

THIRTY STUDIES ABOUT JESUS

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Thirty Studies
ABOUT JESUS

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EDWARD INCREASE BOSWORTH



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1917

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FOREWORD

Jesus is probably the most widely known character of history. Certainly he is the one who has most deeply stirred the emotions of humanity. For nearly nineteen hundred years men have been praying to him and cursing by him. Men still die for love of him and sometimes kill his disciples for hate of his name. And yet neither his enemies nor those of us to whom he is Friend, and More-Than-Friend, know enough about him. These Studies from the Christian Gospels are intended to bring out certain main points in his life and teaching that will help those who use them to know more about him and to have more to do with him. If any who are indifferent to him use them it is hoped that they will find him here a challenge, at first perhaps to curiosity, but finally to conscience and conduct.

New beginnings in human progress during the last nineteen hundred years have been marked by new interest in him. At each step forward men have found in him new light on the meaning of life, on the meaning of the world that is seen and the world that is unseen. Now once more a New Age seems coming to birth. While men of many nationalities from the States and Provinces of North America are coming together to join with men across both oceans in warring for a better world it is fit that we too should think together about Jesus, as our fathers did before us. It is from

him that men of all nations will learn to call God their Father and to plan together even in the red light of war for brotherhood, international, world-wide, and everlasting.

Oberlin, Ohio.

June 6, 1917.

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PART I: JESUS' PREPARATION FOR PUBLIC
SERVICE



STUDY I

THE DISCIPLINE OF VILLAGE LIFE

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Luke 2: 40-52 | 4. Luke 6: 47-49 |
| 2. Matthew 10: 34-36;
11: 16-19 | 5. Luke 14: 28-30 |
| 3. Matthew 13: 54-58 | 6. Matthew 20: 1-15 |
| | 7. Luke 4: 16-30 |

¹PASSAGE FOR STUDY:

Luke 2: 1. Now it came to pass in those days, there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be enrolled. 2. This was the first enrolment made when Quirinius was governor of Syria. 3. And all went to enrol themselves, every one to his own city. 4. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judæa, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David; 5. to enrol himself with Mary, who was betrothed to him, being great with child. 6. And it came to pass, while they were there, the days were fulfilled that she should be delivered. 7. And she brought forth her firstborn son; and she wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. 22. And when the days

¹In each Study carefully read first the Passage for Study, then the comment, and then again the Passage for Study. Afterward consider the Questions.

of their purification according to the law of Moses were fulfilled, they brought him up to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord. 39. And when they had accomplished all things that were according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth. 40. And the child grew, and waxed strong, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him. 52. And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

Mark 6: 1. And he went out from thence; and he cometh into his own country; and his disciples follow him. 2. And when the sabbath was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing him were astonished, saying, Whence hath this man these things? and, What is the wisdom that is given unto this man, and what mean such mighty works wrought by his hands? 3. Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James, and Joses, and Judas, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended in him.

1. At least the first ten-elevenths of Jesus' life were quietly spent as a useful member of a Syrian village community. There he had a good home, in which were four younger brothers and at least two younger sisters. The father, who was a carpenter (see third supplementary reading), does not appear in the description of the family found in the quotation from Mark's Gospel. Therefore he had probably died in Jesus' early young manhood.

As a child, Jesus played with the other children in the village market. He liked in later years to remember this comparatively care-free period when they used to play wedding and funeral, those dramatic occasions

in Eastern life which would powerfully excite the imitative imagination of children (see second supplementary reading).

As a boy ranging over the hills that shut Nazareth in on every side he noted the beauty of the field flowers, saw the dead sparrow lying in the path, and associated both with the power and tenderness of God the Heavenly Father who was becoming more and more a reality to him (Matt. 6: 28; 10: 29). The village schoolmaster perhaps took the boys occasionally to the hill tops, where he could point out to them in the distance many famous historical sites and the great Roman roads full of travel and traffic.

In the village Jesus learned his trade, made house furniture and farm tools and built houses, perhaps making a specialty of foundations (see fourth supplementary reading). In some of the most tense moments of his later life he naturally used the language of his trade: he saw in Peter a rock-man who would do for one of the foundation stones on which to "build" his new Israel (Matt. 16: 18). Some of his words later might indicate that he had at one time been an employer of labor (see sixth supplementary reading), perhaps a kind of contractor. If so, he knew the difficulty of getting on not only with inconsiderate employers but with shirking workmen. In his shop he dealt with men who had inherited from many ancestors the oriental keenness for a sharp bargain, with men who were always criticising the work done for them, and also with poor calculators who had to throw up their contracts when their build-ings were only half finished (see fifth supplementary reading).

The support of a widowed mother and some at least of the younger brothers and sisters came for a while largely upon him. The anxious questions, "What shall we eat and wherewithal shall we be clothed?" were often raised in the family. They understood the science of patching old clothes (Mark 2:21)! He knew what family jars were like, perhaps sometimes occasioned by his own high and unusual ideas about the way things ought to be done. This would be particularly likely to happen after the brothers married and brought their wives home to the mother-in-law. "I came to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against the mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law."

He went freely to all the social meetings and parties of the village (see second supplementary reading). At their work during the day or in the market-place in the evening he and the other men of the village discussed the politics and morals of the nation, the unwelcome regiments of Roman soldiers that some of the farmers had seen that day marching along the Roman roads in sight from the hill tops about Nazareth.

2. These elemental relationships of village life afforded opportunity for the development of the character which Jesus was seen to possess later when he became a person of national importance. The great essential conditions of character making were all present in the village situation: work, play, neighbors, and God. Whatever may have been the nature of the personality with which Jesus was born, it was not such as to do away with the necessity of developing character. A New Testament writer speaks of him as one who "though he was a Son

yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered" (Hebrews 5:8).

3. No situation into which men come lasts long without having in some degree at least all the four conditions of character making mentioned above: work, recreation, neighbors, and God. Human life is a situation devised by God in which men may make character.

QUESTIONS:

Are there other conditions essential to a favorable opportunity for character?

How do those mentioned contribute to character? What do we mean by "character" anyway?

What has your home contributed to your life?

What can you do now to make the most of your home, and home town relationships?

What are the best forms of recreation now available?

It behooved him in all things to be made like unto his brothers that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God.—The Epistle to the Hebrews.

"Born within a lowly stable, where the cattle round Me
stood,
Trained a carpenter in Nazareth, I have toiled, and
found it good.

Where the many toil together, there am I among My
own;
Where the tired workman sleepeth, there am I with him
alone."

—Henry van Dyke, "The Toiling of Felix."

STUDY II

THE INFLUENCE OF JOHN, THE WILDERNESS PROPHET

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS:

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Luke 1: 5-23 | 4. John 1: 6-9, 15-37 |
| 2. Luke 1: 57-80 | 5. John 3: 22—4: 3 |
| 3. Luke 3: 1-6 | 6. Luke 7: 18-28 |
| 7. Mark 6: 14-29 | |

PASSAGE FOR STUDY:

Mark 1: 2. Even as it is written in Isaiah the prophet,

Behold, I send my messenger before thy face,
Who shall prepare thy way;

3. The voice of one crying in the wilderness,
Make ye ready the way of the Lord,
Make his paths straight;

4. John came, who baptized in the wilderness and preached the baptism of repentance unto remission of sins. 5. And there went out unto him all the country of Judæa, and all they of Jerusalem; and they were baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. 6. And John was clothed with camel's hair, and had a leathern girdle about his loins, and did eat locusts and wild honey. 7. And he preached, saying, There cometh after me he

that is mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. 8. I baptized you with water; but he shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit. 9. And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in the Jordan.

Luke 3: 7. He said therefore to the multitudes that went out to be baptized of him, Ye offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8. Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. 9. And even now is the axe also laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. 10. And the multitudes asked him, saying, What then must we do? 11. And he answered and said unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath food, let him do likewise. 12. And there came also publicans to be baptized, and they said unto him, Master, what must we do? 13. And he said unto them, Extort no more than that which is appointed you. 14. And soldiers also asked him, saying, And we, what must we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither exact anything wrongfully; and be content with your wages.

1. The work of this prophet of the wilderness, rough in dress and speech, was not so much to influence Jesus as it was to prepare the nation for Jesus. Yet Jesus seems to have felt his influence to a certain extent. Jesus said later that no greater man than

John had ever lived, but he said in addition that John could not stand comparison with the humblest man in a New Order, for the coming of which Jesus had begun to feel a high and unique sense of responsibility (see sixth supplementary reading).

It was John's stirring harangues to the crowds that flocked about him in the wilderness that drew Jesus from Nazareth. The Nazareth men in the market-place or around the synagogue in the evening talked much about John's threatening summons to the nation to repent and wash themselves in baptismal waters, in preparation for the judgment day so near at hand and for the glad New Age that would follow. Jesus approved this summons and finally went to the wilderness himself. There he, like thousands of others, went down into the baptismal waters of the river with devout desire to take such part as God might give him in preparing for the New Age. This gave rise to a tradition later that Jesus became John's disciple, but the Gospels protest strongly against this idea (see fourth and fifth supplementary readings). They also emphasize the fact that a voice from heaven at the time of the baptism declared Jesus' life in the Nazareth years to have been wholly pleasing to God: "Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased."

2. John had at once attracted the attention of the nation, both because of his personality and the exciting character of his message. In his rough dress and stern demand for reform he resembled the old hero prophet Elijah, who was a favorite character in Jewish history and who was expected to re-appear shortly before the judgment day. It was in the very region

where John now was that he had suddenly disappeared centuries before!

John's message from God was that the "Kingdom of God" was at hand. The Jews, who for much of their history had been subject to different great world empires, had come to expect God himself finally to set up a World Empire, in which the Jewish nation, the keepers of God's holy law given to Moses, would enforce that law among all the peoples of the earth. In preparation for this splendid era the great "Rabbis," or "Scribes," were trying to enforce among the Jews themselves a better and more general obedience to the law than the nation had ever yielded. If this could only be secured, most of them felt that God would grant them a holy king, the "Messiah" or "Christ" (that is the "Anointed," for kings were inducted into office by an "anointing"), who would in a holy judgment remove from the earth all the disobedient, and proceed to reign over a thoroughly righteous Jewish world.

3. The most interesting thing about John was his idea of what constituted the genuine religion which men must have if they were to be ready for this great crisis or change in which they would face God. John's idea was so different from that held by the religious leaders of the day that they had little to do with his movement. Nevertheless, it appealed powerfully to the rank and file of the nation, especially to those who had not been considered as at all religious. Jesus said of it long afterward, speaking to the religious leaders in the nation: "John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not; but the publicans

and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye saw it, did not even repent yourselves afterward."

To John religion meant a kindness of heart and honesty that could be counted on at any time. It meant sharing food and clothing with another man if necessary (v. 10). It meant a square deal in business (v. 12). It meant honor among soldiers in their treatment of civilians and in their loyalty to discipline (vs. 13-14). The things that had impressed this man from the wilderness when he occasionally visited the city were the self-satisfied pride and the utter lack of real friendliness to be found even among those who thought themselves religious. They were a "generation of vipers" (v. 7), a race of poisonous snakes stinging each other to death in hate. They were so proud of their race and social standing (v. 8) that it seemed to them an insult to be called upon to get ready for the searching questions of God's judgment day. And yet judgment was near. It was as if the farmer, going through his orchard to take out useless trees, had laid his ax at the root of a tree for a moment while he inspected its branches to see whether he should spare it or at once cut it down.

QUESTIONS:

What are some of the critical situations in life that really judge a man, that really show him up for just what he is?

To what extent and how can a man get at the facts about himself beforehand? How can he really find out before the crisis comes what kind of man he is?

What is it to "repent"? Does it ever involve any

effort to make restitution for wrong done to another? Does it involve public confession of the details of a bad past life?

God never intends a crisis to break a man down. He means it to introduce a man into something better than he has ever known before. The Unseen Power that is all about us is for us and not against us.

STUDY III

THE DISCIPLINE OF TEMPTATION

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS :

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Luke 4: 1-13 | 4. I Corinthians 10: 1-13 |
| 2. Mark 1: 9-13 | 5. Hebrews 2: 10-18 |
| 3. Mark 8: 27-33 | 6. Hebrews 4: 12-16 |
| 7. Hebrews 12: 1-11 | |

PASSAGE FOR STUDY :

Matt. 3: 16. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway from the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon him; 17. and lo, a voice out of the heavens, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

4: 1. Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. 2. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he afterward hungered. 3. And the tempter came and said unto him, If thou art the Son of God, command that these stones become bread. 4. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. 5. Then the devil taketh him into the holy city; and he set him on the pinnacle of the temple, 6. and saith unto him, If thou art the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written,

He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and,

On their hands they shall bear thee up,

Lest haply thou dash thy foot against a stone.

7. Jesus said unto him, Again it is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. 8. Again, the devil taketh him unto an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; 9. and he said unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. 10. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. 11. Then the devil leaveth him; and behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

1. During the years in Nazareth there had grown up in the soul of Jesus a profound experience of the presence of God, the Heavenly Father. He had necessarily thought much about the New Age which so many of his countrymen expected, especially since the preaching of John in the wilderness had called the attention of the nation to it.

In the profound spiritual experience of Jesus at the baptism he saw a vision in which his Heavenly Father revealed to him the fact that the responsibility of messianic leadership in the New Age was to rest upon him.

Messiahship was not an "office," but a heavy personal responsibility. Woodrow Wilson, in his professional years, studying the history and politics of the United States and other countries, may have thought of the presidency as a high "office," but when he became president he realized that it was a heavy personal re-

sponsibility full of difficult problems for which he must find a solution.

2. The heavy personal responsibility which rested upon Jesus as a Messiah was the necessity of discovering the proper ideal of life to set before himself in his effort to do his work for the nation and the world, and to decide upon a program for the realization of this ideal. The way in which he met this responsibility would show what kind of person he was. It would be his testing, or "temptation."

This sense of heavy responsibility drove him to the wilderness for weeks of prayer, fasting, and study of those parts of the scripture in which Moses, the leader of the nation out of Egyptian slavery into liberty, is represented to have found God's ideal for the life of the new nation during forty days of fasting (Deuteronomy 9: 8-11. Note that Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 8: 3; 6: 16; 6: 13).

3. Jesus' report of his experience during this period is in the form of parable and vision, a form congenial to the oriental mind and found elsewhere in the teaching of Jesus.

From the parable of Stones and Bread it is evident that two ideals appeared to Jesus as attractive possibilities. The first was to relieve immediately the hunger and other physical needs which often cause great suffering and to be content with doing this, leaving God Himself to look out for any other interests. Jesus was keenly alive to the importance of doing this, not only because of his own hunger at the time, but because of all the engrossing struggle of his family to get food and clothing and ward off sickness during the

Nazareth years. The other possible ideal was to attempt primarily to bring men into fellowship with God, to get them to listen to, and live by, the great messages that pass from the soul of God to the souls of men. He decided if human society would rightly relate itself to God, men's relations to each other would necessarily be such as to secure for all a fair chance at physical comforts. So he became later primarily the world's great teacher of religion, but of a religion which instead of being ascetic made large recognition of physical well-being.

In the parable of the Leap from the Temple, Jesus hinted at the possible ways of declaring to the nation his sense of messianic leadership. It seemed appropriate to meet public expectation in this matter. The prophets had said that "the Lord would appear suddenly in his temple." If God should introduce him to the nation at the temple in some miraculous way, surely it would be easy to lead the nation to God. The ninety-first Psalm which spoke about God's messianic "salvation" (v. 16) contained a sentence (vs. 12-13) which seemed to warrant this. Longer reflection convinced him that this was an evil suggestion. He must not take a bold initiative, demanding God's support and so putting God to the test. He must rather wait for God to thrust him forward as Messiah in His own good time. As a result of this decision he later concealed his consciousness of messiahship from the public until a few hours before his death. To the public he appeared as a prophet, although in the inner circle of his disciples his messianic consciousness was known as a secret. Read Mark 8: 27-30.

In the parable of Satan Worship he presented the struggle through which he passed in deciding to make no temporary compromise with evil in hope of thereby gaining larger opportunity to do good later. He would not make temporary compromise with the ideals of either the great Scribes, the Priests, or those who looked for a revolutionary fighting Messiah.

In the course of these great struggles it became evident to him that he was measuring strength with the great central force of evil in humanity, that as messianic leader of men he was set to overcome in the sphere of his own experience the devilish power of selfishness. These temptations of Jesus were a part of his preparation for the public world service that he was to render. He came back from this period of seclusion with deeper lines in his face, a clearer light in his eye, a stronger resolution in his soul. "Though he was Son" he "learned obedience through the things that he suffered."

4. Temptation came to Jesus springing up normally in the development of his own life purpose, not thrust in arbitrarily from outside. His temptations were suited in power and kind to the dimensions and nature of his own personality. They were terribly severe for him. They were in essence like all temptation, namely, temptation to secure something pleasurable for one's self at the moment instead of working for some greater good later that can be shared with others. It would have given immediate relief to Jesus' keenly sympathetic nature to have speedily stopped all the physical suffering of men, but there was another greater and later good to be won for all mankind in a harder way. One

who has so experienced the essential nature of all temptation is prepared to sympathize with those whose particular form of temptation may be different from his own. Coarser temptations when analyzed are seen to have the same essential nature as those more refined. The man with the liquor habit gets the pleasurable sensation of a drink now instead of the greater good later of a sober man's home shared with wife and children. The man who gratifies lust gets a brief pleasurable sensation now, instead of the greater good later of a clean home shared with wife and children and a record which his children as they grow up can discover without shame and without the weakening of moral purpose in the time of their own fierce temptation.

QUESTIONS:

How do you define temptation? Is temptation sin?

Can there be character without temptation? Why should we pray, "Lead us not into temptation"?

Did Jesus probably experience any recurrence of these temptations?

Of what value is the experience of Jesus to a tempted man?

For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted he is able to succor them that are tempted.—The Epistle to the Hebrews.

One of the safeguards in time of temptation is the established habit of frequent silent inner conversation with the immortal spirit of the tempted Christ who did not fall.



PART II: JESUS THE PEOPLE'S PROPHET.
HIS VISION OF THE LIFE OF THE NEW
AGE AND THE WAY TO PREPARE
FOR IT



STUDY IV

DISEASE AND DEMONS GIVE WAY BEFORE THE PROPHET'S PROCLAMATION OF THE NEW AGE

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS :

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Mark 1 : 21-28 | 4. Mark 3 : 7-12 |
| 2. Mark 1 : 29-39 | 5. Mark 5 : 1-20 |
| 3. Mark 1 : 40-45 | 6. Mark 9 : 14-29 |
| 7. Luke 13 : 10-17 | |

PASSAGE FOR STUDY :

John 4: 1. When therefore the Lord knew how that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John 2. (although Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples), 3. he left Judæa, and departed again into Galilee.

Mark 1: 14. Now after that John was delivered up, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, 15. and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe in the gospel.

Matt. 4: 23. And Jesus went about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness among the people. 24. And the report of him went forth into all Syria: and they brought unto him all that were sick, holden

with divers diseases and torments, possessed with demons, and epileptic, and palsied; and he healed them. 25. And there followed him great multitudes from Galilee and Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judæa and from beyond the Jordan.

1. The first steps that Jesus took after his lonely experience in the wilderness are obscure. As we have seen, he felt that God would not have him in any way disclose his sense of messianic responsibility. In John's Gospel there is evidence that while he did not go to the temple in Jerusalem for a spectacular demonstration of power, he did go to the southern province and begin to call the nation to repentance just as John was doing. He attracted even larger crowds than those that gathered about John. This was offensive to John's disciples, although not to John himself. When Jesus learned that he was considered to be a successful rival of John, he at once went back to the northern province (John 4: 1-3) and apparently did not appear any more in public until John was arrested by "King Herod" of Galilee, whose private life the prophet had boldly criticised. Then Jesus began to carry on vigorously the work that John had been obliged to drop.

The "synagogues" afforded him his chance. They were meeting houses in which the religiously inclined met every Sabbath, for the study of the law of Moses and for prayer. These religious services were very democratic. Any layman who showed ability to explain the sacred scriptures might do so from the synagogue platform. Jesus was able to do this very effectively and became very popular as a synagogue speaker. Large audiences gathered to hear him. His message

at the beginning was the same as John's: "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."

2. Soon it became evident that he had power to do what John had never attempted, namely, to cure sick people and exorcise demons. "This present age," which the Kingdom of God was to displace, was popularly thought to be under the control of the Evil One, whose subject spirits ranged through the air, entering the bodies of men when they could and inflicting disease upon them.

It was expected by many that at the great judgment which would inaugurate the Kingdom of God, all these demons would be driven back to the "torment" of the "abyss" where they belonged. It therefore seemed to be a very significant fact that Jesus was able to frighten the spirits inhabiting the demoniacs, free the demoniacs from their power, and cure the diseases that they inflicted. It looked as if the Kingdom really was drawing near, and in the course of time led to the occasional surmise that Jesus himself might possibly turn out to be the Messiah.

What really ailed the demoniacs cannot be discussed here. From the modern standpoint the demoniacs would seem to have been subject to the delusion that demons were in them and to have spoken as they would suppose demons to speak, just as a person under the delusion that the spirit of Napoleon is in him speaks as he thinks Napoleon would speak. An announcement by a popular prophet that the day of doom was near would naturally throw demons into paroxysms of fear.

In any case, there was power in the personality of Jesus to bring case after case back to sanity and to

cure case after case of disease. Many, who in addition to the pain of disease suffered also the humiliation of being thought to be in the grip of Satan, experienced unspeakable relief to mind as well as body under Jesus' healing influence. (For instance, the poor bent woman who was not able to stand up straight, "whom Satan had bound, lo, these eighteen years," Luke 13: 16.)

3. The only hint Jesus gives as to his power in such cases is that it came through prayer. In one case of demoniacal possession, he said, "This kind goeth not out except by prayer" (see sixth supplementary reading). In John's Gospel (11: 41-42) he says: "Father, I thank thee that thou heardest me." Perhaps he was speaking out of his own experience of instantaneous answer to his prayer for the sick who came to him, when he spoke of one's believing "that what he is saying is happening" (so the Greek of Mark 11: 23 might be translated). Perhaps he found later that what he had prayed for had happened while he was praying, and so he said in the same connection (Mark 11: 24): "All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for believe that ye *received* them." If this be so, then, with his wonderful optimism regarding the powers that could be developed in mankind under his spiritual leadership, he foresaw clearly a time when men would be brought to the point where they could pray as he prayed. The healing forces that can be unlocked by prayer in accordance with the laws of mind and body we of course do not yet understand. It is other phases of prayer that at present mean more to us.

4. The main point in this Study is that Jesus stands out here as one who looked forward confidently to the

New Race in the New Age, full of healthful moral and physical life, and that through his personality great currents of spiritual and physical health and sanity poured out to men from the abundance of an unseen world. It is this vision of the New Race in the New Age, conceived under changing forms of thought, that has never faded out. Strangely enough, too, as will be seen later, the hope of realizing this vision has been confidently connected generation after generation with the immortal personality of Jesus.

QUESTIONS:

Is it a sin to disobey the laws of health?

To what extent, if any, is moral character dependent on health?

What measures can a man take to keep himself thoroughly sane in his outlook on life?

Are you "under arms" because you hope in this way to contribute to a better world, and a better race?

Better in what particulars?

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth . . . And I heard a great voice out of the throne saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his peoples, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God: and he shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain any more: the first things are passed away.—The Revelation of John.

STUDY V

JESUS' OUTLINE OF THE CIVILIZATION OF THE NEW AGE

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS:

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Luke 6: 20-26 | 4. Colossians 3: 1-15 |
| 2. Matthew 5: 14-20 | 5. Isaiah 11: 1-9 |
| 3. Luke 4: 14-20 | 6. Romans 12: 9-21 |
| 7. I Corinthians 13 | |

PASSAGE FOR STUDY:

Matt. 5: 1. And seeing the multitudes, he went up into the mountain: and when he had sat down, his disciples came unto him: 2. and he opened his mouth and taught them, saying, 3. Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 4. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. 5. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. 6. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. 7. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. 8. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. 9. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called sons of God. 10. Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11. Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. 12. Rejoice, and be ex-

ceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you. 13. Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men.

1. Jesus sketches here in bold outline his vision of the Civilization of the New Age. His sketch is not the dream of an idealist who lives remote from the hard facts of life. Read again Matt. 4: 23-24, in the last Study, and see that it was in the midst of the shrieks of demoniacs, the groans of those tormented by pain and those who had lost their courage after long continued sickness that Jesus confidently held up his vision of the "Blessed Men." He pointed out the qualities that will finally characterize the civilization of the world.

2. Read the Passage for Study carefully and repeatedly, trying to express in your own language what seems to you to be the meaning of each phrase regardless of the possible meanings suggested below. Think of each sentence also as expressing not only a teaching of Jesus but also a report, in some particulars at least, of his own religious experience.

3. "The poor in spirit"—those who in their spirits feel like poor men; the rich man who never forgets how it feels to be poor; the officer who never forgets how it feels to be a private; the teacher who never forgets how it feels to be a pupil; the popular man who never forgets how it feels to be unpopular or a stranger; the good man who never fails to realize how it would feel to be a bad man. Such people, who know how

to put themselves sympathetically into the places of others, will be found everywhere in the New Age.

"They that mourn"—those who have had experiences that make them sad; their friends have died; they have missed opportunities to do what they wanted very much to do; they mourn over their failures and over the wrong things they have done. But this sad experience is more than compensated for by the strong sure sympathy with which they will be comforted by God and by the friends they will find in the New Age. They will themselves become strong characters. There is a peculiar fineness of character to be found in a man who has passed through a sad experience and been comforted. He has made the great discovery that there is kindness underneath the surface of life, that there is kindness at the very heart of the universe.

"The meek"—those who with due sense of their own limitations hold themselves ready to help where they can. This does not mean any underestimate of themselves or failure to assert themselves on proper occasions. Jesus said that he was "meek and lowly of heart," but he was exceedingly vigorous in speech and deed when there was occasion to be. It is these people who are ready to help that will finally possess the earth—the earth with all its resources, its mines, forests, and farms. Selfish men will finally be eliminated from human civilization. There are certain forces now in human society which tend either to expel or shut up the selfish man as a disease microbe is sometimes expelled from or encysted in the human body.

"They that hunger and thirst after righteousness"—those that are hungry for character, not merely for repu-

tation. They would rather be right than be anything else. These persons will be "filled," that is, their ideals will be realized. They will succeed abundantly in being what they so much want to be. Their weak points will become their points of conspicuous strength.

"The merciful"—those who do not hold a grudge, who are not quick to imagine that they have been insulted, but who look out all day on the lives about them with a broad-minded good nature, putting a charitable construction on the actions of others. They remember that the other man is tired and hungry and wet and dirty and they make allowance for the way he talks and acts. God's mercy is to be theirs in the Great Day, and man's mercy in their daily need.

"The pure in heart"—those who clean out of their hearts everything dirty. Men generally washed their bodies ceremoniously when they went to the Temple to see God. Jesus said they should clean their hearts, clean them of all ill will, spite, lust, pride. Then the vision of God would rise in their souls. They would have a growing sense of the reality and nearness of an unseen world, and all the sense of peace, security, largeness of life, and outlook that this brings with it.

"The peace makers"—those who make peace between themselves and other men and God; those who settle disputes or prevent their arising among those about them. They tell this man the pleasant thing that man said about him, not the ugly criticism he passed upon him. Follow them around all day and you will find a trail of peace and good will behind them. When they war, whether on the small scale of an individual life or on a national scale, it is for the sake of an honor-

able peace, a peace leading to the moral betterment of all concerned.

The people who possess the qualities described in these sentences are called "the salt of the earth." Salt preserves from decay. These people keep civilization from disintegrating. They hold neighborhoods and nations together. They make any body of men a real unit.

4. This picture of the civilization that is to be, we hold boldly up today in the midst of flying shrapnel, the groans of the wounded, and the discouragement of those who are crippled. There is something back of all things that can bring it to pass. There is an unseen force in human society, the presence of which gives us the same confidence that Jesus felt in the midst of his forbidding surroundings. This vision is a vision of the Kingdom of God, and back of it is the *will of God*. Read the Passage for Study again with this thought in mind.

QUESTIONS :

What encouraging features do you see in the present situation of the world?

Take an inventory of your own life: What is there in it that you would like to have last forever? Rather, what trends are there in it that you would like to see followed out indefinitely?

Who, in your circle of acquaintances, illustrate in some degree any of these qualities mentioned in Jesus' words?

Think of these persons and these qualities. "What gets your attention gets you."

"I would be true, for there are those who trust me;
I would be pure, for there are those who care;
I would be strong, for there is much to suffer;
I would be brave, for there is much to dare;
I would be friend to all—the foe, the friendless;
I would be giving and forget the gift;
I would be humble, for I know my weakness;
I would look up, and laugh, and love, and lift."

Howard Arnold Walter.

STUDY VI

NO CONTEMPT FOR MAN NOR LUST FOR WOMAN AMONG THOSE LOOKING FOR THE NEW AGE

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS :

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Luke 18:9-14 | 4. Mark 10:2-12 |
| 2. Luke 7:36-50 | 5. I Peter 2:11-17 |
| 3. John 8:1-11 | 6. I Corinthians 6:9-20 |
| 7. Philippians 4:8-9 | |

PASSAGE FOR STUDY :

Matt. 5: 21. Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: 22. but I say unto you, that every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; and whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of the hell of fire. 23. If therefore thou art offering thy gift at the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, 24. leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

27. Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt not commit adultery: 28. but I say unto you, that every

one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

31. It was said also, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: 32. but I say unto you, that every one that putteth away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, maketh her an adulteress: and whosoever shall marry her when she is put away committeth adultery.

1. Jesus taught that right character necessitates having the proper disposition or purpose with reference to other human beings, men and women. So long as a man's relations to the people about him are not right, it is useless for him to gloss the situation over by bringing gifts to God. See the vivid picture in vs. 23-24. A man had decided to make a great gift to God. He brought his gift to the temple, hunted up a priest, and went with him to the altar. Just then he happened to remember that over in the city there was a man whom he had wronged. It might seem that this thought need not interrupt the important ceremony that was just reaching its climax. Jesus thought otherwise. He said that the generous would-be worshiper must lay his gift down on the pavement by the altar and leave the priest waiting, while he went across the city to find the man whom he had wronged. When he had done his best to right this wrong, he could offer his gift with some hope of intercourse with God.

2. In very strong language Jesus expressed his indignation at a man who felt in his heart anything like contempt for another man. He uses words and makes distinctions that were entirely intelligible to the Jews of his day, but which are not quite clear to us. "Raca"

was a word in Jesus' mother-tongue which meant "empty headed" and was probably frequently used by men who felt contempt for others. It was one of the stinging, hate-breeding words used by the men whom John the Baptist had called "vipers." Perhaps the word translated "fool" was another such word from Jesus' mother-tongue. In any case it is perfectly clear that Jesus condemned not simply the man who in spite rose up and murdered another man, but also the man who rose up and scorned another man. This man, as well as the murderer, if he did not repent as Jesus was urging men to do, would find himself in the place of punishment which the Jews had long described as the fiery "Gehenna." (The name "Gehenna" seems originally to have designated a valley near Jerusalem where horrible human sacrifices had once been offered by the Jews and where the prophets had said God would consequently summon the nation for punishment.)

This disposition which Jesus resents is one which looks down on another man with insolent contempt. Its essential element is ill will. It does not wish him well. It does not wish for him a fair fighting chance for good things. If he is a bad man it does not wish for him a chance to become a good man. It wishes simply to see him stay bad and be despised, as such an "empty head" ought to be!

The contemptuous man likes to see another worse, and worse off, than himself. He needs such another man to set off properly his own superior excellence! He likes to use the other man to boost himself, and drops him as soon as he ceases to be useful for this purpose. It was of such a man that Jesus said in

another place: "He that exalts himself shall be abased." God does not abase him. He abases himself. Simply liking to see another man worse off than one's self and being unwilling to help him is, in and of itself, a degrading experience. It ultimately makes a devil of the man who fixes that feeling upon himself. It introduces the beginnings of hell into his heart.

3. This same disposition turned toward a woman further expresses itself in simple lust. It is willing to use her for the gratification of passion with no thought of her own welfare, with insolent contempt and ill will for the woman herself. Her chances for goodness and badness present and future are utterly ignored. If she is already a bad woman the man is perfectly willing to have her remain the kind of woman she is—sometimes insists on it. He makes no effort to help the possibilities of better womanhood, which Jesus always saw within her, to assert themselves.

To take this attitude toward a woman degrades the man, just as contempt for another man degrades him. No man ever thinks in this way of a woman without being less of a man. It will pay him to make serious sacrifice to overcome such a disposition. If he does not, it will ultimately make a devil out of him.

4. It is probably this same regard for the interests of the woman that prompted the legislation of Moses referred to in vs. 31-32. Before that time the husband had been able to divorce his wife by simply telling her to leave. This sent her out into the community without credentials, subject to the suspicion that she was a bad woman. When the law began to require the husband to give his wife a written statement of his reason

for divorcing her, this reason was often seen to be one which in no way discredited her virtue.

5. Both contempt and lust are perversions of true instincts. A man must have a proper self-assertion over against another man. Otherwise he will sacrifice his individuality and not be the force in human society that God means him to be. But it must be a friendly self-assertion and not one that contemptuously overrides the other man. The sexual instinct is essential to manhood and fatherhood. It creates the family and the home. Lust is its perversion.

QUESTIONS:

In what sense, if any, is "race pride" justifiable? Unjustifiable?

Is there anything in the present world situation that tends permanently to increase inter-racial respect? That tends permanently to break down class prejudice?

What is really meant by "respect" for another person?

What is the strongest reason for the absolutely respectful treatment of every type of woman?

"For mankind are one in spirit, and an instinct bears
 along,
 Round the earth's electric circle, the swift flash of right
 or wrong;
 Whether conscious or unconscious, yet Humanity's vast
 frame
 Through its ocean-sundered fibres feels the gush of
 joy or shame;—
 In the gain or loss of one race all the rest have equal
 claim."

—James Russell Lowell, "The Present Crisis."

STUDY VII

PLAIN SPEECH AND NO REVENGE AMONG THOSE WHO LOOK FOR THE NEW AGE

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS:

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Luke 6: 27-38 | 4. I Peter 2: 18-25 |
| 2. Romans 12: 9-20 | 5. James 3: 1-12 |
| 3. Luke 23: 33-38 | 6. Matthew 18: 15-20 |
| 7. Matthew 18: 21-35 | |

PASSAGE FOR STUDY:

Matt. 5: 33. Again, ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: 34. but I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by the heaven, for it is the throne of God; 35. nor by the earth, for it is the footstool of his feet; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. 36. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, for thou canst not make one hair white or black. 37. But let your speech be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: and whatsoever is more than these is of the evil one. 38. Ye have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: 39. but I say unto you, Resist not him that is evil: but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. 40. And if any man would go to law with thee, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. 41.

And whosoever shall compel thee to go one mile, go with him twain. 42. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away. 43. Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy: 44. but I say unto you, Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you; 45. that ye may be sons of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust. 46. For if ye love them that love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? 47. And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the Gentiles the same? 48. Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

1. To the man of the West the man in parts of the Near East seems "gushing." He is extravagant in his expressions of affection and is constantly appealing to God or to some sacred object as his witness in support of his assertions. Jesus gives specimens of such expressions which he was frequently hearing in common conversation. He said in protest that while the law had simply forbidden falsehood in connection with an oath, he forbade the oath itself. In the civilization of the Coming Age men would be so absolutely reliable that a plain "Yes" or "No" would be all that was necessary.

Modern profanity springs from a variety of motives. Often it indicates no real meanness of disposition. Men sometimes express the most kindly feeling in language that is very startling to one not accustomed to it. It is a "gushing" excess of words, an over-decoration of speech that is in bad taste, like a coating of paint and powder on a woman's face.

Sometimes it indicates a lack of thought. The man has not much to say and so he says it hard, like a minister who pounds the pulpit vigorously when his stock of ideas runs low.

A careless appeal to God in support of an assertion indicates that a man has not much confidence in the reliability of his own unsupported word. Often it is perfectly evident that he is not sincere. He does not mean what he says. He does not really want all the people and things damned that he seems to.

The use of the name of God in trivial connections of course indicates a lack of reverence for God. It is like using the flag on trivial occasions or in disreputable connections. A man who so uses the name of God testifies loudly to the fact that he has no aspirations for patriotism in the Kingdom of God.

What Jesus mainly emphasizes is the necessity of *reverent sincerity* and *simplicity* in speech—really *meaning* everything one says.

2. Jesus was against revenge. He begins his discussion of this point also by a reference to the law. In this point, as in all other points mentioned in this chapter of Matthew, he represents himself not to be opposing the law, but to be following out the beginning which had been made in the law. This is apparently what he means in v. 17 of this chapter when he said that he came not to pull down, but to "fulfil the law," that is to fill it out, to make it complete in its application to the life of man. The law limited revenge, Jesus eliminated it altogether. The law said that if a man knocked out another man's tooth the injured man must inflict no extra injury upon the one who had attacked him. He

must be content simply to knock his tooth out and do no further injury. Jesus said that he must inflict no injury at all in retaliation.

3. This teaching reaches its most fundamental and inclusive statement in the injunction to love enemies. The law had said, Limit your hate; hate only enemies. Jesus said, Hate not even your enemies. Be possessed of such an invincible good will that no abuse of your person or your property can stop its outflow. The motive which Jesus uses in appealing for the exercise of this invincible good will is the fact that this is the way God who is your Father conducts himself: "that ye may be sons of your Father who is in heaven." That is, "Be true to the traditions of your family! Remember who your Father is!" In sending sunshine and rain God does not discriminate between the fields and crops of the good and bad. God's sons must be perfect in this particular, that is, impartial as God is. The statement in v. 48 does not mean that men are to be the equals of God in all his perfections of character, but simply that they are to be like him in the point under discussion. So it is put in Luke: "Be ye merciful, even as your Father is merciful."

4. Some of the statements in vs. 39-42 seem extreme, at first thought, and impracticable. Vs. 39-40, for instance, would seem to deny to the poor all protection by courts of law from the attacks of unscrupulous men, and strict obedience to the letter of v. 42 would sometimes mean moral ruin for the borrower as well as bankruptcy for the lender. Perhaps Jesus put his teaching in strikingly concrete form to make it impressive, and trusted to the common sense of men to understand

what he meant. Possibly some of these statements were influenced by the idea that the judgment day was near at hand. In that case we should accept the principle as of permanent validity and feel free to make such varying application of it as loyalty to the principle would require. An invincible good will would always be demanded of us. It would be left to our consciences to determine case by case how that good will should express itself. Such responsibility would be conducive to the development of character.

Always re-read the Passage for Study. Some of your best thoughts will come to you in this way.

QUESTIONS:

What are the best practical ways of guarding against, or breaking off the habit of profanity?

What seems to you to be the effect of profanity on general character, as you have experienced it yourself or observed it in others?

Is it possible in war to keep free from personal hate of individual enemies?

How can one best do this and yet be an efficient soldier?

STUDY VIII

SHOWING READINESS FOR THE NEW AGE BY CARE OF THE NEIGHBOR IN NEED

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS :

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Matthew 25 : 31-46 | 4. Luke 16 : 19-31 |
| 2. James 2 : 14-26 | 5. I Timothy 6 : 11-19 |
| 3. II Timothy 1 : 8-18 | 6. II Corinthians 1 : 3-11 |
| 7. Job 29 | |

PASSAGE FOR STUDY :

Luke 10: 25. And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? 26. And he said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? 27. And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. 28. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. 29. But he, desiring to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour? 30. Jesus made answer and said; A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho; and he fell among robbers, which both stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead. 31. And by chance a certain priest was going down that

way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32. And in like manner a Levite also, when he came to the place, and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he was moved with compassion, 34. and came to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring on them oil and wine; and he set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35. And on the morrow he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, I, when I come back again, will repay thee. 36. Which of these three, thinkest thou, proved neighbour unto him that fell among the robbers? 37. And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. And Jesus said unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

1. A religious man, a "lawyer" who gave his whole life up to the study of the law of Moses, asked Jesus how a man might make sure of a place in the New Order. He asked this question in a rather critical spirit, "testing" Jesus. We shall see later that Jesus' teaching about the nature of true religion was already being viewed with some suspicion by the Jewish religious leaders. Jesus as usual referred the man to the Jewish scriptures as the source of information. A statement found in these scriptures satisfied Jesus, for as we have seen in the preceding Studies it presented the great idea that was central in his teaching: Loving God with all the heart and loving one's neighbor as himself. The lawyer, suspecting that Jesus would have some peculiar views, tried to ferret them out by a further question. He asked who a man's neighbor is.

Jesus in reply told a story which not only answered the question but gave information regarding proper treatment of a neighbor and contained a criticism of the great men of the temple. A man lies wounded and naked by the roadside. He has been robbed by brigands. He evidently has nothing left with which to reward a rescuer. He will simply be a source of expense to anyone who takes an interest in him. Two religious professionals come riding by, both men of the temple—one a high official, the other an inferior official. They have finished their period of required service at the temple and are going home to Jericho, fifteen miles from Jerusalem, where some four thousand priests are said to have lived. Each in turn sees the naked man lying by the roadside bleeding and gasping for breath. Each in turn, after looking at him for a moment, veers off to the other side of the road and goes on home. Neither of them felt that it was any of his business to look after the man. Neither of them saw any connection between this situation and religion. The wounded man's heart sank within him as he saw them leave. Then there came riding down the road a man whom neither of the religious officials would have spoken to—a man from Samaria whose religion, if he had any, was to their minds worse than none, a wicked perversion of Jewish religion. But he had within him what to the mind of Jesus was the very essence of religion, a truly merciful heart. As soon as he saw the man he got down from his donkey, gave first aid to the injured, lifted him on to the donkey, and walked by his side until they reached an inn. He personally took care of him through the rest of the day and through

the night. When he left the next day he paid the man's hotel bill for some days in advance, and became personally responsible for any further expenditures that might become necessary. He planned to be back soon and follow the case up.

When Jesus asked the lawyer which one of the three travelers was the really neighborly man, he had to admit that it was the Samaritan, though he could not bring himself to pronounce the hated name! Jesus told him to imitate the Samaritan, if he wished to show that he really loved God and his neighbors and hoped to have a place in the New Order.

2. One of Jesus' greatest ideas appears here, namely, that God himself is present in every human situation. All about this poor man in his pain and blood was God. The "Father in Heaven," whom Jesus felt to be present to notice the young sparrow tumbling from its nest to the ground, saw this man fall by the roadside, saw the robbers ride away with their plunder, saw the priest and the Levite disappear down the road. And, according to Jesus, God cared about what He saw. The only way to love God was to love Him there where He was and to join Him in caring for the wounded neighbor. The priest and the Levite thought that God stayed in His white and gilded holy Temple listening to the music and song of the Levite band and chorus, smelling the incense and odor of sacrifice burned by priests. Jesus knew that God was out on the great highways of life, the unseen companion of every man who had fallen by the way. Jesus' influence on our conception of religion is seen in the fact that we recognize the irreligion of any man, no matter what his religious pretensions may be,

who in his thought and practice divorces his religion from merciful ministry to human needs.

3. In our modern experience the world has become a great neighborhood. Electricity has brought the ends of the earth nearer to us than two neighboring farm houses were to each other a hundred years ago. The war is bringing large and diverse sections of the human race into unified action. In the war's hot melting-pot nations are being fused. Peoples are being brought together, not only in space but in spirit. A new soul is being born in our country which seems likely to be a more truly neighborly soul, ready after the war has ended for the industries of peace which the world-neighborhood will once more develop.

QUESTIONS:

Jesus seems to say that *living* really consists in *loving*. It is sometimes said that living consists in, or depends on, the adaptation of an organism to its surroundings—for instance the adaptation of a fish to water. If so, how does living consist in loving?

Why was it worth while to pay so much attention to the wounded man? What is the duty of society toward those who are down and out?

Are there any hints in this story that have a bearing on the methods of modern philanthropic social work?

"He asked her once again, 'What hearest thou? What means the voice of Life?' She answered 'Love! For love is life, and they who do not love Are not alive. But every soul that loves, Lives in the heart of God and hears Him speak.'"

—Henry Van Dyke, "Vera."

STUDY IX

THOSE READY FOR THE NEW AGE COUNT ON GOD WITHOUT NERVOUS WORRY

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS:

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Luke 12: 22-34 | 4. Philippians 4: 4-7 |
| 2. Matthew 6: 16-24 | 5. Philippians 4: 10-20 |
| 3. Psalm 27 | 6. II Corinthians 12: 1-10 |
| | 7. Psalm 23 |

PASSAGE FOR STUDY:

Matt. 6: 25. Therefore I say unto you, Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than the food, and the body than the raiment? 26. Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not ye of much more value than they? 27. And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit unto his stature? 28. And why are ye anxious concerning raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: 29. yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30. But if God doth so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven,

shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? 31. Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? 32. For after all these things do the Gentiles seek; for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. 33. But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. 34. Be not therefore anxious for the morrow: for the morrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

1. The men whose chief concern in life is to help secure the better world that Jesus so confidently believed in must be men who do not worry. The great enterprise to which they have committed themselves demands that all their energy be saved for work and none be wasted in worry. Most men will naturally be inclined to worry especially about food and clothing, the evident essentials of comfortable efficient life. They will naturally feel that the danger of failing to get food and clothing is so great that they cannot wisely spend time and strength thinking about making the world better, much less can they "seek first the Kingdom of God"! Jesus' own experience enabled him to sympathize with this feeling, but he had overcome it and wished to have everyone else share his victory.

The way to overcome it was first to realize that it did no good to worry, and then to see that the active presence everywhere of God, the Heavenly Father, removed all occasion for worry. A man could not by worrying lengthen his life course by a single span. Indeed worry would directly tend to shorten it. The

main cure for worry, however, is the strong assurance that God is profoundly interested in a man's life. The fact that God has given so wonderful a thing as life is a guarantee that he will make it possible to get food enough to sustain life. The fact that he has devised so wonderful a thing as the human body makes it certain that he will provide a chance to get the simple clothing necessary to protect it. All the arrangements of nature are made with reference to providing a man with work enough to give him ample support. The birds that fill the air with song hop busily about, searching for food, and find that nature provides it. The plant finds in soil, air, rain, and sunshine what it needs to appropriate in order to be beautifully clothed. So God has put man in surroundings which reward his work with ample support for him and his family. If he fails of such support it is generally because he or someone else has not been right-minded, has not had in his soul the friendly "righteousness" which is to prevail in the New Age. Some man has been too lazy to work, or there has been some dastardly conspiracy to "corner" the market, or unjust industrial conditions have put men who are willing to work at a cruel disadvantage.

Jesus, with the strong soul of a devout workman, felt absolutely sure from his profound experience that God, the Heavenly Father, was close to the life of men, affording such ample resources for life as made worry a folly and a sin.

2. Jesus taught that the cause of worry was a lack of "faith." "O ye of little faith," he said to the worriers (v. 30). "Faith" is not inaction. On the contrary, it is a form of enthusiastic activity that calls into whole-

some exercise a man's whole being. It is the reaching out of the soul of a man to work with the unseen energy of the Heavenly Father, in good will and to the utmost. That which draws it out is the rational conviction that the kindly Fatherly energy of God is all about human life, ready to work with it at every point. Even men who seem to themselves unable to believe in a Heavenly Father, believe in a reliable, responsive energy on every side, man's growing experience with which makes him enthusiastic in all forms of scientific research. Jesus has brought unspeakable uplift to the life of man by the enthusiastic assurance, born of experience, with which he asserted that this energy is personal and kindly, a Heavenly Father. It is a Heavenly Father who knows that men "have need of all these things" and who has made "these things" to be abundant as soon as men "seek first the Kingdom of God"—that is, seek to make honesty and friendliness universal and secure in the world's life.

On the basis of his own experience he challenges all other men to count on the presence of God and see if their experience does not justify the experiment: "Seek, and *you* shall find. Knock, and it shall be opened unto *you*."

3. The passage that we are studying protests against worrying about food and clothing, but its statements apply equally well to worrying about the end of life itself. The point it makes is that on every side of us there is life, the life of the Heavenly Father, and provision for maintaining life. We live in the midst of unseen life. So if what is called death should suddenly confront us, it would be simply an incident in enlarging

life. One who knows the Heavenly Father need not worry even about this.

QUESTIONS:

What is a suitable definition of the word "anxious" in v. 25? Would a good football coach wish his team to be "anxious" the day and night before the game? If not, why not? If not, how would he try to prevent anxiety?

What can a man do during the uneventful periods of life to forestall anxiety in the face of an emergency?

Have you a philosophy of life which eliminates "worry"? If so, what is it?

And so beside the Silent Sea
I wait the muffled oar;
No harm from Him can come to me
On ocean or on shore.

I know not where His islands lift
Their fronded palms in air;
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond His love and care.
—Whittier, "The Eternal Goodness."

STUDY X

POSSESSING AN ABUNDANCE OF THINGS DOES NOT CONSTITUTE PREPARATION FOR THE NEW AGE

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS :

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Mark 10: 17-31 | 4. II Corinthians 8 |
| 2. Luke 18: 18-30 | 5. II Corinthians 9 |
| 3. Luke 16: 19-31 | 6. James 2: 1-9 |
| 7. James 4: 13-5: 6 | |

PASSAGE FOR STUDY :

Luke 12: 13. And one out of the multitude said unto him, Master, bid my brother divide the inheritance with me. 14. But he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you? 15. And he said unto them, Take heed, and keep yourselves from all covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. 16. And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: 17. and he reasoned within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have not where to bestow my fruits? 18. And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my corn and my goods. 19. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou

hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, be merry. 20. But God said* unto him, Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee; and the things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be? 21. So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

1. In the last Study Jesus discussed those who were hurting their chances of finding a place in the activities of the New Age by worrying over the possible lack of food and clothing. In this Study a man appears who was in the same peril because of the great abundance of the things that he possessed. Jesus sketched his portrait in answer to a typical voice that shouted to him from the crowd: "Make my brother divide!" (v. 13). Jesus saw in the request an expression of "covetousness," that is, of a strong desire to get things for one's self alone. In refusing the man's request Jesus assured him that a man's real life, the life that lasts, does not consist in owning a large number of things. Then he pictured a man who made the colossal blunder of failing to see this fact.

The man came honestly by his large property. He was rich to start with, probably because of inheriting a fortune as Jesus' questioner had hoped to do. After that the natural product of his land made him always richer.

Then came the crisis in his life when he was compelled to say: "What shall I do?" The answer to that question was to determine his future. It is a question that has come to some men in these days when war conditions have suddenly made them much richer than they have ever been before.

The man's decision was to hoard, but not in any miserly way. After he had provided for the proper housing of all his possessions, he said to himself: "Take it easy; eat expensive food; drink good wines; have a good time. You have a long life before you." The prospect looked attractive—big barns, great crops, many years ahead! This Syrian farmer was held in high esteem by his neighbors. Fathers pointed him out to their sons as a "successful man."

But God came to him in a wakeful hour of the night and summoned his soul to step out from the midst of all this abundance of things. How much of a "soul" would he be able to show when separated from his "things"—when there would be nothing to look at but this *man himself*? Then God called him by a name that would have shocked the man's admiring fellow-citizens. The man's own conscience pronounced the verdict: "Fool." He had fooled with his great life chance. Now he was separated from his things over which his heirs would quarrel, as Jesus' would-be client and his brother had done. The man of many "things" and meager "soul" was a spiritual bankrupt. He had nothing ready for investment in the great enterprises of the spiritual world. His underfed anemic soul was utterly weak in the presence of the great enterprises of the vast Unseen World that is always all about us, throbbing with the will of God and calling for strong men to go on great campaigns in the growing universe of God. He had ignored two great facts, the Living God and the Long Future.

2. How should he have been spending his life in order to be ready for the Great Chance? The picture of the

humane Samaritan in Study VIII gives the answer. Instead of feasting at his table he ought to have been out on the great highways of life, at the danger spots, looking for chances to use his increasing fortune in friendly, neighborly ways. The demand in the New Age is for friendly men, for men who have so developed the friendly spirit as to be fit for great enterprises in the Civilization of Friendly Men. It is a significant thing that in the picture of this Syrian farm no neighbor appears. When the farmer talks, he talks to himself.

Jesus' criticism of him is not that he ought not to have been rich, but that he ought to have been "rich toward God." He ought to have been spending himself and his property in working at points of human need, together with the God who gave him abundant crops.

Read the Passage for Study again, trying to see the picture painted in each sentence.

QUESTIONS:

If a man's life does not consist in "the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (v. 15), why should there be such an abundance of things all about him and he be endowed with so strong an instinct for ownership?

Is such a situation really favorable to character-making? The answer to this question necessitates asking again: What is right character?

What is your definition of a "fool"?

The great basal thought of Jesus comes out here again; that the friendly energy of God is all about us, opening to us opportunities to work with it in many ways. Every hour and everywhere there is a chance

for a man to do something with God for the common good. This gives dignity to otherwise undignified occupations. The thought nerves a man when he is working alone or when he has about reached the limit of his endurance. And in the hour when the demand is made for his soul he goes out with good courage. He can "greet the unseen with a cheer."

STUDY XI

NO LOVE OF PERSONAL PARADE AMONG THOSE LOOKING FOR THE NEW AGE

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS:

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Luke 18: 9-14 | 4. John 5: 30-44 |
| 2. Mark 12: 38-40 | 5. John 14: 16-24 |
| 3. Matthew 12: 15-21 | 6. I Corinthians 4: 1-5 |
| 7. Psalm 139 | |

PASSAGE FOR STUDY:

Matt. 6: 1. Take heed that ye do not your righteousness before men, to be seen of them: else ye have no reward with your Father who is in heaven. 2. When therefore thou doest alms, sound not a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have received their reward. 3. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: 4. that thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father who seeth in secret shall recompense thee. 5. And when ye pray, ye shall not be as the hypocrites: for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have received their reward. 6. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, and

having shut thy door, pray to thy Father who is in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret shall recompense thee. 16. Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may be seen of men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have received their reward. 17. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head, and wash thy face; 18. that thou be not seen of men to fast, but of thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall recompense thee.

1. Jesus gives a solemn warning, hangs out a danger signal over a perilous place in the great highway of life: "Take heed!" The peril is that men will be concerned exclusively about reputation, and not at all about character. They will be eager to have what they do reported and photographed for the newspapers and will not think about the Unseen God in connection with it. This disposition is peculiarly offensive in the case of actions ordinarily regarded as religious, but it appears also in the case of those who are anxious to impress men with the fact that they are not religious. It is just as possible to try to parade badness as goodness.

2. Jesus, perhaps with a mild sarcasm, uses the commercial word ordinarily employed in receipting a bill. The man who gave his money (v. 2) in order to be published as a benevolent man can sign a receipt. He has received the publicity that he paid for. The bill is settled!

After the general principle has been stated in v. 1, three forms of action very common in the religious life of the day are specified: alms-giving, prayer, and fasting. Men were likely to give their money in ways that

would attract public attention and that might be described as "trumpeting" the matter abroad. They might arrange to have the regular prayer hour overtake them on a busy street corner or among the group of people whiling away the time about the synagogue. On Mondays and Thursdays, when the specially devout fasted, they would give their faces some artificial treatment that would heighten the natural effect of abstinence from food.

Jesus called these persons "hypocrites." The word in Greek was the name given to actors who played a part on the stage, and who of course were not really the persons they seemed to be.

3. The big thing that men missed by such conduct, the missing of which made a tragedy of life, was the reward from the Heavenly Father. This reward is something secret in the inner life of a man. That there could be any real satisfaction without being seen by others, seemed impossible to some scribes who copied the Greek manuscripts and so they added the word "openly,"—"will reward thee openly,"—but this word which used to appear in the text has properly disappeared from it. The secret reward seems to be the sense within the soul of having done right, of having been pleasing to the Heavenly Father, of being in accord with the kindly power that is the source of all true life. That is, it is the sense of being normal in the most fundamental relations of life. There is a quiet peaceful sense of health, with no uncomfortable desire to be noticed, no nervous fear of not being sufficiently appreciated.

This health of soul is essential to good team work.

A man with this disposition can engage in self-forgetful team work without losing his individuality, rather with enlargement of his individual personality. When men go forward in the mass in a charge in which a man is not distinguished from his neighbor, there is a Power that individualizes them, that sees the heart and feelings of each man in a little world of his own. This Power is God and the inner world that seems so small and so individual turns out to be the vast unseen world where all individuals grow great in perfect team work.

4. If a man finds his sense of God growing dim, Jesus' teaching here shows how to strengthen it. He must do some things intended for God's eye only. Perhaps he will have a chance to help some person by a gift of money in such a way that neither the person who receives it nor anyone else except God will know where the gift comes from. The giver will naturally feel satisfaction in the thought that some one in a tight place has been helped out and he will also feel that *God shares his satisfaction*. This sense of companionship with God in feeling satisfaction over another's good fortune strengthens faith in God. Two men who unite in some secret benefaction are drawn closely together. In doing something for God's eye only, a man is acting as if there was a God. Such action toward unseen reality always in time strengthens faith in the Unseen when the Unseen is real.

In the same way let a man shut the inner door of his heart and pray, or if he has a chance to do so, let him go to a place where for a few moments at least he can be free from disturbance and speak out to God the most

honest desire of his heart. If he does this often, the sense of God will gradually grow stronger within him.

5. This emphasis on giving and praying when no other human being knows it does not, of course, absolutely exclude other kinds of giving and praying. It often builds up friendship to let a man know that he can call on his friend for help if he needs to do so. It is a good thing to join openly with other men in giving to some form of relief work that interests them all. Such open giving is sometimes the only way of endorsing a good cause. Great good is accomplished by joining devoutly with others in common prayer and public worship. Jesus' protest is simply against the spirit of ambitious parade that "loves to be seen of men."

QUESTIONS:

Is it practicable for a man to live a kind of double life, an individual inner life with God and a social life keenly interested in everything that goes on without? How shall he *unify* these two lives—since it is only the unified life that is strong and peaceful?

This calls up the question to which we are always giving an incomplete but enlarging answer: What is God and where is he? What have you found to be the best ways of deepening your sense of the reality and nearness of God?

Counting on the presence and approval of the Unseen God for the most profound satisfaction of life, for the great reward of life, is the venture that constitutes a man truly religious. As Donald Hankey in "A Student In Arms" said: "True religion is betting one's life that there is a God."

STUDY XII

THOSE PREPARING FOR THE NEW AGE WILL NOT BITTERLY CONDEMN OTHERS, BUT WILL PRAY FOR THEM

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS :

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Luke 6: 37-41 | 4. James 3: 1-12 |
| 2. Luke 11: 9-13 | 5. James 5: 13-18 |
| 3. Matthew 7: 13-23 | 6. Romans 14: 1-12 |
| 7. Romans 14: 13-23 | |

PASSAGES FOR STUDY :

Matt. 7: 1. Judge not, that ye be not judged. 2. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you. 3. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? 4. Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me cast out the mote out of thine eye; and lo, the beam is in thine own eye? 5. Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

7. Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: 8. for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. 9. Or what man is there of you, who, if his

son shall ask him for a loaf, will give him a stone; 10. or if he shall ask for a fish, will give him a serpent? 11. If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask him? 12. All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them: for this is the law and the prophets.

Luke 11: 5. And he said unto them, which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say to him, Friend, lend me three loaves; 6. for a friend of mine is come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him; 7. and he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee? 8. I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will arise and give him as many as he needeth.

Mark 11: 25. And whensoever ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any one; that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.

1. Jesus recognized the instinct of the human heart to see and point out to an interested audience whatever is wrong in another. Oftentimes this instinct is combined with an excessive optimism in one's judgment of himself. This combination appealed to Jesus' sense of humor. As will be seen later, he had been the victim of a good deal of such criticism from the religious leaders of his day.

Here, as at all other points in the teaching of Jesus, it is the motive behind the act that determines its moral

character. It is not always a kindness to a person to ignore his faults. He may very much need helpful suggestion, but it is to be friendly and not censorious suggestion. The friendly critic needs to be sure of three things: that he has given generous attention to all the good points in the person criticised; that he has thought long and faithfully of his own weak points; that his purpose in noting the other's faults is not to arouse sentiment against him, but to help him overcome them. In almost all cases, therefore, he will speak of these faults not to others, but privately to the person himself. Also, it will often be possible to make the necessary suggestion in some indirect tactful way that will not be an evident criticism.

2. There is some logical connection between criticism and prayer. No man can properly criticise who has not first prayed both for himself and for the object of his criticism.

For Jesus, who found God to be a Heavenly Father always near at hand, prayer was inevitable. It was the natural speaking of a child to his Father. If our definition of faith—as the reaching out of the soul to work with the unseen energy of God in good will and to the utmost—is correct, then prayer is involved in faith. It is a way of reaching out to work together with God, a lifting up of the life to him.

The democracy of Jesus is evident in his teaching about prayer. Prayer is not a means of getting something for one's self alone. It always includes others. Selfish prayer would be pagan prayer, not Christian prayer. If Christian prayer sometimes at first seems to be for one's self alone, second thought shows that it is

only to make one's self more effective in the community life. Note the word "therefore" in v. 12. The only one who can pray well is the one who is living properly in the community, treating every other man in the community as he would feel that the other man ought to treat him if their situations were reversed. Especially he must be ready to forgive anyone who has done him wrong.

This idea comes out still more clearly in the homely illustration that appears in Luke. Read again vs. 5-8. There prayer expressly appears to be a means of getting something from the friendly God to share with a human friend in need. "*Friend*, lend me three loaves, for a *friend of mine* is come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him." Such an interchange of friendly neighborly feeling binds the two men together and both of them together to God. It is something which, when repeated in a multitude of instances, will make friendship universal and secure in the human race, and this is really what the Kingdom of God, or the New Age, means.

The assumption on which Jesus' teaching about prayer rests is that God and men are so closely related that something can pass from the friendly God to the praying man. What is it that comes to the praying man from the listening, answering God? Thought and feeling. Since God presumably can, in accordance with the laws of mental action, do what men are constantly doing for each other, namely, put a thought into a man's mind or a feeling into his heart, provision is in this way made for answer to most of the prayers a man ever has occasion to make.

Your friend comes to you utterly discouraged and asks for help. What can you do for him? The best thing you can do for him is to put a feeling of courage, hope, resolution into him. Where shall you get it? Silently and swiftly ask God for it. Let God give it to you to share with him. Or your friend comes to you in great perplexity. The success or failure of an important enterprise depends upon the decision he must make. He needs your advice. Silently ask God to put a thought into your mind, and share with your friend the best thought God gives you. Why does not God give the thought directly to the man in need? Doubtless he often does. But he often does it indirectly through a praying man, because such a process, as has been said, directly and vitally contributes to universal friendship. It is good for men to help each other in their need and to have their relationship to each other during the process all alive with the presence of God, as it is in prayer.

QUESTIONS:

On the supposition that there really is a Friendly Unseen Power all about us, whose relation to us is that of a Father to children, to what extent might he be expected to help us?

That is, how much would a father do for his children and how much would he leave them to do for themselves?

In what circumstances and under what conditions would he help them?

What sort of things would he be most likely to do for them?

“More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.”

—Tennyson, “The Passing of Arthur.”

PART III: JESUS, THE PEOPLE'S PROPHET,
AROUSES THE HOSTILITY OF THE RELI-
GIOUS AUTHORITIES BY HIS TEACHING RE-
GARDING THE LIFE OF THE NEW AGE AND
THE WAY TO PREPARE FOR IT



STUDY XIII

THE SCRIBES SUSPICIOUS OF JESUS' TEACHING ABOUT THE FOR- GIVENESS OF SIN

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS:

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Matthew 9: 1-8 | 4. Romans 8: 31-39 |
| 2. Luke 5: 17-26 | 5. I John 1: 5-10 |
| 3. Matthew 18: 15-20 | 6. I John 2: 1-7 |
| 7. Psalm 32 | |

PASSAGE FOR STUDY:

Mark 2: 1. And when he entered again into Capernaum after some days, it was noised that he was in the house. 2. And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room for them, no, not even about the door: and he spake the word unto them. 3. And they come, bringing unto him a man sick with the palsy, borne of four. 4. And when they could not come nigh unto him for the crowd, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed whereon the sick of the palsy lay. 5. And Jesus seeing their faith saith unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins are forgiven. 6. But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, 7. Why doth this man thus speak? he blasphemeth: who can forgive sins but one, even

God? 8. And straightway Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, saith unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? 9. Whether is easier, to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins are forgiven; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? 10. But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins (he saith to the sick of the palsy), 11. I say unto thee, Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thy house. 12. And he arose, and straightway took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God.

1. In a series of incidents Mark's Gospel (2: 1—3: 6, 3: 22-30; 7: 1-24) traces the growing hostility of the religious teachers, the Scribes, to Jesus and his ideas about religion. Jesus was in entire sympathy with many of the ideas of the best of the Scribes, but he attacked certain serious abuses that had grown up in their teaching and practice. Some of the Scribes doubtless disapproved of these abuses, but they were not influential enough at this time to reform them.

In the first scene presented by Mark, the Scribes are represented as suspicious of Jesus, though they do not go so far as to express their suspicions openly (v. 6). They had gathered from many quarters to hear for themselves the teaching of the Prophet who had become so popular (second supplementary reading). Probably they had hoped to be able to utilize his influence over the people for the propagation of their own ideas.

The scene is one in which a helpless man, carried by four good friends, was brought to Jesus with the expectation that Jesus would be able to cure him. The

man's condition was probably thought by many, including perhaps the man himself, to be due to sins he had committed. That which aroused the serious suspicion of the Scribes was the way in which Jesus handled the question of the man's sins. As Jesus looked into his eager face and up at the four men who had lowered him on his sleeping rug through an opening they had made in the easily movable material of the roof, he at once spoke to him about the sins that had so troubled his conscience. He told him that God had forgiven them. Forgiveness by God implies three things: a wrong done; the wrong regretted, discontinued, made right if possible; then, on the part of God the Heavenly Father, a change from disapproving to approving love. The love of a true father never ceases, but in forgiveness it changes from a love that necessarily disapproves to a love that approves.

2. The Scribes were disturbed because Jesus seemed to ignore the necessity that the man should do some "good works" to compensate for his sins. To many of them God was a Book-keeper, who charged up against a man all of his disobediences to particular commandments in the Holy Law and credited him with his obediences. If his credits for obediences exceeded his debits for disobediences, he was "righteous." To Jesus God was not an omniscient Book-keeper, but a Heavenly Father who freely forgave his penitent children, one who would not "despise" a broken and a "contrite" heart. This helpless paralytic, probably poor because he could no longer work, had no chance to do the righteous acts or give the alms that some of the Scribes would have specified.

How should this young prophet Jesus, untrained in the rabbinic schools, assume to have more knowledge about this man's religious prospects, than religious specialists like themselves!

3. Certain things about Jesus' own inner consciousness appear here. He seemed to have an insight into the helpless man's soul which enabled him to see that the man had repented. He seemed also to *feel* the forgiving love of God, rising up within him and flowing out to this penitent man.

Jesus' strong inner consciousness of authority from God to declare this man forgiven found corroboration in what he was enabled by God to do for the man's body. He spoke a prayerful word of power (see Study IV) and the expectant man rolled up the sleeping rug on which he had been brought and made his way through the crowd, to receive the glad congratulations of his four friends, who had come down from the roof by an outside stairway and were waiting in the street.

3. That which instantly attracted Jesus' attention was the "faith" of the five men (v. 5). This faith was evidently (1) confidence in Jesus' power to cure disease, a confidence based on evidence afforded by previous cures; so it probably involved (2) gladly recognizing him as a genuine prophet of God with a true message about the Kingdom of Heaven; and (3) it expressed itself in such action as was appropriate to these beliefs. That is, it saw in Jesus what he represented himself to be and treated him accordingly.

We saw in Study III, and shall see more clearly later, that Jesus during this period was not, and did not wish

to be, recognized as the Messiah. That he was not so recognized here, although the messianic title Son of Man in common usage later among the disciples is placed upon his lips, is made clear by what the crowd said about him. None of them spoke of him as Messiah. They "glorified God who had given such authority unto men" (Matthew 9:8).

QUESTIONS:

What do you imagine to have been the conversation of these five men on their way to the house where they expected to find Jesus? Their conversation on the way home?

What would have been their probable relation to the Christian movement a few years later?

What thoughts would have been in Jesus' mind in the evening as he reviewed the events of the day?

Does God's forgiveness of sins ever remove any of the consequences of sin?

STUDY XIV

THE SCRIBES OFFENDED BY JESUS' FRIENDLY APPROACH TO IRRE- LIGIOUS PEOPLE

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS:

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------|
| 1. Matthew 9:9-13 | 4. John 8:2-11 |
| 2. Luke 5:27-32 | 5. Luke 7:36-50 |
| 3. Luke 19:1-10 | 6. Luke 15:11-31 |
| 7. Hebrews 2:10-18 | |

PASSAGE FOR STUDY:

Mark 2: 13. And he went forth again by the sea side; and all the multitude resorted unto him, and he taught them. 14. And as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphæus sitting at the place of toll, and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him. 15. And it came to pass that he was sitting at meat in his house, and many publicans and sinners sat down with Jesus and his disciples: for there were many, and they followed him. 16. And the scribes of the Pharisees, when they saw that he was eating with the sinners and publicans, said unto his disciples, He eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners. 17. And when Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.

1. Another striking peculiarity of Jesus' conduct

caused the Scribes great concern. They did not tax Jesus with it to his face, but took the matter up with the group of young men who were called his disciples (v. 16). Perhaps they thought that in this way they could get these young men away from Jesus and so save them from the influence of his bad example and teaching. The thing that troubled them was his friendly approach to certain classes in the community whom the Scribes considered to be utterly irreligious. The Scribes were concerned to have all classes obey the Holy Law of Moses in all its details. Certain classes in the community refused to do this, and therefore found themselves getting sour looks in the market and in the synagogue, if they cared occasionally to attend its services.

They were called "The Sinners." This was a popular name for them that had sprung up in community usage and did not mean exactly what the word means in modern speech. Foreigners, or "Gentiles," since they did not recognize any obligation to keep the Holy Law, were called "sinners of the Gentiles" (Galatians 2:15) to distinguish them from "sinners of the Jews" who were like-minded. One particular class of "sinners" were the "publicans," that is, those who did "public" revenue business, instead of engaging in private business enterprises. The numerous small Jewish officials who sat by the public road, each collecting his own special form of toll or custom, were very unpopular, especially among religious people like the Scribes. These revenue officials were willing to help a foreign power collect unholy taxes from God's people; they necessarily had much defiling connection with foreigners; they often had to handle merchandise that to the sensitive Jewish mind

was defiling; they had to work on the Sabbath. Any Jew willing to do all this was pretty sure to be a man who loved money more than he loved God and who would, presumably, cheat whenever he could.

2. Jesus had made the acquaintance of one of these men at the Capernaum wharves, and found him much interested in the message about the New Age. Finally one day Jesus invited him to become one of the "disciples," that is, one of the group of men who gave up most of their time to listening to the teacher's lectures. Many Scribes had such groups of disciples. This man Levi, or Matthew, at once sold out, or resigned, his position, and accepted Jesus' invitation.

The fact that a popular prophet, a religious man talking everywhere about the nearness of the New Age, should show such distinguished honor to a publican, fairly overwhelmed Levi. To celebrate the event he made a great reception in his home. Publicans and other "sinners" came to it in large numbers from all over the city. Jesus and his disciples were also present. Refreshments were served and they all ate together. Such conduct on the part of an ostensible prophet scandalized the Scribes (v. 16). Their great aim was to keep all decent religious people away from such associations. Eating together seemed particularly offensive, because in the East it is a sign of great friendliness. Furthermore, they were pretty certain not to have "kosher" food and not to eat it with proper ceremonies.

3. Jesus' view of the situation seems to have been this. He did not excuse the conduct of the publicans and sinners. To his mind they were unfit for the New Age.

They were sick people needing a physician, wounded men needing a surgeon, bad people needing to reform (v. 17). Neither did he at all lower his own high moral standards to accommodate them. If he had done so, his presence with them would not have been such an impressive and welcome compliment. He did, however, differ radically from the Scribes in his view of the case. To his mind the essential element in religion was the truly friendly heart, the heart prayerfully friendly in its uplook to God, actively friendly in its outlook to all men. He was sure that the publicans and sinners could be drawn into the truly friendly life. He knew that the most effective way to accomplish this was to be truly friendly to them in his own heart and to show his friendliness in natural ways. He did not come among them with the evident purpose of "doing them good." He did not reach a helping hand down to them. He did not preach at them. He came to them on the level and because he saw something in them that he liked. See a very striking instance of this in the third supplementary reading where Jesus went in to lodge with a man that was a sinner. The rabbis were not good enough and big enough in heart to be true friends to the publicans and sinners. They had not enough of real religion to meet the situation. They differed from Jesus fundamentally in their conception of religion. This will come out more clearly in the next study.

QUESTIONS:

Can a man at all control his likes and dislikes?

To what extent can a man learn really to like another who has disagreeable traits?

Is it possible to single out certain good qualities in a man and like him for them? Or to see in him certain unrealized possibilities and really like him for them?

What should be a man's attitude toward things done in his presence of which he does not approve?

How can a man living constantly in association with those whose moral standards seem lower than his own, keep his own conscience quick and healthy?

“Behold him now where he comes!
Not the Christ of our subtile creeds,
But the Lord of our hearts, of our homes,
Of our hopes, our prayers, our needs;
The brother of want and blame,
The lover of women and men,
With a love that puts to shame
All passions of mortal ken.”

—Richard Watson Gilder, “The Passing of Christ.”

STUDY XV

THE SCRIBES OFFENDED BY JESUS' FRIENDLY APPROACH TO IRRE- LIGIOUS PEOPLE (Continued)

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS :

- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| 1. Luke 15:3-7 | 4. John 4:5-26 |
| 2. Luke 15:8-10 | 5. John 4:27-39 |
| 3. Luke 14:15-24 | 6. Romans 5:1-11 |
| 7. John 3:16-21 | |

PASSAGES FOR STUDY :

Luke 15: 1. Now all the publicans and sinners were drawing near unto him for to hear him. 2. And both the Pharisees and the scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them. 11. And he said, A certain man had two sons: 12. and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of thy substance that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. 13. And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country; and there he wasted his substance with riotous living. 14. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that country; and he began to be in want. 15. And he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country; and he sent

him into his fields to feed swine. 16. And he would fain have been filled with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. 17. But when he came to himself he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish here with hunger! 18. I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight: 19. I am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. 20. And he arose, and came to his father. But while he was yet afar off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. 21. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight: I am no more worthy to be called thy son. 22. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: 23. and bring the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat, and make merry: 24. for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry. 25. Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing. 26. And he called to him one of the servants, and inquired what these things might be. 27. And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound. 28. But he was angry, and would not go in: and his father came out, and entreated him. 29. But he answered and said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, and I never transgressed a commandment of thine: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: 30. but when this thy son came, which hath devoured thy

living with harlots, thou killedst for him the fatted calf. 31. And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that is mine is thine. 32. But it was meet to make merry and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.

1. The friendly attitude of Jesus toward certain classes of the irreligious, which so offended the Scribes, finds its explanation in his own religious experience. In his inner soul he felt the Heavenly Father loving these men and women.

By three illustrations that will never lose their place in religious literature he pictured the love of the Heavenly Father for the "lost"—"The Lost Sheep," "The Lost Coin," "The Lost Son." Especially in the story of "The Lost Son" he showed to the Scribes, who criticised him for eating in a friendly way with publicans and sinners (vs. 1-2), how miserably their frame of mind contrasted with the feeling of the Heavenly Father. The culmination of the story is in the contrast between the Father's treatment of the Lost Son when he came home and the treatment given him by the Older Brother (vs. 20-32) who represents the Scribes.

2. The son is spoken of as "lost" (v. 32). A thing is lost when it is out of the place where it belongs and is in danger of not getting back to it. A child is lost when it gets away from the persons to whom it belongs and is in danger of not getting back. It does not necessarily get away from them in space, but in spirit and sympathy. A son may live in the same village with his father and mother, his brothers and sisters, but if he

never communicates with them he is more hopelessly "lost" to them than he would be if he were on the other side of the globe writing them loving letters every week.

Jesus first pictured the "lost" son. He had become out of sympathy with his father and discontented with home life. He took what belonged to him and went far from home—into another and a distant country. There he "lived his own life," utterly unlike that of his old home. He was not meant for that kind of life and it nearly made a wreck of him. Two things were characteristic of the later stages of his life in the far country: there was no suitable work there for him and there were no friends. He was reduced to the necessity of taking care of hogs, even sharing their carob pod fodder with them (worse than eating with publicans and sinners!), and no friendly man gave him anything (v. 16). Then he remembered who he was and started home.

3. The greatest fact in the experience of Jesus was the love of God, the Heavenly Father. The power with which he pictures the Father of the Lost Son is evidence of it. For many months the Father had been looking down to the far point on the road where his eyes had caught the last glimpse of his boy leaving home with his gay clothing and his light heart. He always expected him to come back. When he did finally come back, his Father saw him "while he was yet afar off," recognized him in spite of his changed appearance, ran down the road till he was out of breath, threw his arms around the tired, ragged, half-starved boy and kissed him over and over again. When they reached the house he asked for no "explanations" and

required no promises. He gave him everything to wear and eat that had been saved for the most honorable guest that might ever visit them. In his own inner religious experience Jesus had discovered that this was the way the Heavenly Father felt over the lost publicans and sinners who were daily coming to themselves, beginning to pray to the Heavenly Father and to look forward hopefully to the New Age.

4. Then the Older Brother came on the stage, but showed himself to be no true brother, no true son. He was thoroughly angry from top to toe when he learned what was going on. He had no love for his brother and no sympathy with his Father. This Older Brother, Jesus said, represented the Scribes. It is noticeable that the Father as Jesus pictured him still loved the Older Brother: "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that is mine is thine" (v. 31).

This last stroke in the picture shows that though Jesus was inevitably crowding the Scribes into a corner, and making them look at themselves in a relentless mirror, still his own spirit was kindly, and he was not responsible for the bitter hostility toward him that was developing in them.

QUESTIONS:

What made the younger son dissatisfied with his home?

What did he want that he did not have? That is, why does a man ever stop praying?

Is there anything about the idea of God that a man does not like? If so what is it and why is it not liked?

What are the dangers in a life lived away from God?

Does it at all hurt a man to live the life that forgets God, and if so in what particulars?

Why did his Father let him go with so little protest?

What evidence is there that close up against the life of the world is the life of an unseen Fatherly Being who really cares when a man or woman goes wrong, and who feels profound satisfaction when they go right?

This "lost son" gave his life back to his Father to whom it belonged by right of the Father's love and the laws of its own well-being. The Father knew how with a wealth of resources to bring the life to health and strength.

"O love that wilt not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in Thee.
I give Thee back the life I owe,
That in Thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be."

—George Matheson.

STUDY XVI

THE SCRIBES SO OFFENDED BY JESUS' USE OF THE SABBATH THAT THEY ARE READY TO ARREST AND EXECUTE HIM AS A LAW-BREAKER

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS:

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Mark 2: 18-22 | 4. Luke 14: 1-6 |
| 2. Matthew 12: 1-14 | 5. Luke 13: 10-17 |
| 3. Luke 6: 1-11 | 6. Deuteronomy 5: 12-15 |
| 7. Isaiah 56: 1-8 | |

PASSAGE FOR STUDY:

Mark 2: 23. And it came to pass, that he was going on the sabbath day through the cornfields; and his disciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears of corn. 24. And the Pharisees said unto him, Behold, why do they on the sabbath day that which is not lawful? 25. And he said unto them, Did ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was an hungred, he, and they that were with him? 26. How he entered into the house of God when Abiathar was high priest, and did eat the shewbread, which it is not lawful to eat save for the priests, and gave also to them that were with him? 27. And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: 28. so that the Son of man is lord even of the sabbath,

Mark 3: 1. And he entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there which had his hand withered. 2. And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath day; that they might accuse him. 3. And he saith unto the man that had his hand withered, Stand forth. 4. And he saith unto them, Is it lawful on the sabbath day to do good, or to do harm? to save a life, or to kill? But they held their peace. 5. And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved at the hardening of their heart, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he stretched it forth: and his hand was restored. 6. And the Pharisees went out, and straightway with the Herodians took counsel against him, how they might destroy him.

1. The hostility of the Scribes to Jesus grew steadily stronger. He had offended them not only in the ways indicated in the last three Studies, but also by encouraging his disciples not to observe the Monday and Thursday fastings (see the first supplementary reading). Something like a climax is now reached because of his treatment of the Sabbath.

The Scribes had long found it difficult to keep the nation from yielding to the influence of pagan religions all about it. In their effort to keep the nation separate from other nations they had relied particularly on special food laws which made social intercourse with foreigners impracticable, on special scriptures which contained God's Holy Law, and on a special Holy Day each week when the people might be withdrawn from all their usual occupations and be instructed in the Holy Law. The Scribes felt that the protection of the Holy

Day was absolutely essential to the maintenance of true religion, and therefore had surrounded it with a multitude of minute regulations for conduct in all sorts of possible emergencies. They looked forward to the New Age as a time when all the people would keep God's Sabbath law perfectly. Therefore when Jesus, a popular people's prophet purporting to bring God's message about the New Age and the way to prepare for it, seemed careless about Sabbath observance, the situation looked desperate! They decided that they must arrest him and after formal trial execute him as a law breaker. In this effort they found it desirable to enlist the "Herodians" (3:6). It is not exactly clear who the "Herodians" were. Evidently they were a party devoted to the interests of the Herod family, a member of which was now the ruler of Galilee, and they therefore represented the Roman government, under whom this family held office. The ruling Herod had recently arrested, and perhaps already executed, John, the wilderness prophet, for meddling with his domestic immoralities. The fact that he had just attacked so popular a prophet as John perhaps made him unwilling to proceed now against another popular prophet, for nothing seems to have come of this attempt of the Scribes to enlist his party against Jesus.

The attitude taken by the Scribes in 3:6 seems, however, to have effectually shut Jesus out from all the synagogues in this part of the country. In Mark's Gospel he never again appears speaking from a synagogue platform except in his home town (6:1-6).

2. Two cases are cited in which Jesus seemed to the

Scribes scandalously lax in his observance of the Sabbath. In the first (2:23-27) his disciples did something on a Sabbath which Jesus failed to reprove and later justified; in the second (3:1-6) he himself was the active party. As they were walking on the narrow path that separated two fields of wheat or barley the disciples pulled off some heads of the grain, rubbed it out in their hands, and ate it. To the Scribes this seemed nothing less than harvesting and threshing on a small scale. Either on the spot, or later when they heard of it, they called Jesus to account for not having immediately put a stop to it.

In the other case a man whose right hand had withered up so that he could no longer work appeared in the Sabbath synagogue service where Jesus was present. Scribes were there, suspecting that the man's condition would appeal to Jesus and that he would probably attempt to cure him. The case suited their purpose admirably, for the disease was not painful or dangerous, such as they would themselves have treated on a Sabbath, but was chronic and could be left with entire safety for week day treatment. Jesus saw that the situation was a virtual challenge to him and at once accepted it. He asked the man to stand up so that every one might see him, put to the Scribes a few searching questions which they could not answer, and cured him on the spot.

3. What was Jesus' view of the Sabbath? In the episode of the grain field Jesus justified his conduct by an appeal to what David allowed his young men to do. When they were hungry, he allowed them to eat sacred bread. Does Jesus argue that since the legal sacred-

ness of the bread did not make its use to satisfy hunger illegal, so the legal sacredness of the Sabbath day ought not to make its use to satisfy hunger illegal? Is it man's need of food that takes precedence over the law? Jesus' disciples do not seem to have been in any desperate need of food. Or on the other hand, was it the greatness of David, as the Scribes felt it, that excused the act of his young men? Was David so great a personage as properly to override the law? If this be the argument, then Jesus is by implication assuming that he himself is a great personage. See further the argument found in the second supplementary reading. In v. 27 there is added a word of Jesus, perhaps spoken on some other occasion, which expresses his fundamental idea. The Sabbath is an institution established by God for the welfare of man. Its use, therefore, is to be determined by the real needs of man.

This general viewpoint of Jesus comes out clearly in his treatment of the cripple on the Sabbath. The man's need was great. A fragment of a lost Gospel makes him say: "I was a stone mason, earning my living with my hands. I beseech you, Jesus, to restore my health that I may not miserably beg for my food." There could be no better use made of the Sabbath than to help such a man immediately. Why keep him in this condition another day? "It is lawful to do good on the Sabbath day." To be desirous to do the man good was certainly more pleasing to God, than to sit plotting the death of Jesus as the Scribes were doing (v. 4)!

QUESTIONS:

What are the principal needs of men that the Sab-

bath ought to meet, and how ought the Sabbath to be spent in order to make it meet these needs?

What real need does public worship meet, and how? — Should the Sabbath be used for recreation, and if so to what extent and by whom?

To what extent should the use of the Sabbath be a subject of governmental legislation?

How can the Sabbath be used for the development of friendship, which was clearly one of the great objects Jesus was always seeking in every way to secure?

From an early Christian document :

“And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and pray, and, as we before said, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings, according to his ability, and the people assent saying, Amen; and there is distribution to each, and a participation of that over which thanks have been given, and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons. And they who are well to do, and willing, give what each thinks fit; and what is collected is deposited with the president, who succors the orphans and widows, and those who, through sickness or any other cause, are in want, and those who are in bonds, and the strangers sojourning among us, and in a word takes care of all who are in need.”

—Justin Martyr, 150 A.D.

STUDY XVII

THE OFFICIAL VERDICT OF THE JERUSALEM SCRIBES AND JESUS' SUMMARY OF THE RESULTS OF HIS TEACHING .

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS :

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------|
| 1. Mark 3: 7-12 | 4. Mark 4: 9-13 |
| 2. Matthew 12: 22-32 | 5. Mark 4: 21-25 |
| 3. Mark 3: 31-35 | 6. Luke 8: 1-15 |
| 7. Matthew 13: 1-23 | |

PASSAGES FOR STUDY :

Mark 3: 19. And he cometh into a house. 20. And the multitude cometh together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread. 21. And when his friends heard it, they went out to lay hold on him: for they said, He is beside himself. 22. And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and, By the prince of the devils casteth he out the devils.

27. But no one can enter into the house of the strong man, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house.

Mark 4: 1. And again he began to teach by the sea side. And there is gathered unto him a very great mul-

titude, so that he entered into a boat, and sat in the sea; and all the multitude were by the sea on the land. 2. And he taught them many things in parables, and said unto them in his teaching, 3. Hearken: Behold, the sower went forth to sow: 4. and it came to pass, as he sowed, some seed fell by the way side, and the birds came and devoured it. 5. And other fell on the rocky ground, where it had not much earth; and straightway it sprang up, because it had no deepness of earth: 6. and when the sun was risen, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away. 7. And other fell among the thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and yielded no fruit. 8. And others fell into the good ground, and yielded fruit, growing up and increasing; and brought forth, thirtyfold, and sixtyfold, and a hundredfold.

14. The sower soweth the word. 15. And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; and when they have heard, straightway cometh Satan, and taketh away the word which hath been sown in them. 16. And these in like manner are they that are sown upon the rocky places, who, when they have heard the word, straightway receive it with joy; 17. and they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; then, when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, straightway they stumble. 18. And others are they that are sown among the thorns; these are they that have heard the word, 19. and the cares of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful. 20. And those are they that were sown upon the good ground; such as hear the word, and accept it, and bear fruit, thirtyfold, and sixtyfold, and a hundredfold.

1. The fact that the Scribes dropped Jesus from the list of eligible synagogue speakers seems not to have lessened his popularity. He gave his lectures on the sea shore and on one occasion was nearly trampled underfoot by the friendly mob that was trying to get near him with their sick (see first supplementary reading).

The crowds so constantly thronged the court-yard of the house where he stayed that there was no time for him or them to eat. The members of his family in Nazareth when they heard of it concluded that he was becoming mentally unbalanced, was threatened with nervous breakdown, and came to Capernaum to take him home for rest (see 3:20-21 and the third supplementary reading).

2. It became necessary for the Scribes to do something to destroy the popularity of a man who from their standpoint seemed to be an irreligious man—they must save the people from his ruinous influence. Accordingly the great Scribes from Jerusalem, the headquarters of scribism, came down to the north country and published in all the synagogues an official opinion regarding him. His wonderful power over demons and over diseases inflicted on men by Satan could not come from God, since Jesus was an irreligious law breaker. It must therefore have come to him from Satan. He was a trusted confederate of Satan. Therefore the demons, whenever they saw him, recognized him as their superior and obeyed him. This verdict was intended to put a stop to Jesus' work. It was calculated to make every sick person or little child dread the touch of his healing hand, to make all men dread the glance of his

evil eye and hurry away from his public lecture before the spell of his demonic word should fall upon them! Jesus invited the great Scribes to a public lecture (Mark 3:23) in which he answered their charge (see second supplementary reading). He appealed to his own inner consciousness of having overcome the Devil instead of being the Devil's trusted subordinate. He presented this idea in the parable of the Strong Man Bound (3:27). He had tied up the Strong Man, the chief of the demons, and was now proceeding to do what he pleased with the lesser demons.

3. At about this time Jesus summed up the results of his months of preaching regarding the nearness of the New Age, the nature of its life, and the way to prepare for it. He summed it up in the form of a parable, the meaning of which was not immediately evident to those who heard it (4:10) but which was thought-provoking and worthy, as Jesus assured them, of the most profound attention (4:9).

The parable gives an experience familiar in ordinary farm life. In Galilee even a small field often had a variety of soil. This resulted in a crop which varied in different parts of the same field.

As Jesus walked thoughtfully through the fields, reflecting upon his months of experience, it seemed to him that the phenomenon of the field exactly illustrated it. His hearers fell into four classes, according to the degree and kind of attention they gave to the truths he had presented. The significant word, several times repeated in Jesus' explanation of the parable, is the word "*hear*." The first class of hearers were like the hard beaten path which took into itself absolutely none of

the seed. These were the Scribes, hard with prejudice against the message of Jesus. Satan was ever with them, seeing to it that no truth received any candid attention (v. 15). (It was they who were in league with Satan, not Jesus!) Another class of hearers always present in his audience was made up of the eager men and women who at once responded, but who could not stand the petty social persecutions which the local Scribes stirred up against them in the communities to which they belonged. They soon gave up preparing for the New Age (vs. 16-17). The third class consisted of men and women much stronger and more independent, who had great capacity for permanent, intelligent attention, but their attention was all given to other things. They had so many perplexing things to attend to, money and business to look after, social engagements to keep, that they never had time to give prolonged thought to the ideas presented by Jesus (vs. 18-19). The fourth class was made up of thoughtful people who, as Luke says (sixth supplementary reading), "in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, hold it fast and bring forth fruit with patience."

4. This shows that Jesus was not deceived by his great popularity. He knew that a large part of it was due to his power over disease and demons and did not indicate devotion to his ideas about the kind of life demanded by the New Age. Still the parable was optimistic, even if there was only one class out of four that was really developing the character requisite for the New Age. It was the farmer's usual success, which was sufficient to sustain amply the life of the community.

5. The problem of developing character is the prob-

lem of securing prolonged attention to the truth, whether on the part of one's self or others. The penalty for refusing to give candid attention is twofold: power to give attention decreases and the truth gradually ceases to seem true. The final consequence is that truth seems falsehood. To the Scribes Jesus finally seemed a product of hell and not of heaven. This is part of the justification for at least a few moments of quiet prayerful thought about Christ each day, for a few moments of close attention to some paragraph from the Bible.

QUESTIONS:

What seems to you to have been the most vital difference between the viewpoint of the Scribes and the viewpoint of Jesus?

What seem to you to be the things that keep men from being thoughtful, from thinking about the subjects that they would be the better for giving candid attention to?

How can you get men to begin to give a degree of candid attention to the ideas of Jesus?

How can we develop in ourselves the power of prolonged attention?

If a man will think steadily and honestly for half an hour of God, of eternity, of some duty, of some good friend, an effect will be produced in his character. "What gets your attention gets you."

STUDY XVIII

JESUS WITHDRAWS FROM THE PROVINCE AFTER A FINAL CLASH WITH THE SCRIBES OVER THEIR TREATMENT OF THE SACRED SCRIPTURES

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS:

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------|
| 1. Mark 4: 26-34 | 4. Mark 5: 21-43 |
| 2. Mark 4: 35-41 | 5. Mark 6: 30-56 |
| 3. Mark 5: 1-20 | 6. Mark 7: 16-23 |
| 7. Matthew 15: 1-20 | |

PASSAGES FOR STUDY:

Mark 7: 1. And there are gathered together unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which had come from Jerusalem, 2. and had seen that some of his disciples ate their bread with defiled, that is, unwashen, hands. 3. For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands diligently, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders: 4. and when they come from the marketplace, except they wash themselves, they eat not: and many other things there be, which they have received to hold, washings of cups, and pots, and brassen vessels. 5. And the Pharisees and the scribes ask him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat their bread with defiled hands?

6. And he said unto them, Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written,

This people honoureth me with their lips,
But their heart is far from me.

7. But in vain do they worship me,

Teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men.

8. Ye leave the commandment of God, and hold fast the tradition of men. 9. And he said unto them, Full well do ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your tradition. 10. For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, He that speaketh evil of father or mother, let him die the death: but ye say, 11. If a man shall say to his father or his mother, That wherewith thou mightest have been profited by me is Corban, that is to say, Given to God; 12. ye no longer suffer him to do aught for his father or his mother; 13. making void the word of God by your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things ye do. 14. And he called to him the multitude again, and said unto them, Hear me all of you, and understand: 15. there is nothing from without the man, that going into him can defile him: but the things which proceed out of the man are those that defile the man.

24. And from thence he arose, and went away into the borders of Tyre and Sidon. And he entered into a house, and would have no man know it: and he could not be hid.

1. The effort of the Great Scribes from Jerusalem to destroy Jesus' popularity and influence by declaring him to be a confederate of Satan seems to have failed. The supplementary readings show this.

He now comes to a clash with them over a matter that is more serious than any yet mentioned, namely their "tradition." "Tradition" was a technical term

designating the steadily growing body of commentary on, or explanation of, the Sacred Law. It had been handed down in oral teaching from one generation of devout scholars to the next. It was popularly supposed to have begun in some way with Moses himself and so to have come pretty directly from God. It was never put into writing until some two or three hundred years after Jesus' day, and then it kept on growing. It is still growing, unless the war has stopped the discussions of learned Rabbis.

The motive of the Great Scribes was a very natural desire to tell the people what the Law meant, to describe its application to daily life, to put it in the form in which it must be obeyed by those who proposed to become righteous enough to enter the New Age. The aim of the Scribes was to secure obedience to all the details of the Law, as they explained it, on the part of all the people. When, therefore, a popular prophet talking about preparation for the New Age ignored, or opposed, the Sacred Tradition, he seemed to the Scribes to be a serious menace to true religion.

2. Jesus, who had never studied under any Scribe, had, of course, never learned the "tradition." He had heard it quoted by various Scribes whom he had for years heard teaching in synagogues on the Sabbath. He had carefully studied the Law and had come to feel that the "tradition" was at many points absolutely opposed to the spirit of the Law it purported to explain. In his own synagogue lectures he never quoted it. "He spoke as one having authority and not as the scribes." Some of his own immediate disciples were notoriously lax in failing to wash their hands properly before eat-

ing. The Scribes were particularly solicitous on this point because in the Holy Law persons were rendered ceremonially "unclean" by touching various "unclean" persons or objects. Since fingers were used instead of knives and forks in eating, there was great danger that those who ate "with unwashed hands" would render the food they touched unclean, and so by it they would be seriously "defiled" in a religious sense. Local Scribes and some of the Great Scribes from Jerusalem complained to Jesus about the wrong doing of his disciples in this particular (vs. 1-5). Jesus turned on them with greater vigor than he had previously showed in his intercourse with them. He called them "hypocrites," that is, those who posed as teachers of God's law but really were opposed to its spirit (vs. 6-9). Perhaps this vigor was aroused by the moral perversity they had showed in calling the Spirit of God within him, for which he felt so profound a reverence, the Spirit of Satan. (See Study XVII, Mark 3: 28-30.)

He then proceeded to specify a particular in which their tradition was in flagrant opposition to the spirit of the Law. The Law regarded the honoring of a father and a mother as so important that failure deserved the death penalty. But the tradition allowed a man to regard his entire estate as "devoted" by a vow to God in such a way as to forbid the use of any of it for a father or mother. The man, however, seems not necessarily to have actually parted with any of his property. If he afterward repented of such scandalous treatment of his parents, the tradition made it impossible for him to go back on his vow. Jesus

said that there were many such horrible inconsistencies in their tradition (vs. 10-13). Perhaps he had known of many such in his Nazareth years.

It is very exasperating to a specialist to be accused by an ordinary man of incompetence in the sphere of his specialty! Jesus went still further in his attack on the spurious religion of the particular Scribes with whom he was dealing. He delivered a public lecture attended by crowds of people in which he declared the tradition of the Scribes regarding eating with unwashed hands to be foolishness! (vs. 14-15).

3. This bold act on the part of Jesus was an absolute and final refusal to compromise with the Scribes. Jesus was now acting in accordance with the resolve he had made in connection with the temptation to worship Satan, which had come to him in the beginning. He would be absolutely loyal to the views of truth which God gave him, no matter what the immediate consequences to himself or his cause might be. Having done this bold thing, he felt at liberty to avoid for the time the fierce opposition of the Scribes. He made a strategic retreat to the far north. "From thence he arose and went away into the borders of Tyre and Sidon" (v. 24).

QUESTIONS:

What appears here to have been included in Jesus' idea of true religion?

What constitutes "defilement" in a true religious sense?

What is it to "honor" a person? To honor one's parents?

Jesus saw in the family God's arrangement for the development of character. Its seven wonderful relationships make a mighty appeal for the friendly use of all a man's powers. What a varied demand is made by a man's relation to his father, mother, brother, sister, wife, son, and daughter! Are you becoming the sort of person that can put truth and honor and the material for tender memories into all these relationships?

PART IV: JESUS' STRATEGIC RETREAT TO
PREPARE THE TWELVE FOR THE GREAT
EVENT IN JERUSALEM

STUDY XIX

THE ORIGINAL APPOINTMENT AND EARLIER TRAINING OF THE TWELVE

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS:

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Luke 6: 12-19 | 4. Matthew 10: 34-11: 1 |
| 2. Matthew 9: 35-10: 15 | 5. John 1: 35-42 |
| 3. Matthew 10: 16-33 | 6. John 1: 43-51 |
| 7. Luke 10: 1-20 | |

PASSAGES FOR STUDY:

Mark 3: 13. And he goeth up into the mountain, and calleth unto him whom he himself would: and they went unto him. 14. And he appointed twelve, that they might be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, 15. and to have authority to cast out devils: 16. and Simon he surnamed Peter; 17. and James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; and them he surnamed Boanerges, which is, Sons of thunder: 18. and Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphæus, and Thaddæus, and Simon the Cananæan, and Judas Iscariot, 19. which also betrayed him.

Mark 6: 7. And he called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and he gave them authority over the unclean spirits; 8. and he charged them that they should take nothing for their journey, save a staff only; no bread,

no wallet, no money in their purse; 9. but to go shod with sandals: and, said he, put not on two coats. 10. And he said unto them, Wheresoever ye enter into a house, there abide till ye depart thence. 11. And whatsoever place shall not receive you, and they hear you not, as ye go forth thence, shake off the dust that is under your feet for a testimony unto them. 12. And they went out, and preached that men should repent. 13. And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them.

30. And the apostles gather themselves together unto Jesus; and they told him all things, whatsoever they had done, and whatsoever they had taught. 31. And he saith unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while. For there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat. 32. And they went away in the boat to a desert place apart.

1. Some time before the point we have now reached in the Studies, Jesus had selected from the large number of people who listened to his teaching with some regularity twelve men, to whom he proposed to give special attention in order to prepare them for special responsibilities. He had sent out personal invitations to a considerable number of people, asking them to meet him at a specified place in the hill country of Galilee (3: 13) and there, after seeking guidance from God in a night of prayer (Luke 6: 12-13), he selected twelve men, whom he apparently presented to the rest to be recognized thenceforth as his special assistants (3: 14-15). There was a significance in the number twelve. It was popularly expected that the old twelve tribe organization of the nation would be revived in

the New Age. The old prophet Elijah was expected to reappear just before the beginning of the New Age "to restore all things" (Mark 9: 11-12). Very likely such reorganization of the nation may have sometimes been expected of him. We shall see that many people considered Jesus to be Elijah.

Jesus expected two things of the Twelve. They were to go about urging people to make the sort of preparation for the life of the New Age that Jesus had described, and they were to attack the power of Satan (3: 14-15). They were to get power to do both of these things through continued association with Jesus, repeatedly hearing his teaching and experiencing the contagion of his character (3: 14).

He presumably saw in these men peculiar fitness for such work. Perhaps also they were men who had no families or whose families were not dependent on them for support. They included widely separated political classes. Matthew the publican, who had been ready to accept office under the Romans, and Simon the "Zealot," who was ready for revolt against the Romans, were both included.

2. An account is given in Mark of the first occasion on which the Twelve went out to see what they could accomplish in the work they had been chosen to do. They were sent out in couples in order to keep each other's courage up and to make a stronger impression on the communities they visited. What two or three witnesses said had peculiar force (II Corinthians 13: 1). They were to be regarded as "prophets," emphasizing by the peculiarities of their dress and manner, as the prophets so often did, the character of their mes-

sage. The purpose of the directions given in 6:8-11 is to make the impression in oriental fashion that there was urgent need of instant action. They were to show by their dress that they had taken no time to prepare for the journey and they were to spend no time after they arrived in the leisurely social functions of oriental life. It was as if a man without hat or coat or shoes should ride through the village, shouting out some exciting message as he rode. The message of these men was: "The Kingdom of God is at hand. Repent!"

3. After some weeks of such work they assembled again and reported the things they had said in the synagogues or in the market places and recounted their successes or failures in curing the sick and driving out demons (6:30). Their report must have been intensely interesting to Jesus. His night of prayer preceding their appointment shows how significant their mission seemed to him to be. This appears still more clearly in what he said about his experience at a later time, when seventy disciples were sent out in couples to do the same thing that the Twelve do here. While they were out on their mission he had a profound spiritual experience, a vision in which he saw Satan fall swiftly and hopelessly like a thunderbolt hurled out of its place in the sky. (Luke 10:18, seventh supplementary reading.) Jesus was certain that men going out in the power of his name could do that which would overthrow evil in the world, that which would make the life of the New Age universal and secure.

5. Jesus felt that the Twelve needed rest after the strenuous experiences of their first campaign (6:31). The nervous strain of speaking from the synagogue

platform was considerable for men who had not been accustomed to public speech. The opposition of the local Scribes in each community involved a good deal of unpleasant friction. The subject which they everywhere presented—the coming judgment day and the dawning of the New Age—was in itself exciting, and led to many long and exhausting personal interviews. Driving out demons too must have involved considerable nervous strain. It is not strange that Jesus took them apart from the crowds that were always about and provided for a period of rest.

QUESTIONS:

Is it possible to conjecture how the Twelve were paired, that is, how it was determined who should go together?

What were the principal motives that influenced them in their mission?

In what ways would the thought of Jesus have been an inspiration to these men while they were out on their mission?

What are the advantages of association with another person in religious activity? What, if any, are the dangers of such association? As you review your own life what moral values have ever come into your life from another and how have they come?

“And I will give

To thee Man’s work, so fitted to thy growth

That in God’s Kingdom-Building thou mayst use
The largest powers. But this will cost thee both

Thyself and things which, dear to thee, thou’lt lose.”

—Doremus Scudder.

STUDY XX

JESUS INSISTS THAT THE MESSIANIC SECRET BE PRESERVED AND ASCERTAINS THE TWELVE BY THE INCREDIBLE ANNOUNCEMENT OF A MESSIANIC EXECUTION AND RESURRECTION SOON TO OCCUR IN JERUSALEM

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS:

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Matthew 16: 13-28 | 4. Matthew 17: 1-13 |
| 2. Luke 9: 18-27 | 5. Luke 9: 28-36 |
| 3. Mark 9: 2-13 | 6. Mark 9: 14-29 |
| 7. Luke 9: 37-43 | |

¹PASSAGE FOR STUDY:

Mark 8: 27. And Jesus went forth, and his disciples, into the villages of Cæsarea Philippi: and in the way he asked his disciples, saying unto them, Who do men say that I am? 28. And they told him, saying, John the Baptist: and others, Elijah; but others, One of the prophets. 29. And he asked them, But who say ye that I am? Peter answereth and saith unto him, Thou art the Christ. 30. And he charged

¹Do not fail to read the "Passage for Study" both before and after reading the comment. Note, if possible, in writing the thoughts that will more and more come to you in connection with the study.

them that they should tell no man of him. 31. And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders, and the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. 32. And he spake the saying openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him. 33. But he turning about, and seeing his disciples, rebuked Peter, and saith, Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men.

1. In this period of temporary retreat before the hostility of the Scribes, Jesus makes an earnest endeavor to adjust the minds of the Twelve to a most perplexing and unwelcome announcement. He prefaces it by an inquiry regarding the public estimate of him which the Twelve, perhaps during occasional visits to their homes in Galilee, have found. They report that the antagonism of the Scribes has not diminished his popularity. He is still the people's Prophet. He is even thought to be a reincarnation of some one of the great prophets of the past, who were expected to appear in the last days of the Old Age. Some think that the spirit of John the Baptist, recently executed, has entered into Jesus' body. No one thinks him to be the "Messiah," or "Christ." But now, for the first time in Mark's Gospel, it suddenly develops that one of the Twelve, speaking at least for some of the others also, regards Jesus as the Messiah in disguise. The narrative in Mark leaves it uncertain whether or not this is a new idea. It seems hardly probable that in these dark days when Jesus is a semi-exile from his province the idea should first spring up in the minds of the Twelve. The

parallel account in Matthew's Gospel represents Jesus as assuming that they have been accustomed to think of him as the Messianic Son of Man. In any case one thing is perfectly clear, namely, that the public does not think Jesus to be the Messiah and that he does not intend to have them. His Messiahship is to be the strictly guarded secret of the inner circle of disciples (v. 30).

2. Then follows an announcement that comes like a blow in the face to his most enthusiastic disciple and that seems likely for a while completely to alienate all the rest of the inner circle (v. 31).

There were several startling features in the announcement. It was perplexing to hear him call himself "The Son of Man," for this was the designation of a glorious angelic being reserved in the heavens by God until the judgment day, when one class of people expected him to come to the earth as a glorious Messiah and judge the world. This was the representation in the Book of Enoch—a book highly esteemed later by many Christians (Jude 14). Another class of people looked for a Messiah to be called "The Son of David," whose career would be more in accord with that of the old warrior King David. Jesus never uses this title of himself, but evidently thinks of himself as a Messiah of the less military, less narrowly Jewish, Son of Man type. But what is "The Son of Man" doing on the earth before the judgment day? The disciples might conclude that the glorious radiant spirit of the heavenly angelic Son of Man had taken possession of the human body of Jesus. (Three of them are represented later to have seen the heavenly ra-

diance shine through the flesh and clothing of Jesus. See third supplementary reading.) But how could anyone conceive that the deathless heavenly Son of Man should die, pass into the regions of the dead, and come up thence in the general resurrection at the judgment day, instead of down from heaven, as all who looked for a Messiah of the Son of Man type expected? This problem they never solved during the lifetime of Jesus. When Jesus later spoke of it, they began "questioning among themselves what the rising from the dead should mean" (Mark 9:10). Still later, "They understood not the saying and were afraid to ask him" (Mark 9:32). They probably made up their minds that it was one of Jesus' strange utterances, like some of the parables which they found it hard to understand. When he did actually die, as we shall see later, they utterly abandoned the theory that he had been the Messiah, and reports of his resurrection seemed "idle talk" (Luke 24:11). Their inability to understand Jesus is not to be wondered at because the specification of a three-day period between death and resurrection did not naturally suggest to their minds three literal days, but rather some short suitable period. The prophet Hosea had used such an expression of the desperate condition of the nation in his day—a passage with which Jesus was doubtless familiar: "Come and let us return unto Jehovah; for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live before him" (Hosea 6: 1-2). Jesus himself used the phrase in this same vague general way in Luke 13:32, "Behold I cast out

demons and perform cures today and tomorrow and the third day I am perfected."

The incredibility of Jesus' statement to the disciples is also easy to understand when we remember, in addition to what has just been said, that no Jew of that day had ever dreamed that the Messiah, when he appeared, would die. Statements in the Old Testament, which the Christians later understood to be clear prophecies of a messianic death, had never been so understood by any Jewish rabbi.

3. Peter's readiness to remonstrate with Jesus shows Peter's conception of Messiahship. A Messiah, even of the Son of Man type, was like a king who sometimes might need to profit by the advice of a trusty counselor. The intensity with which Jesus repelled Peter's advice, shows that he was in some measure experiencing a recurrence of the temptations developed at the beginning of the Gospel. By listening to the suggestion of Satan through Peter he might gain the whole world by going the easy way. But what would become of his own soul in its wonderful relation to the Heavenly Father (v. 36)?

QUESTIONS:

Certain great questions naturally arise, some of which have never been fully answered. Reflection upon them is nevertheless useful.

Why did Jesus wish at this time to conceal his Messiahship from the public?

What led Jesus to feel so sure that God would let the Scribes kill him? At what time did he begin to realize this?

What good did it seem to him would be accomplished by his execution?

Does the suffering of the innocent, occasioned by the conduct of the guilty, produce any moral effect on the life of the world?

“The cry of man’s anguish went up to God,
Lord, take away pain!
The Shadow that darkens the world Thou hast made;
The close coiling chain
That strangles the heart; the burden that weighs
On the wings that should soar—
Lord, take away pain from the world Thou hast made
That it love Thee the more!

Then answered the Lord to the cry of the world,
Shall I take away pain,
And with it the power of the soul to endure,
Made strong by the strain?
Shall I take away pity that knits heart to heart;
And sacrifice high?
Will ye lose all your heroes that lift from the fire
White brows to the sky?
Shall I take away love that redeems with a price
And smiles at its loss?
Can ye spare from your lives that would cling unto mine
The Christ on his cross?”

—Poem Found Written on the Wall of a Hospital.

STUDY XXI

JESUS ENDEAVORS TO PREPARE THE DISCIPLES TO SHARE HIS PROS- PECTIVE SUFFERING

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS:

- | | |
|------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Mark 9: 30-37 | 4. Mark 10: 13-16 |
| 2. Mark 9: 38-50 | 5. Mark 10: 17-31 |
| 3. Mark 10: 1-12 | 6. Matthew 20: 17-28 |
| 7. John 13: 1-17 | |

PASSAGES FOR STUDY:

Mark 8: 34. And he called unto him the multitude with his disciples, and said unto them, If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. 35. For whosoever would save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's shall save it. 36. For what doth it profit a man, to gain the whole world, and forfeit his life? 37. For what should a man give in exchange for his life? 38. For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of man also shall be ashamed of him, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels. 9: 1. And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There be some here of them that stand by, which shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God come with power.

Mark 10: 35. And there come near unto him James and John, the sons of Zebedee, saying unto him, Master, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall ask of thee. 36. And he said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you? 37. And they said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and one on thy left hand, in thy glory. 38. But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink the cup that I drink? or to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? 39. And they said unto him, We are able. And Jesus said unto them, The cup that I drink ye shall drink; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized: 40. but to sit on my right hand or on my left hand is not mine to give: but it is for them for whom it hath been prepared. 41. And when the ten heard it, they began to be moved with indignation concerning James and John. 42. And Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great ones exercise authority over them. 43. But it is not so among you: but whosoever would become great among you, shall be your minister: 44. and whosoever would be first among you, shall be servant of all. 45. For verily the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

1. It was disconcerting enough for the disciples to find Jesus in the privacy of their inner circle presenting by a strange "death and resurrection" parable the idea that he as messianic Son of Man must endure some sort of suffering before the New Age could dawn. But now he went further, not only in private teaching, but

also in speaking openly to such local crowds as gathered about him during these weeks spent outside of Galilee. Without telling outsiders that he thought himself to be anything more than God's prophet, he began to say repeatedly that all who wished to consort with him as disciples must prepare to suffer even death (v. 34). He presented this idea in his usual concrete style. He pictured a procession of men going out to crucifixion—not an unusual sight. At the head of this procession walked Jesus, and after him followed the line of his disciples, each carrying the horizontal piece of a cross on his shoulder. This picture of men going out to execution was calculated to put a decided quietus on the aspirations of any who were tempted to think that Jesus, whether as prophet or Messiah, looked forward to a successful revolt against Rome! All revolutionary messianists would instantly lose interest in him. It is no wonder that Peter regarded such a declaration, whether meant to be literal statement or parable, as a serious blunder.

Jesus described the joining of this procession as "denying one's self." To deny one's leader is to deny the control of the leader—as Peter later denied his "Lord." To deny one's self is to deny to one's self, to one's selfish inclinations, the right to control choices. The disciple does not yield to the control of the natural desire to preserve his life at any cost, but instead joins the death procession. Then in v. 35 follows a play upon the word "life" in its two senses. He who is bound to preserve this present bodily "life" at any cost will lose the "life" of the New Age. Why to the mind of Jesus should it seem necessary ever to lose the

bodily life, in order to gain the higher immortal life of the New Age? At least a partial answer is found in the essential nature of the life of the New Age. It is a life in which each man wishes for every other man such a fair chance at all good things as a man would wish his brother to have. When a man begins here and now to stand for this kind of life, as Jesus did, he runs serious risk of getting hurt. If wherever he finds a man or any class of men being exploited by selfish men he makes vigorous protest, as Jesus did, he will very probably suffer some serious loss—perhaps the loss of life itself. A case in point would be that of a lawyer who proposes, whenever he has suitable opportunity, to protect the interests of any men or class of men who are being selfishly exploited by others. He runs the risk of receiving a small income in a profession in which professional success is often estimated in terms of income. He may conceivably even get into a situation in which he will seem to be an absolute failure. As it turned out, Jesus, from the standpoint of a large element in the Jewish nation, was an absolute failure as a would-be Messiah.

Of course from the standpoint of Jesus, for any man to turn from such a career meant the rupture of those fundamental relationships with God and good men which constitute the immortal life. No conceivable gain could be compensation for this terrible loss.

2. The three leading disciples had an experience with Jesus on a mountain in the nighttime, which thoroughly convinced them that the spirit of the heavenly Son of Man was in his body (Mark 9: 2-13), although it did not at all solve the problem of his strange statements

about death and resurrection. The confidence of these three leaders in the Messiahship of Jesus held the rest of the Twelve loyally to him. They all began to count confidently on high offices in the New Age (Mark 9: 33-34), and two of them, to the disgust of the others, tried to make him promise beforehand to give them precedence over all the rest (10: 35-41).

In dealing with the disciples regarding their ambition, Jesus took occasion again to present in another form the idea discussed in the last paragraph. The man who wished to be really great in the New Age must not be wishing for power to bend the lives of others to his own convenience. Not what he could succeed in making others contribute to him, but what he could succeed in contributing to others, would constitute the measure of his greatness. He must be "everybody's bonds slave." Here, too, Jesus led the way and set the example, just as he headed the procession of men going out to execution (v. 45). Being everybody's bond-slave does not, of course, mean doing for them what they ought to do for themselves. Such action would tend to produce in them the very disposition Jesus was protesting against. The principle to be followed in doing for another is evidently to do for him what will stimulate him to responsive good will and efficient action, which are the essential elements in character. Neither is it simply one other man's interests that are to be considered. Being everybody's bond-slave meant working for the common good and summoning all others to do the same. Jesus not only worked for the common good of mankind himself at great cost, but he insisted that all his disciples should unite with him in doing

the same thing even at the risk of losing life (10: 45). Such action results in "ransoming many." It frees them from the terrible forms of blighting bondage which human selfishness inflicts on society and introduces them into that large liberty to develop all their normal powers which will characterize the Civilization of Brotherly Men.

QUESTIONS:

How has the violent death of Jesus actually worked out larger liberty for men?

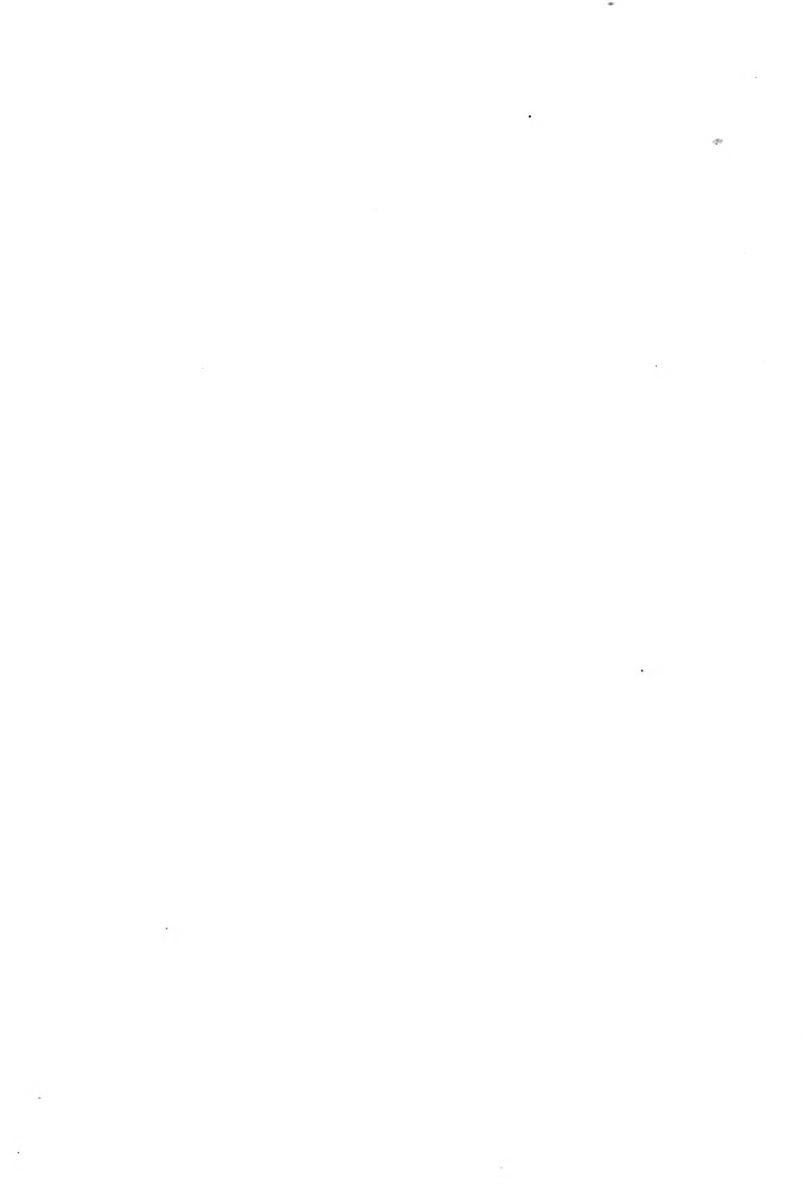
How would human society be any worse off if Jesus had not died as he did?

Have you known or read of any man whose death has brought moral enlargement to your life?

Is there anything in your conception of the Immortal Life that would make it seem worth while to sacrifice largely to secure it either for yourself or others? If so, what?

"If, for the age to come, this hour
Of trial hath vicarious power,
And, blest by Thee, our present pain
Be Liberty's eternal gain,

Thy will be done!"
—Whittier, "Thy Will Be Done."



STUDY XXII

JUST OUTSIDE THE GATES OF JERUSALEM SOME OF JESUS' DISCIPLES IN A KIND OF ACTED PARABLE URGE MESSIAHSHIP UPON HIM

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS :

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Matthew 20:29—21:11 | 4. Luke 19:11-27 |
| 2. Luke 18:35-43 | 5. Luke 19:28-38 |
| 3. Luke 19:1-10 | 6. Luke 19:39-44 |
| 7. John 12:12-19 | |

PASSAGES FOR STUDY :

Mark 10: 1. And he arose from thence, and cometh into the borders of Judæa and beyond Jordan: and multitudes come together unto him again; and, as he was wont, he taught them again.

46. And they come to Jericho: and as he went out from Jericho, with his disciples and a great multitude, the son of Timæus, Bartimæus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the way side. 47. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me. 48. And many rebuked him, that he should hold his peace: but he cried out the more a great deal, Thou son of David, have mercy on me. 49. And Jesus stood still, and said, Call ye him. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good

cheer: rise, he calleth thee. 50. And he, casting away his garment, sprang up, and came to Jesus. 51. And Jesus answered him, and said, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? And the blind man said unto him, Rabboni, that I may receive my sight. 52. And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And straightway he received his sight, and followed him in the way.

Mark 11: 1. And when they draw nigh unto Jerusalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount of Olives, he sendeth two of his disciples, 2. and saith unto them, Go your way into the village that is over against you: and straightway as ye enter into it, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon no man ever yet sat; loose him, and bring him. 3. And if any one say unto you, Why do ye this? say ye, The Lord hath need of him; and straightway he will send him back hither. 4. And they went away, and found a colt tied at the door without in the open street; and they loose him. 5. And certain of them that stood there said unto them, What do ye, loosening the colt? 6. And they said unto them even as Jesus had said: and they let them go. 7. And they bring the colt unto Jesus, and cast on him their garments; and he sat upon him. 8. And many spread their garments upon the way; and others branches, which they had cut from the fields. 9. And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, Hosanna; blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Blessed is the kingdom that cometh, the kingdom of our father David: Hosanna in the highest.

1. Jesus came out from his comparative seclusion and began public teaching, though not in Galilee (10:1). He had passed through Galilee, but tried to escape

observation—perhaps by traveling in the night. He “passed through Galilee; and he would not that any man should know it” (Mark 9:30).

Now finally he decided to appear boldly in Jerusalem, the stronghold of the Great Scribes. On the last day of the journey to the city, fifteen miles away from its gates, in the city of Jericho, a significant incident occurred. As Jesus was just leaving Jericho for Jerusalem with a great company of friendly Passover pilgrims, a man who was blind and a beggar suddenly raised the messianic cry: “Jesus, Son of David, pity me!” There was a fitness in the fact that the cry came from such a man, for Jesus had been famous for his devotion to the sick and the poor. As we have seen, Jesus had concealed his Messiahship from the public. He had done so because his main purpose was to reform the current conception of religion, of real righteousness, of the life of the New Age, and the way to prepare for it. This great purpose would have been defeated, if Jesus had let it be known that he thought himself to be the Messiah. People would have crowded to him, expecting him to do the things they supposed a Messiah would do. Especially the revolutionary messianists would have tried to use him. Jesus would have had to disappoint all these expectations, and in so doing would have lost his great chance to be a teacher of true religion. Furthermore, of course, he would instantly have become an object of suspicion to the Roman authorities and would have been liable to arrest at any moment.

But now he seems to make no objection to this title. The blind man was immediately cured and joined the glad procession. All day long as the great company

climbed the steep ascent to Jerusalem the man talked enthusiastically to everybody about his theory that Jesus was the Messiah. Fortunately, no Roman spies seem to have been in the crowd.

2. Just outside the city gates a peculiar demonstration was made in which Jesus at least acquiesced. To many, probably to most of the crowd, Jesus was still what he always had been, a great prophet of God. When the crowd passed through the city gates "all the city was stirred saying, Who is this?" The multitudes replied: "This is the prophet, Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee" (Matthew 21:11). There was, however, in the crowd a considerable element that shared the conviction of the blind beggar—as of course did Jesus' own disciples, who knew the messianic secret. This element arranged an impromptu demonstration with which Jesus himself cooperated. In a way which suggested a certain passage from the Old Testament prophet, Zechariah, (see Matthew 21:5. first supplementary reading) Jesus mounted an ass. Many spread their coarse cloaks in the pathway, together with leafy twigs from wayside trees. According to Matthew and Luke, they hailed Jesus as Messiah. Their language, according to Mark, was not quite so explicit. The whole affair was a kind of acted parable not sufficiently formal and explicit to attract the attention of Roman officials, who would have had soldiers on the spot quickly if the procession had entered the city gates with any open proclamation of Jesus as messianic King. It was all over in a few moments. The borrowed ass was sent back to its owner. The pilgrims picked up their dirty cloaks and traveled on.

3. Why did Jesus, who had so insistently urged secrecy, encourage this demonstration? He had done his work as a teacher of true religion. He had long felt that the crisis was coming in Jerusalem and he had no longer any disposition to delay it. This demonstration, ludicrous as it may have seemed to a casual observer, gave expression to some of the deepest emotions in Jesus' heart. He was a poor man's Messiah, in the midst of his poor, not riding on a war horse, nor with soldiers all about him. Yet he was coming to his capital city, to the temple of Jehovah, clothed in his heart with a sense of authority from God to make true religion universal and secure in the civilization of the world.

4. It is to be noted also that according to Luke's Gospel (third supplementary reading), while Jesus was still in Jericho he had given a most flagrant and conspicuous illustration of the same disposition that had so enraged the Scribes in Galilee. He had gone openly to the house of a rich Jericho publican and actually lodged over night with him. This would, of course, be instantly reported to the Great Scribes in Jerusalem. Jesus was determined that they should fully understand his convictions. There was an infinite force and a fire of moral conviction within his soul.

QUESTIONS:

Think out the conversation that might have taken place between the blind beggar Bartimeus and the rich publican Zacchæus after each had had his experience with Jesus in Jericho!

What do you imagine to have been the main thoughts

in the mind of Jesus as he reviewed the events of this day at its close?

What thoughts were in the mind of Peter?

“Once to every man and nation comes the moment to
decide,
In the strife of Truth with Falsehood, for the good or
evil side;
Some great cause, God’s new Messiah, offering each the
bloom or blight,
Parts the goats upon the left hand, and the sheep upon
the right,
And the choice goes by forever ’twixt that darkness and
that light.”

—Lowell, “The Present Crisis.”

STUDY XXIII

JESUS' PUBLIC ATTACK ON THE PRIESTS FOR ABUSES IN THE TEMPLE ADMINISTRATION RESULTS IN A POWERFUL COMBINATION OF PRIESTS AND SCRIBES AGAINST HIM

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS:

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Mark 12: 1-12 | 4. Mark 12: 28-37 |
| 2. Mark 12: 13-17 | 5. Mark 12: 41-44 |
| 3. Mark 12: 18-27 | 6. Matthew 23: 1-22 |
| 7. Matthew 23: 23-39 | |

PASSAGES FOR STUDY:

Mark 11: 11. And he entered into Jerusalem, into the temple; and when he had looked round about upon all things, it being now eventide, he went out unto Bethany with the twelve.

15. And they come to Jerusalem: and he entered into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and them that bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold the doves; 16. and he would not suffer that any man should carry a vessel through the temple. 17. And he taught, and said unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations? but ye

have made it a den of robbers. 18. And the chief priests and the scribes heard it, and sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, for all the multitude was astonished at his teaching.

27. And they come again to Jerusalem: and as he was walking in the temple, there come to him the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders; 28. and they said unto him, By what authority doest thou these things? or who gave thee this authority to do these things? 29. And Jesus said unto them, I will ask of you one question, and answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. 30. The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or from men? answer me. 31. And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then did ye not believe him? 32. But should we say, From men—they feared the people: for all verily held John to be a prophet. 33. And they answered Jesus and say, We know not. And Jesus saith unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.

Mark 12: 38. And in his teaching he said, Beware of the scribes, which desire to walk in long robes, and to have salutations in the marketplaces, 39. and chief seats in the synagogues, and chief places at feasts: 40. they which devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers; these shall receive greater condemnation.

1. The great company of Passover pilgrims, after their harmless demonstration outside the city, went with eager curiosity and devotion to Jehovah's House. The Temple was a comparatively small building, but the extensive paved courts and beautiful colonnades about it occupied a large section on the eastern side of the city, which was separated from the rest of the

city by a high wall. As Jesus walked about in these great open courts he saw things that seemed to him scandalous. There were hundreds of crates of doves and, according to John's Gospel, also sheep and oxen ready for sale to worshipers, for sacrifice. Since these market men must have been there by permission of the priests, very possibly doves and animals bought from them would be guaranteed to pass the inspection of the priests. There were also money changers with piles of coins on their tables, ready to change money brought from abroad into current coin.

This whole proceeding seemed to Jesus to be defeating the purpose of the place. The Temple was meant to be a place to which people could come from all over the world to pray to Jehovah. When, after a long and expensive journey by land and sea, they finally reached the place, they found a situation which made quiet prayer almost impossible. There was not only the noisy excited conversation incident to oriental bargaining, but these dealers were also shamelessly cheating many of the foreigners and poorer pilgrims. The holy place was no better than a cave which had been made headquarters for a gang of robbers! In the bitterness of spirit which prevailed when visitors found that they had been cheated, how could men devoutly pray! (v. 17).

As Jesus thought over the circumstances at his lodgings in the Bethany suburb of the city, he decided that he would break this situation up the next morning. Accordingly when he arrived at the Temple, he went about among the market men and insisted on their leaving. He went rapidly about, tipping over the money

changers' tables and sending their carefully piled coins rolling in every direction on the pavement. According to John's Gospel, he himself hurried the sheep and oxen out with a whip. It was not safe to oppose him, for he was known to be a popular prophet with a great following among the people, who had long been exasperated by the frauds perpetrated upon them. Jesus also stationed men at gates leading into the temple courts to turn back any carrying jars or other burdens who were utilizing these courts as a short cut to or from the eastern suburbs. He proposed to make all the surroundings of the Temple conducive to prayer.

Jesus not only took this decisive action, but he "taught" (v. 17), that is, he gave a public lecture, or address, to crowds of people on the mal-administration of the Temple by the Priests! This bold action led the Priests, who up to this time have not appeared in the narrative, to combine with the Scribes who had, of course, long been bitterly hostile to Jesus. There was ordinarily no particular cordiality existing between the great men of the Temple and the great men of the synagogue, but no one could tell to what lengths the People's Prophet might be tempted to go and it was necessary to make common cause against him (v. 18).

2. The next day a committee consisting of Priests, Scribes, and other members of the chief court of the nation met Jesus and informally asked him by what authority he had presumed to meddle with temple arrangements the day before (vs. 27-28).

Jesus replied in a way not unusual among rabbis, by asking a counter-question—namely, by what authority they understood John the Baptist to have acted. This

was a very pertinent question for several reasons. John had presumed to call the nation to repentance and baptism in view of the nearness of the New Age, an action on his part which invaded the prerogative of the Scribes, just as Jesus' action the day before had encroached upon the authority of the Priests. Furthermore, in asking their opinion of John he was virtually asking them their opinion of himself, for he identified himself with John's movement. The question, too, was a searching one, for it showed them that they were cowards and no true leaders of the people; they did not dare to say outright what they thought (v. 31).

Then in a very suggestive allegory (first supplementary reading), without saying anything about his own Messiahship, he went on to imply that they had always been killing prophets and would not shrink from killing the messianic Son of God whenever he might appear. They were thoroughly selfish men, who would have no welcome for God's Messiah. The Priests were so well satisfied with large revenues and political power under the Romans, and the Scribes so well satisfied with the prestige of theological and social leadership that a Messiah introducing another social order would be an unwelcome intruder.

3. In these last tense days Jesus in his public lecturing (12:38) boldly exposed the weak points of the Great Scribes in order to break up if possible the artificial sham religion that they were trying to perpetuate among the people. They liked to walk about in dignified clothing, watching for deferential greetings in the market. They liked to have greater honor than others in the arrangements for seating at dinner parties and

in the synagogues. They were eager to get money from rich susceptible widows who were imposed upon by their pious ways, or from poor widows in return for their pious ministrations. It is easy to see how such conduct would arouse the indignation of a red-blooded working man! Jesus predicted for them a severe verdict in the judgment day (v. 40).

QUESTIONS:

Suppose that Jesus should meet the statesmen of a present day nation at its capital—what would be the main features of the ideal of national life that he would present?

What would be the main features of church life in the ideal that he would present to the leaders of the present day church?

What place would Jesus give to prayer in the development of national life?

“God give us men! The time demands
Strong minds, great hearts, true faith and willing
hands.

Men whom the lust of office does not kill;

Men whom the spoils of office cannot buy;

Men who possess opinions and a will;

Men who have honor; men who will not lie.”

—J. G. Holland, “The Need for Men.”

STUDY XXIV

THE PRIESTS AND SCRIBES SECURE A
CONFEDERATE AMONG THE TWELVE,
BUT JESUS SUCCEEDS IN GATHERING
THE TWELVE FOR A SOLEMN LAST
MEAL TOGETHER BEFORE THE
TRAITOR ACTS

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS :

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Mark 13 : 1-23 | 4. Matthew 20 : 17-29 |
| 2. Mark 13 : 24-36 | 5. Luke 22 : 3-30 |
| 3. Matthew 26 : 6-16 | 6. John 12 : 1-8 |
| 7. I Corinthians 11 : 17-34 | |

PASSAGES FOR STUDY :

Mark 14: 1. Now after two days was the feast of the passover and the unleavened bread: and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take him with subtilty, and kill him: for they said, 2. Not during the feast, lest haply there shall be a tumult of the people.

10. And Judas Iscariot, he that was one of the twelve, went away unto the chief priests, that he might deliver him unto them. 11. And they, when they heard it, were glad, and promised to give him money. And he sought how he might conveniently deliver him unto them.

17. And when it was evening he cometh with the twelve. 18. And as they sat and were eating, Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, One of you shall betray me, even he that eateth with me. 19. They began to be sorrowful, and to say unto him one by one, Is it I? 20. And he said unto them, It is one of the twelve, he that dippeth with me in the dish. 21. For the Son of man goeth, even as it is written of him: but woe unto that man through whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had not been born. 22. And as they were eating, he took bread, and when he had blessed, he brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take ye: this is my body. 23. And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave to them: and they all drank of it. 24. And he said unto them, This is my blood of the covenant, which is shed for many. 25. Verily I say unto you, I will no more drink of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.

1. The Priests and Scribes were thoroughly alarmed. Jesus' bold action and public speeches in the temple courts indicated to their minds that he was planning to head some popular movement against them. There were only two more days before the week of the Passover Festival would begin, when the city would be filled with tens of thousands of visitors, many of them friends of Jesus. It would be unsafe to attack him during that week and yet it was unsafe to leave him free to utilize the opportunity for action presented by Passover Week. It seemed necessary to get rid of him before the week began, but this could be done only by strategy. Just at this juncture help came from a most unexpected source—one of the inner circle of Jesus' disciples. They

needed exactly such a confederate, one who could lead Jesus quietly out for a walk to some lonely spot where officers would be in waiting to arrest him, and who would then go back to the disciples with some story that would satisfactorily explain his absence. The court would rush his trial and execution through before his friends could know what was happening. Furthermore, if afterward there should be any popular indignation at their action, they could protect themselves by saying that Jesus had really been guilty of something so horrible that even one of his own table companions had felt obliged to break away from the sacred relation of that companionship and hand him over to the authorities.

2. What led Judas to betray his table companion, a thing so abhorrent to the eastern mind (vs. 18, 20)? Something in the incident described in Mark 14:3-9 (or the third supplementary reading) seems to have furnished the immediate provocation, though the fundamental reason probably lay further back. In that incident Jesus has seemed to be gloomy and sentimental, welcoming the extravagant expenditure made by a woman for perfume to pour on his head, and talking pathetically about his death and burial! He seemed to Judas to lack the genius requisite for a great world statesman. Furthermore, he had said that rich people would find no place in the New Order, a view of things which according to John's Gospel (sixth supplementary reading) was contrary to Judas' fundamental ambition. Angry over the time and money he had wasted in discipleship, he decided to get what compensation he could and cut loose from the wretched movement.

3. Jesus knew what Judas was doing, though none of Judas' fellow-disciples did, and was exceedingly anxious to eat with his disciples before Judas should find opportunity to do his dastardly deed. ("And he said unto them, With desire have I desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.") In order to accomplish this, he arranged for this Last Supper in such a way that only he and two of his most trusted disciples should know the place, until he brought them to it in the evening (fifth supplementary reading).

4. While they were eating, Jesus in great sorrow spoke of the fact that one of his table companions—whom he did not mention by name—was planning to betray him, and described the consequences of the act in solemn language that was a virtual appeal to Judas not to do it (vs. 20-21). Then Jesus went through a solemn ceremony with loaf and cup that has been full of deep significance since the earliest days of the Christian Church. He broke a loaf, or wafer, of bread into pieces which, after solemnly asking God's blessing, he asked them to eat as his body. He took a cup of red wine and, after giving solemn thanks to God, asked them to drink it as his blood, blood which would bind them to God in a solemn "blood covenant." This would be the New Covenant, which men were expecting to enter into with God in the New Age (Jeremiah 31:31-34.) The Old Covenant, also a "blood covenant," was entered into at Mt. Sinai (Exodus 24: 4-8).

These symbols of a body broken and of life blood poured out at the threshold of the New Age had meanings to the Eastern mind that we men of the West do not immediately understand. To us the great question

here, as in Studies XX and XXI, concerns the influence of the death of Jesus on the life of the world.

Jesus' mind, though full of the thought of his death, saw with perfect clearness victory beyond death. The messianic reign in the New Age was often pictured as a triumphant messianic banquet. In v. 25 Jesus had this in mind when he pledged himself never to taste wine again until the New Age had begun and they should meet again at the messianic banquet. The wine would be "new" because everything was to be "new" in the New Age. ("I saw a new heaven and a new earth." "Behold, I make all things new." Revelation 21:1, 5.)

5. It is only in Luke's Gospel (22:19, fifth supplementary reading) and I Corinthians 11:24 (seventh supplementary reading) that Jesus is distinctly represented to have urged the repetition of this ceremony. Perhaps in the circles in which the Gospels of Matthew and Mark were formed, it was assumed that Jesus would be understood by the readers to have meant to institute an ordinance, for the Christians in very early days seem to have had a sacred meal eaten, perhaps for a time daily (Acts 2:46), with thought of their Lord.

QUESTIONS:

What seem to you to have been the motives from which Judas acted when he violated the sacred relationship?

What do you think Jesus meant by calling the broken loaf his body and the wine his blood?

If you are a communicant, what advantage do you find in the observance of the "Lord's Supper"?

What seem to you to be the grounds for entire confidence—like the confidence of Jesus—that the suffering of humanity will be followed by an era of liberty and peace?

Jesus felt that he was being borne on by the will of God into an experience of great suffering that would finally bring righteousness and peace to all the world. It was also the will of God that he should take his disciples with him into some measure of this experience. This was at least a part of the meaning of his asking them to eat his suffering body and to drink his very blood. It is not simply a ceremony to perform, but an experience to reproduce, that we have inherited.

STUDY XXV

JESUS AFTER A SHORT PERIOD OF GREAT MENTAL DISTRESS IS PLACED UNDER ARREST IN THE NIGHT BY HIS ENEMIES AND GOES WITHOUT RESISTANCE TO A HURRIED TRIAL

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS :

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Matthew 26 : 30-46 | 4. Luke 22 : 47-53 |
| 2. Luke 22 : 39-46 | 5. Mark 14 : 27-31 |
| 3. Matthew 26 : 47-56 | 6. John 18 : 1-14 |
| 7. Hebrews 4 : 14—5 : 10 | |

PASSAGES FOR STUDY :

Mark 14 : 26. And when they had sung a hymn, they went out unto the mount of Olives.

32. And they come unto a place which was named Gethsemane: and he saith unto his disciples, Sit ye here, while I pray. 33. And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be greatly amazed, and sore troubled. 34. And he saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death: abide ye here, and watch. 35. And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass away from him. 36. And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; remove this cup from me: howbeit not what I will, but what thou wilt. 37.

And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldst thou not watch one hour? 38. Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. 39. And again he went away, and prayed, saying the same words. 40. And again he came, and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy; and they wist not what to answer him. 41. And he cometh the third time, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: it is enough; the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. 42. Arise, let us be going: behold, he that betrayeth me is at hand. 43. And straightway, while he yet spake, cometh Judas, one of the twelve, and with him a multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. 44. Now he that betrayed him had given them a token, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is he; take him, and lead him away safely. 45. And when he was come, straightway he came to him, and saith, Rabbi; and kissed him. 46. And they laid hands on him, and took him. 47. But a certain one of them that stood by drew his sword, and smote the servant of the high priest, and struck off his ear. 48. And Jesus answered and said unto them, Are ye come out, as against a robber, with swords and staves to seize me? 49. I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and ye took me not: but this is done that the scriptures might be fulfilled. 50. And they all left him, and fled.

1. Judas seems to have slipped out from the Last Supper as soon as he could and hurried away to the Priests and Scribes. Perhaps he came back again to the same place, with a company of temple police. If

so, he found that Jesus had left and in some way he knew where he would probably find him.

Jesus had gone to a "garden" which, according to John's Gospel (sixth supplementary reading), he often visited. Here he divided his disciples into two groups, an outer group and, farther on in the garden nearer himself, his three special friends. The first group was perhaps to watch for the approach of the enemy and the second to afford Jesus sympathetic support in a certain terrible experience into which he found himself entering. It was an experience in which he needed to have friends near by, while he pressed on beyond them to be face to face with God. The three men were sleepy. It was late at night and two of them had been busy the preceding day making preparations for the Last Supper. But before they fell asleep they saw Jesus fall on his face in prayer and in the stillness of the night heard the words that he uttered. Three times in the intensity of his feeling he went back and forth between the place where he prayed and the friends from whom he expected sympathy, but whom he found sleeping. Then suddenly flickering torches and hurried footsteps in the distance showed that the arresting party was near, Jesus' long time table companion in the lead.

2. The intensely significant question that confronts us here concerns the nature and cause of Jesus' extreme distress of mind. He described it as an extreme sorrow that seemed like death to him: "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death." It was a kind of distress of spirit that almost frightened him. The expression "amazed" is used in the same sense to describe the emotion of the women when they saw the

angel at the empty grave of Jesus (Mark 16: 5). There seems to have been some impending distress into which he was already entering and which he wished to be spared further experience of, if it could in any way be God's will. It is natural to suppose that a sense of the disgrace of being betrayed by a table companion and sorrow over the moral ruin of this chosen friend were in his mind. The physical suffering of crucifixion he may have dreaded, though many martyrs have faced great suffering without exhibiting such distress. Perhaps it is idle to try to penetrate in imagination into the consciousness of Jesus. But one or two things seem to stand out clearly. This distress of mind was the suffering of a Messiah, and of a Messiah to whom Messiahship was not an "office" but a profound personal relationship to the Heavenly Father and to his human brothers. He had thought of his blood as "covenant blood" binding men and God together. His passion in life had been to see the earth filled with men who, with unselfish spirits, would love God and each other. The great pain of his spirit, therefore, would naturally be over the wrong doing of men who refused to love God and each other. Such wrong doing was in process of reaching its most flagrant expression. It does not seem too much to say, therefore, that Jesus was now beginning to feel the sorrow of the Infinite Father over the wrong doing of His human children. One element in the mysterious consciousness of God we may suppose to be distress over the evil conduct of the children whom he loves. This element was beginning to rise in the heart of Jesus and it seemed more than he could endure. Jesus must have often faced

the wrong doing of men, but never before had God so laid upon him the burden of feeling as God himself feels about human sin. The utmost that a father can do to redeem a child from bondage to an evil life is to show the child how the father's heart feels about his evil life. Rising up in Jesus, the Spirit of the Heavenly Father's heart made an everlasting revelation of itself in the suffering soul of Jesus. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself," was later said by one of Jesus' great disciples (II Corinthians 5: 19).

3. Jesus received strength to meet "the hour." What he said to his disciples when he came to them the last time was perhaps this: "Are you then sleeping and taking your rest! Enough (of sleep)! The hour is come!" This arousing summons brought them springing to their feet. "Arise, let us be going!" Then came the table companion straight to Jesus and repeatedly and affectionately kissed him! Jesus protested indignantly against the cowardly manner of his arrest. They had come out with knives and clubs in the night, as if he were a robber, instead of boldly arresting him while he was addressing the public in the temple courts. Jesus recognized in their conduct not only cowardice but a distinct purpose, which will appear later also, to cheapen him—to treat him not as a false prophet or a spurious Messiah but as a cheap criminal.

The disciples all slipped away among the trees in the darkness!

QUESTIONS:

What were the disciples to watch for and what to

pray for (v. 38)? What "temptation" did Jesus have in mind?

What did he mean by the "spirit" being "willing"? Willing to what? What did he mean by the "flesh"?

What do you think were the "cup" and the "hour" that Jesus wished to be spared? Did God spare him, and, if not, why not?

What was Jesus' chief concern?

"Sleepest thou?" (v. 37). It may be that our Lord still has times of special divine suffering over specially flagrant manifestations of human hate and treachery. At such times his disciples who are "alive to God" must not be found sleeping.

STUDY XXVI

JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH BY THE JEWISH COURT AS A BLASPHEM- OUS FALSE CHRIST AND THE ROMAN PROCURATOR RELUCTANTLY EN- DORSES THE SENTENCE

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS :

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Matthew 26 : 57-75 | 4. Luke 23 : 1-25 |
| 2. Matthew 27 : 1-26 | 5. Mark 15 : 16-20 |
| 3. Luke 22 : 54-71 | 6. John 18 : 28-40 |
| 7. John 19 : 1-16 | |

PASSAGES FOR STUDY :

Mark 14 : 53. And they led Jesus away to the high priest: and there come together with him all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes.

55. Now the chief priests and the whole council sought witness against Jesus to put him to death; and found it not. 56. For many bare false witness against him, and their witness agreed not together. 57. And there stood up certain, and bare false witness against him, saying, 58. We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another made without hands. 59. And not even so did their witness agree together. 60. And the high priest stood up in the

midst, and asked Jesus, saying, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee? 61. But he held his peace, and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him, and saith unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? 62. And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming with the clouds of heaven. 63. And the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, What further need have we of witnesses? 64. Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? And they all condemned him to be worthy of death. 65. And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him, and to say unto him, Prophecy: and the officers received him with blows of their hands.

Mark 15: 1. And straightway in the morning the chief priests with the elders and scribes, and the whole council, held a consultation, and bound Jesus, and carried him away, and delivered him up to Pilate. 2. And Pilate asked him, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answering saith unto him, Thou sayest. 3. And the chief priests accused him of many things. 4. And Pilate again asked him, saying, Answerest thou nothing? behold how many things they accuse thee of. 5. But Jesus no more answered anything; insomuch that Pilate marvelled. 6. Now at the feast he used to release unto them one prisoner, whom they asked of him. 7. And there was one called Barabbas, lying bound with them that had made insurrection, men who in the insurrection had committed murder. 8. And the multitude went up and began to ask him to do as he was wont to do unto them. 9. And Pilate answered them, saying, Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews? 10. For he perceived that for envy the chief priests had delivered him up. 11. But the

chief priests stirred up the multitude, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them. 12. And Pilate again answered and said unto them, What then shall I do unto him whom ye call the King of the Jews? 13. And they cried out again, Crucify him. 14. And Pilate said unto them, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out exceedingly, Crucify him. 15. And Pilate, wishing to content the multitude, released unto them Barabbas, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified.

1. The plan of the Priests and Scribes at once became evident. It was to try, condemn, and execute Jesus before word about what was going on could be circulated through the city. The High Court was already assembled, ready for action, when the temple police about midnight brought Jesus before it.

It became evident also that the Court planned to condemn Jesus if possible on some cheap disreputable charge. This would enable the Court in some degree to avoid the general indignation which would naturally follow the execution of a popular prophet. Furthermore it would greatly help the standing of the High Priest and his family with the Roman authorities. If the Court should condemn Jesus as a messianic revolutionist, it would be greatly to the discredit of this family that they had allowed a revolutionary movement to grow to the dimensions attained by the Jesus movement without taking action earlier. The Roman government would see to it that some more competent family held the high priesthood.

The first stage in the trial, therefore (vs. 55-56), was an effort to convict Jesus on some one of several

charges—perhaps among them the charge that he had been a Sabbath breaker. The testimony on these points was not such as to meet the rules of evidence that prevailed in the court usage. There had not been time to see to these details beforehand, especially as it was necessary to keep the proposed arrest and trial secret.

In the second stage (vs. 57-59) certain witnesses were found who testified that Jesus had threatened to destroy the Temple. If this charge could have been proved, the indignation of all classes of people would have been roused against Jesus. Jesus' assumption of authority in the temple courts, his violent expulsion of the traders, and his public criticism of the Priests gave a little color to this charge, but the evidence was inadequate.

In the third stage (vs. 60-61a) the High Priest tried to get Jesus to say something regarding these various charges that could be used as evidence against him. Jesus did not propose to have his case pulled down to the level of any of these cheap charges and kept silent. Finally the High Priest, rather than let the case drag on or utterly fail, reluctantly opened the way for a dignified charge to be brought against Jesus. He seemed to have had some reason for surmising that Jesus had messianic aspirations. Perhaps a part of Judas' treachery had been the disclosure of Jesus' messianic secret. The Priest directly asked Jesus whether he regarded himself as the Messiah. To this question Jesus gave an unqualified assent, taking pains only to imply that it was Messiahship of the Son of Man type, rather than of the military Son of David type, that he asserted for himself. He also said that they who were now sitting in judgment upon him would all one day experience his

judgment of them (v. 62). According to Matthew's Gospel, Jesus' form of assent to the High Priest's inquiry was: "*Thou* hast said." This perhaps laid on the High Priest the responsibility for bringing out into the open a fact which Jesus felt that God had long required him to keep secret.

As soon as this reply was made by Jesus the Court found itself in possession of evidence sufficient to sustain a charge of "blasphemy" and immediately condemned Jesus to death. There may be some question as to whether a false Messiah was technically guilty of blasphemy, but there could be no doubt that an assertion of Messiahship was blasphemous, when made by such a person as the Priests and Scribes insisted on considering Jesus to be. It was thoroughly proper to spit on such a person (v. 65)!

2. Early the next morning, in the cool of the day, when the Roman Procurator would be ready to do business, the court officials asked him for the necessary endorsement of their sentence. They took pains to present their charge in language that emphasized its political aspect: "*King of the Jews.*" Nevertheless at this juncture they nearly lost their prisoner. The Procurator had evidently had his eye on the Jesus movement for some time and was convinced that it had no political significance. His spies had probably been in the crowds when Jesus in his "teaching" made his public attack on the Priests at the Temple. The opposition of the Priests seemed to him simply due to their fear that a popular prophet would interfere with their shady schemes (15: 10). Pilate, too, was much impressed by Jesus' behavior. Ordinarily criminals utilized their interview

with him to present a passionate appeal for mercy or denial of guilt, but Jesus remained absolutely silent after admitting the truthfulness of the charge (vs. 2-5). For a few moments Pilate thought he saw his way out. A local city crowd happened just at this point to come to his office, asking for the annual favor of the release of some popular prisoner. Pilate instantly said: "Here is your popular prisoner, the 'King of the Jews!'" The Priests, frightened at the possibility of seeing their prisoner finally slip through their fingers after all their success so far, hurried around among the crowd and influenced them to call for a certain well known insurrectionist.

The Procurator, who well knew the excitable temper of a Jerusalem crowd at Passover time, wished to get through the week as peacefully as possible. He therefore laid aside his scruples, endorsed the death sentence of the Court, and gave Jesus over to the scourgers in the barracks.

QUESTIONS:

What features of Jesus' character appear most clearly in his trial?

Jesus, simply by virtue of being what he was, brought out the true character of all who were long in his presence. What out-standing features in the character of the leading men of the Court appear in the trial of Jesus?

What features in the character of Pilate were brought to light by his interview with Jesus? Did Pilate know anything about himself in the evening that he had not known in the morning?

A man is himself judged when he stands before a great work of art, a great personality, or a great cause and passes judgment upon them.

“‘What think ye of Christ,’ friend? when all’s done and said,

Like you this Christianity or not?

It may be false, but will you wish it true?

Has it your vote to be so if it can?”

—Browning, “Bishop Blougram’s Apology.”

STUDY XXVII

JESUS IS EXECUTED IN THE MIDST OF THE JEERS OF PRIESTS AND SCRIBES, DIES SOON AND IS BURIED BEFORE SUNSET

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS :

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Matthew 27 : 33-44 | 4. Luke 23 : 44-56 |
| 2. Matthew 27 : 45-61 | 5. John 19 : 17-27 |
| 3. Luke 23 : 33-43 | 6. John 19 : 28-42 |
| 7. II Corinthians 5 : 14-21 | |

PASSAGES FOR STUDY :

Mark 15: 21. And they compel one passing by, Simon of Cyrene, coming from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to go with them, that he might bear his cross. 22. And they bring him unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of a skull. 23. And they offered him wine mingled with myrrh: but he received it not. 24. And they crucify him, and part his garments among them, casting lots upon them, what each should take. 25. And it was the third hour, and they crucified him. 26. And the superscription of his accusation was written over, the King of the Jews. 27. And with him they crucify two robbers; one on his right hand, and one on his left. 29. And they that passed by railed on him, wagging

their heads, and saying, Ha! thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself, 30. and come down from the cross. 31. In like manner also the chief priests mocking him among themselves with the scribes said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. 32. Let the Christ, the King of Israel, now come down from the cross, that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with him reproached him. 33. And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. 34. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? 35. And some of them that stood by, when they heard it, said, Behold, he calleth Elijah. 36. And one ran, and filling a sponge full of vinegar, put it on a reed, and gave him to drink, saying, Let be; let us see whether Elijah cometh to take him down. 37. And Jesus uttered a loud voice, and gave up the ghost. 38. And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. 39. And when the centurion, which stood by over against him, saw that he so gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God.

42. And when even was now come, because it was the Preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, 43. there came Joseph of Arimathæa, a councillor of honourable estate, who also himself was looking for the kingdom of God; and he boldly went in unto Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus. 44. And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead: and calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead. 45. And when he learned it of the centurion, he granted the corpse to Joseph.

I. After Jesus had been scourged and the soldiers in the barracks had made sport of the royal aspirations for which he was to be crucified, he was conducted to execution by a squad of four soldiers. Two other condemned men sentenced to die on this day were executed at the same time and place. Perhaps the early Christians saw a certain fitness in the fact that Jesus, who had always associated with "sinners" in his life-time, should also die with a robber on either side. A man from Cyrene in North Africa for some reason was compelled by the soldiers to carry Jesus' cross. Two of this man's sons afterward became Christians and later, in the region where Mark's Gospel was compiled, were distinguished because their father had done this for Jesus in his dark hour.

Philanthropic women in Jerusalem regularly prepared drugged wine to deaden the pain of the crucified. Jesus refused this ministration. He did not know what God might wish to do for or through him in the great hour which had come to him by God's appointment. He wished, therefore, to be in full possession of his senses. Friends might venture near for last words or some opportunity to comfort those on either side might develop.

The cross was set up near a well-frequented highway and those who passed by seemed to think that Jesus was being crucified because he threatened to attack the Temple (v. 29), although this was not the crime specified on the tablet above his head. Perhaps the Priests took pains to circulate the information that Jesus had planned to do this. By smirching his reputation in this way, they would protect themselves against popular criticism

of their action. Both Priests and Scribes (v. 31) were walking about near the cross gloating over their triumph, and saying things to each other for Jesus to hear. He had pretended to be the messianic Deliverer of the nation, but he could not even deliver himself! Even the two robbers on either hand turned their heads and added their bitter jeers. According to Luke's Gospel, one of them changed his attitude before the day was over (third supplementary reading). As the hours wore on he saw that Jesus hurled no curses upon those who ridiculed him and spoke no bitter word. He was profoundly impressed by such conduct. He cannot have thought that a person in such a situation could possibly be the Messiah. Even Jesus' own disciples gave up that idea. Jesus must have seemed to him a man of fine spirit who was the victim of a messianic delusion. Toward the end of the day with a half humorous friendliness he turned his head and said, "Jesus, when you come in your kingdom, remember me!" Jesus, who saw in this expression of good-will the germ of faith, told him that they would be walking together in the Beautiful Garden before sunset.

An awesome shadow lay over the whole region from noon until three o'clock. At that time Jesus in a very strong voice, unweakened by suffering, uttered the first sentence of the twenty-second Psalm. It is a Psalm which in its first part describes intense suffering, in language very applicable to a man being crucified, but which in its last part describes the triumph of righteousness over all the earth in "Jehovah's Kingdom." Jesus may have lived in this Psalm for weeks, and may have now been comforting himself with its great ideas.

Some one standing near the cross thought, or pretended to think, that Jesus was calling for Elijah and asked permission to saturate a sponge with sour wine from the jar placed near for the use of the soldiers and put it into Jesus' mouth, to encourage him to keep on calling for Elijah. Perhaps Elijah would come!

Just at this time Jesus uttered a great cry, either of victory or distress, and suddenly died. The Roman centurion noting all the circumstances of his death—the awesome shadow, the great shout—said that Jesus surely was “a son of god” or “a son of a god.” Perhaps he had heard the word used in its Jewish sense as a messianic title, but to his Roman mind it probably designated a heroic person descended from the gods.

2. One of the members of the Great Court who had known of the action of the Court but had not taken part in it, went at once to the Roman Procurator and asked permission to bury the body of Jesus. The Procurator could not believe that Jesus had died so soon, for the crucified sometimes lived for days. He suspected some trick on the part of Jesus' friends to rescue him from death, but when the officer superintending the execution assured him that Jesus was dead, he granted the request.

QUESTIONS:

In Study XXV Paul's great statement about the death of Jesus was quoted: “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.” The evening before his death Jesus had said, according to John's Gospel (14: 9), that whoever had seen him had seen the Father. This would have been equally true the next day

as Jesus hung on the cross. What may men learn about the heart of the Heavenly Father by studying the words and conduct of Jesus on the cross? That is, would our idea of God lack anything that it now includes, if we did not know these details about the suffering death of Jesus?

Is there anything about the death of Jesus that tends to make men better?

What does the narrative represent to have been the actual effect of the crucifixion of Jesus upon the various individuals who appear about the cross?

“When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.”

—Isaac Watts.

STUDY XXVIII

AFTER DEATH JESUS APPEARS TO HIS DISCIPLES AND ASSURES THEM THAT GOD HAS GIVEN HIM POWER TO CONTINUE WORKING WITH THEM FOR THE COMING OF THE NEW AGE

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS:

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. I Corinthians 15: 1-11 | 4. Luke 24: 13-35 |
| 2. Matthew 27: 62—28: 15 | 5. Luke 24: 36-50 |
| 3. Luke 24: 1-12 | 6. John 20: 1-18 |
| 7. John 20: 19-29 | |

PASSAGES FOR STUDY:

Mark 15: 47. And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses beheld where he was laid. 16: 1. And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices, that they might come and anoint him. 2. And very early on the first day of the week, they come to the tomb when the sun was risen. 3. And they were saying among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the tomb? 4. and looking up, they see that the stone is rolled back: for it was exceeding great. 5. And entering into the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, arrayed in a white robe; and they were amazed. 6. And he saith unto them, Be not amazed: ye seek Jesus, the Nazarene, which hath been cruci-

fied: he is risen; he is not here: behold, the place where they laid him! 7. But go, tell his disciples and Peter, He goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you. 8. And they went out, and fled from the tomb; for trembling and astonishment had come upon them: and they said nothing to any one; for they were afraid.

Matt. 28: 16. But the eleven disciples went into Galilee, unto the mountain where Jesus had appointed them. 17. And when they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. 18. And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. 19. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: 20. teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

Acts 1: 4. And being assembled together with them, he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, said he, ye heard from me: 5. for John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

Acts 2: 32. This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses. 33. Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear.

1. All through the long day of the crucifixion a little group of distressed women, far enough from the cross to avoid the insults of the soldiers and other spectators, were watching the scene. They had doubtless hoped that the sight of them at a distance would be a comfort

to Jesus. They saw where his dead body was laid in the late afternoon. The Sabbath began at sunset, so there was no opportunity that evening to buy the spices ordinarily used in preparing bodies for burial. When the Sabbath ended at sunset twenty-four hours later, they bought spices and hoped to find some way of using them early the next morning. When they reached the vault at sunrise they found the large wheel-shaped stone, that had been, as usual placed across the low doorway to keep out dogs or human intruders, rolled away. When they entered, they found a young man clothed in white who told them that Jesus had risen from the dead and would meet his disciples in Galilee, at some place which it is assumed they would think of as a natural place of resort (16:7). The women regarded the young man who spoke with such authority as a supernatural being and hurried away frightened from the place. According to the account which appears in Matthew's Gospel, the eleven disciples met Jesus at some familiar place in the hill country of Galilee—perhaps on "the mountain" where the Twelve had been selected (Mark 3:13) and where various other important meetings had probably been held.

2. Various interesting questions naturally arise regarding this period in the history of the disciples. The outstanding fact is that in some way the personality of Jesus made its presence unmistakably evident to the disciples and produced in them certain convictions which transformed their despair into an abiding enthusiasm. This enthusiasm lasted not only throughout their lives but has in various forms characterized the experience of Christian men ever since.

The source of their enthusiasm was not the fact that Jesus was still in existence. The section of the nation to which they belonged had no serious doubt about continued existence after death. If they still held Jesus to have been a great prophet, they would have thought of him as existing in the realms of the dead with the great prophets of the past. If they were tempted to believe with the Scribes that Jesus had really been in league with Satan and that his messianic pretension had therefore proved him to be an Anti-Christ, they would have thought of him as having returned to the realm of Satan. The source of their enthusiasm was the fact that Jesus appeared to them, filled with all his former enthusiastic conviction that he was God's Messiah fully empowered to move forward as leader in the Great Enterprise. He assured them that all power had been given to him and that he would continue to work with and through them until the Old Age should come to an end and the civilization of the New Age be established. (Matthew 28: 18, 20.) In confirmation of this expectation he promised them that they would soon receive certain experience of the touch of God upon their spirits. This would be Jesus' signal to them that he was with God in the unseen world, that his eyes were always upon them, and that he was continuing to work powerfully with them in preparing the lives of men for the New Age (Acts 2: 33).

3. It has been the experience of men generation after generation that as they let their affections follow the personality of Jesus out into the unseen world they find a profound spiritual inspiration coming back to them, which redeems them from bondage to the selfish

life and more and more fastens upon them the disposition and purpose that are seen to have characterized the life of Jesus on earth. This redeeming spiritual inspiration which God brings into the lives of men through the personality of Jesus Christ, the Living Lord, naturally appears in different forms according to personal temperament and current habits of thought. Its unvarying, central feature is love, the very love of God. "The love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit" (the Epistle of Paul to the Romans 5:5). Different phases of the loving heart appear in another statement made by Paul: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control" (Galatians 5:22-23).

QUESTIONS:

Judging from the knowledge we have of Jesus' life on earth, and assuming the continued existence of his immortal spirit, what would naturally be his dominant desires today?

Where should we naturally look for evidence that Jesus is still concerned about the life of an individual man? Or about the development of world civilization?

What are any of the conditions that one might naturally expect to have to meet, in order to have any experience of the power of Jesus?

"Where is your Lord?
Seated on God's right hand,
Captain of Heaven's host,
Directing campaigns grand
On some removed coast

Of Eternity's vast sea—
So far above
Man's highest love
He cannot reached be?

“Where is your Lord?
At God's right hand in sooth:
Where'er his servants brave
Are fighting for the truth,
That all the world may have
His larger life. 'Tis here
The Christ is found:
His accents sound
Within your soul—so near!

“Where is your Lord?
Within the daily round
Of duty. God's command
For you just now's the sound
Of the Master's voice. Stand
To your hard task! Be true
To your ideal!
God's will's the real—
Your Lord dwells there for you.”
—Doremus Scudder.

STUDY XXIX

THE VICTORIOUS CAMPAIGN OF TESTIMONY

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS:

- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| 1. Acts 2: 14-36 | 4. Acts 4: 1-22 |
| 2. Acts 2: 37-47 | 5. Acts 4: 23-35 |
| 3. Acts 3: 1-26 | 6. Acts 8: 26-40 |
| 7. Acts 26: 2-29 | |

PASSAGE FOR STUDY:

Acts 1: 1. The former treatise I made, O Theophilus, concerning all that Jesus began both to do and to teach, 2. until the day in which he was received up, after that he had given commandment through the Holy Ghost unto the apostles whom he had chosen: 3. to whom he also shewed himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing unto them by the space of forty days, and speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God: 4. and, being assembled together with them, he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, said he, ye heard from me: 5. for John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. 6. They therefore, when they were come together, asked him, saying, Lord, dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? 7. And he said unto them, It is not for you to know times or

seasons, which the Father hath set within his own authority. 8. But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

1. Jesus' vision of life in the New Age as we have seen it in previous Studies has had three great features. It is a world civilization in which every man looks up to God as his Father, with a growing awareness of a vast unseen world of which he is a part; in which each man in the midst of the day's work looks out upon all other men with a kindling desire to work with them for the common good in all possible ways and at any cost; in which each man in the midst of the day's work looks forward with a growing expectation of immortality. Jesus felt himself thrust forward by God to lead the human race into this kind of life. Responsibility under God for world leadership was the central idea of Jewish Messiahship, even in its coarser forms. That which was narrowly national and transient in the common Jewish idea of Messiahship soon dropped away. The whole idea of Messiahship came in time to be regarded as a kind of temporary form assumed by an everlasting fact. "Christ" ceased in large measure to be used as a title, "The Christ," and became a part of the personal name "Jesus Christ" or "Christ Jesus." The Jewish title "Son of God," which had originally been thought a fit title for any good king, gained a new meaning, demanded by the new experience of God which men found themselves having in connection with allegiance to the immortal Spirit of Jesus. Into whatever sphere of thought the wonderful

Christian experience made its way, it instinctively took the highest titles that it found and applied them to Jesus. No lesser titles could do justice to the wonderful experience. "Lord" and "Saviour," which were titles that had rich religious meaning in both Jewish and Greco-Roman usage, naturally became widespread designations of Jesus—"Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

This Christian experience has persisted through the Christian centuries. Generation after generation Jesus Christ, the Living Lord and Saviour, has stood out as the immortal personality through whom God is leading the race into the life it ought to live.

The purpose of Jesus seems to have been to gather men into a brotherhood about himself as Leader and to bind this brotherhood forever to God. So far as individual lives are concerned, he wished to share with them through the contagion of spiritual fellowship his own faith in the Heavenly Father, his own sense of human brotherhood, his own confidence in immortality.

2. Jesus' program for the accomplishment of his great mission was a campaign of testimony on the part of his disciples. He gave to the first disciples a sense of being his "witnesses" (1: 8), that is, persons able to testify to something on the basis of their personal experience with him. Such testimony he felt sure would bring the great result to pass. After he passed into the unseen world it involved, of course, a report of research in the sphere of unseen reality. Men on the basis of certain historical evidence let their affections and desires follow the personality of Jesus out into the unseen world and found responsive reality there. This gave them material for their "testimony."

The Christian witness is able to say: "I have determined at any cost to make Jesus' threefold ideal of life my own and have reached out to the immortal Spirit of Jesus, the Living Lord, for help in realizing it." The result has been the beginning of a new success. To some the beginning comes as a distinct experience. Others find themselves living the life, but do not know how and when it began.

Jesus' point is that a multitude of men able honestly and earnestly to bear this testimony, sometimes in words, always in action, will transform the civilization of the world, all its laws and social institutions. When one man in the midst of this great and growing Christian experience stands on the threshold of another man's life, he will find himself possessed of "power" to be or do or say something there that will successfully summon the other man to come forth and join him in God's Great Enterprise.

Such an approach to another man does not involve preaching at him, or handing something down to him from a point of personal superiority. It is simply coming to him on the level to share with him if possible a great value. This readiness to share every value with others is the very genius of Christianity. Any one who will not be true to the demands of this spirit cannot permanently hold Christian values. "From him shall be taken away even that which he seemeth to have."

QUESTIONS:

How much Christian experience should a man have before he makes some effort to share it with another?

Should a man feel any interest in another man's religion? If so, why?

If he feels such interest to be justifiable, should he ever endeavor to influence the religious experience of another? If so, how should he proceed to do it?

“Needs must there be one way, our chief
Best way of worship: let me strive
To find it, and when found, contrive
My fellows also take their share!
This constitutes my earthly care:
God's is above it and distinct.
For I, a man, with men am linked,
And not a brute with brutes; no gain
That I experience, must remain
Unshared.”

—Browning, “Christmas Eve.”

STUDY XXX

WHAT WILL YOU DO ABOUT JESUS?

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS:

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Acts 2: 36-47 | 4. Acts 9: 1-22 |
| 2. Acts 8: 4-24 | 5. Acts 10: 34-48 |
| 3. Acts 8: 25-40 | 6. Acts 16: 16-34 |
| 7. Acts 17: 16-34 | |

PASSAGE FOR STUDY:

Romans 10: 1. Brethren, my heart's desire and my supplication to God is for them, that they may be saved. 2. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. 3. For being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God. 4. For Christ is the end of the law unto righteousness to every one that believeth. 5. For Moses writeth that the man that doeth the righteousness which is of the law shall live thereby. 6. But the righteousness which is of faith saith thus, Say not in thy heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down:) 7. or, Who shall descend into the abyss? (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead.) 8. But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach: 9. because if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt be-

lieve in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved: 10. for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

The message of Christianity has always been: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

To be "saved" is to be saved from a *daily life* of increasing selfishness and its consequent moral ruin to a *daily life* of growing unselfishness and its consequent moral health.

The unselfish life to which we are saved is that which takes due account of others. It yields to God the loving obedience due to a Heavenly Father, and to men the invincible friendliness due to brothers.

We are said to be "saved" to the life of growing unselfishness by "believing in the Lord Jesus Christ." To believe in a person is to accept him on good evidence for what he is represented to be and to treat him accordingly.

Jesus Christ appears as the revelation of the Heavenly Father, in terms of human life, death, and immortal spiritual presence. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" (John 1: 18). To believe in such a person is to treat him as he ought to be treated.

There is only one way to treat such a person, and that is to yield to him the loving, loyal devotion of our lives.

This necessarily brings us into right relation to the Heavenly Father, for he is the revelation of the

Heavenly Father, and into right relation to all mankind, for he is the Great Brother of all men.

Or it may be put in another way: Jesus has appeared as the divine Lord and Leader of mankind. To believe in a leader is to adopt the leader's ideals as our own, at any cost, and then to get from the leader himself all the inspiration possible for the realization of the ideals.

We get from Jesus the great threefold ideal that we have repeatedly found in his teachings, namely, a life that in the midst of the day's work looks prayerfully up to God as a Heavenly Father; a life that in the midst of the day's work reaches out to effort with all men for the common good, at any cost; and a life that looks down the long future with a kindling hope of immortality.

Then we reach out in a great spiritual venture to get from Jesus Christ, the living Lord, the inspiration we need for the enlarging realization of this great threefold ideal in our own lives. It is the sense of the personal friendship of the living Christ that has carried thousands of men victoriously through fierce temptation, that has kept them true and hopeful under the steady strain of heavy responsibility year after year, and that has been their unfailing stay in the hour of death.

The best testimony that the world has known during the Christian centuries has been the testimony of experience with the redeeming Spirit of Jesus Christ. It has come from men and women of all sorts and kinds.

The experience has had different modes of begin-

ning—sometimes distinct and triumphant, sometimes obscure and uncertain. But it has been a deepening experience that means more and more to the end.

He who in this way believes on the Lord Jesus Christ is one who has "true religion" in the Jesus sense. His life in its relation to God and man is a life of growing sympathy, sincerity, and peace.

Questions: Are you a Christian? If so, why? If not, why not?

"THE WORD IS NIGH THEE, IN THY MOUTH, AND IN THY HEART: THAT IS, THE WORD OF FAITH, WHICH WE PREACH: THAT IF THOU SHALT CONFESS WITH THY MOUTH JESUS AS LORD, AND BELIEVE IN THY HEART THAT GOD RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD, THOU SHALT BE SAVED."





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