole company in general, or of individual members of it in particular. Everything was made to point to this end. Especially did the faith of Peter need to become strong, stable, rock-like in its steadfastness, before he could be in the largest degree useful for the kingdom. A number of instances of training to this end are recorded, although sometimes these special lessons were given him in conjunction with James and

John, whose natures also seemed, like his own, to have been peculiarly receptive. One such instance was in connection with the restoration to life of the little daughter of Jairus, a synagogue ruler. Only Peter, James, and John were permitted to go with Christ and the sorrowing family into the room where the dead child lay. Then Christ took her by the hand and said, "Little maid, I say unto thee arise." And straightway she arose and walked. It was a tremendous miracle, and no wonder that it occasioned amazement. The impressions of it at the time must have been profound and overwhelming in the minds of the favored disciples, while the fact itself and the recollection of it afterward, must have gone far toward establishing a conviction of Christ's divine character.

Another notable instance was that of the transfiguration, in which Moses and Elijah appeared to Christ, to talk with him concerning his coming decease at Jerusalem. The favored three were again with him. It must have been a never-to-be-forgotten experience. All heaven apparently was interested in what was to take place. The voice from the cloud declaring that Christ was the beloved Son of the Father, ought to have been sufficient, it would seem, to remove any lingering doubts in the disciples' minds as to the divine character of their Lord. Peter had the elements in him of a strong faith, but it was far from fixed and steadfast yet, and far from adequate to the

severe tests to which it would be subjected in the days to come. It was for this reason, no doubt, and to give him abundant ground for the faith he needed, that these exceptional privileges were granted him. Only in this way, through the convictions which such experiences would cause gradually to develop within him, could he ever have become the mighty champion for the truth and hero of the faith which he did.

But perhaps the most effective lesson of a distinctly personal character which Peter received, as it was certainly most humiliating to himself in the outcome, was in connection with Christ's trial. His faith had been slowly gaining, but a time had now come when it would be put to the severest imaginable test, and not the faith of Peter alone, but that of all the disciples as well. Would they be equal to it? Would Peter especially, who had always been foremost to speak and to act, whose self-confidence was strong and who had boasted much, be able to endure it?

When at the last meeting of Christ and the disciples the night before his crucifixion, he had been telling them again of his death that they might not be altogether taken by surprise, Peter declared with great vehemence, as he had on a former occasion, that it should not be so. For himself he was prepared to stand by his Master to the bitter end. Christ cautioned him against over-confidence in his own loyalty. It had not yet been put to the test which would determine just

how strong it was. In fact, Christ told him that before the cock should crow, i. e., before the next morning, he would even deny him. "Never," exclaimed Peter; "no, not even if I should die with you." He little realized the sad self-revelation of his own weakness which he would witness even within the next few hours.

After Christ was actually arrested and bound, the disciples, filled with fear, and panic stricken, all fled. John, recovering himself, followed him even into the palace of the High Priest Caiaphas, to which he was taken for examination and trial. He alone of the eleven—for there were only eleven now—kept close to the Lord in this hour of trial. Later Peter appeared upon the scene, but when he was asked again and again by a servant girl and others in the palace court as to his being a member of the prisoner's company, his courage foresook him, he became angry and indignantly denied it, repeating his denial several times in succession and emphasizing it with an oath. "I know not the man," he said. Thereupon the sound of the cock-crowing was heard, and instantly the Savior's warning and prediction flashed into his mind. Yes, Peter, boastful, self-confident, the leader of the disciples, had fallen! When the test came, his loyalty was not equal to it. Not even Peter could be depended upon to stand by his Lord at a time when, if ever, he most needed the support of human sympathy. It was at this same moment that Christ from within the

palace turned and looked upon Peter in the court. Peter caught that look, not of anger or reproach, but a tender, sorrowful look of love. That look brought him to a full realization of what he had done. He had actually denied with an oath, in a moment of temptation, the One to whom he owed so much, and whom he had sworn to defend even to the death. Then the fountains of the great deep of his nature were broken up, and he went out and wept bitterly.

And all this was brought about by a look. In the circumstances, it was a most effective rebuke. That moment was no doubt the turning point in Peter's life. From this time forward he was a changed man. Not that he was at once divested of his faults or freed from his weaknesses, or suddenly made strong and steadfast, but that now he began to appreciate, as not before, how much he owed his Master, and how basely he had treated him. The realization of all this could hardly fail of steadying his nature, of rendering him more careful and thoughtful, and of preparing him for a more settled and abiding personal devotion than ever before. Sometimes it is the best possible preparation for better things in one's life to become fully and humiliatingly aware of one's own weaknesses and defects. Certain it is that never again, so far as we have record, did Peter become disloyal to his Lord. He may have shown weakness, but never disloyalty. No one, indeed, of all the disciples, was more enthusiastically devoted to

the Master's service, or accomplished more, or as much, for his cause.

But the loving interest of the Master in his disciples and in their preparation for their future work did not cease with his crucifixion. This was what was chiefly on his mind after his resurrection. By his various appearances to them, their faith at length would become unalterably established. Without such faith they would not be able to endure the hardships and trials which would certainly befall them in the mighty work which they were to undertake. Peter, especially, needed such an experience to establish his faith. This Jesus recognized, and so continued his special training, not only giving him the advantage of his several appearances to the whole company of the disciples, but on one occasion appearing to him by himself. The details of that appearance are wholly unknown to us.

The final lesson to Peter of which we know, was in connection with Christ's appearance to several of the disciples on the shore of Galilee. At this time he probed Peter's heart in such a way that any hidden weakness or disloyalty remaining would not fail to be brought to light. He had boasted that although all men should be offended, he himself would not be, and yet he had denied his Lord, and this three times in succession. It was fitting that he should thrice confess him, and so Christ asked him, as many times, the question, "Simon, son of John, lovest thou

me?" Peter felt hurt at these repetitions, but his failure had taught him humility. "Lord," he said, "thou knowest all things. Thou knowest that I love thee."

After such an experience, he can never waver again. Now he is ready, not boastfully, but humbly, to follow his Master wherever he may direct, even if to martyrdom, as Christ had not vaguely intimated that he might be called to do. Henceforth his loyalty will be above suspicion. Christ's purpose in Peter's training has been accomplished. His case has been one of peculiar difficulty, but the root of the matter had been in him all the time. And now, with the final training of the Holy Spirit to do a work within him which not even Christ himself could do—a training in fact which did not cease with Pentecost but went forward with ever-enlarging and deepening success as long as he lived—he will be ready for valiant, lifelong Christian service.

II

As we pass from the Gospels into the book of Acts, we are impressed with the different type of character presented to us in connection with the name of Peter. It seems to be entirely transformed from what it was during his discipleship. Then he was impulsive, boastful, rash, always foremost among the disciples to speak and to act, and yet the one, of them all, to make the most humiliating failure at length. But now the de-

fects of his character seem largely to have been remedied, its excrescences to have been removed, its weaknesses to have given place to strength. Peter stands before us as a moral hero, upborne by a steady and sustained courage in the midst of most trying, even perilous conditions. He is a leader of the apostles, open-minded, progressive, and this leadership in the early church he nobly maintained for many years.

How are we to account for this transition? What was it which led to so pronounced a change, and to a faith and courage on his part such as he had never exhibited before? It was the transforming work of the Holy Spirit. Christ had carried his personal training of the disciples as far as he could. But there were features of the discipline which they needed which could only be realized by the working of the grace of God at the very core of their being. Only in this way could their previous training be gathered up and carried forward to its full fruition. It was with this in view that Christ bade the disciples remain in Jerusalem, after his departure from them, until the Spirit should be poured out—which he gave them to understand was imminent—and they should be endued with power from on high. After ten days of waiting and of prayer, the Pentecostal effusion came, and with it the promised enduement. There were marked external but temporary manifestations of the Spirit's presence and power, but the effect upon the disciples was

deep, radical, and permanent. All were quickened to a new energy. The minds of all were illumined in regard to spiritual things. Fresh light was thrown upon the Old Testament Scriptures, which constituted their Bible, and many of Christ's dimly understood teachings were recalled and their significance made clear. Everything appeared to the disciples in a new light, and a consuming desire possessed them to witness for their Master and in every possible way to make the glad tidings known to men, even to the earth's remotest bounds.

Then it was, in the presence of a vast throng of people, who had been drawn together by reports which had been noised abroad through the city of the unusual manifestations among the disciples, that Peter stood up with the eleven others—the place of Judas having now been filled—and as their spokesman gave powerful witness to the resurrection of their Lord from the dead and explained its mighty import. He declared that Jesus was the long-expected Messiah, that he gave every evidence of being so, but they, the Jews, had not only rejected, but had crucified him. This crucified One had risen from the dead—God had raised him up. They, the disciples, were witnesses of this great fact. Furthermore, God had exalted this same Jesus to his own right hand on high, where all power had been committed to him in heaven and on earth, by whom alone the world would at length be judged in

righteousness. Then Peter appealed to his hearers to repent of their sins and to give him their allegiance, the living One, in whom alone were forgiveness and salvation. And so convincing were his arguments, so conscience-smiting his charges, that about three thousand of his auditors were then and there converted and became Christ's followers.

It was a bold and courageous thing for Peter to do, thus to stand up before so mighty a throng, presumably unsympathetic, and address it as he did. It was in striking contrast, certainly, with the cowardice which he had exhibited but a few weeks before, when he denied, with an oath, that he even knew Jesus. But from this time on, he and all the disciples—nothing daunted by obstacles or threats of punishment by the authorities—continued courageously to bear their testimony to the risen and now glorified Lord. Especially was this the case with Peter and John, whose early friendship as fishermen seems to have ripened during their discipleship together, and who were now conspicuously associated in the work of the kingdom. The new movement had received a mighty impulse at Pentecost and in connection with the events immediately following it. Peter, its recognized leader, was proving himself to be the man for the hour. His wisdom and prudence, his tact and intelligence, by which he knew exactly what to say and do, were in marked contrast with his previous unwisdom and tactless-

ness, while his boldness and courage must have been a surprise even to himself.

Not long after the remarkable scenes at Pentecost, occurred the healing, by Peter and John, of the cripple at the gate Beautiful of the Temple. In the name of the risen and ascended Lord, Peter had bidden this cripple of many years to arise and walk, which he at once proceeded to do, to the great astonishment of all who were present. Naturally a crowd collected, whereupon Peter took advantage of the opportunity and again bore witness for his Master. And such was the power with which, filled with the Spirit, he spoke, that again, as at Pentecost, many were added to Christ's followers.

But such boldness of address and such charges as Peter made were exceedingly distasteful, naturally, to the Jewish leaders, especially to the Sadducees, and the two disciples were arrested as disturbers of the peace, thrust into prison, to appear before the authorities on the morrow. At that time, when asked by what authority or power they had wrought the miracle, Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, boldly declared that it was in the name of Christ, whom they, the Jewish leaders, had crucified, but whom God had raised from the dead and exalted to the highest position, and in whose name alone there was salvation. Such boldness on the part of these unknown and unlettered men was a great surprise to the Council, but the miracle itself could not be denied—the re-

stored cripple was there—and nothing could be done to the two men but to rebuke them and forbid them to preach further in the hated Name. Then Peter made answer, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to hearken to you rather than unto God, judge ye, for we cannot but speak the things we have seen and heard.” In other words, they proposed to follow their own God-given convictions, whatever the consequences, even if they were led to defy the Jewish authorities. Being dismissed, they went to their own company and reported all that had been said to them, whereupon all lifted up their voices with thanksgiving and praise, and prayed with great earnestness that they might continue to speak the Word with all boldness, and that the divine power might be more and more manifest among the people.

As a result of the labors of the apostles, and especially of the outspoken testimony of Peter and the mighty works wrought by him in the name of Christ, there came together, we read, multitudes of people from the cities and towns round about Jerusalem, bringing their sick folk with them and those that were vexed with unclean spirits, and they were all healed, while many were all the time added to the growing number of believers.

But as the work went on, the Jewish officials became more and more disturbed, not knowing to what the movement might grow. So under some pretext they caused the entire twelve apostles to

be arrested and brought before them. "Did we not strictly charge," they said, "that you no more teach in this Name? And behold ye have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us." Then Peter and the apostles answered—Peter still foremost and probably speaking for them all—"We must obey God rather than men." Continuing, and recalling, possibly, that they were standing in the very place their Master had stood when he was condemned, and that they were addressing the same Jewish leaders who had condemned him, he said, "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew, hanging him on a tree. Him did God exalt with his right hand to be a prince and a savior, to give repentance to Israel and remission of sins. And we are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God hath given to them that obey him."

This address so cut the officials to heart that they were minded to slay the apostles, but wiser counsels finally prevailed, through the influence, especially, of Gamaliel, a doctor of the law who was held in high esteem among them, and the apostles, after being beaten and being again charged not to speak in the name of Jesus, were dismissed. And again, as before, they rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the Name. And every day, in the Temple and at home, they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus as the Christ.

It is difficult to imagine that this is the same Peter who basely denied his Lord only a few weeks before, and yet it is, but now the energy of the Holy Spirit possesses him, and it matters not whether it is before the highest dignitaries of the nation or the humblest men on the street, he is ready, with unflinching courage, to bear witness to his Lord.

We have now to notice Peter's courage and leadership in another and different way than before those who were not in sympathy with or were hostile to the new movement. The time was at hand when he would feel obliged to take a courageous stand before his own friends—which sometimes requires more stamina and force of character to do than to face one's out and out enemies—as to whether the gospel, with all its privileges, should be offered to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews, and upon the same terms. Hitherto it had been presented to the Jews only, or to such Gentiles—called proselytes—as had virtually become Jews by accepting and practicing certain rites of the Jewish religion. It was the opinion of most of the Jews who had become Christian believers that the latter was essential, viz:—that it was only through the door of Judaism that Gentiles might receive the benefits of the gospel, although the ceremonial requirements of the old Mosaic system, much as they might mean to the Jews, were meaningless to them. The

pride of race and sense of exclusiveness in which the Jews had been trained, and their prejudice against the Gentiles, especially in the matter of religious equality with them, were deep and strong—we have little idea, probably, how strong—and any such view as that of giving the gospel to Gentiles and on the same terms with themselves, would not fail to stir up the most determined opposition. And yet this question was bound, sooner or later, from the nature of the case, to come up, and it would have to be met with courage, if the new religious movement was to develop into anything more than a mere Jewish sect. As a matter of fact, it was for years a burning question in the early church, and it came near rending it in twain.

Stephen had already gained a glimpse of the larger mission of the gospel, and had given expression to his broader views. But it really fell to Peter to take the leadership in putting these views in practice, and thus initiating this advance movement. It was not a deliberately thought out plan on his part to do this, rather he was driven to take the step by a series of providences which he interpreted—which he could hardly do otherwise than interpret—as intended to encourage and to call for this very thing. It was in this way that the conviction gradually grew upon him that the gospel was for the Gentiles as well as for the Jews, and when he was finally persuaded that this actually was the will of God, he was as resolute

and bold to act upon it, even in face of the certain opposition of many in the Christian company, as he had all along been bold and courageous in proclaiming the gospel itself in the face of hostile Jewish leaders.

It came about in this way. Peter's work led him at length to the western part of Judea. It is not unlikely that this question of the gospel for all men may have arisen in his mind before this—not settled as yet, for Peter was a Jew, with the narrow spirit of exclusiveness of his countrymen—but still it may have been before him. At Joppa, one day, "he fell into a trance and beholdeth the heaven opened and a certain vessel descending, as it were a great sheet, let down by four corners upon the earth: wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts and creeping things of the earth and birds of the heaven. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter: kill and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord, for I have never eaten anything that is common and unclean. And a voice came unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, make not thou common. And this was done thrice: and straightway the vessel was received up into heaven."

Peter was much perplexed as to what the meaning of this vision might be, for that it had some profound significance, he was satisfied. In the midst of his perplexity messengers arrived from Cæsarea from an officer in the Roman army named Cornelius, who wished to see him and to receive

instruction from him in regard to the new religion. Already the Spirit had given Peter intimation of what was coming, and had bidden him to go as invited, nothing doubting. So when the messengers stated to him their mission, he prepared to return with them. He took several of the brethren of Joppa with him, possibly as a matter of precaution. It was neither a Jew nor a Jewish proselyte who had invited him, but a Gentile, and he might be brought face to face with the question which had already been giving him uneasiness. If so, it might be important to have witnesses present, especially if he should afterward be called upon by the Jerusalem authorities to explain his course. Reaching Cæsarea, he was cordially received by Cornelius, who explained to him the circumstances which had led him to send for the apostle. He, too, had had a vision from God, and in that vision he had been directed to send messengers to Peter at Joppa.

Then the meaning of his own strange vision began to dawn on Peter. He saw that it meant that God was no respecter of persons. The Gentiles were no longer to be regarded as common or ceremonially unclean and for that reason to be excluded from gospel privileges. And although it was a great step for Peter to take, and a courageous one, to go directly in the face of his own Jewish training and prejudices, he overcame the scruples which caused him to hesitate, and preached the gospel to this seeking Gentile and

his family, offering it to them on the same terms as he had been accustomed to offer it to the Jews. To the amazement of the Jewish Christians who had accompanied him, the Holy Spirit fell on the company of listeners as upon the disciples at Pentecost, and Cornelius and his household were baptized and officially recognized by Peter as Christian believers. The question had seemed to answer itself. Peter's mind was at last clear. The gospel was not for Jews exclusively. It was for Gentiles as well, for man as man, upon the same terms for all. God had signalized his approval of Peter's course by the gift of the Spirit to these Gentiles. There might be opposition on the part of the more conservative Jewish Christians, serious opposition, but there Peter will stand, and nothing will move him from his position.

No sooner was word of what had taken place at Cæsarea received at Jerusalem than that happened which was to have been expected. It created a great stir, and Peter was called to an account for what he had done. Thereupon he explained the circumstances fully by which he felt justified in his course—the preparatory vision at Joppa, the call immediately afterwards to go to Cæsarea, his own reluctance, and yet how he had been bidden by the Spirit to go, nothing doubting, how he had found the Gentile and his family waiting and eager to learn of the new religion, how he had

felt impelled to declare it to them, and how the approval of God had been apparent in the bestowal of the Spirit upon them. In spite of his own scruples, he had become convinced that the gospel was intended for the Gentiles as well as the Jews, and upon precisely the same terms. After this frank and unanswerable explanation, which was at the same time a self-vindication, those who had criticised Peter's course held their peace. Not that they were fully satisfied—subsequent events showed that they were not—but they doubtless felt that this might be passed by as something exceptional. It was not, at any rate, intended to establish a precedent for the future.

But although nothing further was heard on the subject for a considerable time—no other instances of the kind occurring in that vicinity—it was still a great step in advance which had been taken, and its influence on the future procedure of the church must have been considerable. Peter had taken the initiative, and this he had done with the courage which was now becoming characteristic of him.

Strange as it appears to us that such a question, which seems so simple and plain upon its very face, should have so agitated Christian people of the time, it was nevertheless felt to be one of tremendous import to the Jews, as it involved the very existence and stability of the entire religious system which had prevailed among them for centuries. It dated back to the time of Moses—

even, in some aspects of it, to the patriarch Abraham himself, the founder of their race.

Meanwhile events were transpiring in another quarter by which this whole question of giving the gospel to the Gentiles would ultimately have to be faced, and a final and formal decision be made in regard to it. Other Christian believers were being led, by providential circumstances, to take the same large view of the scope of the gospel which Peter had taken. At Antioch a work had developed as growing out of the dispersion of Christian believers from Jerusalem at the time of the persecution which arose on the death of Stephen, by which many Gentiles had become converts to the new faith. When the leaders at Jerusalem were advised of this, they at once sent Barnabas, in whose piety and judgment there was large confidence, to investigate. He did so, and was constrained to acquiesce in the situation, not only being satisfied that the movement was of God, but to help it on by his personal efforts. As the work grew upon his hands, he was led to seek out Paul, the converted persecutor, who had now for a number of years been laboring in comparative obscurity in his native Cilicia, to assist him. A year later, after being formally set apart for the purpose, these two men made a missionary tour through Central Asia Minor, preaching the word to Jews and Gentiles alike, and founding a number of churches in important cities. Soon

after their return to Antioch, the question as between the narrower and the broader view of the gospel and its mission was thrust upon them. Before this time it had been ignored. Gentiles had been placed upon the same footing with the Jews in the matter of the gospel and its privileges. But now certain of the more rigid and conservative Jewish Christians from Jerusalem had come down to Antioch—possibly for this very purpose—and at once began to agitate the subject, saying that except a man was circumcised—a rite which stood for the whole Mosaic system—he could not be saved. In other words, in order to salvation, a Gentile must first become a Jew by accepting this distinctively Jewish rite. The right of Paul and Barnabas to do as they had all along been doing, i. e., offering the gospel upon the same terms to Jews and Gentiles alike, even though God's blessing had seemed to attend them in so doing, was called in question. So far, in fact, did these Judaizing teachers carry the matter, that the harmony of the church and the success of the Antioch work were seriously threatened. Finally it was decided to refer the whole matter to the leaders at Jerusalem, and this was accordingly done. Paul and Barnabas, the recognized champions of the larger and broader view, headed the delegation from the Antioch church.

It is here, in this important Jerusalem Conference—which will be considered more in detail in our study of Paul—that we have our last view of

Peter so far as the book of Acts is concerned. There was a strong feeling among many in the Jerusalem church against the broader view. Not even the experience of Peter at Cæsarea several years before had permanently satisfied all, although no doubt many were influenced by it to a more liberal attitude on the subject. Naturally, at such a conference Peter would be present and be likely to be heard. When he, among others, was called upon to express his views, he did so in no uncertain way. His sympathies, his convictions, were clearly with Paul, in whose successful work among the Gentiles he no doubt rejoiced. In his address he rehearsed the steps by which he had himself been led to his convictions on the subject. By this experience he had been taught the great lesson, which is as true now as it was then, that it is not at all by external rites and ceremonies, Jewish or otherwise, *but by the grace of God within the heart*, and by that alone, that anyone is ever saved. In this way Gentiles were saved as well as Jews.

This address of Peter did much to clear the atmosphere, and after full discussion, during which Paul and Barnabas rehearsed the story of their work among the Gentiles, the broader view, as championed and put in practice by them, prevailed. Although some further trouble was occasioned later by certain unreconciled elements among the Jewish Christians, the great question was really once for all and for all time settled,

that the gospel was to be given to all classes and conditions of men, everywhere, upon the same terms.

In the settlement of this question, Peter had courageously borne his part. Who shall say that without his influence and efforts, the same decisive result would have then been reached? Of course it would be, sooner or later, but it was something to have had a hand in shaping things at that early stage of the development of Christianity, and of shaping them right. Now the wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles was broken down, never again permanently to be raised. From this time forward the real center of the Christian movement was transferred from Jerusalem to Antioch, and thenceforth Paul became its leading spirit. Peter recognized his special mission as being more particularly to his own countrymen, as Paul's was to the Gentiles, and so far as appears, it was among the Jews that he labored during the remainder of his life. Why the story of his life is not continued in the book of Acts beyond the account of this Conference at Jerusalem is not clear, unless it be, as seems probable, that the aim of the writer was not so much to record the history of the movement in detail, as the expansion of the work beyond the bounds of Palestine and among the Jews, to the Gentiles. But Peter had made an imperishable record for himself. This record abundantly vindicated Christ's choice of him, with all his inconsistencies and defects of character, to

be a disciple, and all the pains he took to train him for the ministry which was to follow. He was the first great leader of Christianity, doing more to give it its first impulse and to shape its course, than any other one of the original apostolic company. Only once, according to the record, did his old vacillating disposition again show itself, when he endured the faithful rebuke of Paul in view of it with meekness, and immediately resumed his steadfast course. (Gal. ii, 11 cf.)

Aside from this we have no certain knowledge in regard to Peter. As the apostle to the circumcision, he would find the sphere of his labors among his own countrymen—chiefly, very likely, among the Jews of the Dispersion. From references in Paul's epistles, he seems to have visited Antioch, possibly Corinth also, and from his own first epistle, he apparently labored in the far East at Babylon, where the Jews were numerous. Naturally his work would call for frequent missionary journeys. It seems probable that he experienced a martyr's death at the end, as his Lord had foreshadowed that he might, and this may have been, as many suppose, at Rome. Beyond these few references, Scripture throws no light upon his course, his fortune, his labors, his sufferings, his successes, save what may be inferred from the two epistles which bear his name. Little reliance can probably be placed upon the numerous traditions in regard to him which have come down to us.

Peter's first epistle was written to encourage the Jews of the Dispersion, particularly in those provinces of Asia Minor where persecution prevailed against the Christians, to bear up against it patiently and hopefully. Soon their trials would be over. They are exhorted, meanwhile, to stand fast, to live a life of holiness and mutual love, and in due time they would receive the inheritance which was reserved in heaven for the faithful. The epistle is remarkable for the depth and beauty of its Christian teachings, and from the very beginning it has always held a secure place in the sacred canon. The second epistle, if indeed it is from Peter's pen, seems to have been written to the same churches as the first. Its object was to stir up the minds of its readers to remember what had been taught them, that they might be saved from the errors which were now becoming prevalent, and might grow in grace and a knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. In both these epistles Peter stands before us in a singularly beautiful humility. They show him to have ripened into Christian maturity, and that Christ, whom he once denied, was the mighty inspiration of his life.

Our review of Peter's life and work impresses us with the nobility of his character as the result of the training which he received from Christ and the transforming influence of the Spirit. From the impulsive, sometimes weak and vacillating dis-

ciple, he became the courageous apostolic leader, and during all his after life nobly fulfilled the duties of his apostolic office. As to his actual contribution to the movement which Christ inaugurated, it is impossible accurately to estimate it, either as to the numbers brought into Christian discipleship, the extent of territory into which he introduced the gospel, or the influence he exerted in bringing in a broader conception of Christianity than at first prevailed among the Jewish Christians. The results of his labors from a numerical point of view must have been large, especially when we consider the wide extent of territory over which he probably traveled in his missionary journeys, and in which he preached. One with such powers as he possessed would not be likely to lack for a hearing anywhere. But his contribution to the new movement was particularly marked in what he did to open the door, and help keep it open permanently, to the Gentiles. As soon as he saw the light he was quick to follow it. He was not one to reason out such a proposition in the first place, as Paul would do, but he was willing to be led into the truth, whatever it was. After perceiving that his presentation of the gospel to Cornelius and his family was attended by marks of the divine approval, he no longer questioned that this was the Lord's will concerning the Gentiles. His utterances on the subject at the Jerusalem Conference were especially influential in turning the tide in favor of the broader view.

CHAPTER III

JOHN

The popular impression as to John the apostle—perhaps owing to his designation as the “disciple whom Jesus loved,” and because he himself in his epistles and Gospel dwells so much on love—has come to be of one who was all gentleness, mildness, inclined even to effeminacy. It is of one largely destitute of such strong and positive elements of character, as we find, for instance, in Peter and Paul. But this is to do serious injustice to the facts in the case. John’s natural traits appear to have been just the reverse—traits which might need to be modified and sanctified, but by no means eradicated. It was very likely his discernment of strong, manly qualities, with their possibilities, in John’s nature, which so commended him to Christ, and led to his selection for the large part he was to have in laying the foundations of the Christian faith. At the same time, there was evidently such a delicate susceptibility to impressions on John’s part that his close association with the Master and the influence of the latter’s personal training upon him could hardly fail to develop the gentler, more lovable graces, which seem later to have been so characteristic

of him. More than this, the inworking of the Spirit would bring all to maturity, and kindle in his soul that profound love for his Lord by which he was one of the first to join and the last to leave him, and that zeal in his service which continued undisturbed throughout his long career.

I

John was a native of Galilee. He was probably of the town of Bethsaida on the western shore of the lake or sea of Galilee, and not far from Capernaum, which was the headquarters of our Lord during his Galilean ministry. The names of John's parents were Zebedee and Salome. His father's business was that of fishing, and John and his brother James were brought up to the same occupation. That Zebedee was a man of some worldly substance, reasonably well to do at least, and of respectable position, has been inferred from the fact that he was assisted by hired servants in the management of his boats and in mending his nets, that mention is made of his ownership of a home, and that John was acquainted with the family of Caiaphas the High Priest. The mother was an ardent, pious woman, and from the references to her in the Gospel narratives, she must have been possessed of more than ordinary energy of character. She was one of the women who ministered to Jesus, and shared in the expense of spices for anointing his body at his burial. It has been thought that because of so little mention

of the father, and that Salome is designated as the "mother of Zebedee's children," he died not long after the sons became disciples of Christ.

It is not improbable that James and John had often been associated in pastimes, studies, and occupation, with Andrew and Peter, two other young men of Bethsaida, whose father also was a fisherman, and whom they assisted. Very likely the long and intimate friendship of Peter and John began in those early days. Though they had strongly contrasted characters and widely differing temperaments, each may have supplied what the other lacked. Certainly this friendship must have had no small influence upon the development of both, and may have been fruitful in many ways for their mutual good. As the time advanced, their common interests and sympathies would naturally tend to make this friendship closer.

As to John's education, we can hardly presume that it was anything like as thorough as that of Paul. His knowledge of letters, properly speaking, was doubtless limited. He was probably trained in all that constituted the ordinary education of Jewish boyhood at least. No doubt he was carefully instructed by his parents in the rudiments of the Mosaic law and in the leading events of the nation's remarkable history. Not to have done this—to have allowed their children to grow up without being instructed in the principles of religion—would have been regarded as

entirely unbecoming in Jewish parents. The sons most likely shared in the provision made for general education in connection with the synagogue schools, and schools more advanced if, as is thought, such were in existence at that time in the province. Furthermore, the public services of the synagogue on the Sabbath were of themselves educational in character. It is hardly to be supposed that one of John's susceptible and responsive nature would fail to be impressed by and to remember what he heard there as the days and the years passed.

Other influences which had not a little to do with shaping John's character and developing his mental powers were his contact with travelers passing through his native place and the political agitations of the time; the reactive effect upon him of his own business in its varied relations; the personal influence of his mother, with her warm and energetic disposition; above all, the training which he received directly and indirectly from the Master himself. By all these means he became fitted at length for the great mission to which he was called, and which occupied his time and energies throughout his long career. That he was a man of a high order of ability naturally, seems evident from the profound spiritual views which he was able to take and to which he gave expression later. His writings make this abundantly clear.

Whether he was ever married or not—as it is evident that Peter was—no light is given in the

records. If he had been, it would seem as if some reference would have been made to it. That he had a home, presided over by his mother Salome no doubt, is evident from the fact that Christ committed his own mother—as he hung upon the cross—to the care of the beloved disciple, who, we read, took her to his own home. The opinion that John was the youngest of the disciples would seem to be sustained by the fact that he lived to see the close of the first century. He probably survived all the others.

Evidently John early became a disciple of John the Baptist, and the influence of such a teacher, both in his message and in his own character and spirit, must have had a marked effect upon his developing manhood. No doubt he and other Galilean youth were early attracted by the Baptist's preaching in the wilderness, and put themselves under his instruction. Andrew, Peter's brother, is distinctly mentioned as having been one of these, and there can be little doubt, from the form of the reference in the first chapter of John's Gospel, that John was another. Most likely Peter was a third. Along with the others who heard him, they must have been profoundly moved by the burning words of this preacher of righteousness. Without realizing it, John was receiving the best possible preparation for the higher discipleship under Christ which was to come later, to which, indeed, the Baptist himself introduced him. The day of that introduction to

Christ was a memorable one in John's life. When in his old age at Ephesus he writes his Gospel, it rises distinctly to view, and he makes detailed reference to it.

One of the constant aims of Christ, never lost sight of even in his busiest hours, was that of preparing his disciples for the functions of the apostolic office. Accordingly, as John became one of Christ's disciples, his training for his future work at once began. Not only was he to be instructed in the things of the kingdom, he was to receive such discipline in temper as would enable him, both by precept and example, fittingly to exemplify the truth which he was to proclaim and the spirit which Christ inculcated. As in the case of Peter, this training was to be both general and special—that which was received in common with the rest of the disciples, and that which was directly personal, adapted to his own peculiar temperament and needs.

As to the general training of John, his susceptible and responsive nature would naturally lead him to appreciate and to profit by Christ's instruction and discipline, the influence of his example and spirit, more than most of the others. The same opportunities would mean more to him than to the rest. It was this quality or disposition on John's part, very likely, which led to his being selected as one of the favored three who were more than once permitted to come into closest

possible contact with the Master. These three, Peter, James, and John, formed a kind of inner circle of the disciples—not in the sense of favoritism on Christ's part, but as a natural outcome of their possessing, in larger degree than the others, the power of apprehending spiritual things. Of the three, John appears to have stood in even more intimate relation to him than the rest, so much so that he is spoken of as the disciple whom Jesus loved. We can imagine what such relationship would mean to one in preparation for the apostolic office.

In common with the other disciples, John would listen to the instruction of Christ as to the nature of the kingdom which he was to inaugurate and which they were to carry forward after him. He heard the public discourses of the Master, and listened to him in private as frequently his public utterances were afterward explained or amplified for their benefit. He saw the mighty works which Jesus performed, which constituted one of his credentials to the Messianic office, and which could not but lead to a steadily deepening faith on the part of those who witnessed them. How effectively John learned this lesson of faith, one of the most fundamental and important lessons in his entire training, would seem to be made plain in his Gospel, whose main aim is to convince others of Christ's divine character. In doing this, he selected such scenes and miracles and discourses from Christ's life as had made the most

profound impression upon his own mind, and the rehearsal of which he believed would produce the same effect on the minds of others.

But as in the case of Peter, a large part of John's training was personal and private. No risks must be run in such a work as that which was to be committed to the disciples, and he who knew the secret heart and weakness of each of them, as well as their points of strength, would leave nothing undone to qualify them for their great undertaking. So like the true friend and thorough teacher that he was, Christ frankly pointed out the shortcomings and special needs of each as occasion arose, as well as sought to develop the corresponding positive virtues. Sometimes the experience was severe for them—it was so in Peter's case—but it was no more severe than the nature of the defects or the desperateness of the fault required.

We know not all the weak points in John's character, but some of his failings were evidently of the gravest kind. With all that was winsome in his nature—and there was much—he was thoroughly human. There is reason to believe that he was of a quick, fiery temperament, disposed to be revengeful, and full of unsanctified, selfish ambition. The name given to him and his brother James by Christ—Boanérge, sons of thunder—would seem to imply a vehemence, impetuosity, severity, even violence of natural disposition.

These tendencies broke out once and again. On one occasion, after the people of a certain Samaritan village had refused hospitality to Jesus and his disciples at the close of a wearisome day of travel—a refusal evidently growing out of the long-standing prejudice between Jews and Samaritans—John and his brother James came to their Master and proposed that the offending villagers be destroyed by fire called down from heaven. It was a strange, brutal request to come from men who had long been disciples of the gentle and loving Jesus, but it shows clearly that as yet they were in a low stage of development; that their conception of the Christian life and the Christian temper was still very crude; and that they were animated by a spirit which was entirely foreign to that inculcated by the great Teacher. That which seemed to them to be but righteous resentment, in reality contained the very essence of all sin—murder. Christ pointed out their sin and rebuked them for it. It was a personal lesson in regard to the true spirit of the Christian life which would never be forgotten. All this goes to show how possible it is to think one is rendering service to God, when in reality he may be doing just the reverse—just as in the case of Saul the persecutor, before he became Paul the Christian, as he himself confesses. It makes all the difference in the world as to the spirit one breathes, or by which he is animated. One may be in the right on some question, so far as the

abstract truth is concerned, and yet be all wrong in the spirit with which he maintains his position. Some over-zealous reformers seem to be of this class. Thus one's maintenance of a right attitude is often neutralized by a wrong spirit manifested in connection with it. No one seems to have needed the lesson which Christ sought to inculcate on this occasion, more than John. Later, after the Holy Spirit had wrought more fully within him, the opposite qualities of gentleness, meekness, patience, tolerance, began to be manifest in his character. The zeal of the sons of thunder did not disappear, but it became tempered, softened, sweetened.

On another occasion John reported to his Master the incident of the interdicted exorcist. The disciples had found a man, unknown to them, engaged in the work of casting out devils in Jesus' name. On the ground that he did not identify himself with them, the twelve, they forbade him to continue. It was not that he was not a good man or a sincere follower of Christ, which he doubtless was, but simply because he did not identify himself with them. Just as if to-day we should refuse to recognize others as Christian believers, along with ourselves, or the work of their hands for Christ, because they are not of our particular set, or church, or denomination. The spirit of the disciples, and of John with the rest, was uncharitable, narrow, out of harmony with the spirit of the Master. No wonder Christ rebuked

them for it. "There is no man," he said, "that shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me." That one engaged in a work like that of this exorcist might be actuated by unworthy motives, might be possible, but until clear, strong reasons for believing otherwise appeared, Jesus would have the disciples charitably regard the outward action as the index of sincere faith and love. John would hardly need a second lesson on the subject, and the large, generous spirit which he afterward exemplified, showed how well he profited by the lesson received at this time.

In the incident of the two brothers, James and John, seeking through the intervention of their mother, the highest positions of honor in the new kingdom, we have an illustration of the worldly and selfish ambition by which they were animated, even up to but a few days preceding the crucifixion. Regardless of the equal claims of the other disciples, and thinking only of their own selfish interests, they wanted to make sure of the places of highest honor for themselves. No wonder the rest of the disciples, when they learned of it, were indignant. It seems a marvel that even Jesus himself could have borne patiently with such a spirit. His answer to this presumptuous request, though singularly mild, apparently, was in reality a rebuke of the severest kind. He declared to the brothers that they little realized what they were asking. True greatness in his kingdom was by unselfish, ministering service. The

way to the throne was by the cross. The real princes of the kingdom would be those who had passed through great tribulation, and had drunk most deeply of the cup of sorrow. It was not for him, Christ, to assign positions of honor. Each man would get the place for which his experience fitted him, and no other. Only as the disciples were willing to pay the price, would their ambitions be realized.

These are a few instances of Christ's personal efforts to train the impetuous, intolerant, ambitious disciple, that he might become the spiritual apostle. No doubt there were many other occasions, not recorded, when other equally needed rebukes were administered and other important lessons were impressed, but these will sufficiently indicate the course which Jesus pursued in order that each of the disciples might receive the special training which he needed. It was in this way that the blemishes of John's character were removed, its harsher elements subdued, and the more winsome, gentle, and loving qualities of it largely developed—those qualities which gave reason for his being so loved by the Master, and by which he came to be designated the apostle of love.

But we are by no means to suppose that Christ's personal training of John was all of a negative sort, any more than in the case of Peter. He sought to develop within him the positive virtues and a positive faith, as well as to subdue or to overcome such qualities as were abnormal. To

this end, such incidents as that of raising the daughter of Jairus, the transfiguration, and others, at which John was present along with Peter and James, would be particularly helpful. The full significance of some of these lessons might not be altogether plain at the time, but it would be made so later, as the Spirit should bring all things to John's remembrance.

In addition to the direct general and personal training of John, he also received from the Master the inestimable benefit of what may be termed the unconscious influence upon himself of Christ's example and spirit. Lessons from this source, from the Master's own life—of an absolute trust, of patience, forbearance, prayer, forgiveness, sympathy, and of entire absorption in the work of ministering service to others—would make an indelible impression upon John's nature, and could not fail to prove a large factor in his development. Nor would this be less true, even if, as is likely, he may have been largely unconscious, at the time, of the effect which was being produced upon himself. He would imbibe his Master's spirit, emulate his example, form ideals of character, and set up standards of conduct, under that influence, without being distinctly aware of it at the moment. He had opportunity to observe Jesus' demeanor and spirit under all conditions. He saw that when he was reviled, he reviled not again; that he spent much time in

communion with his Father; that in trying exigencies especially, or when about to take some important step—as, e. g., the formal appointment of the twelve to be his disciples—he spent entire nights in prayer; that in the final ordeals of his earthly life, those last days before his death, he bore himself in a way to command the admiration of men in all time; that so self-forgetting was he, that even while hanging on the cross, he embraced an opportunity to preach the gospel to a penitent criminal at his side; and that in his last words he prayed for his enemies who were putting him to death. All these scenes and experiences through which John passed, together with those pertaining to the resurrection, must have had a large place in the development of his character and faith, and in preparing him for the momentous responsibilities which were soon to devolve upon him, along with Peter and the rest of the disciples.

Christ's direct training—both general and special—of the disciples, may be said to have been essentially finished on that last evening they spent together, when he gave the whole company a never-to-be-forgotten lesson in humility by washing their feet, and in the final instructions of that uninterrupted interview. Henceforth Providence would take up and carry on the process, and brief though the time was before Christ's final departure, its occurrences were epoch-making. Such scenes as the disciples were now to witness

would impress lessons of a different kind from any they had hitherto received, yet they were none the less needed to complete their preparation. That the desired results were accomplished, in so far at least as John was concerned, there can be little doubt. So ineffaceably were these experiences impressed upon his mind, that he wrote of them years afterward in the full and vivid way which he would naturally have written had they been of but recent occurrence. The things which Christ said, the prayer which he offered, the scenes connected with the arrest and the trial, the vacillation of Pilate, the scene at the crucifixion, the bearing of the suffering One, some of his words from the cross, his death—all are graphically portrayed in the Gospel which bears John's name. The educating influence of all these scenes upon such an one as he is not to be computed. When the spiritual enduement of Pentecost came upon him and the rest, their preparation for their life work was complete. Then they were ready to go forth and enter upon the great work which had been committed to them, and to extend the kingdom to the very ends of the earth. The love of John, especially, burned with a fresh intensity.

II

The spiritual enduement at Pentecost was not calculated to mold the disciples into men of the same pattern. Its effect would rather be to de-

velop and to emphasize their individuality. Their native differences of temperament would be brought out more distinctly than ever. And this was no doubt intended. While the disciples were alike illumined mentally, and energized, it was in each case along the line of his own peculiarities and aptitudes. If one was by nature a leader of men, as in the case of Peter, his qualities of leadership would be developed and rendered more effective. If one was of a contemplative and thoughtful cast of mind, as was John, qualities of this character would be emphasized. And so of other characteristic traits and tendencies, while other elements still, perhaps unrecognized before or never called out, would be brought to light. The value of all this is seen in the fact that the work of the kingdom would be of so varied a character as that all the faculties and powers and special gifts of the disciples could be utilized, and would be needed.

But while some of these qualities were such as to give to one a special prominence in the work—qualities which would be more quickly recognized by men—it by no means follows that they were in reality the most important, or that their possessor thereby accomplished a more important or a larger service than others. It is just here that we meet with embarrassment in any effort to set forth and to estimate the work of different men who are associated in a great enterprise. Some seem to be entirely overshadowed by others whose

work is better adapted to arrest public attention, although their own work may be just as important as that of these others, and even more so. So in the story of the public work of Peter and John, so in the case of Paul and Barnabas, so of Luther and Melanchthon. John and Barnabas and Melanchthon and their work are not always appreciated at their full value, for the reason that they were overshadowed by their associates.

After Pentecost, Peter's qualities of leadership brought him at once to the front, and this position he maintained for a number of years. It was he who preached that wonderful first Christian sermon at Pentecost whereby three thousand were led to believe. Naturally from being so conspicuous at this time and in activities succeeding, he is more prominent in the records. He was probably considerably older than John, and would naturally take the lead. But even if John is less conspicuous in the narrative as given in the book of Acts, it must be remembered that the two men were so closely associated that the acts and words of the one, might not improperly be regarded as the acts and words of the other. Just how large and important John's part of the work actually was; how much his sympathy and counsels influenced Peter; how much of a restraining influence he exerted on Peter's impulsiveness; just how much John's strong faith and his great love served as an in-

spiration to his companion, cannot be told. Later in life, when John seems to have been alone—very likely from having survived both Peter and Paul—he himself became the most influential of all the Christians then living, having charge of the work centering at Ephesus, the third great center, as Jerusalem had been the first, and Antioch the second. At any rate, we find Peter and John standing side by side during that early Jerusalem work, with its startling incidents and events. They were together when the lame man was healed—an incident which made so profound an impression upon the people, and which developed the first opposition on the part of the authorities. Together they faced the Sanhedrin after being arrested, and together they declared, when forbidden to continue to speak in Christ's name, that they must obey God rather than men. Together they were imprisoned, together they bore witness to their Master by their unflinching loyalty, their heroic devotion, and their scathing words against the Jewish leaders; and together, sent by the apostles at Jerusalem, they went at length into Samaria, to carry forward and complete the work which had been begun there by the evangelist Philip. A great movement had developed as a result of Philip's labors. Peter and John prayed for the people, we read, laid their hands on them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, and baptized a large number in the name of Christ. Here they were thrown in contact

with Simon the sorcerer, whose name figures prominently in primitive ecclesiastical history, who sought to purchase the Holy Spirit with money. The two apostles preached in various towns and villages of Samaria. Nor is it impossible that they may have preached the gospel of love in the very villages upon which John and his brother once sought permission from Christ to call down fire from heaven. The marvelous boldness which they together manifested, was not the boldness of the main spokesman simply—it was the boldness of John just as truly as of Peter. This, indeed, is only what we might expect from one who was the bravest of all the disciples after the arrest of the Master. Then, more than all the others, John stood loyally by him. It is hardly to be supposed that he would now fall behind Peter or any others in the boldness with which he met the difficulties and the perils of the situation from the opposition of the Jewish authorities. In Acts iv, 13—"Now when they beheld the boldness of Peter and John"—it is made plain that it was not alone Peter's boldness of speech of which the council took note—it was the boldness of John as well.

John was present at the famous Jerusalem Conference (Acts xv) when the burning question of the time in regard to the admission of Gentiles to participation in the full privileges of the gospel, and on the same terms as the Jews, was settled. We do not read that he was conspicuous in the

discussions of that meeting—his name, in fact, does not appear in Luke's record of it. Paul, however, makes honorable mention of him in this connection in one of his epistles (Gal. ii, 9). It was his (Paul's) testimony that John and Peter and James seemed to be pillars, and that they gave to him and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship. Paul and John may have met before, but this is the only meeting recorded. We may well believe that John's position at this Conference was no less advanced than that of Peter and the others who sustained Paul in his championship of the cause of the Gentile believers. It would be unlike John—certainly as he appears in his later life—not to have taken broad views on such a question, or to have failed to give Paul and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship in their noble work. John was destined to become the successor of the great apostle later, in the care of some of the very churches which the latter had planted among the Gentiles, as we shall presently see. After this, except in Revelation, the name of John disappears from the New Testament.

III

From this time forward we must make our way as best we can in regard to John without the Scripture to guide us, save as those parts of which he was the author clearly connect themselves with his history, and take their place as authentic records of his life. As John lived longer

than the rest of the apostles and was personally known to a generation of Christians who were on the stage at the beginning of the second century, the traditions respecting him have of course a much higher value than those related of any other of the twelve, and the traditions themselves have a greater appearance of historical truth. Some very important statements in regard to John's later life may be derived from the genuine writings of the ancient fathers.

No very positive information as to where John spent the time between the Jerusalem Conference and his residence in Asia Minor, is available. It seems somewhat remarkable that we find no further mention of him in the book of Acts. But the same is true of Peter. Whether John spent this whole period in discharging his apostolic office at Jerusalem, or in Palestine, becomes a question of deep interest. As there is no trace of his labors in any other direction, some have conjectured that inasmuch as he had been so intimately related to Peter in Judea and Samaria, he may have accompanied Peter in his missionary journeyings to the eastward and elsewhere. But wherever spent, the years of this portion of John's unwritten history were doubtless years of zealous activity for the Master whom he so devotedly loved. If he returned to Jerusalem, it was not to tarry there long. The days of its tribulation were at hand, and he would be quick to discern the signs of the coming woe which Christ had predicted, and no

doubt under the special direction of the Holy Spirit, he took his departure from it. It may be that at this time he embarked for Asia—not the continent, not Asia Minor merely, but a province of that name in the western part of Asia Minor. Ephesus was its capital, and to this city he came. Here a Christian community existed under the very shadow of the goddess Diana—"Diana of the Ephesians." Apollos, Aquila, Priscilla, Paul, had all been there before him. The latter appears to have labored here for three years. Here, in this great center of trade of both Europe and the Levant, and of false worship, John, with his characteristic ardor, entered upon his work.

It was a time of persecutions, and it is believed by many that it was in connection with the great persecution of Nero—which, beginning in A. D. 64 and continuing until that monster's death in '68, swept to the remotest provinces—that John was forced into exile on the isle of Patmos, and that there he had the visions which formed the basis of the Apocalypse. The island of Patmos was an obscure one, a few miles south of Ephesus, and about fifteen miles in circumference. The fact that there are references in the Apocalypse which seem to imply that Jerusalem and the Temple were still standing, adds to the strength of this position in regard to the date. There are others, however, who place the date of the book at about A. D. '95, or during the latter part of the reign of Domitian. This, indeed, has been

the tradition, and there are many considerations which support it. If, as some assert, neither Revelation, nor the Gospel which bears John's name, could have been written by the apostle, they must certainly have been written by men who had been most closely related to him, had imbibed his spirit, and were thoroughly familiar with his thought.

But while much can be said on either side of these questions, the value and significance of both these books are not dependent upon the determination of their date, or even of their authorship. They have an imperishable worth on other grounds. Revelation is remarkable as a literary work and for its figurative character. While some things in it seem to have reference to events which then were "shortly to come to pass," these references are by no means so clear as to warrant the minute and literal and material interpretations which are sometimes given them. The evident design of the book was to encourage the persecuted and suffering Christians of that time to hold fast their confidence. The present ordeals would soon pass. Christ would ultimately triumph in the world, and a glimpse is afforded into the glories of the heavenly realm which the faithful were to inherit.

John is at this time the only, or about the only survivor of the apostolic company, certainly so if the date of the book is near the end of the first century. James, Peter, and Paul are no

more. If Peter survived, or any others, they must have been in extreme old age, or in some remote quarter of the globe. If hitherto John has been less prominent than these others, now he may be regarded as the leader of the Christian movement, and his work, direct and indirect, was a fitting climax of the apostolic period. As Dr. Schaff says: "If Peter was appointed to lay the foundation of the apostolic church, and Paul to build the main structure thereon, John, the apostle of Completion, was to erect the dome whose top should lose itself in the glory of the new heaven."

At the time of John's stay in Ephesus, great heresies were beginning to develop both there and in other cities of prominence in that region. The old struggle over the question of the union of Jewish and Gentile converts in one church—although it had broken out here and there even after it had apparently been settled at the Jerusalem Conference—was now a thing of the past. The ritualistic differences between the churches of the circumcision and the uncircumcision were recognized and understood on both sides, and so unity was preserved. But now fresh controversies sprang up which had not appeared in earlier days, and it was reserved for John to meet them, to reconcile oppositions, and restore peace among conflicting elements. This was probably his final service for the cause he loved, and for the

Master whom he adored. There were heathen and Jewish superstitions to supplant, subtle and misleading speculations to be set aside, old mythologies to uproot, and eastern sorceries to overthrow. These speculations and theories became mingled more or less with Christian doctrines, and hence there arose what may be called the Gnostic heresies, an expression, however, which covers the widest and sometimes most differing ideas. Although there seem to be references to these theories and speculations in such epistles as James, Hebrews, and First Peter, whose writers seek to meet them in ways direct and indirect, it is in the writings attributed to John, who was perhaps better prepared than the rest by his training and his contemplative habits to take them in hand, that they are refuted in a most masterly and unanswerable way. This is done, not by attacking them directly, but rather by setting forth the positive doctrines on these subjects, especially in regard to Christ, his divine character and eternal sonship, which were particularly called in question. This gives special significance to the literature which bears John's name, and of which it is the unanimous testimony of antiquity that he was the author.

And yet there is very little in these writings, especially in John's Gospel, to imply that a great controversy was raging. Still, everything which enters into them, particularly into the Gospel, bears upon the one end of setting forth the posi-

tive truth for the upbuilding of the faith of Christian people. The incidents, the miracles, the discourses, which are comprised in it, were selected out of material at hand, with this in view. Thus the double purpose was served, of refuting dangerous error though without referring to it by name, and of establishing or demonstrating for all time the truth pertaining to Christ and his divine character. The book is written with extreme simplicity, yet it is the simplicity of greatness and of perfect familiarity with the theme. It abounds in "gems of thought which lie scattered about with profuse carelessness." The personality of the author pervades the whole narrative. One writer says: "In the whole range of literature there is no composition which is a more perfect work of art, or which more rigidly excludes whatever does not subserve its main end."

The three epistles which bear John's name are anonymous, yet it has been the prevailing belief from the older times that they are apostolic writings, and a part of the legacy of the beloved disciple to the church. An underlying unity of thought binds all parts together. The first epistle, at any rate, has the same characteristic phraseology as is manifest in John's Gospel. Its aim is tersely summarized by the writer as intended to confirm his readers in faith and communion with God. The second and third epistles, which are both of extreme brevity, are simply

specimens of Christian correspondence in which spiritual instruction is incidentally interwoven.

It is impossible to estimate the total influence of such a one as John upon the movement which Christ set in operation. There is no reason, however, to suppose that he was less tolerant, or charitable, or open-minded to the truth, or less devoted, than his intimate but more conspicuous associate, with whose work his own was, for so long a time, so closely linked. If Peter stands first in apostolic influence in those early years, there is no good reason why John should not be a close second.

But in summing up John's life and trying to form some conception of his particular contribution to the movement of Christianity during the first century, we must not fail to lay special stress upon the work of his closing years—both upon what he did in conserving the work which had already been accomplished in the important field where he labored, and in providing a body of positive doctrine which fittingly forms the capstone of the arch of truth which has been left us by the early champions of the gospel. If Peter was the apostle of hope, and Paul of progress, John was the apostle of love—a review of whose life and work would perhaps more fittingly conclude these studies than to appear in this place.

CHAPTER IV

STEPHEN

It is not easy for us to-day fully to understand or to appreciate the religious situation in Jerusalem for a considerable period after Christ's departure. The disciples, now apostles, continued there, hard at work in preaching, teaching, and winning men to the new faith. Yet with all their spiritual enlightenment, it was long before they arrived at the full, rounded conception of the scope and relations of Christianity as it lay in the mind of Christ. Rarely, if at all, in those early days, did it occur to anyone that it was intended for any but Jews, or those who should first become Jews in order to share in its benefits; that it was ever to break away from its connection with Judaism, and pursue its own independent course in the world; that it was to become universal, without local habitation or headquarters, designed for all classes and conditions of men everywhere, in all lands, in all ages, upon the fulfillment of the simple conditions of repentance and faith. Or, if any did gain a glimpse of these larger views, it would have been regarded as rank heresy, even blasphemy—i. e., disloyalty or treason to the Mosaic system—to express them.

Hence when Stephen arose at length and boldly did this very thing, it is not strange, perhaps, considering the narrow and exclusive spirit of the Jewish leaders and the Jewish people, and the tenacity with which they clung to the old Mosaic ritual, that it should arouse violent opposition. Yet here, in the brief narrative of this one man, of clearer and broader vision than his contemporary Christians—even of the apostles themselves at that time—we have, strictly speaking, the beginning of a mighty movement within Christianity itself, which finally led to the bursting of its Judaic fetters, and its complete emancipation from the ritual system of the Jews—henceforth to be recognized as the one universal religion.

The particular incidents which we are to consider and by which only we gain an insight into the life and character and views of Stephen, are set forth in the sixth and seventh chapters of the book of Acts. They occurred before this general broadening of view, this expansion idea, had come to prevail. The Jewish Christians had not broken away from the Mosaic observances. Even the disciples continued to conform to many of them. No one seemed to think of anything otherwise, or of any inconsistency in so doing, least of all that the acceptance of the gospel would involve a rupture with Judaism and its customs. No question as to the permanency of the Mosaic system, or as to its being in any way superseded

by the new faith, was raised or seemed to be thought of. To the Jewish Christians, Christianity was simply a new phase, an advanced development, really a part, a culmination of Judaism. The temporary and typical character of both the tabernacle and the Temple and the entire Mosaic system, though distinctly intimated in the Jewish Scriptures, had not apparently occurred to anyone until Stephen arose and suggested it. His thoughts and teachings were in advance of his time, and, as has not been unusual, he had to pay the penalty of it.

The work of the apostles at Jerusalem had been growing so rapidly that they found it impracticable, at length, to give their personal attention to the distribution of charities among needy Christians, which had come to be a large and important responsibility. Many of these were Greek speaking Jews, as they were called, or Hellenists, who had come from the various provinces about, as distinguished from the native or Palestinian Jews. A fund had been provided toward the support of the more needy converts among both these classes. Some complaint having arisen that there had been unfairness in the distribution by those who had been appointed to the work, that the widows, especially, of the Hellenists or Greek speaking Jews were being neglected in the daily ministrations, the apostles took steps not only to remove all grounds of complaint, but at the same time to relieve themselves of the burden of

looking after the distribution of alms altogether. They proposed that the Christian people of Jerusalem select seven men, in whom they had full confidence, to have charge of the whole business, in order that they themselves might be left free to give their undivided attention to the work of preaching the gospel. Their suggestion commended itself to the Christian company and was adopted. Thereupon seven men of good report among them were selected, and these were formally inducted into their new office—commonly, since then, called that of deacon—with the laying on of hands.

The first and most prominent name in this list was that of Stephen, of whom it is expressly stated that he was “full of faith and of the Holy Spirit.” His character and abilities, as indicated in the narrative, were evidently of a high order. Nothing is known of his early life and training, not even of his conversion. Up to this time his name had not occurred in Christian history. Although it is not certain that he was a Hellenist, there seems to be considerable ground for the belief that he was one. He must have been a diligent and independent student of Scripture, for when at length he appears for a brief interval upon the stage, it is with fully matured views, which were, in many respects, far in advance of his contemporary Christians. Very likely, in his thought respecting the new faith, he had been led to seize upon its more universal

and enduring aspects, in distinction from those which were purely local and temporary. He would be quick to recognize its superiority, with its spiritual character, to the Mosaic ritual with its external rites and material sacrifices. He would be likely to perceive, also, that instead of being a part of Judaism, it was really distinct from it, its ripened fruitage. In due time it would leave Judaism behind as having accomplished its mission, would, in fact, supersede the old system altogether. In this broader view which he would take, he would not fail to see that God, as a spirit, could not be confined to any one locality, but would be able to be, and would be worshiped, anywhere, and this not necessarily in Jerusalem or any other stated place.

Stephen's work was not confined to the distribution of alms, to which duty he had been specifically called, important as that duty was. In addition to his qualifications for that office, he possessed gifts which fitted him for preaching also, and for performing miracles—functions which were characteristically apostolic. In this sphere he was remarkably successful, and became conspicuous because of his effectiveness and power. Many converts were won to Christ through his efforts.

It seems that the foreign born Jews in Jerusalem had synagogues of their own, named from their respective provinces, whenever their numbers were sufficient to maintain them. To these

synagogues the visiting Jews from the different countries represented would naturally resort. It was here, also, that Stephen mainly preached. After he had given utterance, in setting forth the claims of Christ, to views which ran counter to some of the Jewish prejudices of his bearers, he was challenged by their leaders to public disputation. But it soon became evident that they were no match for the lay preacher. His power and skill as a controversialist were such that they were speedily discomfited. Then it was, smarting under defeat, that they had recourse to base means to accomplish their purpose. They accused Stephen falsely, suborned witnesses, stirred up all those who did not believe in Christ—judges, elders, scribes—and brought him before the Council to answer for himself.

As one of the synagogues in which Stephen preached was of the Cilicians, it has been conjectured that Saul of Tarsus may have been a member of it, and, if so, that he may have been one of the keenest antagonists with whom Stephen had to contend. And if such were the case, it would not be at all improbable that many of the truths to which Stephen gave utterance, though they may have inflamed the rage of the young Pharisee at the time, may also have been so lodged in his mind as to become the germs of much which, after the scales had fallen from his eyes and he became a Christian disciple, he himself taught later.

We are not told what, in particular, was the nature of the charges which were brought against Stephen, but they were no doubt based upon the expression on his part of some such views as have been indicated, viz., that acceptable worship of God was not limited to any one place, not even the Temple in the Holy City, as Christ had already intimated in his conversation with the woman of Samaria; also that as there had been a progressive development of religious institutions and worship all through Jewish history, each successive stage of progress giving way, after its own mission was accomplished, to that which came after—so as Christianity in its spiritual character was an advance upon Judaism with its material sacrifice and worship, the latter would, as soon as its mission was achieved, be superseded by the former. Perhaps he even went so far as to look forward to a time when Jew and Gentile would stand on a common footing before the Most High. We can only infer what these views were—and not even this with entire confidence—by an examination of the address in his own defense which he was permitted to make before the Jewish High Council.

Concerning the precise purpose of this address, there has been not a little diversity of opinion. Yet it would seem to have been intended at least to cover the particular points at issue—perhaps also to vindicate his position in general in regard to the nature of the Christian religion. There

would seem to be little reason for questioning the essential historicity of the address itself, notwithstanding some apparent inaccuracies of statement which are contained in it. If we understood fully the circumstances, some of the latter might, perhaps, be relieved. At all events, we have no guarantee of Stephen's inerrancy, however correctly his address may have been reported.

The liberal views which Stephen held would be regarded by the Jews as dangerous and as calculated to do great mischief. Knowing the character of his hearers, their bigotry and prejudice, we can understand how they would chafe to get Stephen in their power and compel him to desist. It was in this spirit and with this in view, that they had him arrested and arraigned for trial. The witnesses on whom they relied to sustain their charges—who are called false witnesses—may yet have stated some things which, while literally true, at the same time so misrepresented and perverted what he actually said, and the spirit of all, that their testimony was virtually false. Yet there must have been some foundation, some occasion, for what they said.

We can picture to our minds the excitement and the tumult, as the people crowded into the court room. Yet excited and noisy as the scene must have been, and clamorous as the Jews were for Stephen's condemnation, all was calm and peaceful in the heart of the accused. He probably realized the hopelessness of his case in such

an atmosphere and before such a tribunal—the same which had condemned the Lord Jesus himself—and had yielded with full resignation of mind to what seemed his inevitable fate. The record states that as the people gazed on him, they saw his face “as it had been the face of an angel.”

If we assume that the main points which Stephen sought to maintain in this address, in addition to a general vindication of his position, were, first, in regard to the non-essential relation of locality to the worship of God, in view of the spiritual character of true worship, and second, as to the temporary and typical nature of the Mosaic law, it having fulfilled its mission in preparing the way for the higher revelation of Christianity—the former controverting the Jewish idea that in Jerusalem alone and in connection with the Temple could acceptable worship and sacrifice be offered, the latter in opposition to the prevailing view as to the permanence of the Mosaic system—we find much in the address to sustain these positions. Simply to read it as it stands, it might seem to be but a resumé of leading incidents in the history of Israel, without apparent aim. But the truth probably is that Stephen was making history do the work of argument, the full force of which would be more apparent if we were fully acquainted with all the facts bearing on the situation at the time, and which his hearers would not be slow to recognize.

In his address Stephen declared that even before the Temple was built, and in other places than the Holy City or the land of Palestine, there had been acceptable worship of God. This declaration was sustained by Scriptural instances confirmatory of it. So there might be acceptable worship in other places, after the Temple should have passed away. There was no difference in holiness as between one place and another. There might be acceptable worship anywhere. So in regard to the question as to the permanency of the Mosaic ritual system. All through the history of the Jewish people there had been a gradual development or evolution in their religious life and institutions. As one thing after another had been added, that which had preceded and constituted a preparation for it had been set aside, its mission accomplished. The Tabernacle with its ritual had been superseded by the Temple and its worship. When the law was given at Sinai at the hands of Moses, the latter had intimated that another prophet than himself would in due time arise, and introduce a new dispensation or economy. The prophet then predicted had at length come in the person of Jesus Christ, and Stephen, in his loyalty to him, was but following out the injunction of the great lawgiver himself. The Jews, on the contrary, by their refusal to recognize and receive him, had disobeyed Moses. Yet this was but in keeping with the spirit which had all along animated them

through their history. Their fathers had resisted the prophets and opposed any advanced step which they had proposed. "As your fathers did," Stephen concluded, "so do ye. Which of the prophets did they not persecute? They have killed them that showed before of the coming of the righteous One; of whom ye have now become betrayers and murderers; ye who received the law as it was ordained by angels, and kept it not."

Such was Stephen's terrible arraignment of his accusers before the bar of God, as he himself stood there arraigned before that human tribunal. The effect which it produced it is not difficult to imagine, knowing as we do the character of the men before him. "They were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth." It was no longer a question of fairness or justice—it was simply, in their anger, how to get rid of him. Regardless of the forms of law, and more in the spirit of a mob than that of judges, they rushed upon Stephen, even, as is probable, before the conclusion of his address, and hurried him out of the Council chamber to the common place of execution outside the walls of the city, that they might stone him to death.

But none of these things had any terror for Stephen. He was inwardly prepared for the worst which his enemies might do, and calmly awaited his end. Being full of the Holy Spirit, he looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on his right

hand. His declaration of this but served to increase the rage of his persecutors, and they went on with their deadly work. The witnesses, laying aside their upper garments and committing them to the care of Saul of Tarsus—a name which was afterward to become the most conspicuous in the annals of the early church—cast the first stones, Stephen meanwhile calling upon the Lord and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then, following the example of his Master, he added, "Lay not this sin to their charge," and in the midst of that raging mob and with the stones falling about him, he passed away, or, as the record states, "he fell asleep."

Thus perished Stephen, the first Christian martyr, the first to give up his life for his loyalty to Jesus Christ. The sorrowing disciples tenderly gathered up the battered and bleeding remains and bore them to their burial, there to await the morning of the resurrection.

Stephen's career had been brief. For a moment only, as it were, he had stepped out into the full light of history, but that appearance made an indelible impression upon the early development of Christianity. It led to consequences of which the martyr himself probably little dreamed. His speech and death marked a crisis—the beginning of the transition of Christianity from its earliest Jewish form, to its expansion to include the Gentiles in its privileges; the changing of

the Christian church into the church of the Gentiles and the world; "the beginning of the severance of two institutions which had not yet discovered that they were mutually irreconcilable." Much earlier than the twelve even, Stephen had arrived at the true appreciation of the words of Jesus respecting the nature and extent of the new kingdom.

After the death of Stephen, the Sanhedrin, now thoroughly aroused against the disciples of Christ and their religion, determined to suppress the new sect altogether. It must be stamped out once for all, before it had opportunity for further expansion. Accordingly a general proscription of the sect was issued. Meetings were broken up, men and women were arrested, imprisoned, and Christians were persecuted throughout the land, even to distant cities. The leader in this movement was the young Saul of Tarsus, at whose feet the witnesses against Stephen had laid their clothes before proceeding to stone him. In consequence of this persecution, a great body of disciples fled from the city, most of them scattering through Judea and Samaria, but many of them going much farther, even into Phœnicia, Cyprus, and Antioch in northern Syria. The apostles themselves seem to have continued in Jerusalem, perhaps in hiding for the time being, evidently considering it their duty to remain at the headquarters of their work.

Yet all these events, disheartening as they must have been to Christian believers at the time, turned out, providentially, to be the most effective means of extending a knowledge of the new religion. Wherever these persecuted believers went, they continued to bear their testimony to the faith as before, and many were converted to it, not merely of Jews and Jewish proselytes, but some even from the ranks of the Gentiles. More than this, the mantle of Stephen, shortly after his death, seems to have fallen on the very one who had taken the lead in this persecuting movement. As Saul, afterward called Paul, was on his way to Damascus, still "breathing out threatenings and slaughter" upon those of the Christian sect, with authority to carry on his dreadful work to that city, he was himself converted to the very faith he had sought to crush out. It is not at all improbable that the very truths which had fallen from Stephen's lips had been so working in his mind that he was at last brought to the conviction that Stephen was right, and that he was wrong. It may have been under this strong conviction that he was led to make the great decision by which he became, later, the world's champion for the cause of Christ, and the means of achieving the very results which Stephen had sought, but in vain, to bring about. Stephen, in his *thought*, may be regarded as one of the forerunners of Paul, as Philip the evangelist became his forerunner in *action*.

In the case of Stephen we have a noble illustration of a man with the courage of his convictions. He had come to believe in Jesus as the Messiah of the Scriptures, which had been his constant study. He was led to believe also that the gospel which Jesus proclaimed was fitted to the needs of universal humanity, of man as man, and that it was designed for all men, and not simply for Jews. These convictions, though at variance with the prevailing Jewish opinion, he did not hesitate to declare. Notwithstanding opposition, he continued to bear his testimony, clearly and positively. Finally his opposers, unable to meet his arguments, sought to put him out of the way, which they succeeded at length in doing. But while his opposers are forgotten, save as they were connected with his persecution and his death, Stephen's own name stands out in glorious contrast with theirs, immortalized in Scripture, and an example for all time of heroic devotion to principle and of loyalty to convictions.

We also have an example, in the results of the persecution and death of Stephen, of how the cause of truth for which one becomes a martyr, and which it is sought by violence to stamp out, often becomes all the stronger, more firmly rooted, more widely extended, because of the opposition it has encountered. Stephen's campaign of ideas did not appear to bear immediate fruitage, but these ideas evidently sank into the minds of many,

took root, and afterward sprung up and spread widely, never again to be suppressed. His defense was unsuccessful so far as the preservation of his own life was concerned, but his arguments were not lost. His persecutors could kill him, but they could not recall or arrest the progress of the words which he had spoken, and these produced results long after he who spoke them had passed away. The very fact of persecution only advertises the more the truth for which one is made to suffer, and those of calm judgment are led to examine it dispassionately, where otherwise their attention might not be turned to it at all. If it commends itself to them, they are likely to accept it, and so the truth makes its way among men. In Stephen's case, we have a conspicuous instance of how the blood of the martyr became the seed of the church.

But the one fact which stands out with special prominence in the career of Stephen, is that of the relation of his work to the progress of the great movement which Christ had inaugurated, and which he committed to his followers to carry on after him. In this movement, each leader had his place, his own special contribution to make, and all together they wrought for its success. There were many things in the teachings of Christ whose meaning only gradually dawned upon the minds of the disciples. They were not understood at the time they were uttered, and their

meaning seemed to be held in abeyance for a long time afterward. Consequently Christianity, in its broad and universal character, was hardly thought of for a considerable period after Christ's departure. Its world-wide features seem first to have been perceived, at least proclaimed, by Stephen. He appears to have been the first of the Christian converts who had any clear apprehension of many of the fundamental facts of the relation of Christianity to Judaism. He saw that Christianity, rather than Judaism, was the goal of Hebrew history. It would supersede Judaism from the nature of the case. It was fitted to spread over the earth as Judaism was not. And it would include in its ranks the great mass of Gentiles, as well as of Jews merely, and these on equal terms. All this was clear to him, although not even the apostles seem as yet to have discerned it. But when he began to promulgate such views, fortifying them by Scripture, and boldly to declare things which were contrary to long established Jewish tradition, the Jews were stirred up against him, and martyrdom was the result.

Stephen was in advance of his time, but he made a distinct contribution to the New Testament movement. It was literally a campaign of ideas which he entered upon, but these ideas formed an essential element of its development. That which the Jews regarded as their own peculiar possession, Stephen saw was simply given to them in

trust for the benefit of the world, and his influence helped mightily, in its outcome, to bring this about. Others carried on the work after him, but he was the pioneer.

CHAPTER V

PHILIP THE EVANGELIST

The next one after Stephen to give a decided impulse to an enlarged conception, among the early Christians, of the scope of the gospel, was Philip, also one of the seven, and who is spoken of in the records as Philip the evangelist. If he was not a Hellenist or Greek speaking Jew, he was, in his thought and sympathy, an exceedingly liberal-minded Hebrew. Stephen had made a brief but notable campaign, for the times, of progressive ideas, declaring boldly against the exclusive spirit of the Jews; repudiating their claim to a monopoly of the divine favor; setting forth clearly the true relation of Judaism to Christianity—the former designed to be of but temporary duration, the latter intended to be permanent. In the advanced views which he advocated, he may properly be regarded as the precursor of the apostle Paul, the great champion of an open door Christianity for the whole world.

But if the first martyr was the forerunner of the great apostle in the realm of progressive ideas, Philip was his precursor in the application of the same, both in zealous missionary operations, and

especially in opening the door of the church to non-Jewish believers.

How all this came about, it will be the aim of this chapter to set forth.

I

The preaching of the liberal-minded Stephen not unnaturally stirred up the more narrow and conservative Jews. They were inflamed against him. To them he seemed to be the setter forth of dangerous, heretical views, views which threatened the very existence of the Jewish faith. The outcome of all was, first, the martyrdom of Stephen, then a persecution of all bearing the Christian name. Saul of Tarsus, who afterward became Paul the apostle, took a conspicuous part in both the martyrdom and the persecution. The object of the latter was, if possible, to stamp out the hated Christian sect altogether. In consequence, many of the Christians fled from Jerusalem. But so filled were they with the love of Christ and with zeal for his cause, that they continued to bear witness for him and to preach wherever they went. Thus a knowledge of the gospel was disseminated, a widespread interest was awakened, and many were led to believe.

Among those who thus went forth was Philip. He went into Samaria, perhaps to the city of that name. Like his colleague Stephen, he seems to have had gifts for a wider sphere than that of merely serving tables or the distribution

of alms. He was an effective lay preacher, possessed of the power of working miracles, and his ministrations among the Samaritans were so successful that an extended revival sprung up. Hated as they were by the Jews, Philip, freed from all prejudice, as gladly embraced the opportunity of declaring the gospel to them as to his own countrymen.

The Samaritans were a peculiar people. They were neither Jews nor Gentiles, though they were descendants from both—i. e., from colonists from the East whom the Assyrian king had placed in the land of Israel when the leading inhabitants of the country were carried into captivity at the time of the fall of Samaria in B. C. 721, and from the Jews whom the king permitted to remain.

At first these colonists continued, in their new home, the idolatrous practices in which they had been reared, but later they partially embraced the worship of Jehovah as the recognized God of the land. They accepted the law of Moses and practiced the Jewish rite of circumcision. The Pentateuch constituted their only Scripture, and they had a temple of their own and temple services on Mount Gerizim. But although their religion and their worship were perverted by the admixture of foreign elements, and they were isolated from their distinctively Jewish neighbors by a feud which had continued for many generations, there was still not a little which they

had in common with them in the matter of religious worship, and they looked for the same Messiah. Yet notwithstanding their partial Hebrew descent and their partial acceptance of the tenets of Judaism, they were rigidly excluded from the Jewish church, and were even denied the privileges accorded to the heathen, of becoming proselytes to the Jewish faith.

It was among these Samaritans that Philip went and preached salvation through Jesus Christ, and administered the rite of baptism to such as believed. It was a great step forward, in the circumstances, for him to take, but any question as to the propriety of his doing so, on the one hand, or of the Samaritans receiving the gospel, on the other, seems not to have been raised on either side. Perhaps Philip had learned of the fact that on one occasion, at least, during the Lord's ministry, there were not a few Samaritans who had believed on and been accepted by him. At all events, many of the people were now led to believe through Philip's preaching, and a movement was inaugurated which later became widespread in the city where he labored and in the regions about. Even Simon Magus, the sorcerer—who had acquired a large influence in the city by reason of his magic arts, so that all the people gave heed to him as of one having divine power—was so impressed by Philip's preaching and the signs which he wrought, that he was led—although as it afterward proved, with a divided

heart—to become a believer and to accept baptism.

Reports of this work of Philip were not slow in reaching the apostles, who, in spite of the persecution, continued to prosecute their work in Jerusalem. Thereupon they concluded to send a delegation from their number to the scene of Philip's labors, to inquire into the nature of the work, its regularity, and presumably to give it their endorsement and assistance in case they should find everything satisfactory. No more suitable men could have been selected, both from their prominence and from their experience, than Peter and John. They found the work entirely satisfactory, and at once threw themselves into it. They prayed for the converts that they might receive the Holy Spirit who had as yet fallen upon none of them. "Then they laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit." Having completed their work in this city of Samaria, Peter and John turned their faces toward Jerusalem, preaching the gospel, however, in many of the Samaritan villages on the way.

Thus had Philip become instrumental in breaking, to some extent, the barriers of a merely narrow and provincial Judaism. A notable step forward had been taken, and not only did the apostles not disapprove of it, they had, through their leading representatives, endorsed it. If the door was not yet open to out and out Gentiles, it was at least not shut against those who, like the Samari-

tans, occupied a middle ground between the Jews and Gentiles. There was some measure of preparation among them for receiving the gospel, and no good reason appeared to Philip why they should not be admitted to its privileges. It was only step by step that the larger, broader views of the gospel gained recognition, and the contribution of Philip to this end by the course he pursued, was one of signal moment at this juncture.

II

But the remarkable thing now is that the one who had been instrumental in inaugurating a gospel movement among the Samaritans, and who seems to have been fitted for large and conspicuous service anywhere, is withdrawn from the field. He is sent upon an indefinite, vague mission, in an out of the way place, so that he went forth much as did Abraham of old, "not knowing whither he went." An angel of the Lord spake to him, the record says—perhaps in vision as in the case of Cornelius—saying, "Arise, go toward the south, unto the way that goeth down to Gaza from Jerusalem, which is desert." This was the injunction, with no further explanation. But although no reason for it was given, and no work in particular was pointed out, Philip's obedience was prompt. Still further service, particularly in the way of helping to broaden the Jewish conception of the gospel, awaited him, but as yet no intimation of its nature had been given him.

As he journeyed along the desert way leading toward Gaza on the coast—the route which a traveler from Jerusalem to Egypt would ordinarily follow—he was overtaken by an Ethiopian eunuch, an official of high rank under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, with his retinue of attendants. He was very likely a proselyte to the Jewish religion, although the fact of his being a eunuch would render it impossible for him to enter into full membership in the Jewish church (Deut. xxiii, 1). Still, this would not prevent him from worshipping in the Temple at Jerusalem, in connection with the great Jewish festivals. He had been to Jerusalem for this purpose, evidently, and was now returning homeward. He was riding in a chariot, which was a mode of travel suited to his rank in the country from which he came, reading aloud, as he rode along, from the book or roll of Isaiah. Reading aloud was and is a common practice among orientals, even when reading by themselves.

In obedience to a clear prompting of the Spirit, Philip went near to the chariot. This he would be able readily to do in a train of people who were journeying in the same direction, without being deemed intrusive. As he did so, and heard what the eunuch was reading, he was moved to inquire of him if he understood what he read. This led to a conversation, and an invitation to Philip to take a seat beside the eunuch in the chariot in order to explain the passage he was

reading, which proved to be the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. This passage is rich in Messianic allusions, especially in regard to the sufferings the Messiah would have to undergo in connection with his mission. Philip took advantage of this fact and made the passage the starting point of his discourse. The one referred to in it, he explained, was the Messiah, who had at length come into the world in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, who had suffered, been put to death, had risen again, had ascended to heaven, where now he was enthroned. His mission had been to open a way of salvation to men. All who would might now be saved through faith in him. Nor did Philip fail to make a practical application of his discourse. He urged upon the Ethiopian the need and the duty of a personal reception of this Messiah, Jesus; his need of him as a Savior from sin; and his duty to recognize him as Lord and King. It proved to be the word in season. The traveler was satisfied with the explanation given, and decided then and there to become a disciple of Christ. In order that the work might be completed, he requested that he might receive the rite of baptism, which doubtless Philip had already explained to him as the way of making a formal avowal of his allegiance to Christ. Reaching a spring or stream of water, the chariot and all the retinue halted, the rite was performed, and one who may have been a Gentile by birth, was introduced into all the privileges of the gospel and of

Christian fellowship. There might have been reason, to one of less breadth of mind than Philip, for hesitating, in the circumstances, to perform the rite, but he did not hesitate a moment, and so another step was taken toward opening the door of the gospel to all classes and conditions of men. By receiving this man into the Christian church, Philip virtually declared that disabilities of race and outward condition have no place there, but that all who believe in Christ, regardless of external circumstances or conditions, are eligible to membership and to all its advantages.

The interview had been brief but memorable. The whole current of the life of this eunuch had been changed for all the future. He went on his way rejoicing, and tradition says that he became the inaugurator of a great religious movement in his own country, which continued for generations.

Philip's mission with the eunuch—the important mission no doubt for which he had been sent hither from the scene of his successful labors in Samaria—having been completed, the Spirit “caught him away”—whatever precisely that expression may mean—and he was introduced into some other waiting field. It was a signal service to the cause of Christ which he had rendered on this occasion, as well as in connection with his labors in Samaria. Very likely it was for this reason, the assistance given to the broadening movement within the gospel sphere, that the au-

thor of the book of Acts recorded the two incidents.

We know but little of the further work of Philip. In general he engaged in evangelistic labors in the Philistinian towns between Azotus in the southern or southwestern part of Palestine, and Cæsarea, which was some thirty miles north of Joppa on the coast, and the Roman capital of Judea. According to tradition, Cæsarea was his birthplace, and here he eventually made his permanent home. The details of his work would be interesting, as would the details of the evangelistic work of any and all the early gospel preachers; but we can only leave it to imagination to fill out the picture. A space of many years in his life is a blank, as far as the book of Acts is concerned, before we hear of him again and finally. It would not seem improbable that he may have continued in evangelistic work here and there through these regions, making longer or shorter stops at different places as circumstances might seem to require. But until we hear of him as residing at Cæsarea and entertaining Paul for some days in his own home twenty years later, on the occasion of the apostle's going to Jerusalem after his third missionary tour abroad, the records of it are entirely silent. Then it is said of him that he had four daughters who prophesied. Such an interview with the great apostle, with whose broad ecclesiastical views and missionary zeal he was in full sym-

pathy, must have been particularly agreeable and cheering, as also later, during Paul's protracted imprisonment at Cæsarea, when they were no doubt in frequent conference. Very likely Philip here met with Luke also, Paul's companion, to whom he may have communicated many facts of his own early career—facts which were incorporated in the book of Acts, and which we have been considering.

But however fruitful Philip's evangelistic ministry may have been during these years, the main significance of his life, so far as the developing history of the early church is concerned, no doubt lay in the signal service which he rendered to it through his successful mission to the detested Samaritans, opening the gospel door to them, and in the bold baptism of one who had been forbidden by Jewish law to become a member of the Jewish church. But few, relatively, among the Christian leaders of that time, even among the apostles, contributed much to the enlargement of the Jewish views of the gospel and its privileges, but Philip was one of the few whose contributions and influence were by no means unimportant.

Of the closing period of Philip's life we know nothing certainly, although there would seem to be some grounds for the tradition that in the unsettled conditions existing in Judea about A. D. 65, from the breaking out of the great Jewish war, he, like many other Jewish Christians, probably left Palestine and found a home elsewhere.

As to whether he suffered martyrdom, or died a quiet and natural death, tradition is divided.

The life and experience of Philip, as in the case of others of the early Christian leaders, are full of suggestion. In him, for example, we have a notable instance of the good which a consecrated layman may accomplish. A similar possibility of usefulness, even if not in precisely the same sphere, is open to any consecrated layman to-day. He may make his life as successful as that of Philip, if he will. Another thing which impresses us in the narrative is his instant obedience, upon all occasions, to the voice of the Spirit, and this even though the way may not have seemed clear before him at the time. It was enough for him to know that he was bidden to go in a certain direction, and this promptness of response was the secret of his success. As he went forward, the way opened before him, step by step, added light was given as it was needed, and the work which was in waiting for him was made plain.

But especially interesting and instructive is the relation of Philip to the New Testament movement and its progress in those early times. His broad-minded disregard of the national and religious prejudices of the Jewish people, as illustrated in both the incidents recorded of him was, at the time, a real contribution to the progress of the cause. The time had not yet come for an

open rupture with Judaism, but things were working that way. There was a constant introduction of broader ideas among Jewish Christian people, and a loosening of the prejudices in which they had been reared. This, in due time, was bound to bring about the inevitable separation. Philip is to be thought of as one of the pioneers in promoting these enlarging conceptions, and in boldly acting in accordance with them as opportunity presented.

CHAPTER VI

BARNABAS

In the gradual evolution of the New Testament movement, both in its extension over the world as then known and in its disentanglement from Judaism, Barnabas had a by no means unimportant part. If he did not possess in as pronounced a degree the bold and aggressive qualities of Paul, he was still independent and courageous and was recognized as a wise, safe counselor. He was a man of broad sympathies, unprejudiced, open-minded, and generally level-headed in his judgments. He went farther than did Stephen or Philip in the liberality of his views—rather he carried the ideas and the spirit of these men to their legitimate conclusion. Instead of withholding the gospel from the Gentiles, which the more conservative Jewish Christians would have done—until at least they had first become Jews by submitting to certain prescribed Jewish rites—he was glad to welcome them to the gospel fellowship without reference to these rites. It was enough for him that the divine favor manifestly attended their reception of it. More than this, he was ready and willing to join heartily in the work of offering the gospel to them upon the

terms which Jesus had originally proclaimed. He was, in fact, the first prominent leader of the church to settle upon this as a definite policy.

The first mention of Barnabas occurs in Acts iv, 36, from which we learn that his original name was Joseph, but that he was afterward surnamed Barnabas, meaning "son of exhortation" or "consolation." Nothing is known in regard to his conversion; it may have occurred at Pentecost. He was at least among the earliest to join the new community. He began his Christian career by a willing consecration of a portion if not all of his possessions. Having a field he sold it and brought the money which he received for it and laid it at the apostles' feet. It was a generous act, indicative of his character, for he gave of his sympathies on all occasions as freely as he did of his means on this. He evidently possessed in high degree the confidence and esteem of his brethren. A striking proof of this is to be found in the fact that on a certain occasion his endorsement of Paul secured for the latter a cordial reception by the disciples who before had been inclined to turn to him the cold shoulder.

It seems that after Paul's return from his sojourn in Arabia and his unsuccessful effort, owing to the hostility of the Jews, to do evangelistic work in Damascus, he determined to go to Jerusalem. Here, he felt assured, he would receive a hearty welcome from the Christian believers.

Furthermore, it would be a satisfaction to him to preach the gospel in the very place where he had so violently opposed it. Upon reaching the city he found, to his surprise, that the disciples were disinclined to receive him. Very likely they had distrusted the reports of his conversion which had reached them, and so feared him still. At this critical juncture Barnabas appeared upon the scene and relieved Paul of his embarrassment. It is not impossible that the two men may have known each other before. In this case, Paul, in his dilemma, may have sought out his old friend, told him his story and satisfied him in regard to its truth. At all events, Barnabas took him by the hand, introduced him to Peter and the rest of the brethren who were then present in the city, standing sponsor for him as a Christian man. This endorsement was sufficient to allay all apprehension, and Peter took Paul to his own home and entertained him during his stay in the city. His recognition by the brethren at this time was due to the discriminating insight and confidence of Barnabas, as it was afterward due to him that Paul was "discovered" at Tarsus and introduced to the large and waiting field at Antioch, where, indeed, his career as an apostle to the Gentiles may be said to have begun.

Among the refugees from Jerusalem, after the persecution which arose against the disciples upon the death of Stephen had broken out, were some who went as far north as Antioch, and beyond,

bearing witness for Christ as they went. Some of these seem to have been less affected by Jewish prejudice and narrowness than others, and preached the gospel indiscriminately to Jews and Gentiles, and upon the same terms. The result was that many believed, the same marks of divine approval being manifested in case of the converted Gentiles as in the case of converted Jews. As reports of the work reached Jerusalem, it was determined to send some one to examine into it and the supposed irregularities in connection with it, presumably with a view to correcting the latter. For this delicate and difficult mission, Barnabas was chosen. This speaks well both for the high estimation in which he was held for tact and prudence, and for the church that a man as broad-minded as he should be made their representative on so delicate a mission. On reaching Antioch, Barnabas at once perceived the fruits of the gospel in the city. A multitude of Gentiles as well as of Jews had turned to the Lord, and all were living in harmony and in complete acquiescence with what seemed to be the will of God. He could not fail to be impressed with the genuineness of the work, to rejoice in it, and to identify himself with it. At length it became evident that assistance would be needed. As Barnabas pondered the subject, the man for the place and the hour occurred to him. He remembered Paul, for whose abilities and spirit he had come to feel a profound respect. More than this, he was

broad-minded like himself. By this time he had had no little experience, and here in Antioch would be an open door for the exercise of all his gifts. Under the direction of the Spirit, therefore, and without waiting to confer with the brethren at Jerusalem, Barnabas set out for Tarsus, to which place Paul had gone some years before, to see if he could not find him and persuade him to return with him. He was successful in his quest. Paul was found; the situation and the need at Antioch were presented to him. He recognized the call as providential and prepared at once to return with Barnabas.

And here, aided by the zeal and wisdom of these two men, the work went quietly but successfully forward for a whole year—Barnabas calm, conciliatory, tactful; Paul strong, fervent, and of marked ability as a preacher. A simple incident in connection with the visit of brethren from Jerusalem is of interest—the prediction by Agabus of a general famine, a prediction which was soon fulfilled. This led the Antioch Christians, with quickened sympathies for their brethren in Judea, to resolve to make a liberal contribution to their assistance. This contribution was entrusted to Barnabas and Paul to convey to the officers of the church at Jerusalem for such distribution as might seem to them advisable. The manifestation of this kindly spirit on the part of the Gentile Christians at Antioch toward their Jewish brethren at Jerusalem must have done much to

promote confidence and to strengthen the bond between the two branches of the Christian church.

But now at length another question arises. The fact that the gospel was intended for both Jews and Gentiles, upon the same terms, seems to have been quietly accepted at Antioch, but ought not steps to be taken to give it to the great mass of heathen, or Gentiles, in the regions beyond? It was very likely in connection with or as a result of such questioning as this that the incident of Acts XIII, 1-3 occurred, in which Barnabas and Paul were designated by the Spirit and formally set apart by the church to carry the gospel to them. That first missionary journey was full of hardship and adventure. First visiting Cyprus, the two men crossed to the mainland of Asia Minor and went as far northward as Antioch in Pisidia, thence eastward to Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe in succession. If persecuted in one place, they went on to another. At Lystra a strange incident occurred. The natives regarded the missionaries as heathen gods—Jupiter and Mercury—come to earth in human form. Barnabas was taken for the former, perhaps because he was large and impressive in appearance, and Paul for the latter, very likely because he was the smaller and the orator of the two.

One feature of this journey seems to have been that although Barnabas was the leader at the outset, this leadership evidently passed over to

Paul shortly afterward, perhaps naturally. Paul may soon have shown a special fitness for taking the lead in such an enterprise as that in which they were engaged. If so, it only confirms the high opinion we have already had reason to entertain of the sweet and humble spirit of Barnabas, that he should have acquiesced in it so gracefully, for it seems to have made no difference whatever in the close and sympathetic relations between the two men.

As a result of this missionary tour, a number of important churches were founded at strategic points. Undiscouraged by obstacles, these two men had persevered in their undertaking—worthy companions and equally heroic.

We next read of Barnabas in connection with the Conference which was held, not long after their return to Antioch, at Jerusalem, over the question which they had hitherto felt it wise to ignore. This question had recently been introduced into the Antioch church by self-appointed emissaries from the more conservative Jewish Christians at the Holy City, who insisted that circumcision was necessary to salvation. The controversy which was thus precipitated so threatened the very life of the church that it was determined to refer the matter to the apostles and elders of the mother church at Jerusalem. Paul and Barnabas went up to the Conference as the chief representatives of the Antioch church.

Without going into details of the Conference—

which will be more fully considered in the next chapter—suffice it to say that the broader view as advocated and practiced by Paul and Barnabas, prevailed, and the edict went forth that henceforth the Gentiles should not be required to submit to Jewish rites, but might be received to Christian fellowship directly upon the fulfillment of the conditions—repentance and faith—which Christ himself had laid down. Barnabas and Paul had stood firmly for Christian liberty, and had succeeded. The former had been a leader in this advance movement whose influence was second only to that of the apostle himself.

Some time after this Paul proposed to his former comrade that they retrace the old ground and see how the brethren were getting on in those cities where before they had preached the gospel. Barnabas readily acceded to the proposal, but suggested that they take John Mark, his cousin, with them. He had accompanied them before as far as Perga, when, for some reason, he turned about and returned to Jerusalem. Paul was unwilling to take him again. If, as is supposed, Mark had become fearful and dismayed by the hardships and dangers of the region through which they were to pass, what would hinder him from deserting and thus disappointing them again? Paul refused a second time to run such a risk. Barnabas, however, was firm in his insistence. Mark may have repented his former

course, and his relative would give him another chance. The outcome was a serious contention between these two leaders and friends—as bitter as it was deplorable—and the only hope of peace lay in their separation. So they parted—to forgive and honor and love each other later, as is evident from Paul's epistles, but never again to work together in the great enterprise which was dear to the hearts of both. As to which of the two was the more to blame, it may not be possible to determine. Barnabas may have erred on the side of leniency toward the fault of a relative—Paul, in view of the great interests at stake, no doubt felt justified in his attitude. The wrong was not in their differing judgments, which may have been honest, but in the persistency, the unyieldingness of each, so that agreement became impossible and separation necessary. But they were both too earnest and too zealous in the work to give it up. Paul chose Silas as his companion and went on his way through Asia Minor, thence into Macedonia and Greece, while Barnabas, with Mark, went over his native island of Cyprus. The controversy had been overruled for good, for now there were two missionary undertakings instead of one.

And here the Scripture notices of Barnabas cease. It does not follow, however, that his labors ended with this visit to Cyprus, or indeed for many years thereafter, but he is no longer identified, as in his former prominent way, with the

great missionary movements of the time, or with the burning questions which continued to disturb the churches for some years to come. The writer of the book of Acts seems to note only those persons and events that were brought in close connection with the movement which sought to give the gospel to the Gentiles. When that work was accomplished, nothing more was said about them.

Our review of Barnabas has brought to light two significant things:—first, a marvelously well-rounded character. He was sweet-spirited, generous-hearted, broad-minded, open to the truth, free from prejudice, ready to recognize and to welcome new light or new truth and to fall in with and appropriate it. There would seem to be some ground for the criticism of Renan that Christianity has done Barnabas an injustice in not placing him in the front rank of its founders. He was really a great man, if we may judge from the breadth of his views, which were far in advance of those of the mass of his own countrymen, his clear insight into men and events, and his effectiveness in the work along side of the greatest apostle. If on one or two occasions he betrayed weakness, it is only what all great men, as well as others, have also done at times—even Paul and Peter. But that he was true to the core to his convictions as to the gospel and its universal character, is made abundantly manifest by the zeal with which he

promulgated his views, and his earnestness in the work of giving the gospel to the Gentiles. He stood side by side with Paul in all these things, and to the end Paul honored and loved him as a friend and brother, notwithstanding their unfortunate difference on one occasion. The apostle owed much to him personally, and perhaps no one was nearer to him in all his career than Barnabas had been.

At the very first notice which we have of him, Barnabas appears as one generously consecrating his possessions to the cause of Christ. He early became highly esteemed and a brother beloved among the brethren at Jerusalem for pure worth of character, for he was a "good man," we read, "and full of the Holy Spirit." He was prompt to recognize the sincerity of Paul as a Christian man after his return from Damascus to Jerusalem, when others were suspicious, and to endorse him to the brethren. Without hesitation he recognized the genuineness of the work among the Gentiles at Antioch. In the providence of God he was the one to seek out Paul in his obscurity, after he had left Jerusalem for Tarsus, and to introduce him to the waiting field at Antioch, and so to his great career as an apostle. He was one of the first men definitely chosen by the Holy Spirit for the important and responsible work of giving the gospel to the heathen. He shared with Paul the hardships and trials of that eventful first missionary journey, and he stood with him

for his convictions as opposed to burdening the Gentiles with Jewish customs and rites before they could be recognized as Christian disciples. And even after the sad difference between him and Paul, he still persevered in his missionary zeal, in which work he may have continued, for aught we know to the contrary, for many years, or as long as he lived. Noble, broad-minded, sympathetic, consecrated, practical, yet unselfish and humble, and filled with the Holy Spirit—Barnabas was worthy to be classed among the early founders and leaders of the Christian church.

Again, Barnabas made a distinct contribution to the progress of the New Testament movement in its broader aspects and its wider relations, second only to that made by Paul himself. The direct evangelizing work which he did at Antioch, then and on that first missionary journey, and his later work, of which we have no record save that he and Mark sailed away to Cyprus, was not small. Who, so far as we can determine, aside from Paul, did more among the Gentiles than he, or as much? But especially in regard to that burning question of the time, as it became, as between Jews and Gentiles and the conditions of salvation for the latter, his views were clear, his position sound, his influence positive and pronounced. Paul became the main spokesman in the controversy, but Barnabas stood loyally by his colleague, between whom and himself there were doubtless many discussions of the whole question in all its bearings.

The victory, in its first stage, i. e., with the apostles and elders at Jerusalem, was finally won, and these two champions, seemingly, shared alike in the honor of it. The later and final stage of the struggle, among the churches themselves, was fought out by Paul alone. Had it not been for the contention over John Mark which sprang up between him and Barnabas and the separation following, they would doubtless have stood side by side in that struggle too, and Paul's heavy burden in the care of all the churches would have been materially lightened.

We do well to bring Barnabas out of the obscure place into which he seems to have fallen, to the honor which he deserves for what he was in himself and for what he did—not least of all that at a critical time he endorsed Paul to the brethren, and later “discovered” him in his obscurity and introduced him to his life work as the apostle to the Gentiles.

CHAPTER VII

PAUL

We have seen what various leaders of the New Testament movement, or Christianity, contributed to its progress, both in the way of extending its bounds, and toward its emancipation from the Judaism in the midst of which it had its origin, and with which for a considerable period it seems to have been identified. It now remains to study the life and work of the one who made the largest and crowning contribution of all to the movement in both these respects.

Saul of Tarsus, afterwards called Paul, seems to have been the providential man for the period during which his life work was accomplished. There was need at this particular juncture of one of just such a broad and liberal spirit as he possessed and just such training as he had received, to do for Christianity what no one else had yet done or could do, and for which no one in the original apostolic company seemed to be qualified. He became its greatest worker, its most enterprising missionary, its profoundest thinker, its most powerful champion, its great liberator from Judaism. In him the power of the gospel to overcome prejudice and entirely to make one over was

put to the test under the most trying conditions, and it was found entirely adequate to meet it. He seems to have embodied in himself the entire movement for the time being, and to have wrought out many of its most difficult problems in his own experience. The success with which he did this has been the marvel of the generations since.

A glance only, over the wide field of Paul's life, especially in view of frequent references to it already, will be necessary.

I

Our first introduction to Paul does not present him to us in the most favorable light. It is as a participant in the martyrdom of Stephen. Nevertheless, there were great energies in him which, later, under the influence of the very gospel which at this time and afterward he was endeavoring to stamp out, would be turned into right channels and be devoted to highest ends.

His early home was at Tarsus, "no mean city," the capital of the province of Cilicia in Asia Minor, in which, however, he was brought up by his Jewish parents after the "straitest sect" of the Jewish faith. Whether he studied at all in the university for which Tarsus was famous and which made it one of the chief educational centers of the world at that time, we have little means of knowing. In any event he could hardly have failed to imbibe something of the classic spirit of the place, and to receive lasting impressions from

its life and activity, all calculated to be helpful in his preparation for his distinguished future career.

But the great center for Jewish education was Jerusalem, whither, when quite a young boy, Paul was sent by his parents with a view to his being trained to be a rabbi. Here he studied at the feet of Gamaliel, who was one of the most famous instructors of his time, and where he manifested exceptional zeal for the Pharisaism under which he had been reared. When at length the new Christian sect in Jerusalem began to be aggressive, and Stephen's liberal utterances had awakened the bitter hostility of the Jewish leaders, the young Saul began to be aroused. Not only did he take part in the mob-like movement which resulted in Stephen's martyrdom, he was ready to put himself at the head of an authorized attempt to stamp out the hated Christian sect altogether.

After he had wrought no end of havoc among the Christians in and about Jerusalem, arresting and thrusting many into prison, even in some cases giving his vote for their death, as he himself acknowledges, he sought to extend his persecuting work to distant cities. Without difficulty he gained permission from the Jewish authorities to do this, and Damascus was his first objective point. It is not improbable that as he journeyed along, his thoughts were busy and his conscience active. The question may have continued to thrust itself before his mind as to whether he

could be justified in the course he was pursuing, whether his zeal for the religion of his fathers was not being carried altogether too far, whether it might not be possible, after all, that the suffering Christians were in the right. At all events, as he neared Damascus, still "breathing out threatenings and slaughter" against the Christians, he was suddenly halted in his course, a great light from heaven shone about him, and, overpowered by the experience, he fell to the ground blind and speechless. When he recovered himself, he was a changed man. He declares that in the midst of the dazzling light which had enveloped him, the glorified Lord himself appeared and summoned him to the life mission of declaring the gospel, which had so stirred his fury and whose adherents he was persecuting, to the distant Gentiles. At that moment, he saw and believed, responded to the call, and was ready to join his fortune with the very sect he had been seeking to destroy, and become the champion of the very Christ whose Messiahship he had hitherto refused to recognize. Everything looked different to him now, old things had passed away, all things had become new. Now he saw things as they were, as, when the scales of prejudice were blinding his vision, he could not.

After so complete a revolution inwardly and in his plans and prospects outwardly, it was but natural that he should feel the need of retirement for a season for thought and study and prayer.

All that he had previously gained in the way of education and training would now be utilized in the work which was unexpectedly opening before him, but in view of the greatness and importance of it and the mighty influence it was to exert, there was need of still further preparation. This, by his retirement into Arabia for a season, and by his years of experience afterward in preaching the gospel to his own countrymen in the regions of Tarsus, he was providentially to receive.

After his return from Arabia—his ideas of the nature and scope of the gospel and its relations to the old Mosaic system greatly enlarged and clarified—he sought to preach the new faith in Damascus, but apparently without much success. His zeal was adequate and his understanding of the gospel was ample, but the Jews there were unwilling to receive his testimony, and a conspiracy was formed to kill him. Escaping, he went to Jerusalem where he sought to join himself with the disciples, wishing especially to see and confer with Peter who was their recognized leader. But they were suspicious of him and were inclined to turn the cold shoulder. Barnabas, however, becoming interested in his case and being satisfied as to the genuineness of his conversion, introduced him to the disciples and elders with his personal endorsement, after which they gladly received him, and Peter took him to his home for the two weeks of his stay in the city. During this

time Paul endeavored to perform the same ministry in Jerusalem which he had attempted at Damascus, and with a similar result. The prejudice of the Jews was so strong, and the hostility of their leaders, with whom, before, he had been closely associated in the work of persecuting Christians, was so great, that it was found useless for him to continue. As it was, a conspiracy was formed among the Jews to slay him. So, probably by the advice of the brethren, and after a distinct intimation that such was the Lord's will, he resolved, reluctantly, to leave. He was conducted by his new friends as far as Cæsarea, from which point he set sail for his native Cilicia. Here, so far as the records are concerned, he remained in obscurity for a number of years, perhaps seven or eight.

But although we have no account of Paul during this period, we can hardly think of him otherwise than as active in his chosen work, preaching the gospel as he had opportunity. The existence of churches in Syria and Cilicia, which Paul visited on his second missionary journey, may be evidence of Paul's activity there before going to Antioch. These years must have done great things for him, giving him still further preparation, in experience and in broadening of views, for the career which lay before him. Whether he had fully grasped the thought before or not, it must have become clear to him now, that Christianity was intended to be entirely

distinct from Judaism, that the mission of the latter had been simply preparatory to it. At any rate, when occasion arose at length, there was no hesitancy on his part in declaring this conviction. When, finally, the call came to him as related in the preceding chapter, to join with Barnabas in prosecuting the work which had been so auspiciously begun at Antioch, he was fully equipped for it. His mind was ripe, clear in its grasp of truth, while his experience had fitted him to deal with all classes and conditions of men.

For some time previous to this there had been indications of a broadening movement with respect to the nature and scope of the gospel. It had been assumed that it was intended only for Jews, or such Gentiles as would first become Jews by accepting certain Jewish rites, which, however, were of no significance to them. But now Stephen had boldly declared that the Mosaic law was but preparatory and temporary, intended to give place at length to the more complete revelation of God in Christ and his gospel, which was not alone for Jews but for all. Philip had been preaching to the Samaritans with success, although they, if not strictly Gentiles, were not regarded as Jews. Peter and John had approved his work, and even assisted in it. Peter had had his vision at Joppa, and under the influence of its lesson that God is no respecter of persons, had, without hesitation, accepted an invitation to preach the gospel to the Gentile

Cornelius and his family at Cæsarea, and the blessing of God had attended. Moreover, a Christian church had been formed at Antioch, in which Gentiles were received on the same footing with Jews, and Barnabas, who had been sent from Jerusalem to investigate, had been satisfied with the situation and had joined in the work. It was the rapid development of the work here in the peculiar conditions which existed, which had led him, in seeking for a suitable man to assist in carrying it on, to think of and to seek out his old acquaintance and friend at Tarsus.

The record of the work of Barnabas and Paul here in Antioch is very brief. In a single verse it is stated that for an entire year it went forward prosperously and harmoniously, and with constant accessions to the membership of the church, which was already beginning to rival that at Jerusalem in importance. Its notable feature was its welcome to Gentiles without question, as that at Jerusalem was its work among the Jews. Paul's long and varied training was finding full scope, and he was being prepared, as was Barnabas also, for the next great step in the progress of the new movement.

And that step was no less than a mission, under the auspices of this church, to the Gentiles of the countries about. As the work was going on at Antioch and Gentiles were gladly embracing the gospel, the question of giving it to Gentiles at a distance was naturally much in the minds and

hearts of the leaders. This finally became a definite purpose, for as they were ministering and praying, the Holy Spirit made it plain that the plan was divinely sanctioned, and Barnabas and Paul were designated as the ones to undertake it. The latter had previously been called by the Lord himself directly, to be an apostle to the Gentiles, the former to an analogous work by the providence of God. Now they were both formally set apart to the work, and so began the first great foreign missionary undertaking of which we have record.

The story of that first missionary journey, with its varied experiences, its hardships, its dangers, its successes, is briefly told. It is covered by two chapters in the book of Acts, the thirteenth and fourteenth. Churches were formed at a number of strategic points in the interior of Asia Minor, in such places as Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. The practice of the missionaries was to preach first to the Jews in their own synagogues. If these refused to receive the gospel message, as was frequently the case, they turned to the Gentiles, who, as a rule, accepted it gladly. Nor did they find reason to question the propriety of offering the gospel to the Gentiles without the imposition of unusual or purely Jewish conditions, any more than at Antioch, while the marks of divine approval attended their reception of it just as truly as at the latter place. Thus their convic-

tion that the gospel was intended for Gentiles as well as for Jews—and they were both entirely agreed in this—was not only confirmed, but burned into their minds as the outgrowth of their experience. When at length they returned to Antioch, from which they had set out, they reported to the church the things which had transpired during their journey, and one and all rejoiced at the successful issue of their mission, especially in the fact that the door of faith had been opened to the Gentiles.

II

But the peace and harmony of the Antioch church, which had thus far escaped serious dissension, were about to be disturbed. Hitherto there had been mutual forbearance between the Jew and Gentile Christians. They had respected each other as Christian brethren, had associated freely, and divisive questions in regard to the Jewish law and its relation to the Christian faith had been either quietly ignored, or, by common consent, held in abeyance. But now a controversy was started, through no fault of the Antioch Christians, by which the church was nearly rent in twain.

It seems that certain of the more strict and conservative members of the Jerusalem church—evidently alarmed at the liberal tendencies and practices of the Antiochian Christians and the rapid growth of the church—had come down to

do what they could to stem the tide and bring the church back to the more Jewish and orthodox view on the questions involved. They came entirely upon their own responsibility, although they were evidently not unwilling to have it appear that they came with the sanction of the Jerusalem leaders. At once they began to declare that except a man be circumcised he could not be saved. In their view the Jewish religion was unquestionably of divine origin, and circumcision was a badge of the covenant dating back even to Abraham's time. This being so, how could the rite be regarded as unessential? What authority had anyone to abolish or to ignore it? The result was that not a few of the Christians at Antioch were filled with apprehension lest they might have omitted something upon which the welfare of their souls depended. Their minds became confused, and some even went so far as to fall in with this strict Jewish view, although it was directly contrary to the teaching of Paul and Barnabas, who not unnaturally took their stand in opposition to it. But so disquieting had been the influence of these Judaizing emissaries that the need of some more authoritative pronouncement upon the subject was recognized by the church, and it was determined to refer the whole matter to the apostles and elders at Jerusalem for their decision. Paul and Barnabas, with certain others, were appointed to represent the church at the proposed conference.

There was probably little doubt in their own minds as to what the decision would be, for the apostles and brethren, after learning of what had already been achieved among the Gentiles, and how the blessing of God had attended their reception of the gospel without reference to the Jewish law and its requirements, could hardly take a position in opposition to what had manifestly been the divine leading. Furthermore, it is not impossible that there may already have been some understanding between Paul and the leaders at Jerusalem on the subject.

The question as to the relation of circumcision to salvation, although so simple and clear to us that it is difficult to conceive how a controversy over it could ever have arisen, was yet for a long time a burning one in those early times of Christianity. The dissension which was occasioned by it was a bitter one. Paul, who had thought the question through before he entered actively upon his apostolic mission, was the leading champion for the view that the rite of circumcision had nothing whatever to do with salvation; that it was a question with which the Gentiles had no concern—least of all ought their recognition as Christian disciples to be made to hinge on their acceptance of that rite. To his mind, circumcision or uncircumcision was nothing in itself. The entire Mosaic system, for which the rite stood, was but preparatory to Christianity, which, having

now been given to the world, that system had thereby become obsolete, and was to be set aside. There might be no serious objection to Jews continuing the observance of rites which meant much to them and under which they had been trained, but it was another thing to impose them upon Gentiles, to whom they meant nothing, as a condition of salvation and Christian fellowship. Not only would no possible good come from it, but infinite harm rather. To impose it upon the Gentiles would not only be burdensome in the extreme, and embarrass and hinder many from accepting the gospel, it would be an injustice and a wrong, to say nothing of its being an unwarrantable interference with their Christian liberty. Christ had laid down no such conditions of salvation. Accordingly, when it was proposed to insist upon these burdensome conditions, Paul threw himself into the controversy with all his strength, nor did he cease to struggle and fight until he had gained the victory. This, then, was the situation at the time of the Jerusalem Conference.

As Paul and Barnabas went on their way to the Holy City, they reported to the churches in the several towns through which they passed that the Gentiles were accepting the gospel, to the joy of the brethren everywhere. But it was otherwise with many of the Jerusalem Christians. Here there were opposition and criticism. Realizing this, and unwilling to run any risk in a

matter of such vital moment as the one which had led to the Conference, Paul conferred privately with the recognized leaders, Peter, James, and John, before the general meeting was held, rehearsing to them the story of the work both at Antioch, and on the recent missionary journey to the Gentiles, abundantly satisfying them as to the genuineness of it.

On the following day the question was fully debated by the assembled church. Though not of one mind, evidently, at the outset, certain Pharisees standing strenuously for the conservative Jewish view, the conclusion which was finally reached was apparently unanimous. During the discussion Peter spoke of his experience at Cæsarea some years previously, when God's blessing had attended the conversion of the Gentile Cornelius and his family. He gave his voice decidedly in favor of receiving the Gentiles to Christian fellowship without the imposition of any purely Jewish conditions. The ruling principle of Christianity, he declared, was not any mere external rite, but *the grace of Christ within the heart*. Whoever believed in Christ and looked to him for salvation was a Christian; whether Jew or Gentile. His address produced a profound impression. Then Barnabas and Paul told of their experience among the Gentiles. Barnabas had been well and favorably known in Jerusalem, and his words would naturally carry weight. He declared how the Gentiles had be-

lieved in Christ, and that on them the Holy Spirit had been poured out. Would the church at Jerusalem take the responsibility of rejecting such testimony as this? Paul followed and likewise rehearsed the simple story of their work, confirming what Barnabas had said.

Finally James, who presided over the assembly, brought the discussion to an end, summing up its chief points, and indicating what in his judgment the decision should be. He proposed that they give their endorsement to the work among the Gentiles, not insisting upon the Jewish rite of circumcision, nor troubling them with any such questions. But he also recommended that Gentile Christians make certain concessions in view of the scruples and prejudices of the Jews, who were to be found in every Gentile city, and whom it would be wise to conciliate rather than to antagonize. As these concessions on the part of the Gentiles would involve the sacrifice of no principle, and might do much toward the promotion of harmony and good will, it seemed but reasonable to request it of them.

These recommendations of James were adopted, and to emphasize the fact to the Gentile Christians at Antioch and beyond, and at the same time to promote the best of feeling between the two classes of Christians, a delegation consisting of Judas and Silas, both men of prominence in the Jerusalem church, was sent back with Paul and Barnabas to present the formal report

or result of the Conference. This document was really a most radical one. It declared that the emissaries who had gone from Jerusalem to Antioch and had there caused disturbance, had not gone with the sanction of the Jerusalem church or its leaders, but upon their own responsibility solely. Paul and Barnabas were heartily endorsed and their work among the Gentiles was commended. Nothing was said to hinder Jewish Christians from continuing to observe the Mosaic ritual if they chose to do so—the decree was simply intended to make clear to the Gentiles what the conditions of salvation were—perhaps, in view of what had taken place, what they were not. As a matter of fact, in so far as they were concerned, the whole Jewish ritual, with its ablutions, its observance of days, its discriminations between clean and unclean things ceremonially, and all its peculiar rites, was swept away. This is the document itself, as given in Acts xv, 23-29:

“The apostles and the elders, brethren, unto the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, greeting: Forasmuch as we have heard that certain who went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls; to whom we gave no commandment; it seemed good unto us, having come to one accord, to choose out men and send them unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord

Jesus Christ. We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who themselves also shall tell you the same things by word of mouth. For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that ye abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication; from which, if ye keep yourselves, it shall be well with you. Fare ye well."

As might be inferred, the outcome of the Conference produced great gratification and rejoicing among the Antiochian Christians and among the Gentile churches beyond as the word reached them. Happy would it have been for the cause of Christ, if this decision at the Conference had ended the controversy. But there were evidently those in Jerusalem who were not disposed to fall in with the conclusions which had been reached. They awaited their time, and when opportunity offered, gave the apostle no little anxiety and trouble.

III

With the second missionary journey, Paul enters upon a new and wider career. It was signalized by the introduction of the gospel into Europe and by the writing of his earliest apostolic letters. It is doubtful if he himself, at the time he entered Europe, recognized the full significance of his course. Apparently he had

thought only of a mission to Asia. Having preached in the cities of eastern and central Asia Minor, he had planned to continue his work in the cities on the west coast, some of them the most important at that time in existence. Silas, one of the two delegates sent from the Jerusalem Conference with himself and Barnabas on their return to Antioch, was his companion throughout the journey. Timothy, a young man, converted on the first missionary tour, joined them at Lystra where he was born. Luke joined them at Troas, and accompanied them as far as Philippi, where he appears to have remained until Paul's visit to the city when he was returning from his third missionary tour.

This second journey began as a tour of visitation to some of the churches which had already been founded in Asia Minor. To these churches the decree of the recent Conference was delivered, and it was everywhere received with hearty satisfaction. By means of it a great hindrance to the progress of the gospel was removed. The result was that the churches were established in the faith and increased in numbers and strength greatly.

This visitation of the churches having been completed and possibly yet others founded, the plan of the missionaries seems to have been to travel westward along the great road which led from the Orient, to Ephesus, the chief city of Asia Minor and the capital of the province of

Asia. This plan, however, they were hindered from carrying out. "They were forbidden of the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia." By some means unknown to us, the Spirit, by whom their steps were guided, indicated that at that time they were neither to go into the province of Asia, nor yet into the large and densely populated province of Bithynia. For the present, at least, entrance into these provinces was denied the missionaries. Though they may not have understood it, the goal of their journey was not in Asia but in Europe. Pushing on in the direction which divine guidance permitted, they came to Troas, a town on the northwest coast of Asia Minor. While waiting here, uncertain whither next to proceed, a vision appeared to Paul in the night in which he was summoned to go to the assistance of the Macedonians across the *Ægean* Sea. "There was a man of Macedonia beseeching him and saying, Come over into Macedonia and help us." It is not impossible that the project may have already been floating in his mind. At all events, the vision was accepted as an intimation of the mind of Christ, and at once the missionaries prepared to depart. Thus through three distinct divine interpositions, twice hindering them from going in other directions, and now pointing out the particular field in which they were to labor, Paul and his companions were led into a course which had been entirely unanticipated by them, but which constituted a most

important step in the divine plan for the extension of the gospel.

Crossing the Ægean Sea, the missionaries came to Neapolis, the seaport of Philippi, to which place, only a few miles distant, they journeyed by land. Philippi was one of the principal cities in Macedonia. It was celebrated as the battlefield where the Roman republic received its final death blow, when the armies of Brutus and Cassius were overthrown by those of Augustus and Antony. Now it is even more celebrated as having been the first city in Europe where Paul preached the gospel. Being a military post rather than a commercial city, the Jewish settlement in it was small. There was no synagogue—only a *proseucha*, or place of prayer, outside the city. To this place, after a few days, Paul and his companions repaired for worship, along with those who were accustomed to gather there for that purpose. The result of his first preaching was the conversion of the proselyte Lydia, a seller of purple of the city of Thyatira, evidently a woman of influence and position, who afterward became their hostess. For several Sabbaths Paul continued quietly to preach, and a church was formed consisting of both Jews and Gentiles.

The work of the missionaries was interrupted by an accusation which was brought against them before the authorities by the masters of a certain damsel, possessed of a spirit of divination, who had brought them much gain by her

power of fortune telling, but out of whom Paul had cast the evil spirit. This attack was one of his many "perils from the heathen." Whenever they saw that the influence of the gospel which Paul preached endangered their own interests in any way, as frequently it did, they opposed its proclamation. In this case, Paul and Silas were dragged before the magistrates, scourged, and thrown into prison. The scenes attending their imprisonment, their feet in the stocks; their triumph over pain and suffering—praying and singing praises at midnight, the other prisoners listening; the earthquake shock; the conversion of the jailor; the subsequent release of the missionaries—form one of the most stirring and graphic episodes in the book of Acts (Ch. xvi). In order to avoid further disturbance, they departed from the city, Luke being left behind to instruct and confirm the infant church.

Journeying a hundred miles to the southwest over the Roman military road which led from Byzantium (Constantinople) to the Adriatic Coast, the missionaries next entered Thessalonica (the modern Salonika), the capital of Macedonia, the most important city, aside from Antioch in Syria, which Paul had thus far reached. Once established here, the gospel would be advertised throughout the whole of Macedonia and Achaia. To the large and influential synagogue which was located here, Paul at once

repaired. For three Sabbaths he reasoned with the Jews, showing them, from their Scriptures, that the Messiah must suffer and rise from the dead, and that Jesus of Nazareth, who had been crucified by the Jews, had risen from the dead, and was consequently the Messiah. The outcome of the missionary labors here at Thessalonica was that a few of the Jews believed, and a still larger number of the proselytes and devout Greeks. Paul and his companions were expelled from the synagogue, but not until the nucleus of a Gentile congregation had been gathered. From his epistles to the Thessalonians, it would seem that the missionaries remained here for a considerable time longer, preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, and that a flourishing church, composed chiefly of Gentile converts, was formed. But at length the Jews, filled with envy at the success of the gospel work, stirred up a tumult against them, accusing them of treason against the Roman government—of setting up another king than Cæsar, one Jesus. In consequence of this commotion, they felt compelled to depart, going by night. It would not be safe, in the circumstances, to remain.

Continuing their way south-westward, the missionaries came next to Berea. Here the Jews were less bigoted than those at Thessalonica. They gave Paul and Silas a fair hearing. They compared the proofs advanced in regard to Jesus as the Messiah, with their Scriptures.

The consequence was that there were numerous converts among them. Everything went well until, learning where the missionaries were, Jews arrived from Thessalonica to stir up a tumult against them in Berea similar to that which had but recently been raised in their own city. In consequence it was deemed wise for Paul to leave, though Timothy and Silas were able to remain. The danger to Paul's life must have been great, for he was taken directly to the sea-shore, there to embark for Athens at the first opportunity.

At Athens, the intellectual capital of Greece, a city of philosophers, Paul was greatly stirred by the signs of idolatry which he observed on every hand. Among the numerous altars, one caught his eye which had upon it the strange inscription, "To an unknown god." After preaching for a time in the synagogue, also in the market place, reasoning or arguing with the people whom he met there—disciples of the two great schools of heathen philosophy, the Stoics and Epicureans—he was invited to address them more formally at the Areopagus, or Mars' Hill, the open air meeting place of the illustrious senate of Athens. Here, taking as his starting point the peculiar inscription which he had observed, he delivered his celebrated address on the true God and his fatherhood, and the brotherhood of all men from their all being his offspring. He concluded with the usual appeal to recognize Jesus Christ as the one in whom God had made

revelation of himself, in confirmation of which he had raised him from the dead. The address was one of rare tact, conciliatory in spirit, recognizing the element of truth which lay at the bottom of the mistaken worship of the Athenians. But the results of Paul's labors here were not large. Neither much interest nor serious opposition was awakened. We do not read that a church was formed, but evidently a number of persons were converted.

It was a short journey from Athens to Corinth, and to this city Paul next directed his steps. In striking contrast with Athens, Corinth was a commercial city—the commercial metropolis of the country and the most important city in Greece. It was celebrated for its luxury and its vice. It was the Paris of the ancient world. Paul came here alone, evidently somewhat depressed in spirits, possibly because of his limited success at Athens, perhaps because of loneliness, Silas and Timothy not yet having rejoined him, although there is considerable reason for thinking that Timothy had joined him at Athens and then been sent to Thessalonica. Here he fell in with Aquila and Priscilla, fugitive Jews from Rome. They were Christian Jews and their occupation was that of tent-making. With them Paul lodged and wrought. They became most effective helpers in his work, both here and elsewhere. According to his custom, Paul repaired to the synagogue and there reasoned with the

Jews, proving that Jesus was the Messiah. The same result followed as in other cities. Expelled from the synagogue, he betook himself to the Gentiles. Not long after he was joined by Silas and Timothy. Their coming seems to have imparted to him new courage and hope. From this time the work took on a more aggressive form. The result of their labors was the establishment of a strong and flourishing church, whose membership was drawn from the lowest as well as the higher walks of life. And yet there were in this church the seeds of corruption and strife which afterwards gave the apostle no little trouble, and which led to his writing them later two of his strongest epistles.

It was during his residence of a year and a half at Corinth that Paul wrote the two epistles to the Thessalonian Christians. Timothy had brought him information that the persecution which had begun when Paul was at Thessalonica, had been continued. The disciples there were distressed, also, about the fate of their deceased friends, who would not be able to share with them in the glorious experiences connected with the second advent of their Lord, which they had come to believe was near at hand. Thereupon Paul wrote a letter to them—the first of his epistles of which we have record and which has come down to us—to encourage them in the midst of their trials, to confirm their faith, and to comfort them in regard to their departed friends. The latter,

he said, would be raised at Christ's coming, and so would be prepared, equally with themselves, to welcome the Lord on his return.

When the messenger who carried this letter to the Christians at Thessalonica returned, he reported to Paul the existence among some of them still of a spirit so fanatical over the expected immediate return of Christ, that they were neglecting daily duties, even their own support, and that a general state of demoralization prevailed among them. To correct this error and the abuses to which it had given rise, Paul wrote a second epistle, in which he declared that it had been the *suddenness* of Christ's expected coming which he had emphasized in his teachings among them, rather than its immediacy. Various things must occur before that event, things which could not be brought about in a moment. Hence there was no ground for the existing excitement and its accompanying evils. It was no doubt Paul's opinion, as it was also the opinion of the other apostles, that the second advent of Christ would occur in their own generation, but he had not taught it in any such way as to give just ground for the mischievous results which had been manifested among some of the Thessalonian Christians.

Finally, after a protracted residence in Corinth, Paul and his companions, Silas and Timothy, accompanied by Aquila and Priscilla, departed, sailing direct to Ephesus. Here

Aquila and Priscilla remained. Paul's stay was brief, as he was hastening to Jerusalem to attend one of the annual festivals of the Jews. He promised, however, soon to return. His stay in Jerusalem was also short, but that of Silas was of considerable length. Paul, with Timothy, went to Antioch. His report to the church there of the results of the tour must have been startling and yet immensely encouraging.

Thus terminated Paul's second missionary journey. He had penetrated into new countries and established churches in some of the great cities of the Roman Empire. Not only had he confirmed the churches in Asia Minor which had been established on his first missionary tour and founded others, he had invaded Europe and planted Christianity in at least four important centers—Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Corinth, perhaps also in Athens. The tour had been the boldest of all his enterprises and the most successful. He has grown in his conception of things, and his plans are much broader than at the beginning of his missionary service. Now he can be contented with nothing less than giving the gospel to every important city in the Roman Empire.

Was it between the second and third missionary tours that Peter visited Antioch? So Neander, Wieseler, Sabatier, and some others think. If so, it was when Paul was there full of the success

of his first European mission, when his mind had been enlarged by a new and broader experience, when he had seen again and again the narrowness and bitterness of Jewish prejudice, and had been convinced, as never before, that the hope of Christianity was in the conversion of the Gentiles—that Peter and Barnabas seemed to waver in the opinion that Gentiles could become Christians without first becoming Jews.

Although the principles involved in the controversy between Jewish narrowness and Gentile universalism had been definitely defined, the question of their practical application was not entirely clear to all. Even the minds of such trusted leaders as Peter and Barnabas seem at first to have been somewhat confused. At the outset of Peter's visit to Antioch, he mingled as freely with the Gentile converts as he would have done if they had been Jews. When, later, certain Jewish Christians from Jerusalem appeared upon the scene and observed the fraternal spirit—conspicuously exemplified in his case—which prevailed between the Jewish and Gentile Christians, they were not a little disturbed. Then they protested against Peter's course. They had no desire, they might say, to impose any other burdens upon the Gentile converts than those specified in the decree; but while the ceremonial requirements of the Mosaic law were not held to be binding upon them, there was nothing in it which could be construed as releasing *Jewish*

Christians from the obligation, or even from the traditions of the elders. To ignore these, as Peter was now doing, was not only disloyalty to the faith in which he as a Jew had been reared, it was exerting a demoralizing influence upon others, and was likely to imperil the very existence of the Mosaic system. Not only this, but as soon as his conduct should be reported at the Holy City, it would awaken a great outcry, lead to controversy, and develop antagonism. If Peter had any regard for the religion of his fathers, he would at once desist from his free intercourse with the Gentile converts.

It was in view, most likely, of such considerations as these, that Peter was constrained to retrace his steps and withdraw from further social relations and religious communion with the Gentile Christians. Nor was Barnabas, who appears to have been in Antioch at the time, entirely unaffected by the plausible arguments of the visiting brethren. He seems also to have taken an attitude similar to that of Peter. It may have seemed to them both, in the circumstances, a matter of indifference, involving no principle, a question of expediency simply, or of wise policy. But such a line of action on the part of these brethren would not be so regarded by the clear-minded Paul, ever on the alert to guard the religious liberties of the Gentiles. He well knew that neither of these men had in the slightest degree altered his convictions on the

main question, but assuming the attitude they now did toward the Gentile brethren, they were at least guilty of dissimulation, of appearing to be what they really were not. To refuse to eat with them was virtually, in existing conditions, a refusal to regard them as brethren. It was not so much an error of doctrine on their part, as of the application of it. As for the Gentile Christians themselves, they were filled with alarm and indignation. Such a change of attitude on Peter's part, or the part of any others, was not unnaturally regarded by them as a change of conviction.

Paul felt that something ought to be done to counteract the evil which he clearly saw was resulting from Peter's conduct. So he went directly to him and publicly exposed the inconsistency of his course. If you who are a Jew by birth, he said, and therefore have been brought up under the law of Moses, feel yourself at liberty to disregard its prohibitions, and to live as you were doing a little while ago, regardless of the ceremonial requirements of the Jewish system, how can you justify yourself in obliging the Gentiles to conform to the Jewish law? You do not indeed insist upon it in so many words, but the natural inference from your present withdrawal from the Gentile Christians, is that you have now come to believe that circumcision is essential to salvation—something which the Conference decided is not obligatory. If you

were not wrong before in eating and mingling socially with the Gentiles, contrary to Jewish law, how can you be right in refusing to do so now?

Thus Paul felt justified in "withstanding Peter to his face," and Barnabas too, by implication. Peter had not intended to be disloyal to the Conference decree, but under pressure had been led into an unfortunate inconsistency. He appears, however, to have received the rebuke of Paul in a spirit of fraternal meekness, and there was no break in the cordial relations of the two leaders. We may well believe that from this time forward there was no further faltering on his part, either in word or in deed. Paul, the great champion of the Christian liberty of the Gentiles, again proved his staunch devotion to what he believed to be right. Not even his personal regard for his friends, or his natural desire to shield them from embarrassment, would keep him from standing for it.

These proceedings at Antioch amounted to a renewal of the old struggle, and the conflict, breaking out here, spread rapidly over the field of Paul's mission, raging with special bitterness among the Galatian churches. It was a movement which threatened to undo the work which he had, at great labor and sacrifice, accomplished. How successfully he dealt with it we shall presently see.

IV

Paul's third missionary journey seems to have had for its main object the evangelization of the populous and important province of Asia in the western part of Asia Minor, which, on his previous journey, he had been hindered by the Spirit from visiting. After thus completing, in a sense, his work in Asia Minor—having already preached the gospel in the cities of Macedonia and Greece—his plan was to preach the gospel in the very capital of the Roman Empire. This third journey was distinguished by his great success at Ephesus, and as the period of his struggle with the Judiac reaction which gradually developed after the Jerusalem Conference. It was during this period that he wrote the four great evangelical epistles which were the outcome of that struggle, viz., one to the Galatians, two to the Corinthians, and one to the Romans. Apologetic and doctrinal interests henceforward became more prominent in his work than before.

After first visiting the churches which had previously been founded in Asia Minor, Paul went directly to Ephesus, the metropolis and capital of the province of Asia, and one of the three great cities of the eastern Mediterranean, of which Antioch in Syria and Alexandria in Egypt were the other two. It was a city of great wealth, and was given over to every kind of pleasure. The fame of its open air theater—said to have had a seating capacity for 20,000 or more people—and

its race course, were world-wide. It was also the seat of the worship of the goddess Diana, whose temple—which harbored great numbers of priests—was one of the most celebrated shrines in the world. At certain seasons of the year, pilgrims flocked to it from far and near. A prominent occupation of the people of Ephesus was the manufacture and sale of little models of the image of the goddess which the temple contained. This image was said to have fallen from heaven. The city swarmed with fortune tellers, wizards, and those familiar with occult arts. As it was one of the most accessible of all the cities in Asia, owing to the system of roads which centered here, and was located on the great line of commerce between Rome and the East, Ephesus was naturally marked out as the center where Paul should station himself in order to influence the province.

Here Paul labored for between two and three years, his longest stay in any city. As at Corinth, he probably made his home with Aquila and Priscilla, for we learn that here, also, he had to support himself by manual labor. At first he preached in the synagogue of the Jews. On his expulsion from that a little later, he continued his ministrations in the lecture room of a Greek instructor named Tyrannus. Probably in no city were his labors more blessed. The word of the Lord grew mightily. Paul himself tells us that a “great and effectual door was opened” to him. He wrought astonishing miracles. Many profes-

sors of magical arts were converted to the Christian faith. Their books of magic, which they burned, aggregated in value many thousands of dollars. As multitudes from the neighboring cities came to Ephesus, many would naturally hear the word of God. Moreover, it is not impossible or improbable that Paul may have made circuits through the province, preaching and establishing churches. He may also have sent out some of his fellow workers, of whom the names of several are given, on the same errand. So promising a field would hardly be neglected. Very likely it was at this time that some of the churches which, later, were addressed in the book of Revelation, may have been founded.

A practical evidence of the remarkable success of Paul's ministry is seen in the fact that there came to be a real diminution in the sale of silver shrines of Diana—so much so that Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen complained that not alone at Ephesus, but throughout all Asia, "this Paul persuadeth and turneth away much people, saying that they are no gods which are made with hands." These craftsmen, headed by Demetrius, stirred up a riot, in which it was sought to lay hands on Paul, but through the assistance of friends he was able to elude capture. Foiled in its attempt, the mob rushed into the theater. Here the thousands who composed it shouted themselves hoarse for a space of two hours, crying "Great is Diana of the Ephesians," many of them not knowing—

perhaps not even the leaders themselves—the precise purpose for which they were there. Finally, after they had about worn themselves out, the town clerk—corresponding perhaps somewhat to our mayor—was able by his calm, tactful, sensible words, to quiet and disperse them. Even before this, Paul had planned to revisit the churches which he had founded in Macedonia and Greece, but this tumult no doubt hastened his departure. Waiting a reasonable time so as not to seem to have been driven away, he set out on his journey. Reaching Macedonia, he visits the churches at Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea, extending his work somewhat also, evidently, into the regions beyond. Then he came to Corinth, where he spent three months. No details of his experience in Macedonia and Greece are given.

But although this third missionary journey may not have been marked by specially exciting incidents, save the one at Ephesus, we know from other sources than the book of Acts that it was, in many respects, one of the most important periods of Paul's life. For it was probably during this time that the revolt against him and his work among the Gentiles broke out in its most serious form. In their fanatical devotion to the Mosaic law and their jealousy lest it be disregarded, the more conservative of the Jewish Christians at Jerusalem had at length, after recovering from the shock of the Conference, de-

terminated to send out propagandists of their views to visit the Gentile churches one by one, and raise a warning voice against the spiritual perils connected with ignoring the rite of circumcision and that for which it stood. Even if it were not absolutely essential to their salvation, as the Jerusalem Conference had decided, still if they, as Gentiles, would enjoy the full privileges of the Christian faith, if they would realize their own highest spiritual development, attain to a more advanced stage of it, they must conform to the requirements of the Jewish law. Only in this way could they come into the full blessedness of the kingdom of God. Nor did these Judaizing emissaries stop here. They even went so far as to raise suspicions as to the genuineness of Paul's apostleship, and misrepresented and perverted his motives. Thus unrest and dissension resulted wherever they went. The minds of not a few of Paul's converts were poisoned against him, and there was not a little defection from the faith which he had inculcated. The truth was, the enormous accessions to the church from the Gentiles or heathen, threatened to overwhelm the Jewish portion of it altogether. It was this which so alarmed the more conservative Jewish element of the church at Jerusalem. Hence this counter-mission to undermine, if possible, and to overthrow Paul's work.

But Paul was not one to allow such undermining work as this to go on among his converts and

the churches which he had founded without most strenuous efforts to prevent it. All the great powers of his mind and heart were enlisted in the effort. Such churches as he could he visited. To others he sent messengers. To others still he wrote. With his unanswerable logic he met and demolished the arguments of his opponents; with the keenest sarcasm he exposed their inconsistency; and with tenderest love he appealed to his converts to remain loyal to the faith which they had espoused. In no epistle of Paul which has come down to us is his manner of dealing with the difficulty more strikingly brought out than in that to the Galatian Christians, although something of it also appears in his first epistle to the Corinthians, with indications of it elsewhere.

The epistles which Paul wrote on this journey—those to the Galatians, to the Romans, and the two to the Corinthians—are among the greatest and most important of the thirteen of which he was the undoubted author. They constitute an anti-Judaic group, or the group of controversy. Other topics were considered in them, various irregularities were criticised, directions for their correction given, Paul's non-apostolic authority vindicated as in those, especially, to the Corinthians, but primarily they were called out to counteract the influence of Judaizing emissaries who were seeking to undermine his work as an apostle, and to bring his churches into bondage to the Judaic yoke. The epistle to the Galatians was

probably written at Ephesus—although some would place it somewhat earlier—his first to the Corinthians also. Probably the second to the Corinthians was written from Macedonia. Both these epistles must have done much to prepare the way for his personal visit to Corinth a little later. No doubt before he reached there the various disorders which had existed in the Corinthian church were in the main corrected.

It was while Paul was at Corinth that he wrote his epistle to the Romans, the greatest of all his epistles. The reason of his writing to this church, which he had not himself founded or even visited, doubtless grew out of the fact of its importance as being located in the metropolis of the world. It was his earnest desire that the Roman Christians should be well grounded in the faith and protected from the errors of heretical teachers. Perhaps he would anticipate any possible influence there of the Judaizing propaganda. He expected soon to visit Rome. Meanwhile he seizes the opportunity of sending an epistle to the Christians there, which would also serve as a preparation for his own coming. In it he takes special pains to set forth, with unusual fullness, the nature, scope, and spiritual benefits of the gospel. To such as would receive it, it was the power of God unto salvation, this for both Jews and Gentiles. In view of all the considerations presented, and as a means of realizing these blessings, Paul exhorts his readers

(Rom. xii, 1) to a complete consecration.

No doubt these epistles accomplished their mission at the time, but in their effect upon succeeding ages, which probably Paul himself little anticipated, we have a monument to the influence of one of the greatest men, the greatest apostle, of that early period. Dr. James Stalker ("Life of St. Paul") well says:

"Overpowering as is the impression of the remarkableness of this man produced by following him as he hurries from province to province, from continent to continent, over land and sea, in pursuit of the object to which he was devoted—this impression is immensely deepened when we remember that he was at the same time the greatest thinker of his age, if not of any age, and, in the midst of his outward labors, was producing writings which have ever since been among the mightiest intellectual forces of the world, and are still growing in their influence."

The anxiety occasioned by the Judaizing propagandists was a constant strain upon the apostle. Nor was it a mere temporary burden—the struggle continued for years. Paul was successful at last however. He proved to be more than a match for all his opposers combined. In his later writings the traces of this controversy are very slight. He had won a great victory for the church, once for all. Thenceforth Christianity, instead of being the religion merely of a single Jewish sect, stood forth, as it was originally intended that it should, as the one uni-

versal religion. The first widespread controversy within the Christian church had been settled and settled right. Paul had proved himself to be the providential man for the emergency.

Paul had intended to sail direct from Corinth to Ephesus or Antioch, but was prevented from so doing by a conspiracy of the Jews, which led to a change of plan by which he journeyed overland to Philippi. Here he was joined by several of his associates, Luke being one of them. From Philippi he continued his journey, going by sea, visiting Troas and other points by the way. Glad as he would have been to visit Ephesus again, he sailed past it without stopping, being anxious to reach Jerusalem for the approaching feast. As his vessel stopped a few days at Miletus, thirty-six miles south of Ephesus, he sent for the elders of the church of Ephesus to come and meet him. To these elders he delivered his celebrated farewell address, in which, after reviewing his past labors among them and giving them wholesome counsels, he expressed forebodings, so far as he was personally concerned, for his own future, and said that in all probability he was addressing them for the last time.

The story of the remainder of his journey, his visits to Tyre, Ptolemais, and Cæsarea, his entertainment at the latter place by Philip the evangelist, is full of interest. Although his friends sought to dissuade him from his purpose of go-

ing to Jerusalem in view of dangers which he would without doubt encounter there from the hostility of the Jews, nothing could prevail upon him to alter his determination. He felt that it was his duty to go whatever the consequences; and to Jerusalem he went.

And so Paul's third missionary journey was ended. Although he had visited but little new territory, this journey, in its consequences, may properly be said to form the climax of his active missionary labors. Never had his direct work of evangelization been so successful as at Ephesus, while his effort to counteract the influence of the Judaizing propagandists had preserved for the churches he had already founded their Christian liberties.

V

Paul now enters upon a new stage of experience. His own and his friend's presentiments of danger at Jerusalem proved to be only too well grounded. In spite of precautionary measures suggested by James and others in view of the hostile feeling against him among the thousands of visiting Jews, he was pounced upon in the Temple by some of his enemies, and would have lost his life in the tumult which followed had he not been rescued by the Roman guard and borne into the castle for safe keeping. The narrative as given in the Acts (chapters XXI-XXVI), is intensely interesting, dramatic, thrilling, showing

how he sought in vain to placate his countrymen by an address from the stairway steps leading to the castle; how he asserted his rights as a Roman citizen when it was attempted to draw out the truth from him by scourging; how he was nearly torn in pieces by the Sanhedrin the next day as he appeared before it, and was again rescued by the guard; how a conspiracy was formed against his life, the highest Jewish officials winking at it; how the commander of the post, learning of this conspiracy, decided to send him by night under a strong guard to Cæsarea for safety, with a letter to the Roman governor Felix; how, shortly after, the Jewish authorities of Jerusalem sought, but in vain, to make out and sustain charges against him; and how, after languishing in prison for two years and abandoning all hope of a fair trial in his own country, he was constrained to appeal to Cæsar, which, as a Roman citizen, he had a perfect right to do. His address before Festus and Agrippa stands unrivaled for beauty and effectiveness. It fully satisfied these officials of his innocence, but the appeal to Rome having been made, nothing remained but for him to be sent there.

It has been thought that during the two years of Paul's imprisonment at Cæsarea, Luke may have been near him, and that possibly at this time he may have gathered from all available sources the material for his two books—the Gospel which bears his name, and the Acts.

That Luke accompanied Paul on his voyage to the capital would seem to be clearly evident from the description of it and its perils. Only an eye witness and participant of its incidents could have written of them in the graphic way which he did (Acts xxvii). It is a thrilling narrative. In it Paul's faith looms up more grandly than ever. He alone, of all on board, seems to have remained calm and collected through that terrible two weeks' storm which threatened their vessel with destruction and the loss of all on board. It was by his forethought that when, at length, they were about to be wrecked on the shore of the island of Melita, the modern Malta, they were all enabled to reach the land in safety. Here they spent the winter, and upon the opening of navigation, proceeded on their journey, disembarking at Puteoli and traveling the balance of the way by land. Here at Rome Paul was again obliged to wait. It was two years before his trial came off. During the time of this imprisonment, however, he appears to have been granted various liberties, notably that of living in his own hired house, though not freed from the constant presence of a Roman guard, to whom he was chained. Yet even here he continued his evangelistic work as he had opportunity. Many came to see him, and to them he told the story of the cross. He talked with his guards also, and not a few of them believed. Thus at last, in this great center and capital of the Roman world, which his heart had

been set upon visiting, he was preaching the gospel, which was unfettered now, to all classes and conditions of men—Jews, Gentiles, those of every nationality, as he was able. It was the universal gospel, for whose liberation from its Jewish trammels he had fought and gained a great victory, and now, although with limitations from the necessities of the situation, he was publishing it without let or hindrance. His wish of coming to Rome had been gratified, although not in the way he had anticipated. It is not impossible, however, that he may have accomplished as much for the cause and its extension, in the end, as if his own wishes had been realized. The disappointment of our plans is often overruled, in the providence of God, for higher ends than we can anticipate.

But even here in Rome the care of all the churches which he had been instrumental in founding, rested upon him as a heavy burden. To many of these churches he dispatched messengers, to others he wrote letters, some of which have been preserved for the instruction and inspiration of the ages. It is believed that it was from here that he wrote to the Christians at Ephesus, at Colosse, at Philippi, and his letter to Philemon. These are the most spiritual of all his epistles. In the epistle to the Philippian Christians, he pours out his gratitude for their thoughtful and practical remembrance of him and his needs on more occasions than one. The keynote of the

epistle is joy. "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say unto you rejoice." In the epistle to the church at Colosse, which was some eighty or more miles to the eastward of Ephesus and which met in Philemon's house, Christ is exalted to the highest. He is creator and Lord of all. Subtle speculative errors which had been creeping into the church are corrected, this mainly by a setting forth of the corresponding positive truth. In the epistle which is addressed to the Ephesian Christians—perhaps a circular letter to a group of churches of which the Ephesian church was the central and leading one—Christ is also most highly exalted. He is the spiritual head of the church. Here also sundry subtle heresies are referred to and corrected. The epistle to Philemon is one in which the apostle asks pardon for a run-a-way slave, Onesimus, who had in some way come under Paul's influence and been converted, but was now returning to his master. It is the briefest of his epistles, and a fine illustration of a delicate Christian courtesy.

And here, with Paul awaiting his trial before Cæsar, the narrative in Acts suddenly ends. It may be that the writer had another, a third volume in mind, in which to give further account of the great apostle and of the expansion of the work at the hands of the others. Or he may have felt that his purpose in writing the Acts, i. e., to show how the gospel was freed from its Jewish entanglements and became a universal gospel, was

now completed, with its main champion and liberator in the capital city, and preaching it to all classes without question or hindrance. Tradition would seem to indicate that Paul was set at liberty as a result of his trial, that he then continued his evangelizing work and his care of the churches he had already founded, possibly extending his work to Spain, very likely visiting Macedonia, Ephesus, perhaps also Crete. The three Pastoral Epistles, at least the first to Timothy and the one to Titus, were probably written during this period. To both these helpers in his work, his esteemed and beloved assistants—the former at Ephesus and the latter in Crete—he gives sundry practical directions with reference to administering the churches. It is believed that after a time, in some season of persecution, Paul was again arrested and taken to Rome for trial. It must have been during this second imprisonment that the second epistle to Timothy—the most personal and tender of all his epistles, in which he does not restrain the overflowing love of his great heart—was written. It is believed that the outcome of Paul's second trial, as he himself seems to anticipate in this, his last epistle, was his condemnation and execution.

We have now reviewed the salient features of the life and work of the apostle to the Gentiles. We have seen him as a man, his thoroughly Chris-

tian character and spirit, his zeal as a missionary, his broad-minded thoughtfulness, his mighty championship of the faith, his emancipation of it from its fetters, the tremendous impulse which he gave to its extension among the Gentiles. He was a man of marked humility, prayerfulness, conscientiousness. He was correspondingly courageous. Even from physical hardship and peril, no matter how great, he did not shrink, and the same was true of him in moral difficulties and dangers. In this realm, indeed, he might almost have been said to be without a peer. And the secret of this marvelous heroism was his faith. He believed in the unseen realities. He was persuaded that his Lord, though invisible to the natural eye, was nevertheless with him and would be, even to the end. At death he would go to him and be with him forever. Hence there was nothing, not even death, which could terrify him.

Paul was a man of great singleness of aim. A single mighty purpose ran through his entire Christian career. That purpose was to serve his Master. To do this he was ready to sacrifice everything. This was his absorbing desire. He was ready to spend and be spent for his Lord's sake. And the motive of all was love, the love of Christ which burned within him, a yearning love for his fellow men and desire for their salvation. A mighty enthusiasm possessed him.

Paul was a growing man. There are many indications of progress on his part in the apprehen-

sion of truth, as the years went on. His epistles abundantly show this. The great truths which he taught, he had tested for himself. He would hardly have been prepared, immediately upon his return from Arabia, for instance, to set forth the exalted truths which are presented in Ephesians and Colossians.

Paul was a man of vast energy and of large administrative ability. He was a most zealous propagator of the new faith, the first and greatest missionary of the church. He pushed his way into distant provinces, and established the gospel at strategic points, great centers, whence Christian influences would radiate into all the regions about. And not only did he manifest this persistent and unremitting zeal personally, he gathered about himself a company of helpers who partook of this same spirit whom he employed to assist him, sending them here and there into new fields, or to look after the interests of the work in fields which he himself had already visited. Of his contribution to the movement by his pen and its abiding influence in the church through the ages since, we have already spoken. How many more than the thirteen epistles which bear his name he may have written, we do not know. These only have come down to us.

Paul was a providential man, if ever there was one. At just the juncture when he appeared upon the stage, such a man as he was needed—a man with clear mind, able, strong, one quick to

perceive the relations of things, able to formulate Christian truth and in some measure to systematize it, one capable of philosophizing upon the great facts and truths concerning Christ which had been given to the world, but whose significance needed to be more fully explained than had yet been done. The other apostles were unlettered men as compared with himself and the advantages which he had enjoyed. A man was needed who could also cope with the many errors of the day which sought to undermine or to corrupt Christianity after it began to be a recognized force in the world. Especially was one needed who could discern, fully grasp, and unflinchingly proclaim the real distinction between Christianity and Judaism. And while Paul's contribution in general to the Christian movement then and for all time as growing out of his being the one great thinker among the early leaders, was far superior to that of any or all others combined, his most distinctive contribution, as already observed, was in what he did for the liberation of Christianity from its Jewish fetters, and bringing it out into the open as the one independent, absolute, universal religion. Others contributed something to this end, but it was reserved for Paul to fight the great battle through to a finish. Unless someone had done this, it is probable that Christianity would have continued for a long period to be the faith of simply a Jewish sect within the realm of the Jewish religion.

CHAPTER VIII

OTHER LEADERS

I

We have thus far been studying the lives and the work of the more conspicuous among the early leaders of the movement which Christ inaugurated for the redemption of the world. Each of the men whom we have studied made his own contribution to the progress of this movement, Paul, however, making the largest and most important contribution of all. The gospel was at last free. Meanwhile everything possible was done to carry it over the whole world, so that at the close of the New Testament period it had been preached in all the leading centers of the Roman Empire.

But there were other leaders, less well known, concerning whom slight records have come down to us, who yet contributed much toward giving the movement momentum and power. If they had less to do than some others with the special work of developing and promulgating larger and broader views of the gospel than were at first and for a considerable period entertained among the Jewish Christians, they still had much to do with extending its bounds. It can hardly be supposed

that only the two or three of the original twelve who are specially mentioned by the writer of the book of Acts, were active and aggressive and successful in the spread of the gospel. There is every reason to believe that all of them, having been carefully selected by the Lord himself for the responsibility committed to them, proved their fitness for it by years of devoted and successful labor. Each in his own way, in his own field, did his work and did it well, and even without confirmatory records we are undoubtedly warranted in accepting this as a fact and thus in giving them the credit and the honor which are their due. The traditions which have come down to us in regard to the less known apostles, while probably not entirely reliable, may yet contain some truth.

Then, too, there were others than the apostles whose names are mentioned in the Scripture narrative—men who became interested in the work as it progressed, who developed a special fitness for helping it forward, and whose labors, in the aggregate, contributed much to its success—such men as Stephen, Philip, Barnabas, to whom reference has already been made—also Silas, Apollos, James the Lord's brother, Timothy, Titus, Mark, and Luke, to say nothing of many helpful women.

While we know but comparatively little about these persons, we are not entirely without definite information concerning them. We may notice them in order, beginning with

JAMES, THE LORD'S BROTHER

James rose to the conspicuous position in the apostolic age of head of the mother church at Jerusalem. If not of the original company of the apostles, he became, after his conversion, very closely associated with them. He is mentioned by name only twice in the Gospels (Matt. XIII, 55, Mark VI, 3), but the outlines of his life may be traced by means of the notices of the "brethren of the Lord," who seem to have constituted a distinct class both during our Lord's life, when they did not believe on him (John VII, 5), and after his resurrection, when they are found among his followers (Act. I, 14).

The precise relationship of these "brethren" to the Lord has always been a matter of dispute. Some have thought them cousins, some half brothers, but there would seem to be little reason for doubting their relation to him as real brothers. They always appear with Mary, living and journeying with her. As the name of James stands first on the list, he was very likely the oldest. When or how he became a believer in Christ is not stated. It may have been in connection with some special appearance of the risen Lord (1 Cor. XV, 7). Of his subsequent history, we gather from the Acts and the epistles of Paul that after the ascension, he with his brothers remained at Jerusalem in the company of the eleven disciples and Mary and the women, waiting for the descent of the Spirit, and that within ten years from this

time he became head of the church. Paul says (Gal. i, 18, 19) that three years after his conversion he went up to Jerusalem and stayed with Peter fifteen days, seeing no other apostle, only James the Lord's brother. Peter on his escape from prison (Act. xii, 17) went first to the home of Mary, the mother of Mark, and desired that the news of his escape be sent to James and the brethren. In Gal. ii, 1-10 Paul describes a visit to Jerusalem fourteen years after the first, when the leaders of the church, James, Peter, and John, after listening to his report of his first missionary journey, signified their approval of his work and gave him the right hand of fellowship.

James was the presiding officer at the Conference which was held at this time, to settle, if possible, the question as to how far Gentile Christians should be required to conform to the customs of the Jews in becoming disciples of Christ. After a general discussion in open meeting, in which Peter appears to have been a conspicuous figure, and after both Barnabas and Paul had rehearsed the story of their experience in preaching to the Gentiles at Antioch and in connection with their recent missionary journey in Asia Minor, James sums up the discussion and proposes the resolution which was finally adopted. The Gentiles were not to be burdened with the Judaic requirements. Evidently James stood upon the same platform of faith with Paul, although as Paul

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felt himself called to preach to the Gentiles, so James felt that his responsibility was more particularly to the Jews. A prominent feature of the work of James, in fact, seems to have been to smooth the passage of the Jews over to Christianity.

James again appears in the same position as head of the Jerusalem church when Paul, after his third missionary journey, presents himself before him. He and the elders with him praise God for the success of Paul's labors, but warn him of the strong feeling which existed among the Jews against him as growing out a report which had been circulated that he taught the Jews of the Dispersion to abandon circumcision and some other customs of the fathers. To counteract this impression, they suggested that he join in the completion of the Nazirite vow which had been entered upon by four men in the community, assume the costs of it, and thus show that the report was unfounded. The plan did not succeed, but the incident at least discloses the fraternal interest of James in the safety and welfare of the apostle.

After Acts xxi, 18, we meet no further references to James in the New Testament. Secular history tells us, however, that he was martyred in a popular outbreak of the Jews during the interregnum between the death of the procurator Festus and the appointment of his successor. Yet meager as are the references to James in the

book of Acts, we learn enough of him to satisfy us of his kindly spirit and his broad-mindedness.

Was he the author of the epistle which bears his name? Nothing in the epistle itself definitely answers the question. The characteristics of the letter harmonize perfectly with what we know of James, and it seems to be the consensus of opinion that he was the author. It is addressed to the twelve tribes which are of the Dispersion, as the Jews dwelling outside of the Holy Land were technically called—i. e., probably, the Christians among them. The object of the epistle was to reform and correct those sins and errors to which its lately Christianized Jewish readers continued to be liable, and to encourage them in the sore trials to which they were exposed.

SILAS

One of the men who was for a considerable period associated with Paul in his missionary labors, was Silas, whose name, uncontracted, seems to have been Silvanus. Few details of his life are given. He appears to have been a distinguished member of the apostolic church at Jerusalem, who is for the first time introduced to us as one of the delegation appointed to go to Antioch, along with Paul and Barnabas, after the Jerusalem Conference, to communicate its decision to the Christians at that place, together with a brotherly greeting from the Jerusalem church. He remained for some time in Antioch, and in the ex-

ercise of the gift of prophecy, exhorted the brethren with many words and confirmed them. When Paul declined to take John Mark on his second missionary journey, and he and Barnabas parted company in consequence, he chose Silas as his companion and colleague. It was a particularly appropriate choice in view of the projected tour through Syria and Cilicia to the Gentile Christians, since Silas had been specially accredited to them by the Jerusalem church. His selection by Paul testifies to the confidence reposed in Paul by the more liberal Jewish Christians, as it would also do much to commend Silas to those to whom they were to go.

On this missionary tour, Paul and Silas journeyed not only through Syria and Cilicia, but in Lycaonia, Phrygia, Galatia, and places farther west. From Troas they crossed over into Macedonia. Together they were imprisoned at Philippi; they were together at Thessalonica during the riot there; and together they were sent away to Berea. From Berea Paul went on to Athens. Silas evidently remained behind, but joined him later at Corinth. In this city he was an esteemed co-worker (2 Cor. I, 19). In the two letters which Paul sent from Corinth to the Thessalonian Christians, Silvanus is associated with himself in the opening salutations. After this Silas disappears from the narrative. It is probable, though not certain, that he is the one referred to in Peter's First Epistle (v, 12) as the

bearer of it to the Christians in some of the provinces of Asia Minor. His reference to Silvanus as a faithful brother to them, would seem to correspond with his experience in having before visited the churches of these regions in company with Paul.

If Silas was not as conspicuous as some of the New Testament leaders, he was at least an effective Christian worker.

APOLLOS

Apollos was evidently a born orator. He is represented as an eloquent preacher, fervent in spirit, and exceptionally well versed in the Jewish Scriptures. About all that we know of him is gathered up in a brief passage in the book of Acts (Ch. xviii, 24-28). "Now a certain Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by race, an eloquent man, came to Ephesus; and he was mighty in the Scriptures. This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and being fervent in spirit, he spake and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, knowing only the baptism of John; and he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him unto them and expounded the way of God unto him more accurately, and when he was minded to pass over to Achaia, the brethren encouraged him, and wrote to the disciples to receive him, and when he was come, he helped them much that had believed through grace; for he powerfully

confuted the Jews, and that publicly, showing by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.”

In these few verses several things concerning Apollos come to view. First of all, he was born in the famous city of Alexandria in Egypt, which had been founded in B. C. 325 by Alexander the Great. At this time it was the second city in the Roman Empire. It was a great commercial center, a mart of interchange between the Orient and the Occident, and it was regarded as one of the great intellectual centers, also, of the world, a city of schools and of learning. Here the Hebrew Scriptures had been translated into Greek, and this translation, called the Septuagint, was the one which was in general use in the time of Christ. The city was cosmopolitan in its make up, its inhabitants having been drawn from many nationalities. The Jews, who were specially numerous, occupied a large quarter by themselves.

In the midst of such a city and of such influences Apollos was born and bred. The teaching of John the Baptist and some knowledge of Jesus had reached there, and this teaching Apollos had been led to accept. Yet his knowledge of Jesus was only partial, for he seemed to know only the baptism of repentance as John had taught it. Still, he became a zealous preacher concerning the Messiah, and while itinerating in Asia Minor, he came at length to Ephesus. Here he met Aquila and Priscilla, who were devoted fol-

lowers of Christ. Paul had become acquainted with them at Corinth, and they had accompanied him on his return from that city not long before this time, as far as Ephesus. This Christian couple, after hearing Apollos preach in the synagogue, and recognizing the rudimentary character of his information in regard to the gospel, "took him unto them and explained the way of God more perfectly." Evidently he was a willing learner. It is not impossible that the disciples whom Paul afterward fell in with here, who knew only John's baptism and had never heard that there was a Holy Spirit, may have been converts of Apollos.

With his more complete equipment for his work, Apollos now became desirous of extending this knowledge of the gospel as far as possible. Accordingly after remaining awhile in Ephesus he concluded to go to Corinth. Some suppose that he may have received an invitation to visit that city from certain Corinthians who were in Ephesus at the time and heard him preach. The brethren at Ephesus therefore wrote letters of introduction and of commendation to those of Corinth. Reaching there, Apollos "helped them much which had believed through grace, for he powerfully confuted the Jews and that publicly, showing by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ."

From Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians we learn that divisions had sprung up in the church,

very likely after the return of Apollos to Ephesus, the names of Paul, Apollos, and of Peter being used as those of party leaders. It is not at all likely that there was any serious divergence of views between these men, but the same truth presented in different ways, may have led indiscriminating believers to attach themselves to one leader or another according to their fancy. At all events there is nothing whatever to indicate any personal estrangement between any of these leaders, but rather every reason to think the reverse. For Paul sought to persuade Apollos to return to Corinth, which, however, the latter was unwilling to do. Perhaps he thought that the mere fact of his presence there, in the circumstances, might serve to inflame party spirit.

The last mention of Apollos in the New Testament is in Titus III, 13. He was then in Crete, or was shortly expected there, and Paul urges Titus to set him forward in his journey.

It was first suggested by Luther, and the opinion is now quite widely held, that Apollos was the author of the epistle to the Hebrews.

TITUS

Titus was one of Paul's trusted companions. Although not mentioned in the book of Acts, he is frequently referred to in Paul's epistles, one of which is addressed to him directly. His birth-place is unknown. All that can be said for cer-

tain is that he was a Gentile, probably converted through the influence of Paul himself, and living at Antioch at the time when the controversy over the question of the circumcision of Gentile Christians arose. He was among those who accompanied Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem at the time of the Conference. His presence at this meeting gave offense to the Judaizing party, and an attempt was made to compel him to be circumcised. Paul, in standing as he did for the freedom of the Gentiles from the Mosaic law, resisted this, and the church sided with him. A great principle was at stake, and the apostle refused for a single moment to endanger it.

How long Titus remained Paul's companion we cannot tell. He may have been with him when he wrote to the Galatian Christians. He is not again mentioned until the time of the incidents which caused the writing of the first and second epistles to the Corinthians. At this time Titus paid two if not three visits to Corinth. After his first visit, which had reference to arranging for a systematic collection for the needy saints at Jerusalem, he was sent back to deal with certain difficulties which had recently developed there. Paul anxiously awaited his return, expecting to meet him at Troas. Apparently the crisis required a longer time than the apostle expected. So he moved on to Macedonia where Titus rejoined him, bringing the comforting news of a happy ad-

justment of the main difficulties. Whereupon Paul wrote his second epistle to the Corinthian Christians, and requested Titus to go on a fresh visit to that city, to carry the letter, and to complete the collection. Two other brethren, probably from the Macedonian churches and to represent them, accompanied him. Titus himself went as a representative of the apostle.

We do not again read of Titus until after Paul's release from his first Roman imprisonment. The reference to him is in the apostle's letter to him. This seems to imply that Paul, after his release, had traveled with Titus in the East, that they had landed at Crete, and had evangelized several towns, but that he had been unable to remain longer and had therefore left Titus behind to complete the organization of the churches which had been gathered. Titus found not a little opposition, especially from the Jews (I, 10), and much tendency to insubordination. Possibly he had written to Paul to report this, and to ask his advice. However this may be, Paul wrote a short letter pressing him to complete the organization, to ordain presbyters, to teach sound doctrine, to avoid empty disputations, and to exercise his authority firmly.

The letter was probably sent by Zenas and Apollos, and Titus was requested to be ready to leave Crete and join Paul at Nicopolis as soon as he should receive a further message through Artemis or Tychicus. Probably it was thence

that Paul dispatched him on a mission to Dalmatia (2 Tim. iv, 10).

This is a bare outline of Titus' life and work—meager enough—so far as we are able to gather it from the few references in Paul's epistles. But the references show two things—that Paul manifested more of a genius for administration and for easily adapting himself to all conceivable exigencies which arose in his varied experience, than possibly he has received credit for, and that Titus was possessed of qualities which fitted him in exceptional degree for being one of his successful lieutenants. Paul discriminated wisely among his associates, selecting the right men for different errands, and combining their services in fitting proportions. These companions and co-laborers of Paul were more in number than perhaps we realize, as we learn from the frequent mention of the names of different men here and there in his epistles. Titus is perhaps a fair sample of the men who surrounded him and were employed by him in spreading the truth. He was evidently highly esteemed and greatly beloved by Paul. He appears to have been possessed of much strength of character, and Paul seems never to have feared any weakness or hesitancy on his part in carrying out his directions. He was thoroughly at one with Paul in his thought and purposes, and Paul's high regard for him was evidently thoroughly reciprocated. The fact that he was sent upon the important errands which were entrusted

to him, shows him to have been, in Paul's estimation, possessed of very high qualities of character and of trustworthy judgment.

TIMOTHY

Timothy was the well-known companion and assistant of Paul, whom he seems to have loved even with the affection of a father. The terms of endearment with which Paul speaks of him in his epistles make clear the closeness of the ties which bound him to his youthful associate. This love on Paul's part seems to have been fully reciprocated by Timothy, who was associated with the apostle for a longer period than any other person of whom we have record. Two letters written by Paul to him have been preserved.

When the apostle on his first missionary tour visited Lystra in the province of Lycaonia, Timothy's mother, Eunice, and grandmother, Lois, were led to Christ. From a child Timothy had been instructed in the Scriptures, his mother being a Jewess, although his father was a Greek. Whether he was converted directly through the efforts of Paul, or through the influence and instructions of his mother after her own conversion, is not entirely clear. When the apostle again visited the place, as he did later, on his second missionary journey, he found the young man well reported of by the brethren both of Iconium and Lystra as an interested and active Christian worker. Paul was much drawn toward him. He

seemed to be a congenial spirit, like-minded with himself and of corresponding zeal, and he was moved with desire to take him with him as his companion and helper. The opportunity was one which appealed to Timothy, and with due formality he was set apart to the work of an evangelist. Inasmuch as he had never been circumcised, it seemed best to Paul that the rite should be performed. It would tend to conciliate the Jews with whom, in almost every place, they would be brought in contact, and where no principle was involved, as there was not in this case, the apostle was always willing and glad to make any concessions which might facilitate his work.

After this the fortunes of Timothy were united with those of Paul. He evidently accompanied the latter and Silas on the remainder of this second missionary journey. Together they crossed over into Macedonia, where they visited in succession Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea. At Thessalonica Timothy took an active part in the preaching. When Paul, obliged to withdraw from Berea, went on to Athens, Timothy and Silas remained behind, but followed him shortly after. They did not overtake him, however, until he had reached Corinth, unless, as is thought by many, they rejoined Paul at Athens, from which place Timothy was sent to Thessalonica. Here, through their combined efforts, a strong church was at length formed. In the two letters which Paul wrote to the Thessalonian Christians from

this place, the names of Silas and Timothy are associated with his own.

Timothy remained with Paul at Corinth the entire year and a half of his stay there, and probably accompanied him on his homeward journey. We do not hear of him again until we find him with Paul at Ephesus on his third missionary tour. From here, according to I Cor. iv, 17, and before this epistle was written, he was sent to Corinth to correct certain irregularities which had arisen in the church, but whether or not he actually reached the city we do not know. He evidently returned to Ephesus shortly before Paul left the place, and he and Erastus preceded him to Macedonia, whither the apostle soon afterward followed. From Macedonia he and Timothy went on to Corinth, where the two were both actively engaged. Timothy is mentioned as one of the number of those who escorted Paul from Corinth on what proved to be his last journey to Jerusalem. He is mentioned as being with him at Troas where they remained for a week, after which very likely they journeyed together to the Holy City, although this is not stated. In fact, Timothy's name does not again appear in the book of Acts. Nothing is said about his having been with Paul during his two years' imprisonment at Cæsarea, although we can hardly think of him as having kept aloof all this time. He must have followed his master to Rome, for in the

epistles, written from that city, he is represented as being a devoted co-worker.

After Paul's release from imprisonment, he seems more than ever to have entrusted Timothy with important responsibilities, notably in placing him in charge of the church at Ephesus while he was himself absent in Macedonia. It was a post of no little difficulty, especially for one who was still a young man. Officials were to be appointed, the church organization was to be completed, and false teachers were to be combated. Paul's first epistle to him had special reference to the task imposed upon him. It deals with the ecclesiastical difficulties which confronted him, and gives him personal advice. The second epistle was written evidently after Paul had been arrested a second time and taken to Rome, and shortly before his death. It is the last product of the apostle's pen. He seems to have been almost alone and he longs to see his loved companion again. In this epistle he lays bare his whole heart. The letter was written partly to encourage Timothy in his evangelizing work, and partly to urge him to hasten to his side. It seems probable that he was able to comply with Paul's request and that he reached him before his death, although we have no positive evidence on this point. Surely he would make the most strenuous endeavor to do so. The only further reference to Timothy in the New Testament is in the epistle

to the Hebrews, from which we learn that he had suffered imprisonment but had been set at liberty. We know nothing of his closing years.

From these references to Timothy we are fully warranted in inferring that he was a young man of most estimable qualities of character and of a sweet and beautiful spirit. He must have possessed decided ability also, or he could hardly have been equal to the large responsibilities which were from time to time committed to him. He was a real companion to the apostle, a most valuable helper, by whose presence and sympathy Paul was greatly comforted and cheered in his arduous labors. While we know nothing of his subsequent career, we can hardly think of him otherwise than as a faithful, zealous worker in the Christian cause to which he had been set apart.

LUKE

The close relation of Luke to Paul during the closing years of the latter's life, and the fact of his authorship of the Gospel which bears his name and of the book of Acts, would seem clearly to entitle him to a place among the early leaders of the Christian movement. It may have been a minor place, but it was an important one nevertheless. Paul speaks of Luke, indeed, in one of his epistles, as his "fellow laborer."

We know very little about Luke directly. He does not mention himself—evidently seeks to keep himself in the background. But from references

in several of Paul's epistles we are able to gather a few facts in regard to him. In one place he is described as the "beloved physician," and in several cases his name is joined with that of Paul and others in sending salutations to those addressed. He was also with Paul in Rome at the time when his second epistle to Timothy was written. In this epistle a touching tribute is paid to Luke's fidelity in the words, "Only Luke is with me."

But while Luke is mentioned by name only in some of Paul's epistles, we may learn something of him from the book of Acts, of which he was the author. He intimates his presence with Paul during certain portions of the latter's missionary journeyings by the use of "we" or "us" in the narrative, although in other parts the third person is employed. From these passages it appears that Luke joined Paul on the second journey, at Troas, and went with him to Philippi. Again on Paul's return from the third journey, he rejoined the apostle at Philippi and went with him to Jerusalem. During the two years of Paul's imprisonment at Cæsarea, he appears to have remained in Palestine. At all events he made the voyage with him from Cæsarea to Rome.

Luke was evidently of Gentile origin. Early tradition made him a native of Antioch. His familiarity with the church there and his interest in it are evident from a number of passages in the Acts. His close companionship with Paul

for so long a time would seem to indicate that he possessed qualities of a high order. Just what his function was as Paul's companion and fellow laborer, we have no means of knowing. It may have been that of a general assistant, to relieve him of a portion of his burdens, or as a physician to look after his bodily health, or primarily a companion on whom he could lean, or all of these functions may have been combined. It was evidently a great comfort to the apostle to have Luke with him.

Luke's literary work is notable for the careful painstaking with which he collected his material, and for its artistic quality. His Gospel is the most literary production of the four, and contains not a little which is lacking in the others. It was peculiarly adapted to cultured Greeks, for whom, especially, it was written. The more universal aspects of the gospel are presented. There is nothing narrow or contracted about it. It was evidently intended to be the first of a series of works on the origin of Christianity, a purpose which he carried out in part. From the abrupt way in which the book of Acts ends, it would seem as if a succeeding volume must have been in contemplation, but which its author was hindered from writing.

The book of Acts does not aim to rehearse all that the apostles did, or even to give a general history of the Christian movement as carried forward by them. Rather it seems to trace the

gradual emancipation of the gospel from the Judaism from which it came, and of which, at first, it seemed to be a part, until it became independent and was recognized as the one, final, universal gospel. Everything in the narrative is made to bear to this end—the extension of the gospel beyond the bounds of Judaism and the Jews, to the Gentiles. Such incidents and leaders only are introduced as contributed to this result. The book is very graphically written. Its essential historical accuracy has been proved by modern research. It is one of the most remarkable historical documents ever penned.

MARK

Another person who was brought into close relations with the early expansion of Christianity, but of whom we know comparatively little, was Mark. He was more or less associated with both Paul and Barnabas in their missionary operations, and was the author of the Gospel which bears his name. His first name was John, and by this alone he is once designated in the book of Acts (xviii, 5, 13). His mother, Mary, appears to have been in comfortable circumstances, and her house in Jerusalem was one of the meeting places of the early Christians. Mark was cousin or nephew to Barnabas—it is not entirely clear which—and started with him and Paul on their missionary journey from Antioch into Asia Minor. For some reason, which can only be con-

jectured, he left them at Perga and returned to Jerusalem. Paul so disapproved his course that when a second missionary journey was proposed, he was unwilling to take him with them. Barnabas insisted. The result was that a sharp contention arose between the two missionaries, and they separated. Barnabas took Mark with him on a journey to Cyprus. Paul, with Silas for a companion, set out upon a tour which, before its completion, included Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Greece.

After this Mark disappears from the history for a number of years. We next find him at Rome, joining with the apostle in sundry salutations to some of those to whom the latter sent epistles. From this it would appear that the former cause of variance between them had been removed. At a still later period, Paul speaks of Mark in highly commendatory terms: "Take Mark and bring him with thee; for he is useful to me for ministering" (2 Tim. iv, II). According to First Peter (v, 13) he was with that apostle in Babylon. Peter calls him his son. He may have been one of his converts. Early tradition represents Mark as the interpreter of Peter. This may mean that he was a companion of Peter in his later missionary journeyings, or that in the Gospel which bears his name he gave the facts in regard to Christ substantially as Peter was accustomed to do in preaching. This, indeed, is the generally received opinion.

The Gospel according to Mark is the shortest of the four. It is also the simplest, most pointed and concise. The narrative moves forward rapidly and with much pictorial power. It lays special stress on the deeds of Christ, rather than on his teaching. It begins with the forerunner's mission and ends with the resurrection. Christ is depicted as the mighty Son of God, the conquering Savior. Mark evidently wrote his Gospel for the Gentiles, particularly for the Romans. It is believed that Mark was in Rome with both Paul and Peter. His early history and his later associations with the chief apostles, fitted him to become the writer of a Gospel. Nothing is known of the circumstances connected with his death.

THE WOMEN

No account of the early development of Christianity and of those who aided in helping the movement forward would be complete without some reference to the part which faithful women had in it. There were those who ministered to Christ while he was seeking to inaugurate it. Even those at the cross are spoken of as "ministering." After the Lord's ascension, the apostles, "with the women," continued with one accord in prayer and supplication at Jerusalem. Then there were others who, both directly and indirectly, contributed to the progress of Christianity during the apostolic age. Paul recog-

nized this and makes frequent mention of them in his epistles, and the names of some of them appear in the book of Acts. Dorcas, a resident of Joppa, made garments which she gave to the poor—thus engaging in practical Christian service, and so helping on the general movement. When she died there was widespread sorrow. Peter was sent for. After prayer he bade her arise, and, to the joy of all her friends, her life returned. As a result of this miracle, many were led to believe. The fame of it spread far and near. Dorcas societies are named for her. Thus her influence is still felt.

When Christianity was introduced into Europe, the first convert was a woman. Paul and Silas went out from Philippi to the riverside, "where prayer was wont to be made." One of the company of women who had gathered here for their devotions was Lydia. Her heart "the Lord opened" that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul, "and she and her household were baptized." Thereupon she besought the missionaries, saying, "If ye have judged me faithful to the Lord, come into my house and abide there," and this they did. In this unpretending scene at the riverside, the conversion of Europe began. It would seem that the Christian work of women was characteristic of the church which was at this time formed in Philippi. In the epistle addressed to it long

afterward, we find Paul saying, "Help those women who labored with me in the gospel."

Reaching Thessalonica, Paul and Silas found "the chief women not a few" among the true and active believers. Of the two converts at Athens who are specified by name, one was a woman. At Corinth and in its neighborhood, we encounter the familiar names of Chloe, Priscilla, and Phœbe, while in the epistle to the Romans, which was written from Corinth, the enumeration of female converts—mentioned in terms which show that they were active laborers in the good cause—is very remarkable (Rom. xvi, 3-15). Priscilla appears here as elsewhere, and among other women we find the following specified, also with an allusion to their services. "Mary, who bestowed much labor upon us"; "Tryphæna and Tryphosa, who labor in the Lord"; "Persis, who labored much in the Lord." Such phrases imply a system of widespread sympathy and service in the Christian cause. But it is in the name and description of Phœbe that the whole case is most completely summed up: "I commend unto you Phœbe, our sister, who is a servant (deaconness) of the church which is at Cénchrea; that ye receive her in the Lord as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you; for she hath been a succorer of many, and of myself also." Cénchrea was the eastern seaport of Corinth, and distant from it about nine

miles. A large amount of brave and active service is revealed in the phrase "a succorer of many." Now Phœbe goes to Rome, and Paul follows her with his gratitude. Very likely she is the bearer of his letter. Christianity certainly owes much to women, and it owed more in those early days than is generally recognized.

And then there is Priscilla. She and her husband Aquila are always associated in the good work. Upon Paul's arrival in Corinth, he found there certain Jews who had recently come from Rome. The emperor Claudius had commanded that all Jews depart from the city. Among them were these two. In them Paul found congenial companions. "And because they were of the same craft (tent-making), he abode with them and taught." The friendship thus formed continued during the years following. Whether or not the two were converted to Christianity before Paul met them is uncertain; in due time, if not from the first, they became hearty Christians, helping each other in the work.

We next hear of them at Ephesus. Paul was going to Jerusalem, and they accompanied him from Corinth as far as this city. Here they remained, Paul promising to return later. It was not long before they had opportunity to render a signal Christian service. Apollos, the eloquent preacher and "mighty in the Scriptures," was here. After they heard him preach, they discovered that there were some respects in which

he needed further equipment in order to the most effective service. He had not been fully instructed in the things of Christ—only in the teachings of John the Baptist. So they devoted themselves to the task. It was something which they were well qualified to do from their long association with Paul. They instructed Apollos more fully in the teaching which they had themselves received. A large share of this work evidently fell to Priscilla. That she possessed abilities of a high order would seem to be inferred from the fact that her name is always mentioned along with her husband's—in a number of instances is mentioned first. The willingness of Apollos to learn, and to learn from a woman, speaks well for his spirit. When finally he was minded to go into Achaia, she and Aquila encouraged him to do so, and letters of commendation were given him. When he came to Corinth, he “helped them much which had believed through grace.” Paul had instructed Aquila and Priscilla at Corinth, they instruct Apollos at Ephesus, and he then passes on to Corinth to “water” where the apostle had “planted.”

After Paul joined Aquila and Priscilla here at Ephesus, as planned, we read that the church was in their house. It was the acknowledged meeting place for the disciples of Christ, for instruction, worship, and mutual help. Later the two returned to Rome, whence they had previously been exiled.

Here their hospitality was still prominent, for in writing to the Roman Christians Paul refers to the fact that the church was in their house. In addition, they are said by Paul in his epistle to the Romans, not only to have been "his helpers in Christ Jesus," but to have "laid down their own necks for his sake." This points to some heroic facing of danger in his behalf. The personal gratitude of Paul breaks out warmly in this passage: "To whom not only I give thanks, but all the churches of the Gentiles."

Throughout all the oppositions which Paul encountered, Priscilla and Aquila remained his loyal supporters, and this friendship continued to the end. Shortly before his martyrdom, Paul sends them a loving salutation, the only salutation in the affecting letter—the second to Timothy (iv, 19).

As we gather together all the references in the book of Acts and in the epistles to the ministry of Christian women, we are surprised at the number and significance of them. If none of these women stand out as leaders in the Christian movement in the same sense in which Peter, Barnabas, and Paul did, they were certainly, from the very first, most effective helpers in it, ministering in more quiet and retired ways, and they should receive for it the credit which is justly due them.

II

THE APOSTLES

Of the men included in the "glorious company of the apostles," there are no fewer than four lists in the New Testament. No two of these lists exactly coincide, but on examination it will be found that the twelve names—for that was the number chosen—fall into three groups, in each of which the same four apostles are found, though not always mentioned in the same order. The first group, which is invariably headed by Simon Peter, includes also his brother Andrew, and James and John the sons of Zebedee. The second group, headed by Philip, comprises in addition Bartholomew, Matthew, and Thomas. In the third group, in which James the Son of Alphaeus is always first and Judas Iscariot always last, we also find Judas the son of James, or as he is sometimes called, Thaddeus, and Simon the Cananaean.

In pursuance of our plan to sketch, even if but briefly, other leaders of the New Testament movement than those who, like Peter and John, Stephen, Philip, Barnabas and Paul, were specially conspicuous, and some who, though less so, are yet specially referred to in the New Testament—we now turn to those members of the apostolic company who have not already been considered. Our knowledge of them is very limited, and sometimes we are largely if not entirely dependent upon uncertain tradition. Yet

it cannot fail to be interesting, in this connection, to note such facts as we have, and with such authority as may attach to them.

ANDREW

We begin with Andrew, the story of whom must always have a special interest for us, if only because he was the first called of Christ's disciples, and also because it was through his influence that his more distinguished brother Peter was led in like manner to become a disciple.

Andrew was born at Bethsaida on the lake of Galilee. Like his brother Peter he was a fisherman, and with him had a home at Capernaum. He was a disciple of John the Baptist. When at length the One of whom John was the herald actually appeared, Andrew was ready to accept him. Pointing to Jesus one day, the Baptist said to John and Andrew, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." This led to their following him and attaching themselves to him as his disciples. Then it was that Andrew went off in search of his brother Peter, to whom he made the joyous announcement, "We have found the Messiah." This resulted in Peter's becoming a disciple also. Had Andrew done nothing else than this, he would deserve the eternal gratitude of the church.

The references to Andrew in the Gospels and Acts are few. He joined with his brother and James and John in enquiring of Christ as to the

time of the destruction of the city and temple, and of his own second coming (Mark XII, 3, 4). He is the one who volunteers information about the lad with the loaves and fishes at the time of the miracle of feeding the five thousand on the northeast shore of the sea of Galilee (John VI), and he, with Philip, presented to Jesus at Jerusalem, the request of the Greeks who desired to see him (John XII, 22). Nothing trustworthy is known about his subsequent life. According to tradition he was martyred in Achaia by crucifixion on a cross shaped like the letter X, which is now called St. Andrew's cross. He seems to have been of a kindly, unostentatious disposition, simple-minded, who always knew just what to do. His whole life was one of comparative obscurity and of the humility which, so far from seeking great things for itself, is content rather to be the means of getting great things done for or by others. After Christ's ascension, his name appears in the list of the eleven who waited in the upper room for the promised gift of the Spirit, and with this, as far as Scripture is concerned, he passes out of sight.

JAMES, THE MARTYR APOSTLE

James, the son of Zebedee and brother of the apostle John, was one of the earliest and most trusted followers of our Lord. Of his birthplace or early home, we are told nothing. All we know is that he was the son of Zebedee and Salome, and

along with his father and brother pursued the trade of a fisherman on the sea of Galilee, and that it was while engaged in this work he was definitely summoned to become a follower of Jesus. He seems early to have found his way into the inner circle of the disciples, for he is specially spoken of, along with John and Peter, in connection with some of the most solemn occasions of our Lord's life. Yet there is nothing in connection with any of these occasions which tends to throw any light on the individual character of the apostle himself. Along with his brother John, he received from Jesus the surname Boanerges, or son of Thunder. For it was these two brothers who, after they had been sent forward on one occasion to prepare for his entertainment at a Samaritan village, and had brought back word that he would not be received, asked permission to call down fire on the offending villagers. This impetuous, intolerant disposition on their part was at once rebuked. They little realized what manner of spirit they were of.

At another time the two brothers aroused the indignation of the rest of the disciples by their request of Jesus, through their mother, that they might have seats at his right and left hand respectively in his kingdom, which they ignorantly assumed was to be material and political. This ambitious, self-seeking spirit on their part, was also rebuked by Jesus. It was then—when, in answer to the question of the Lord if they were

able to drink of his cup and be baptized with the baptism with which he would be baptized, they had declared themselves able—that they were told that they should indeed drink of his cup and be baptized with his baptism, but that honors in his kingdom were not in his power to assign. Our Lord's words were literally fulfilled in the case of James in his martyrdom fourteen years later at the hands of Herod the king. How his life was spent during this interval we do not know, but that he must have been zealous and earnest in Christ's service, and a marked man, is made evident in the fact that he was singled out as the first apostolic martyr. Alarmed at the rapid progress which the new sect was making, Herod resolved to strike a blow against its leaders, and shortly before the passover noted in Acts XII, he "killed James the brother of John with the sword." This is all we are told of an event which must at the time have made a profound impression upon the early church. James was the first of the apostles to seal his testimony with his blood. He evidently possessed a strong character, was bold and uncompromising in his advocacy of the truth, or he would hardly have attracted the notice of the king in the way that he did.

PHILIP

Philip, one of the twelve, was a native of Bethsaida. He must be carefully distinguished from Philip the Evangelist, the story of whose work in

Samaria and of his interview with the Ethiopian eunuch has been preserved in the book of Acts (Ch. vii). He had probably been, like his fellow townsmen, Andrew and Peter, a disciple of John the Baptist. He was the first one whom the Lord called directly to be one of his followers, after which he found Nathanael and brought him to Jesus. Philip's name is mentioned in connection with the incident of the feeding of the five thousand. "Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?" said Jesus to Philip. This inquiry, it is expressly stated, was intended to "prove" him, for Jesus himself knew what he would do. Philip had not thought of a miracle at this time, and seems to have looked upon the feeding of the multitude as wholly impracticable.

Shortly after Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem, certain Greeks desired to see Jesus, and applied to Philip who put them in communication with him. The last incident in which Philip is specially mentioned occurred a few days later when the Master and his disciples were together in the upper room. The Savior, in seeking to comfort the little company in view of his coming departure, had told them of the many mansions above in his Father's house, whither he was to go to prepare a place for them that where he was they might be also. Philip, unable readily to grasp the significance of what his Lord was saying, asked Jesus to explain it more fully. "Show us the Father," he said, "and it sufficeth

us." If he could only see him with the natural eye, everything, he felt, would be made clear. Then Jesus made this reply: "Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know me Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; how sayest thou, show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father and the Father in me? the words that I say unto you I speak not from myself: but the Father abiding in me doeth his works."

From this point Philip disappears from the Gospel narrative. In the book of Acts his name appears simply in the list of the eleven. According to tradition, he lived, after the ascension, as one of the "great lights of Asia," and was buried at Hierapolis along with his two aged virgin daughters. With the scanty material at hand for estimating Philip's character, there is little which can be said with certainty. He appears to have been honest, faithful, and earnest, not very quick of apprehension, but conscientious in the path of duty when he saw it.

BARTHOLOMEW

Both by the early church and in modern times, Bartholomew has generally been identified with Nathanael of the fourth Gospel, referred to especially in the first chapter. If this is not the case, then we know nothing whatever of him. Assuming the identity to be established, however, we are then able to say that his call to be a follower

of Jesus was effected through the instrumentality of the disciple Philip. He was a native of Cana of Galilee, whom Jesus declared to be an Israelite indeed in whom was no guile—not sinless, but sincere and candid, open-minded and simple-hearted. After Philip had himself been called, he found Nathanael and brought him to Jesus, in the conviction that a personal interview would convince him that he was the Messiah. The result was as Philip anticipated, and Nathanael also became a disciple (John 1, 45-51). His name occurs only once more in the Gospel narrative, viz, John xxi, 2, where it is among those of the seven mentioned to whom the risen Jesus manifested himself after they had spent a night of fruitless fishing on the sea of Galilee.

According to tradition, which, however, has little ground for credit, he afterward traveled into India, and returning thence, preached in Armenia, and Cilicia. Eventually, so it is said, he met his death by being first flayed alive, then crucified.

MATTHEW

At the time of his call to be a follower of Christ, Matthew was a publican or tax gatherer of the Roman or Herodian government. It was while he was sitting at or near the place of toll, in or near Capernaum, that Jesus summoned him, and we read that he immediately responded. He was afterward appointed one of the twelve. Mark and Luke give his name as Levi, and state

that his father's name was Alpheus. He may have received the name Matthew when he became a Christian, or he may have had two names originally as was not uncommon among the Jews. Although he belonged to the despised class of publicans, there is no evidence that he was personally given to extortion and fraud, as was common with officials of his class, neither is there evidence that he was not. The prevailing suspicion and contempt in which publicans were held, could hardly fail to have exerted a hardening effect upon him. No doubt the fact that Jesus had accepted a publican as a disciple had something to do with encouraging others of the outcast classes to seek his presence and listen to his teachings. The opposition of the Pharisees would naturally be increased by this. At the feast which Matthew gave to Jesus soon after his conversion, many "publicans and sinners" were present. In reply to the criticisms of the Pharisees growing out of this fact, the Lord made this memorable answer: "I am not come to call the righteous"—i. e., those who regard themselves as righteous—"but sinners to repentance."

The story of Matthew is an emphatic witness to the great truth that Jesus is no respecter of persons. The fact that Matthew was a tax-gatherer did not deter the Lord from recognizing in him one who had qualities to fit him for his service, although to select him was really to set at defiance all the ordinary considerations of

worldly prudence. Matthew does not come before us elsewhere in the New Testament except through the bare mention of his name in the lists of the twelve. After Christ's ascension he remained for some years, according to tradition, in Jerusalem, preaching to the Jews. On leaving Jerusalem he went, apparently, as a missionary to Egypt and Ethiopia, where he is said to have lived the life of a religious ascetic. Accounts vary as to his death. In the eastern church it was the common belief that he died a natural death. In the western, it was believed that he was slain by the sword.

The special work of Matthew which has come down to us and for which the gratitude of the Christian church is due, is the Gospel which bears his name. It is believed to have been written specially for Jewish readers. His frequent quotations from the Messianic passages of the Old Testament as having been fulfilled in Jesus, and which would especially appeal to Jews, would seem to confirm this.

THOMAS

The apostle Thomas was also called Didymus, a Greek name, meaning, like Thomas, a twin. He is, and probably always will be, remembered for his doubt. And yet it is an unnecessarily harsh judgment. At such a critical time, when the most tremendous interests were at stake, it ought not to be considered strange that one should be

unwilling to accept the testimony of even one's closest companions in regard to the resurrection of Jesus, but should insist upon the clear and unmistakable evidence of one's own senses.

All the material we have for studying Thomas consists entirely of a few brief notices in John's Gospel, and yet these are sufficient to leave a pretty distinct impression upon our minds as to the kind of man he was. In the first notice, which occurs in the narrative of events immediately preceding the raising of Lazarus, the disciples were astonished that Jesus proposed to venture again into Judea when only a little before the Jews had threatened to stone him. Then Thomas, determining to share the peril of his Lord, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go that we may die with him" (John xi, 16). So strong is his devotion to his Master, that not even the prospect of death is sufficient to deter him from sharing his fortunes with him.

Later, when Jesus, in anticipation of his departure, spoke of going to prepare a place for the disciples and added that they knew where he was going and the way, Thomas broke out, "Lord we know not whither thou goest; how know we the way?" (John xiv, 5). These were not the words of idle curiosity, but rather of honest perplexity. Then Jesus sought to encourage him, saying, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one cometh unto the Father, but by me" (xiv, 6).

After the resurrection of Christ, Thomas was not present at his first meeting with the disciples. When he learned that Jesus had presented himself to them he declared, "Except I shall see in his hands the prints of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe." It was this incident which gave rise to his designation as "doubting Thomas." Eight days later when he was present with the rest, Jesus again came, and as if having read the very thoughts of Thomas, he offered him the proof that he had desired. "Reach hither thy finger, and see my hands; and reach hither thy hand and put it into my side; and be not faithless but believing." Then, overwhelmed with evidence which his senses could not question, he broke out in the adoring exclamation—which contained the loftiest tribute which any of the disciples bore to the divinity of their Lord—"My Lord and my God" (John xx, 24-29).

Thomas was on the Sea of Galilee with six other disciples when Jesus hailed them from the beach and told them where to cast the net (John xxi, 1-8), and was with the rest of the apostles in the upper room after the ascension. Tradition makes him afterward labor in Parthia and Persia, dying in the latter country. At a later date, India is named as the place where he preached and suffered martyrdom.

The story of Thomas should give encouragement to honest doubters, for just as he was sat-

isified at length, so anyone may be who comes to the evidences with open minded spirit. Christianity challenges investigation, and there are proofs sufficient to answer any reasonable doubt.

JAMES, JUDAS, AND SIMON, THE UNKNOWN
DISCIPLES

There is little more than a reference to the names of these three apostles, who belong to the last group of four of the apostolic band, in the New Testament.

Mark speaks of the first as "*James the son of Alpheus*" (Mark III, 18). So far as we can judge, he has no connection with any of the other Jameses mentioned in the New Testament. He is almost entirely unknown.

Judas is carefully to be distinguished from Judas Iscariot who betrayed his Lord. The only word ascribed to him in all the Gospels was the question put to Jesus at the farewell meeting with the twelve: "Lord, what is come to pass that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us and not unto the world?" (John XIV, 22). It shows how little, apostle that he was, he appreciated the real nature of the spiritual kingdom of Christ. Apart from this, the whole of Judas' history is a blank. The early church traditions concerning him are involved in too great confusion to furnish reliable information.

All that we know of *Simon* is contained in Mark's description of him as "the Cananæan"

(Mark III, 18), or Luke's reference to him as "the Zealot" (Ch. VI, 15, Acts I, 13). By the Zealots is generally understood a fanatical party headed by Judas of Galilee who were so bitterly opposed to the dominion of Rome that they were ready to hasten the Messianic hope by the sword. It is thought that Simon before becoming a disciple of Christ may have actually belonged to this party. And yet it is not impossible that this designation may have been intended to point to his personal character, and that "as the first Simon was rock-like, so the second was characterized by jealousy for what he conceived to be right and true."

Though so little is known of these three apostles, their very obscurity renders them peculiarly interesting to us. They were individually faithful and devoted workers for the kingdom of their Lord. They certainly would not have been selected by him without some adequate reason.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

It is not necessary to dwell at length upon the disciple who will always be remembered for his base betrayal of his Lord. Yet because he was one of the twelve until he voluntarily withdrew from their company, a few words may be devoted to him. By his surname Iscariot, he is distinguished from another of the twelve who was named Judas. Judged by his character, he probably followed Jesus because he hoped to gain

earthly advantage from the establishment of his kingdom. He was appointed treasurer of the company, but like some modern treasurers, he proved recreant to his trust, appropriating a portion of the money to his own personal ends. Knowing that the chief priests were desirous of getting Jesus into their power, Judas went to them and offered to betray him for a price. The amount agreed upon, thirty pieces of silver, was about \$19.50 of our money, and from that time forth, until it was accomplished, he sought opportunity to deliver Jesus to them. This finally occurred after the last interview of the disciples and the Master in the upper room, where the "Lord's Supper" was instituted, and they had all gone out to the Garden of Gethsemane. Thither Judas came, accompanied by a multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders. In accordance with a sign which had been agreed upon, he pointed Jesus out by kissing him, whereupon the arrest took place. Next morning, seeing that Jesus was condemned and was to be put to death, Judas went to the chief priests with confession and offered to return the money. When they refused to listen to him, he threw down the silver pieces before them, and went out and hanged himself.

These are the bare facts of Judas' life. As to the real motive of his betrayal of Jesus, opinions are not altogether agreed. In the thought of some, the comparatively small sum of money in-

volved would hardly seem adequate to account for so heinous a deed. It is not impossible that he may have been so stung, for the time being, by words which Christ had uttered concerning himself, that under the influence of his anger he was led to the desperate course which he pursued, and of which he repented as soon as he realized its serious consequences. Or, as is the charitable thought of others, may he not have sought in this way to force Jesus to do what he seemed strangely reluctant to do, viz., to declare himself once for all the Messiah-king, and exercise his great power in thwarting the designs of his enemies, even after, humanly speaking, they had him in their power? When he saw how completely the scheme miscarried, and that instead of asserting his high prerogatives and his almighty power he meekly yielded to the inevitable—overwhelmed with remorse which he was unable to endure, he put an end to his distress by suicide. But the precise motive which actuated Judas is only known to Him who is able to read the hearts of all men.

We have now completed the survey proposed of the inauguration of the great movement of Christianity in the world, and of the leading spirits among its early promoters and their individual contributions to its progress during the New Testament period. The providential preparation for it, some of the mighty obstacles it was obliged

to surmount at the very outset, the remarkable advance which it made, especially after it had become disentangled from Judaism, until it had occupied the main strategic points in the Roman empire and entered upon its world-wide conquest, have come under review. With some set-backs from time to time, from hindrances without and from corruptions within, it has been steadily, and—during the more recent centuries especially—with increasing momentum, been making its headway in the world ever since. Although its conquest is far from complete as yet, Christianity is now recognized as the mightiest moral and spiritual force in all the earth, and from its nature, and the character of the victories which it has achieved already, there is abundant warrant for the confidence that the whole world will yet be brought under its sway, and that its claim to be the one universal and final religion for all mankind will be triumphantly vindicated.

CHAPTER IX

EMANCIPATED CHRISTIANITY, UNIVERSAL, FINAL

The Scriptures record the gradual disclosure of God and his truth to men. This was brought about in connection with the history of a particular people chosen for this purpose. The culmination of this progressive revelation was realized in the person and life and teachings of Jesus Christ, in whom, it was declared, there "dwelt the fullness of the godhead bodily"; that he was "God manifest in the flesh." The religion which he announced, of which he was himself the embodiment and center, and which gathered up into itself all previously revealed truth but adding infinitely more, was the outgrowth, the ripened fruitage, the fulfillment of that rudimentary Jewish religion which prepared the way for and led up to it.

This new religion which, broadly speaking, we term Christianity, claimed directly and indirectly to be universal and final. This was foreshadowed from the first. Back in the time of Abraham, the founder of the chosen race, it was promised that in him and his descendants all the nations of the earth should be blessed. For a long time the crude religion of his descendants was but tribal

or national—each nation then had its own distinctive faith and gods—yet there were elements or germs in this faith which gave promise of unfolding into a religion which would ultimately include the whole world in its scope. This the prophets early recognized. They seemed to catch glimpses of a glorious time to come when no outward regulations would be needed in worship, when national limits would be obliterated, racial distinctions be done away, and the God of the Hebrews be the recognized God of all the earth. This thought reaches its climax in Isaiah. The gods of the nations, he says, are idols, nothings. This is in striking contrast with the God of the Hebrews, who is a living God, with all power, the Creator of all things, and Ruler over all. Universality was the ultimate goal of the Hebrew faith. All through the Old Testament, at its highest points, this is recognized, this is the expectation. The rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic law pointed to this, the utterances of the great prophets emphasized it. When finally Christ came and the gospel was given, the same thought was both assumed and declared. The good tidings which he announced were for all men, regardless of race, or locality, or condition. No ritual, no traditions, no sacrifices, no pilgrimages, no burdensome external conditions were required. The new religion was fitted for all men, and was intended to be given to all. Such expansion, indeed, was the law of its being. In Christ there

was to be neither Jew nor Gentile. The link binding men to God was not to be of race, or to consist of anything external. The relation between them was to be purely moral. It was to be a religion of love: there was to be perfect confidence between them. From the beginning to the end of Christ's life, the universal purpose and character of his work were made manifest. The disciples, though at first they seemed not fully to grasp this purpose, were to go into all the world and preach this gospel to every creature. This, in obedience to Christ's command, they did. And this has been the spirit and purpose of the apostles of the Christian faith ever since. The conquest of the world for Christ is their aim. This is the gospel's goal. The idea of a world conquest lies at the foundation of the Christian religion.

This claim of the gospel to universality and finality is a stupendous one. Is it warranted? Are there solid reasons for admitting it?

I

One consideration in support of this claim is the fact that Christianity or the gospel is perfectly adapted to man as man. It corresponds completely to the needs of the nature with which he has been endowed. This is something which can be said of no other religion.

Man possesses a religious nature. Worship is a universal human instinct. This is true of every

race and tribe. Proofs of this abound on every hand. No evidence has been adduced to the contrary. The instinct may be less clearly or strongly manifested in some cases than in others, but it is never absent. Always and everywhere, even in the lowest races, it has been natural for man to worship. Sometimes this instinct has found expression in fetichism, sometimes in bowing down to images of wood and stone, sometimes in the worship of the heavenly bodies, of natural objects deified, or imaginary gods, even of devils. But as man has advanced in knowledge he has become conscious of needs in his nature which none of these objects, nor anything of earthly origin, could relieve. Conscience has been found to be a tremendous fact, especially if one's life has been out of harmony with right living—a fact to be reckoned with; sin a terrible reality, with the sense of condemnation which goes with it, and of hopeless bondage to its power. There are the troubles and sorrows of life, sad realities, with no adequate comfort or consolation available from human or earthly source. There are the aspirations and longings which reach far beyond the present life. These are some of the profound realities and needs of the nature with which man has been endowed, and they have given rise to anxious inquiries, and occasioned, often, the keenest distress.

Has any provision been made to answer these

needs? All other necessities of man's being have been provided for in God's economy—how is it in regard to these?

It would seem as if there must have been some provision. Joseph Cook used to say that there are no half hinges in nature. Food has been supplied for the relief of physical hunger in man and beast, and water to quench their thirst. The bird has wings—there is air in which to use them. The fish has fins—there is likewise a sphere appropriate in which to operate them. In some animals and birds there is a migratory instinct. This means that there is a region somewhere corresponding to it. So if man has been endowed with a religious nature and with the deep needs which pertain to it, we reason that there must be some adequate provision, some reality, to correspond with it. There are no half hinges in nature.

Is any adequate answer to these needs to be found in the leading non-Christian faiths of the world? Have Brahmanism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Mohammedanism, any systems of philosophy, past or present, brought to men the relief, in these deeper respects, which they have craved?

We would not, in any indiscriminate or wholesale way, disparage these religions and systems which have existed so long and which have gathered to themselves so many adherents. They contain not a little that is good, and not a little

truth. They inculcate many wholesome moral precepts. With all the errors they contain and all the evils connected with them, they are not devoid of many excellencies. Each, in its own way, in its own race or land, may have served some providential end, may in some sense prove to be a school-master or tutor to lead ultimately to Christ. But it only requires even superficial examination of the teachings of these several religions and a study of their effects wherever embraced, to make evident how far short they come of holding up a perfect moral standard and of answering these profounder needs. There is no truth in them which is not found in richer and purer form in the Christian religion, and each truth balanced by its just corrective, which is absent from these others. In it there are, in fact, whole realms of thought and whole fields of morals into which many of these religions have not entered. Too often there is lack of anything to bind these faiths to moral life. Some of them are actually unclean. No doubt noble characters are to be found among their adherents, and some of a deep reposefulness of spirit, but these are exceptional as compared with the hopeless and despairing millions of their followers, whose lives are untransformed morally, and whose souls are feeding upon husks. They know nothing and their religions teach nothing as to the forgiveness of sin, as to a way of release from its power, as to personal fellowship with the eternal God and

consequent inward restfulness and peace here, or as to a well-founded hope of a conscious, personal, and blessed life to come. Most of these religions do not answer or pretend to answer the profound and most real needs of human nature.

It was not until the religion of Jesus Christ, long fore-shadowed and gradually prepared for, intended for this very purpose, was at length made known, that this which had been lacking in all these other faiths, so-called, was at length supplied. Such has been, for twenty centuries, the testimony of those who have received the Christian religion. They have found that it actually does lift from the soul its awful sense of guilt and condemnation before a holy God, imparting a sense of his forgiving love. Christianity alone, of all the religions of the world, has been proved to possess redemptive power, making possible a progressive victory over self and sin, breaking the fetters which hold men in bondage. Salvation from sin and its power is its distinctive, crowning glory. It has constantly demonstrated its ability to impart enduring consolation and comfort in human sorrow, and to answer the soul's deepest aspirations and longings. It gives abiding rest and peace to the human spirit, and a well-founded hope of a blessed and personal immortality. The Christian religion alone, of all the religions of the world, as experience has abundantly demonstrated, perfectly meets the needs of man's religious nature.

Are we not then, in view of all these things, fully warranted in the conviction that this was God's intended provision for these needs, given at length, with marked tokens of his favor attending the gift, crowning all in the resurrection of his Son from the dead, when the powerlessness of these other faiths to accomplish this end had become manifest, and the world was ripe to receive it. No other religion fits the case. This does, and perfectly.

II

Again, Christianity meets all the tests which a religion claiming to be final must confront.

One of these has to do with its conception of God. This is the most perfect conceivable. Other religions present but fragmentary conceptions at best. Some of these are to a degree worthy, some are unworthy, perverted, some are positively debasing, all of them are inadequate. But the God of Christianity is one who is holy, just, loving, omniscient, all-powerful, just the God for whom man seeks and for whom his heart yearns. The character and spirit of God are perfectly exemplified in his Son Jesus Christ, who is both able and willing to do for man the utmost that he needs, conditioned only upon his willingness to receive. Only such a conception of God as this affords, can be an adequate basis for a final religion.

Again, one of the ends aimed at in all reli-

gions is to bring about individual communion with the deity or deities which they recognize. The finality, indeed, of a religion, may be judged by its ability to do this very thing, since failure at this point means failure to satisfy the deepest longings of the human heart. But all the non-Christian faiths, with their partial or perverted conceptions of the one true God, come short just here. No such provision is made. No such experience is possible. Only in the religion of Jesus Christ is this realized. God makes himself known in his will and purpose through the incarnation of his Son, and through the gift of the Holy Spirit, which he bestows upon every believer. He becomes an inward abiding presence, and a sweet and satisfying communion is thus realized.

Another test has to do with moral ideals and standards, and the power of realizing them. These standards and ideals in Christianity are exemplified in the life and character of Jesus Christ. They are the highest conceivable. They represent absolute perfection. Beyond them we cannot go. But not only are these standards perfect: the gospel provides motive, or inspiration, or a spiritual force adequate to a progressive realization of them in individual experience. Not only is the power of sin broken, but a gradual transformation of character into the divine likeness is made possible. Herein Christianity stands alone. Only in the message of Christ's gospel has the secret of redemption and a complete transfor-

mation of character—which the world has always longed for but never before realized—been disclosed to mankind. This is its distinctive feature among all the religions of the world, this is its crowning glory. This would seem to be sufficient evidence that the final religion has been reached.

Again, the final religion must be as truly fitted for one age as for another. It must be free from the trammels or the environment of any particular period. And this condition is also perfectly met in the religion of Jesus Christ. No one age can claim it—it belongs to all the ages. Its teachings are adapted to all time. Such parables as the Prodigal Son and the Good Samaritan, the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount, the Ten Commandments, the condition of salvation, are as true to-day as ever in the past, and as they will be true in all the years to come, or as long as human nature remains what it is. These things cannot be said of any other religion. These other faiths partake more or less of a local coloring, or are adapted to certain race peculiarities only. While possessing some of the elements of universality and finality, it may be, no one of them possesses all the elements as Christianity does. The religion of Jesus Christ is a religion for the ages.

The final religion must satisfy the rational test. It must meet the demands of the human reason at its best. If it cannot do this, it will not commend itself to universal confidence and acceptance.

We are endowed with a rational nature. Our reason, quickened by the spirit of God, must be our guide. Does the religion of Christ present a God for our acceptance who can inspire our deepest reverence? Are his commands reasonable? Is he such a being as to warrant our full confidence, such as to justify us in committing the guidance of our lives to him here, and our destiny hereafter? Is the religion which he offers adequate to meet the needs of a nature of infinite possibilities? Who shall say that the God of the Christian faith as presented to us concretely in Christ, is not abundantly adequate to meet all these requirements, the demands of our rational nature? In all the respects indicated and more, Christianity meets the rational test. No other religion does.

Finally, Christianity is essentially self-evidencing. It appeals directly to the common instincts and experiences of mankind. It carries upon its very face the evidence of its truthfulness.

Christianity alone, of all the religions of the world, satisfactorily meets all the tests which a religion claiming to be final must confront.

III

Christianity has demonstrated its fitness to be universal, its adaptedness to all races, all classes, all degrees of culture, and this through the ages.

We might conceive of a religion suited to a particular race, or grade of development, or locality, but not to all races, or grades, or ages, and every-

where. Such, in greater or less degree is the case with the various non-Christian religions, and herein are their limitations. This has been one of the barriers between the races and nations,—the fact that each has had its own distinctive religion, with more or less fanatical devotion to it and intolerance of any other. But a religion for the world must be fitted for universal application, and this regardless of social or other distinctions. And precisely such has the Christian religion proved itself to be historically. It has shown itself to be entirely at home and to thrive in every land where it has gained a foothold, among all peoples, of all ages. This has been equally true of it in the orient and the occident, among the cultured nations of Europe and America, among the peoples of darkest Africa and the isles of the sea; with the most learned philosopher and the most degraded barbarian, filling the cup alike of the highest and the lowest. This has been demonstrated through the centuries. It has shown itself to be readily adjustable to all possible conditions. Especially has this been demonstrated in recent years in connection with missionary operations in all quarters of the earth and among all grades of humanity. Its fitness for universality has been historically demonstrated.

But it may be asked, has there been no progress in religious thought or knowledge or spiritual light in the world since the religion of Christ was given

to men? Are we to understand that progress in the religious realm came to an end at that time? By no means. It would be strange indeed that there should be advance in all other realms of truth and knowledge, as all recognize, but that everything should be stationary here. At the same time it is a fair question whether any absolutely new religious truth has really been added to the deposit which we have in the New Testament, as proceeding from Christ and the interpretations of him by the Holy Spirit. Rather may not any seeming new discovery of such truth have been the result of a more full and complete apprehension, or a more vivid realization, or a new application, or a further development of that which has already been given? A new angle of observation may have been reached, or new experiences may have called out some new manifestation of it. New light has constantly been breaking forth from the written word as new crises have seemed to demand it—why not as truly through the quickening and illumining of the Holy Spirit, the Revealer? And as it has been, so no doubt it will continue to be, yet all proceeding from the one common source, the Son of Righteousness, with limitless stores of light and truth still in reserve in the oracles of God, to be disclosed as the demands of the future may require. So that in speaking of the religion of Christ as absolute and final, we do not mean to declare or to imply that revelation has been closed, or that man can make no further progress in religious knowl-

edge, or that generations to come can learn no more of God than is already known. The religion of Christ is not limited in its resources. It may not be fully apprehended now, but we may be sure that in the future, as heretofore, it will prove adequate to all the demands which may legitimately be made upon it. Some of the things set forth in the Bible as leading to it or as springing from it may have been simply temporary in their character, but the revelation itself of Christ was not alone for the age in which he lived, it was for the remotest time to come as well. It was henceforth to have a permanent place as an actual experience in human history, and to be an essential constituent of the entire future life of humanity.

We have now, in a cursory way, reviewed the subject before us. We have taken a bird's eye glance over a practically limitless field. We have seen how the Christian religion makes claims to finality and to universality, how it anticipates, how it expects this, and has within itself a potency adequate to the realization of it; that these great claims are confirmed, as in the case of no other religion, by its ability to meet the profoundest needs of man as man; that it answers all the tests which would be demanded of a religion putting forth stupendous claims of this character; that it has actually demonstrated, historically, its fitness for universality, especially in more re-

cent years in connection with missionary operations among practically all the races and nations of the earth. It has shown itself to be as truly fitted for one age as for another, able to meet all exigencies, to fit itself into all circumstances, capable of being naturalized in all lands.

A glance at the world-wide effects of Christianity tends to confirm what has been said. Not only has it wrought marvelous, seemingly miraculous transformations in the inner life and in the character of those who have received it—the most beneficent external results have marked its course from the beginning. The lowest tribes have been lifted out of their degradation. Woman's condition has been revolutionized. Mighty evils, like slavery, polygamy, barbarity, have been done away with by its power, directly or indirectly, or are in process of being overcome. Education has flourished wherever it has gone, science has made its greatest triumphs, civilization is at its best. Much of the best music of the world, many if not the most of the greatest productions of painting, sculpture, architecture, have been the outcome of Christianity. False religions have been overcome by it; the great religions, so termed, with their partial truth mingled with much evil and error, are gradually yielding before its steady, resistless advance. Barriers between races have been broken down by it, and it causes wars to cease in proportion as its principles hold sway. In spite of mighty oppositions and seem-

ingly insuperable obstacles, it has gone forward with steadily increasing momentum. Nothing is more inspiring than the story of its victories. Wherever abuses or corruptions have crept into it, it has shown itself to possess a self-purifying, self-rectifying power. In it, all the scattered and fragmentary ideas and hopes and longings of the nations find their completion and fulfillment, and in it we have a common meeting ground for all nations and all religions. Take from modern life and civilization all the Christian elements which have entered into them, and what would there be left?

In view of all this, may we not with full confidence affirm that in Christianity we have the absolute, universal, final religion of the world, intended to be such by God himself—ultimately to prevail over all the earth. In what it is in itself and in what it has done, it proclaims its universal character. Only such a religion as this would have warranted the wonderful, world-wide, and yet minute providential preparation which was made for the coming of Christ, all the various lines of preparation converging upon him, and each having reached its climax. It was the “fullness of time” in very truth for the advent of the world’s Redeemer, and for the giving to men of the final religion.

Such a review should help mightily to confirm and establish our faith in Christ, the world’s Savior, Exemplar, and Hope; promote restfulness

and peace of mind, brighten our hopes, and lead to a more complete yielding to the dominance of his spirit in our lives. Still further, if this religion was divinely intended for all mankind as God's final and complete provision for its spiritual wants, as we have abundant reason to believe, then it is the rightful inheritance of mankind. That vast multitudes of people are still in ignorance of it does not alter the fact. It is still true that it is mankind's rightful inheritance. Then the responsibility would seem clearly to rest upon those who have themselves entered into this inheritance and experienced its blessings, to make it known the world over. This is the spirit of this religion, to say nothing of the Golden Rule and its requirements with reference to those less favored than ourselves. Thus we may assist in ushering in the glad day when "all shall know the Lord from the least to the greatest," at home, abroad, wherever men are still in ignorance of him, and his kingdom be triumphant over all the earth.

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