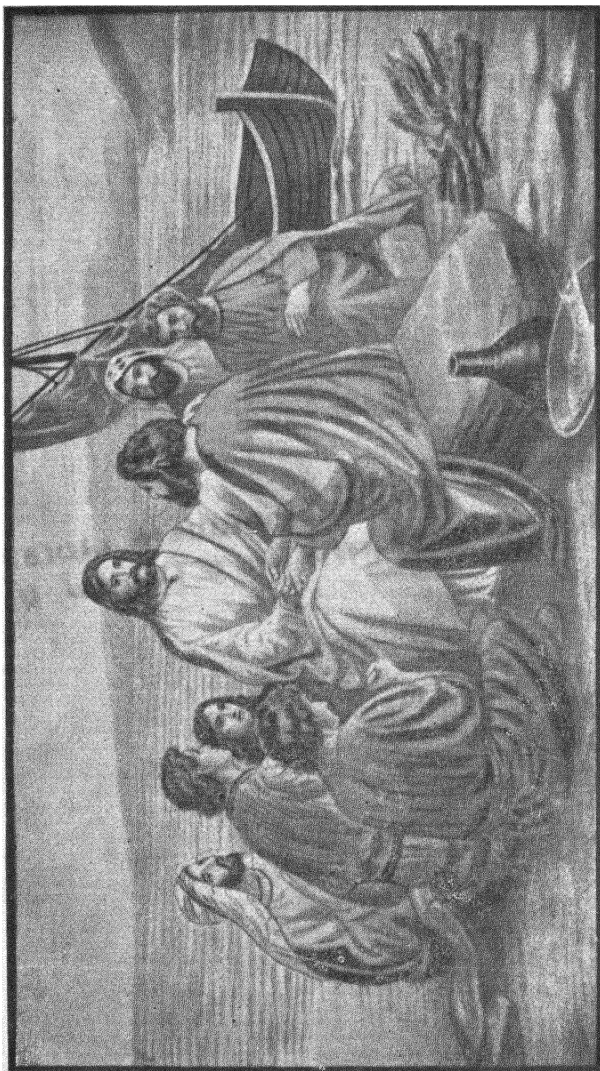


UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY

OU_150210

UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY



IESUS BY THE GALILEAN LAKE

THE WORLD GOSPEL SERIES

4.
**THE
GOSPEL
OF
JESUS**

**“Give up the self, take up the Cross,
and follow Me.”**

**Edited and Newly Translated from the
Four Gospels
with
Explanatory Notes and
Introduction**

**by
Duncan Greenlees, M.A. (Oxon.)**

**1950
THE THEOSOPHICAL PUBLISHING HOUSE
Adyar, Madras, India**

THE WORLD GOSPEL SERIES

Gather us in, Thou Love that fillest all,
Gather our rival faiths within Thy fold,
Rend each man's temple-veil and let it fall
That we may know that Thou hast been of old.
Gather us in ; we worship only Thee :
In varied names we stretch a common hand ;
In diverse forms a common Soul we see,
In many ships we seek one spirit-land.
Each sees one colour of Thy rainbow light,
Each looks upon one tint and calls it heaven ;
Thou art the Fullness of our partial sight—
We are not perfect till we find the seven.

G. MATHESON

APART from a few scholars and devotees, the modern public are unwilling to spend time on reading through the whole of the lengthy Scriptures of the world. This little Series is planned to offer them in a cheap, handy and attractive form the essence of each of the world's great Scriptures, translated and edited by one who has a deep and living sympathy for each of them.¹

¹ It is however obvious that the writer does not thereby pronounce his own personal convictions, save where they are shown by the "first person".

It is based on the inevitable conclusion of any fair student that all the great Religions and their Scriptures come from one Divine Source, in varying degrees of purity of transmission, and according to the needs and capacities of those to whom they came—the authentic Word of God to man.

The Publishers hope to issue two volumes yearly, each of about 250 pages, with short notes or running commentary, and a brief introduction to point out the significance of the book in the history of world thought. This is Volume Four.

When the Series is completed, it will form a useful little reference library of the world's religious literature, which has done so much to mould the thought and culture of today, even though few individuals in each of the communities have perhaps been able to reach the ideal laid down in their holy books.¹

¹ I desire to express my thanks to Miss Gertrude Watkin and the authorities of the Adyar Library, Madras, for their courteous help in granting facilities for study, and to Dr. G. S. Arundale and Swami Nisreyasananda of the Sri Ramakrishna Mission for ensuring the leisure which has made that study possible. D. G.

THE GOSPEL OF JESUS

JESUS taught, as the Prophets taught before him, that there is one God, the Lord and Father of all, whose pleasure it is that we His children should live righteous lives, for only in that way can we find true happiness in a world made by the God of Righteousness.

He loves us dearly and will give us all we need if we trust in Him for everything. Through Prayer we can draw close to Him and know His love for ourselves, if we reflect His love and goodness in our own dealings with our brothers who live around us. It is only as we show love to others that we can really enjoy His ceaseless love; only as we forgive others can we know the serenity and joy which come when our sins are forgiven and we are at peace with God. Our prayer should be simple and frank, straight from the heart of a child to its loving Father and

avoiding all the show of piety that draws respect and admiration of other men and so puffs up the pride of our little selves.

We should obey the laws of men when they are not against the inner Law of God, the conscience, but it is more vital to live in harmony with the spirit of the Law in doing good than slavishly to adhere to the letter of its precepts. Sincerity is worth more than many verbal prayers and showy deeds of virtue or of charity.

Men should not compete for glory or position over one another, nor confer or accept high-sounding titles, for all alike are brothers, frail children of One Father. They are not born to rule, but to serve each other even to the death; by following the Divine Spirit through all suffering and persecution they will nobly win the eternal crown of victory.

Those who manfully take up the work of ushering in the spiritual Kingdom of God on earth will be the nearest to Him in the glory of the life to come. That Kingdom is now in the heart of every man, hidden in the darkness like a tiny seed. To bring it to a splendid harvest in the self and in the world around is

the first and greatest duty of the follower of Jesus. And his reward is to be with him where he is, in the glory of God the Father, where no shadow of sorrow can ever enter in for all eternity.

THE GOSPEL OF JESUS

PREFACE

ONE who sees this may well wonder why yet another book on Jesus is put into the market. He may ask himself, "Will the stream of writing on this subject never run dry?" Well, I offer only two excuses: the joy that I have myself found in writing it, to see the beloved of thousands of millions of human beings from a new angle, and the fact that in such a series as this the teachings whereon Christianity is based must play a large part, for it is the widest spread of all the World Religions.

Have you never noticed how the doting mother keeps on her bedroom wall a dozen photographs of her absent son—at every age, in every occupation, and in every kind of pose? It seems she can never be weary of that loved form, and she is always hungry for some new phase of her boy's activities, whence she can draw for herself some picture of the activities of the man-child she has given to the world.

It is just the same with the devotee of a Divine Incarnation. Every incident in that precious life of Jesus has been treasured in the Christian mind along with so

many memories and sweet associations from earliest infancy, that he can know few joys greater than to hear "the old old story of Jesus and his love" which he first heard at his mother's knee—perhaps told with a new background and from a fresh point of view.

With this urge to spur me on, humbly and with all diffidence, as knowing only too well how hard is the task I have undertaken, I offer this work to an audience, Christian and otherwise, which will surely pardon its defects because of the sincere devotion out of which it has been made. But let me first warn the reader. From this book he will not see Jesus quite as the Christian has ever seen him; for the complete picture he must turn also to the diviner aspects of the Founder, which are more commonly linked with the name of "the Christ"—together with those beautiful incidents in his life which have perhaps a deeper mystical than a merely historic meaning—in the "Gospel of the Mystic Christ", Volume Six of this Series. These two books must, then, be blended together by one who would see the great Man, Jesus Christ, as he appears in human history.¹

It is not the function of this Series to delve deep into the "higher criticism" of the various Scriptures, or to

¹ This "Gospel of Jesus", in fact, shows us more or less the Jesus taught by the "Liberal" school of modern Christians—but no religion has ever been founded on this portrait alone, and it is certain that but for the vivid experience of the living Christ, in the heart of the believer and in the Church, no Christian Religion could ever have survived, or indeed have ever been founded at all. For the vital elements in Christian Faith, the student should not fail to turn rather to "The Gospel of the Mystic Christ".

spend much time on the relative authenticity of such writings as have come down to us, but rather to present each of them as a living whole—as the vehicle of a living Faith, as far as possible in the form which might command the largest measure of assent among its actual adherents. So we shall not here go into those long and involved studies out of which this book has actually grown.

Many will be aware that for fifty years past a glaring searchlight has been turned especially on the Christian origins and the history of the Gospels. Though critics have differed very widely in their results—Loisy going so far as to declare that there is no intact historic core in the Gospels which can be dissected out, that we have in fact no materials for a true life of Jesus, while others rather absurdly reduce the whole history to a few “pillar texts”, which in their turn are not quite unassailed—certain general opinions do seem to have crystallised out from this enormous detailed research of half a century. These may be summed up so :

(a) There *is* a historical nucleus containing the main outlines of the Gospel story as we at present have it ; many elements cannot be accounted for by any process of invention or adaptation known or likely in that age, and they directly contradict some of the dearest ideas of those who wrote them down.

(b) The main story was preserved with remarkable faithfulness, even where in some places it endangered the early Christians themselves, and the constant reproduction even of glaring contradictions

in the text shows greater honesty in the copyists than was allowed for some years ago ; the sacred text *was* regarded as sacred at an early date.

(c) Certain elements were, however, added to the oral tradition and early written accounts handed down by eye-witnesses, and so they appear in our written Gospels in the interest of certain dogmas in the growing creed and in opposition to certain ideas by then regarded as heresies.

(d) The so-called Mythic School have so far failed to prove their case that the whole story was made up out of distorted prophecies and the ghosts of old mythologies. The fact of close parallelism between certain cult-rites and myths of the Mediterranean area and incidents in the life of Jesus cannot disprove the historicity of the latter.

(e) Recent developments in psychic knowledge have freed students from the supposed need to discredit everything supernormal as superstition. Religion itself is supernormal, and there is nothing strange in the founding of a new Religion being accompanied by an outburst of supernormal events.

However, a search for the truth about Christian origins drove me into a long and very detailed study of materials now available in several languages, in hundreds of articles and reviews and in nearly two hundred different books, from every possible point of view. This study has resulted in a clear picture of how we come to have our present Four Gospels, and upon how much of them we may place our total reliance as an actual physical

history of certain events that once happened in the lanes and plains of Palestine. This "Gospel of Jesus" is one result of that study, the details of which, together with reasons for the conclusions finally achieved, may be found by the curious in a forthcoming treatise entitled "Prolegomena to the Gospel of Jesus". The reader of this book may take it as certain that the passages utilised in it as text carry the largest possible measure of acceptance in all schools of critical opinion. They give a substantially accurate report of the doings and sayings of the Man who has had perhaps almost the greatest influence on posterity of any men known to history.

The real pity is that Jesus lived too early for there to have been at the time much interest in what he really did do and say ; had he only lived a few centuries later, we might have had as reliable a record as we have of Muhammed. He had no Plato to take down his words for posterity like Socrates ; he was surrounded by illiterate and fanatical peasants and fishermen. His disciples, indeed, were at first obsessed with the fancy that the world was ending and that the Messiah was to come in glory and destroy all the mighty foes of his nation ; in face of such a belief, the incidents and teachings during that tragic short life of Jesus could have but little meaning for them. It was only when most of the believers had realised how futile, how wrong, was this dream, and when the non-Jews crowded into the Church with their own wholly different religious background —totally rejecting the Jewish Messiah notion and

replacing^d it with their own familiar Redeeming-Dying-Rising God—that the few survivors from early days were pressed to write down all they could remember or collect of the floating traditions still current. Thus, after many editings, our Gospels took their place beside a whole library of other books of the same kind, along with Paul's great letters; the New Testament was born to carry on the story of religious development begun in the ancient Scriptures of the Jews.

If, reading this little book, wherein there is no space for any of the evidences upon which it has laboriously been constructed, any new students are drawn to delve delightedly into the huge literature on Christian origins, so as to do better what I have so boldly tried to do for myself—that will be a rich return for the labour of this work. I have tried here to build up a “historical Gospel” for the ordinary man, who has no leisure to wade through thousands of pages of argument by technical experts who, I may be pardoned for saying it, are not always as clear or convincing to others as to themselves. I could not find in the market any book trying in this way to give the fruits of genuine criticism, by offering a simple English translation of a Gospel text which can on the whole withstand all reasonable critical assault.

This is no work for the archaeologist and antiquarian alone. Jesus was one of the clearest thinkers our human race has yet brought forth, and he spoke with perfect frankness and directness. His words are of vital and enduring value to all. On them are built the

ideals, though unhappily little of the practice, of our European peoples. We have never yet dared, save for heroic individuals, to "renounce the self, take up the Cross, and follow" him. We always seek refuge in thinking the appeal is to others, not ourselves. So we have wrecked our boasted "civilisation", and the world is further from peace and morals today than at any other recorded time in history. Yet the teaching of Jesus stands, and if the world is ever to reach what it dimly feels to be its own aims it must some day try to put it into practice.

A society built thereon, bravely taking its stand on the faith that the righteous God in whom Jesus trusted will give us His daily help and guidance, if we will, would soon do away with war and poverty and all those cruel social evils that have made a hell of this lovely world. It is not hard to see that all the troubles which have so long tortured mankind would then fly away like morning mists at the rising of the sun.

INTRODUCTION

1. How this Book was Made

Axiomatic Foundations

EVERY piece of mental work is built upon certain axiomatic assumptions whereon the whole is rested as upon sure foundations. After the patient and thorough preliminary studies already referred to in the Preface, I came to certain conclusions, whereon this book is founded. To establish their truth I have neither space nor time here, nor is it in place to enter upon such matters in a book of this Series. But the discerning may find sufficient reasons for my holding them in this book itself or in the books listed in the Appendix which are among those studied.

Let me try here, then, to state the principal conclusions attained through the said study :

(1) There is a true historical basis for the life of Jesus, though various accretions have been made to the story in our Gospels.

(2) Like other religious Founders and reformers, Jesus did not claim any peculiar divinity for himself, but often declared that he was the simple mouthpiece of God and did His work (cf. *Jn.* 8 : 26-29). That is,

he claimed to be God's Prophet, in the true sense—which has no connotation of foretelling the future. Jesus was no astrologer; though like many other great men he had glimpses of the future, we must look on all supposed forecasting by him with extreme suspicion. Again, like most religious Founders, in time he came to be deified, so we must admit and allow for some exaggeration and glorifying in the texts; this was to edify, and not to deceive. To understand Jesus and his life, we must not be lost in syntax or textual minutiae but compare him honestly with other religious Founders and great Saints—like Muḥammed, the Bāb, Sri Rāma-krishna, Sri Krishna Chaitanya—of whose lives we have adequate contemporary records. From such comparisons we shall learn much—some of which we have never expected; but no student unequipped with such knowledge is qualified to pronounce on the Gospels, however deep or wide his study of Greek or Latin, or the approved Theologies, may be. Religion is as highly technical a subject as Geology, and one who does not believe in the supernormal is as qualified to write on Religion as is the one who rejects scientific methods of research to write on Geology.

(3) Modern psychic research, and the study of infra-material conditions and their influence upon the bodies of men, have established the *a priori* possibility of most of the "miracles" in the Gospels, though they naturally cannot prove that they in fact really took place. But we are no longer justified in rejecting as untrue what we cannot immediately explain by purely physical science;

we know now how little is our knowledge yet of all these things, and have learned to be humbler than our fathers. Nor are miracles absent from our world today.

(4) Everything in the Gospels which have close mythic parallels must be regarded with some suspicion, because there is practically no evidence on the real life of Jesus outside the Gospels themselves, and our earliest writer, St. Paul, does not help us in any way.

(5) Jesus was no mere rebel—religious, social or political. He found the society of his day in many important respects decadent, and set to work to restore it, on the lines of a sane interpretation of the spirit of the old laws of his people. But when the leading Jews rejected his mission, he came into such conflict with them through his own moral courage that they more or less outcast him and at last hounded him to his death—not knowing that through death he would win his victory.

(6) As a nation, the Jews did not reject him or kill him; even to the last "the common people heard him gladly"; the blame for his death was shifted from the Romans who actually killed him to the Jews, so as to win the favour of the Roman power; the real responsibility lies on the priests, whose tool the Romans were.

(7) The "Kingdom" which was the centre of his teaching was wholly spiritual, though his contemporaries and successors misunderstood it as either political or eschatological; thus they lost the benefit of the deep spiritual teaching given by him, which we can recover for ourselves if we will—being much aided thereto by a study of comparative religion.

(8) Jesus never planned any church organisation himself, but he thought of his followers as "children of the Father"—as a great brotherhood of those who were ready to suffer and die devoted to "God's Kingdom", that it might come on earth and establish true righteousness.

(9) When he was killed for blasphemy, it seemed that his Cause had for ever perished, yet something unparalleled happened within a few days that sent it triumphing over the whole known world and has kept it a mighty power for good through the changing centuries to our own day. This was said at the time, and has ever since been believed, to be the actual return of Jesus in a physical body seen and handled by many witnesses after his death.

Building the Text

I do not claim to be a Biblical critic, nor even a scholar in the narrow pedantic sense ; yet I have written this book only after a prolonged study of the Gospel texts themselves and of much other literature of the same age, and also of what the best critics have had to say about them during many years. Of course, in all use of the human judgment the personal and subjective element does creep in, but I have honestly tried to control it by a sincere and open mind, seeking only the truth and willing at all times to accept respectfully the opinions of others who have made this study their lifework.¹

¹ I was greatly encouraged at one stage of the work by a letter from Prof. L. P. Jacks of *The Hibbert Journal*, in the course of

Where these critics have differed from each other—as is usually the case!—I have come to my own verdict with all care and humility after weighing their various arguments in the balance of common-sense. Any student following in my footsteps will certainly differ from my results in details, but I believe his general outline will closely resemble what is now presented here.

You may be interested to learn how the text of this "Gospel" has been deduced. After the intensive studies referred to in the Preface, confirmed by the taking and careful study of very copious notes, I adopted the very obvious method already followed by many others. I prepared a "Synopticon" by cutting and pasting in four parallel column the parallel doings and sayings from our four Gospels, and in a fifth column I added citations of them from Clement, Justin, the "Clementines" and other early writings.

Next I underlined in red all elements in the synopticon which were common to the three first Gospels, *Mk.*, *Mt.*, and *Lk.*; all elements common to *Mt.* and *Lk.* alone were then underlined in green, and elements peculiar to the several Gospels in blue. This showed up the "Marcan"

which he was good enough to say after a perusal of specimen pages and an outline of the book—

"The work you have done is meritorious and you have done it in an admirable spirit and with the highest intentions." Adding that in these days it would be hard to find a publisher for the book in England, he concluded—"I do not pretend to be infallible and give you my opinion for what it is worth. And I give it with regrets."

Any student of the Christian origins would be proud of, and enthused by, so kind a message from a world-known, world-honoured authority.

and "Non-marcan" elements at a glance, and also revealed the special characteristics of each of the gospels. Thus the fact that *Mk.* has been much expanded and embroidered, and in places slightly toned down, at once became obvious, as already pointed out by most scholars; it became a major task to "excavate" the supposed "proto-Mark" which most critics now regard as the oldest and most historical account of the Mission. This then I adopted as my basis.

I then studied very carefully all the variations between the Gospels, as shown by the synopticon, trying to adduce a reasonable explanation for each acceptance or rejection of the "source-material" by the various gospels, each of whom had his own special aim and method. Using the peculiar flair or insight thus gained, I copied out separately the elements of the supposed "proto-Mark"; of "Q", the main non-marcan source; and the special Lucan and Matthean additions; I found that my "Q" differed only slightly from that of the great Harnack, and noted that it seemed possessed by the eschatology which appears for other reasons to be secondary.

Finding that the scheme of Goguel's "Life of Jesus", confirmed by the book of Dr. Klausner, agreed fairly closely with the apparent life-story revealed by these preliminaries, I adopted it as the general outline for my "Gospel". Next, for convenient working, I copied the short sections of my "proto-gospels" on to separate cards, and sorted them into the probable stages of the presumed life-story to which they belonged or best

cohered; within each period of the life, I grouped the card under the concerned topics. So was prepared the "first draft" of the Gospel text.

Next, I again studied carefully the full notes I had made of the views of the critics, ranging from men like Drews and Robertson to Harnack, Conybeare, Vincent, Bacon, Streeter and Salmon; in the light of these opinions I reviewed each incident in the life, each sentence in the teaching, modifying my results as seemed necessary, and omitting words or phrases which might be accretions. A few striking "Agrapha" of early appearance or citation were then selected and added in the appropriate places; some of these were found to be of earlier form than the variants in the "accepted text". The whole of the "Gospel Text" obtained by this long process of analysis and synthesis was then carefully revised and copied out fair.

Then I wrote the Commentary on each section, in the hope that it might render the "text" of greater value to modern readers, not all of whom have been brought up in a Christian environment. These notes were written also in the light of what can be gathered from the study of other Prophets and other Religions and of living saints in India.

After this I copied out the Greek version of the whole of this deduced "text", and compared it word for word with the provisional English draft, modifying the translation wherever it seemed necessary in the interest of accuracy and clarity. When this Introduction had been added the book was then ready to be typed for the Press.

It would be a real joy and pride to me if I were followed by others who could at once replace my work by a better one ; it exists only because so far as I have been able to find such a work has not yet been done by others. Only I do hope that all such future work will be done only after a similar study of " Prophets " in literature and in life itself, and by the same intensive and sympathetic study of other religions which has made this task so pleasant and enlightening to myself. It is not enough for the student to be a master of Greek prose or of Theology as taught in the universities ; to understand any religious text he must equally study other religions and those who made them. Not least of the essential qualifications is a deep and living religious sense and a vivid reverent sympathy ; the dogmatic " rationalist " and the fanatical " sectarian " are equally disqualified for all such study ; from their eyes the truth must ever be concealed.

2. Jesus, Prophet of the Kingdom

Palestine in His Day

Palestine, the scene of the earthly labours of the Prophet Jesus, is remarkable as being a holy land for three of the great world-religions ; Jews, Christians, and Muslims all alike look to it with deepest interest and reverence. Yet it is a very small land, not more than 150 miles from north to south, and about 50 from east to west. And the life of Jesus passed almost wholly within an area of about 30 miles square, in Galilee in

the north, where he had his home, and in the environs of Jerusalem, the capital where he had to meet the leaders of his people and, by dying, lay the foundations of his spiritual Kingdom.

Let us look, then, for a moment at this little district of Galilee, dotted about as it then was with prosperous villages and little towns nestling in shady groves among their fertile fields. We must not be misled by the present appearance of Palestine to think of it as an almost treeless and rocky land when Jesus lived there. Centuries of neglect and ruthless misrule have stripped this country of much of its ancient beauty. In the days of which we are going to speak, many trees everywhere gave delicious shade, the rainfall was still heavy, and though perhaps it was not exactly "flowing with milk and honey" its landscapes were of great beauty in rich and various shades of green. Galilee was especially attractive to the eye; its people were mostly simple shepherds, farmers or artisans, living by their own hard work in the open air, and though looked down on by the city-folk of Jerusalem as clumsy boors, they kept in spite of a rather mixed blood a keen faith in the destiny of God's chosen people. In their villages they lived an intensely Jewish life, more or less as the old teachers of their people had planned in long-past days; save for the regular pilgrimages to the Temple at Jerusalem they rarely left the rolling meadows of their own district or the busy little fishing villages around the lake which held the rather high-sounding name of Sea of Galilee.

Palestine falls into four natural physical divisions ; first, we have the coastal plain of Sharon, anciently colonised by the Aryan-speaking Philistines, and its extension across the country known as the Plain of Jezreel. To the north of this are the low hills of Galilee, and to the south the like hills of Samaria ; the latter rise gradually to the Hills of Ephraim and of Judah, about 3000 feet above the sea ; and to the east is the extraordinary Valley of the Jordan, averaging 1000 feet below sea level, a furnace for wet heat, and backed by the hills of Bashan, Gilead and Moab. Lying as it does right across the main road between Egypt and Mesopotamia, Palestine was during most of its long history a buffer-state between the Empires, often trampled under foot by their surging rivalries and ambitions.

The Jews had never had an easy time in Palestine. Entering as a small band of Semitic desert-wanderers more than a thousand years before this, they had carved out a kingdom for themselves which had thriven greatly under two of its first kings, David and Solomon, the memory of whose glory has haunted the imagination of their people ever since. But immediately after Solomon had died, this kingdom had broken into two small and perpetually warring states, which kept the people from giving any real resistance to the frequent invasions from Egypt in the south, Syria in the north, Assyria and Babylonia in the east. The mass of the people continued to be the same early Semitic settlers known as Canaanites who, under other names, are still the bulk of

Palestinians to this day. Among them the Jews lived as an uneasy ruling minority, struggling to maintain their own higher monotheistic cult against the Mediterranean religions which surrounded them on every side and from time to time swept over them like a tidal wave. This religious struggle was led through the centuries by a remarkable series of men, the Prophets, who, from Samuel to John, proclaimed with vision, courage and a lofty moral standard, the one God who must be served by obedience to His Law; many of them died for their testimony. They taught that so long as men serve Him He blesses them; so long as the Jews served Him, He would guarantee to them their kingdom on earth and make them great among the nations; whenever they deserted Him, He would throw them into exile or subject them to foreign lands.

Again and again this had happened. Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Macedon, Syria, Rome, came one after another, leaving only brief intervals of peace and a relative independence between them. The last of these intervals had been the longest, the most glorious. A terrible tyrant, Epiphanes of Syria, had oppressed the people and persecuted their religion. Never over-patient, the Jews flared up in open revolt when to this persecution was added the desecration of the Temple round which centred almost the whole of their religious life. Under the heroic family of the Maccabees they fought their way to freedom, and several of our "Psalms" show with what enthusiasm masses of the people hailed this dynasty as the real Messiah or political saviour

from God, promised long before through several of the Prophets ; on the day when the Temple was reconsecrated in B.C. 165 it seemed as though God Himself might well come down and rule His purified people.

This was an age of great progress in the religious and cultural life of the people, which reached a level of idealism and personal piety rarely excelled in any land. But the age of gold ended suddenly in a total eclipse. Family rivalries, the steady opposition of the great religious sect of the Pharisees, the schemings of ambitious adventurers with the rising power of Rome—each played its part. The Maccabees gave place to the Herods, tyrant-puppets under the shadow of the wings of the Roman eagle.

Yet the people did not lie down under the new misrule. Klausner has shown in a brilliant study how again and again they found their leaders and rose in short but desperate and violent rebellion to free themselves and to restore a truly native kingdom. Most of these leaders won their following by claims to be the Messiah, the chosen and anointed Agent of God's power to liberate the Jews. Galilee, with its wooded hillsides giving good cover for guerillas, was a perfect hotbed of such revolts and underground movements by these violent nationalists. Within the three generations of people who might have seen Jesus with their own eyes, it is computed that about two lakhs of the small population of this district alone died in such fighting, and the villages had been ruthlessly plundered again and again. Even during the childhood of Jesus there was a great famine

in the land as a result of these depredations, and the people suffered very great privation.

Yet their courage and zeal never wavered, and they were always on the look-out for fresh leaders to take them out against the enemies of their God. So great was their moral courage that in A. D. 40, only a few years after Jesus died, tens of thousands of ordinary peasants left their standing crops to perish in the heavy rain, so that they might go to protest with their lives against Petronius the Roman setting up an image in the Temple, where all images had been forbidden by their God. Judaism was indeed far from moribund or apathetic at that time; it was a boiling cauldron of religious zeal, patriotism and energy. And into this welter of hot emotions came Jesus, later to be known as the "Prince of Peace".

He came into a simple artisan family of Nazareth, a small town on the slopes of the Galilean hills and overlooking southwards the fertile Plain of Jezreel. It is clear that his family belonged to the pious group of Pharisees known as the Hasidim, who pinned their national faith less on violent revolt than on faithfulness to God's Law, relying on Him to save them and to uplift the nation to the promised greatness. Their leader, Hillel, was one of the greatest ethicists of all time, and his teachings and that of his disciples forms the bulk of the holy book *Talmud*. But Jesus did not follow the Pharisee teachings for long; they tended towards asceticism and an over-emphasis on ritual purity—while he believed in simple piety, in kind good action, and in

a direct personal relationship with God as child to a loving Father. Thus he drifted out of the sympathy of the ruling classes of his people, and entered the grim vale of sacrifice and tragic death.

The People of His Day

Sri Krishna says in the Hindu scripture *Bhagavad-gita* (4 : 7-8) : " Whenever religion decays and irreligion prevails, then I manifest Myself. To protect the good, destroy evildoers, and firmly establish Religion, I am born from age to age." History is full of proofs that this is true. It is in the darkest hour we see the first glimmer of a new dawn. The spiritual giant is born in a time when men have begun to lose faith in the old religions around them and to feel out after something new and better ; he leaves behind him a living seed that grows into a mighty tree to comfort millions in coming centuries.

The *Pagan world* had in the time of Jesus reached such an age of crisis. The immemorial national cults, with countless Nature-Gods to be propitiated by holocausts and served only by initiates born in their own particular nations, had lost their charm. The human soul no longer believed much in such narrow deities, and was being flooded with scepticism and with atheism. Many plunged headlong into the abyss of sense-gratification and of luxury and crime ; a few withdrew into meditation and solitary ecstasies or sought refuge from disillusionment in the philosophies of Plato and the Stoics. New

cults were arising all over the Mediterranean basin, cults which frankly faced this change of religious atmosphere, welcomed foreigners as their initiates, and prescribed ways to purify and deify the individual devotee. Old gods were giving place to new : Zeus, Kronos, Yahweh, Amenrē' and Ba'al were being dethroned by the Saviour-Gods, pitiful, loving, protecting ; masses swarmed to the temples of Osiris, Adonis, Attis, Mithra. Large communities of monks and hermits were springing up in Egypt, Palestine and other lands ; the silent deserts of Arabia, Libya and Syria were finding a population such as they had never known. There was a warm and friendly rivalry between these cults ; and a bitter enmity between them all and the orthodox priests of the old and dying worships. In Palestine the orthodox insisted on maintaining, with increased rigour, the ancient prohibition against social contacts with the "heathen" of Syria and other lands around—a prohibition Jesus did not at first defy.

The Messianists. Alongside this renewal of spiritual aspiration in the lands around them, the last few centuries had led the Jews into a great upwelling of national hope and of spiritual revelation. The divine help given this little people in its heroic struggle against the Syrian tyrants left behind him by Alexander, had thrilled them with a sense of God's abiding presence and His blessing. If they obeyed Him, they were sure He would soon come in the glory and might of Heaven to overthrow all their enemies, to establish Jerusalem as

the world's capital, and to rule the world from there through His Viceroy, the Chosen One, the Messiah. During those centuries many inspired books poured out—Enoch, Baruch, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, the Twelve Patriarchs, Judith, and a host of others like them; the religious leaders were giving their people, at least in theory, an ethic and a national ideal beyond which Jesus hardly found it necessary to go. At the same time, the political side of all this exuberant national dreaming was a constant danger, a menace to the peace and to the very lives of the people. For the world was ruled by Rome—lazy and tolerant in peace, but a ruthless and mighty foe in war. And Rome could hardly be expected to abdicate the leadership and wealth of the world to a little provincial town like Jerusalem.

The Zealots were the political extremists of the day, who believed that defeat for God's people was impossible; however much they might have sinned against Him in the past, He would never cast them off and would certainly give them victory in His own good time, however terrible the odds against them might appear. Their eyes were always alert for the expected signs that God was sending His promised Viceroy to exalt His chosen people in the place of the heathen, and were always ready to fling themselves on that day into the very fire with madly glorious heroism. An example of their noble folly was shown once when in a battle against the Romans they gave up a certain victory and let themselves be mowed down rather than break the

Law by fighting once the Sabbath had begun. Their splendid heroism in the last tragic hours of Jerusalem has never yet been sung in the epic it deserves. Many of Jesus's personal followers seem to have been drawn from their number, and their passionate patriotism was a constant embarrassment or temptation to Jesus himself.

The Pharisees were the "Protestants" of the age. Leading an intellectual revolt against the aristocracy of Temple priests who insisted on gloomy sacrifices to a jealous and vengeful God, they had striven to make the Sabbath and all other feasts joyful occasions of family life, had raised the position of women, had almost abolished the death penalty by imposing so many conditions upon it, had won recognition for the harmless traditional farm-festivals of the village folk, and had largely transferred the anthropomorphic ideas of God to angels. They saw God as the only possible King for His people; so they broadcast the Messianic hope among the people, while discouraging the extravagances of the Zealots—God Himself would reign; He needed no human help to overthrow the heathen. They both taught and practised a virtuous, sober and ascetic life; they took food only after washing and saying grace, and in every way they were as strict in private life as the hereditary priests. Having democratised religion through the village synagogues, or meeting-houses, they enjoyed great popularity; and their skill in interpreting the Law, for which they employed their own experts, the "Scribes", was generally used in the interest of the

common folk. They claimed that the High Priest himself was only a representative of God's "holy people", and they claimed that all their innovations were based on the "tradition of the fathers" or sayings of the wise. The name of their Order means "separated", and it was open to all who vowed to live segregated from the heathen, paying tithes for the poor and observing vows; they called one another Brother. They believed in a resurrection of the body but did not teach immortality of the soul.

Jesus in his own lifetime enjoyed friendly relations with this popular movement or sect; the ease with which they gave him the title of Rabbi, teacher, shows that he was at first himself regarded as a good Pharisee, as the Talmud legends also imply. That is why his free mixing with the common folk, even with "sinners", so surprised and shocked these good people as a violation of the vows of segregation. After his death, in which the Pharisees themselves had no hand—our texts being slightly altered in this sense during the reign of Hadrian (A.D. 117-138) when the Christians were expelled from the synagogues as heretics—the Church piled on their name every kind of abuse. It is also true that at about that time they were themselves denouncing certain of their own members for hypocrisy and stupid formalism, some at least having by then become rather eccentric fanatics.

The Scribes were the special experts in the Mosaic Law, and so were called "lawyers" by Luke in his

Gospel. They based their interpretation of the Law on the commentaries of the fathers, which with the Pharisees had almost canonical force. They were an aristocracy of learning, not of blood, and shared in the full the usual reputation of scholars for a certain measure of narrow pedantry. The denunciations of Jesus were mostly addressed to them, and not to the Pharisees at large. Jesus honoured love, humility, and singleness of heart; and these men were clever in twisting the Law to the view they wished it to uphold. However, they enjoyed as immense a prestige with the masses as the schoolmaster did in Goldsmith's "Deserted Village".

The Essenes, as described by Josephus who lived among them for some time, seem to have been a very strict sect who lived a life much like that of the Buddhist Order in its early days. Arising from the Pharisees, they insisted on ritual purity, on celibacy and meditation, on frequent fasting and withdrawal from the world; they met together only for prayers and meals, somewhat as the Hermetists were doing in Egypt. John was probably an Essene: his followers called themselves Asiin or Nasoreans (later on, Mandaeans), a title held by Jesus himself in our earliest copies of Mark's Gospel—probably a relic of the days when Jesus was a pupil of the great Baptist Prophet. But the later Nasoreans repudiated the big claims made by or for Jesus, and it is certain that Jesus wholly gave up those ideas of purity which characterised the followers of John. (cf. *Jn.* 3 : 25 and *Mt.* 15 : 10-14) Yet

he continued to admire the greatness of the man John, who had given up his life for his view of God's Kingdom.

The Sadducees were the priestly party, bitterest enemies of Jesus and his reform movement. They claimed to be descended from Zadok in Aaron's family, and to have been set aside by God Himself for the exclusive and unique service of His Temple; it was death for any other to arrogate this service to himself. They insisted on the supreme value of their caste-birth, despised, hated and resisted the democratic Pharisees, contradicting their interpretations of the Law and insisting on a strictly literal reading of every word in it. Thus they rejected the whole doctrine of the Messiah and denied resurrection; they strove to keep Yahweh on His lonely throne as the unapproachable Deity hidden by clouds of smoke and fire, and they fiercely opposed, though in vain, the innovation which gave the people a right to offer money for the Temple sacrifices. They tried to keep all feasts austere and stern, to keep women in the lower place assigned to them in the Law, and to maintain the strictest understanding of the Sabbath rules and the laws against mixing with the heathen. It was their enmity to Jesus that led at length to his murder by the Roman governor.

The Herodians were the servants, officials and toadies of Herod, the puppet king, or tetrarch, under the Roman power. As agents of the foreign yoke, supporting a

régime itself three-fourths pagan, they were despised and hated by all true Jews; they had continually to look for support to the foreign rulers and to their Syrian mercenaries. Their alliance with the priests against Jesus was no doubt made because Herod feared he would lose his throne if he let Jesus carry on the Messianic agitation started by John—a fear thrown back by Mt. 2 to the very birth of Jesus.

The Tax-Collectors were perhaps the lowest caste in ancient Jewry. As men who had loaned themselves out to fleece their fellow-Jews in order to enrich the unscrupulous Roman adventurers who speculated on the taxes that could be collected for the State—and incidentally kept large shares out of the profits for themselves—they naturally earned nothing but an intense loathing and contempt from everyone. What decent man would associate with such creatures? Jesus really flung away his early popularity by insisting on treating these men as human beings and as brothers. Many of the parables or stories of Jesus were meant to show that in God's eyes a man does not "lose caste" by doing even the meanest work, if it falls to him as a duty to be done.

3. The Life of Jesus

Early Days

Born somewhere in Galilee, unless the Bethlehem story is historical, Jesus seems to have belonged to a poor and pious family of artisans in the little town of

Nazareth, and he was brought up on the Jewish scriptures. These seem to have been very familiar to him, for he quoted them freely, and he knew the approved mode of comment practised in the scholastic circles among the Pharisees. His father, Joseph, must have been dearly loved, for in later days he usually spoke of God as "my Father"; the family was small and probably lived a peaceful life even in such stormy times.

Jesus early showed skill in debate, and had a good sense of humour though with a rather caustic tongue. We are assured by Justin that he usually spoke in brief clear sentences, being a man of action rather than of talk. He had a lively and quick intelligence, shrewd wit, an observant eye, and a love for Nature that in his time was rather unusual. There are many signs that he had a pleasing and "magnetic" personality, great sympathy for others, and a wide lovingkindness that endeared him to the common folk. But one thing he could not endure, and that was the smug self-righteousness of the complacent; it stung him into the bitterest rebukes.

There are very early legends that he studied for some time in Egypt, probably in one of the "Therapeutic" or Hermetic communities of which his contemporary Philo writes (cf. *Mt.* 2: 13-21, and the Talmud stories in *Pal. Chagiga* 77d, etc.), but this cannot rank as certain history. Of his youth the canonical Gospels preserve the silence characteristic of all Jewish literature about great men; we know nothing of the youth of Elijah, Isaiah and the rest. If there be any truth in old legends, on his return to his home Jesus seems to

have shown an independent mind and fearless manner (cf. *Bab. Sanh.* 107b and *Bab. Sota* 47a); the Jewish legends give us one glimpse of the bareheaded boy passing seated Rabbis with head held proudly up (*Toldoth Yeshu*, 2 : 4), evidently showing such "disrespect" because he felt himself equal to the best before God, as also when he argued with his teachers (*Lk.* 2 : 46, *Toldoth Yeshu* 2 : 6-11, *Gosp. of Infancy*, 48, etc.). The Infancy stories in the many Gospels of the first three centuries are almost pure myth, but we may draw from them the picture of a bright boy, devoted to his parents but putting his duty to God even above that to them, while in all other respects he lovingly and obediently served them (*Lk.* 2 : 48-52, and *GI* 82 : 1-2).

The Popular Preacher

When he grew up, Jesus among big crowds was baptized by John in the River Jordan; in his company he soon came to know that it was for himself to bring in God's Kingdom of joyous righteousness. His co-disciples of John felt bitterly that he was interpreting the master's ideas too freely and was usurping his place; so the two Prophets separated, Jesus returning home to work in his own villages. John seems to have been a bit disappointed in finding Jesus a faithless disciple, and was not quite sure that he was adopting right ways of work.

After the older man's arrest, Jesus carried on John's preaching and enlisted some disciples of his own, with whom he toured Galilee with great energy spreading the

message everywhere. His psychic powers found outlet in curing many sick people instantaneously, and as he scrupulously upheld the Law, explaining it in a noble way, he enjoyed at first great popularity, so that he was always surrounded by crowds.

But his free outlook soon brought him into conflict with the orthodox scholars of the Law. His startling doctrine that conscience might override the letter of the Law and that man can forgive sins even without payment of the priestly dues, shocked them; his friendly mixing with all classes, even the lowest and most despised, disgusted them. Rumour said that he had given out that John's "Kingdom of God" had now replaced the Law and the Prophets which foretold it long before: this seemed like an open repudiation of the bases of Judaism, and it drove them into open hostility. They began to plot his ruin with the help of the State officers.

The Political Phase

The miracles roused the people's hopes of a Messianic deliverer, and excited crowds of peasants besieged Jesus everywhere; he picked out a few disciples whom he felt he could trust, to be trained as evangelists and heralds of his message. His healing powers rose to a maximum and made many people wild enthusiasts for him; but his own family feared for his safety while annoying the rulers of the people, and tried to make him abandon his work. The hatred of his opponents steadily grew more fierce as his message slowly took more definite form—

powerful, pithy and poetical ; he taught through homely parables with great skill.

When Herod killed John for political reasons, Jesus opened a determined offensive, sending out his chosen preachers to spread John's message in every Jewish village ; the whole country was thrown into a ferment of eager expectation. Herod began to think it time to silence this second John, who seemed no less troublesome than the first. When the apostles returned to him, enthusiastic about developments, Jesus found that the whole countryside was looking for the immediate appearance of the Messiah ; when he almost nonchalantly fed the huge crowd on the shore, they wanted to proclaim him at once as the awaited Leader. But that was not at all what he wanted. Jesus refused to join in the political revolt for which they clamoured, even warning them against the use of violence. He at once lost all his popularity and was deserted by many of his followers. To the few who clung to him he began to give purely religious instruction, and he warned them not to use the name Messiah, which had connotations he could not accept and which would certainly lead to trouble for all. As the public faith in him waned, the cures became less rapid and less successful, but they continued even to the end.

Preparing for the Crisis

Refusing to be hurried into premature action, Jesus went up to Jerusalem in his own way, and in the Temple he boldly preached to all the real duty and the real

privilege of the Jews. After demolishing the childish objection that he could not be the Messiah because he came from Galilee, and not from David's city, he said something which made even his friends try to stone him for blasphemy. He then hurried back to Galilee. It is clear that by this time he believed himself to be the Messiah even though in a sense other than the normal.

He now put a higher demand on all who wanted to follow him, for it was clear that his followers must be ready to suffer for the cause; they must depend wholly on God and bravely face the future, whatever might come to them. They must give up showy virtue, pride, ambition, love of money, and all compromise; their supreme aim in life must be a pure heart. Those who suffered for God's sake would find a wonderful reward. Jesus still found many simple country folk, even in these trying days, who gave him their love and revered him as a great and good teacher.

On his way back to Jerusalem with a large band of Galilean followers, Jesus was slowly led by them to accept openly the Messianic rôle, to which however he still attached his own meaning. Having roused great hopes by his quasi-royal procession into the City, he only partly fulfilled them by a violent attack on the pollution of the Temple by trade, and by his boldness before the priestly exploiters of the people. He called on the people to choose intelligently between good and bad, and then he foretold the downfall of the faithless City and its Temple. This coming event he carefully distinguished from the coming of the Kingdom that he

preached, spiritual, in the hearts of men, and already among them. When he bravely declared that he was God's obedient son, and so one in work with the Father Himself, the crowd again tried to murder him; he fled across the Jordan into the lonely district of Perea.

His Enemies Appear to Prevail

Jesus foiled a cunning attempt to lure him into a definite stand for or against Rome, and then the priests decided to destroy him before the people broke out in a disastrous rebellion in his favour. Jesus came back to the City for the great national feast, as the people hoped he would. Braving all dangers, he openly denounced the cruel hypocrisy of those who misled the Jews with their false ideas, and then he privately explained to his own disciples that the real struggle was not against the Roman foreigner but within the nation itself, and within every home in the land; the time for conflict and for building up the spiritual Kingdom was now very near.

The last meal together, his passover feast, was embittered by the thought that even these his chosen intimates were not really worthy of the Cause. While he faced alone the anguish of defeat and loneliness, they slept, and the mob which came to seize him took them by surprise. Their leader arrested, the disciples scattered as he had expected they would. That night Jesus was taken for a preliminary enquiry before the priests. Having openly and deliberately "blasphemed" before them all, he was next taken before the Roman Governor as a royal pretender and a rebel. By him sentenced to

to death Jesus was crucified, and died after a few hours of agonised hanging on the cross. Obscurely buried, it seemed his life was over, a miserable failure ; but the women who after the Sabbath came to embalm the body learned that he was "risen". He was indeed seen after that by many disciples a number of times, both near Jerusalem and in Galilee. During a long period these visions continued (forty days, we are told, and by the Gnostics, forty years) ; under this inspired teaching from the Inner World, the Church slowly grew in numbers and in doctrine till it covered the world. The faithful feel that the promise of Jesus never to leave them has been fulfilled, and he is still, in his divine-human nature, a living power in their lives.

4. His Teaching

The Kingdom of God

God's Kingdom is at hand ; its coming is to be announced first to Israel, and if she rejects the message it will be announced to others. The scribes have in their hands the scriptural key to the message, but they do not use it. Men now living will see its coming, though the actual time cannot be known in advance ; indeed the defeat of evil spirits even now shows how near it is.

Its coming is at first secret ; it starts its work unseen, but later on it expands to give shelter to all ; its growth is natural and without our anxious interference, and when the time is ripe it suddenly appears like a flash of

lightning and illumines the whole world. The Kingdom does not come when expected, for it is timeless and spiritual; it comes in the heart and can only be found by him who searches into the self, transcending sex differences and realising his oneness with all.

So one who knows the laws of Love is very near to it, and to get entry into the Kingdom one must be more perfect in that law than the best of ordinary men. All may now try to enter, but only the worthy will succeed in getting in. No flatterer can enter, but only God's true servant of simple heart, one who trusts Him like a child. It is hard for the rich to humble themselves enough to enter, though God's special grace can achieve even this. Rank and place therein go to the most deserving, but all its citizens are greater than even the greatest of other men.

The seeker for the Kingdom must be whole-hearted and never look back, and he will never regret his choice. The Kingdom is so precious that it must come first in our life, being worth more than every other thing. The devotee who puts this first will have all else that he needs, and those who give up all for its sake will find ample recompense. Any sacrifice for the sake of the Kingdom is more than worth while; the path towards it is easy and joyful and gives rest to the simple-hearted who walks on it trustfully like a child.

Discipleship

But it claims our all, so we must first count the cost and measure our own strength before we begin. Then

if we dare we may renounce the little personal self, gladly take up the Cross of blessed suffering, and like Jesus himself give up the whole of our lives for the Kingdom's sake. If they lead us astray, we must give up all the joys of sense, carefully guarding and following the holy Inner Light towards perfection. If we have faith enough, nothing is impossible for us.

Cling, then, to your Teacher and to other holy people, for in this way holiness will grow in you and you will hear of eternal things. It is better to sit quiet at his feet than to rush about in showy service. Those who do God's will in this world are they who are nearest to Him; but you should have no differences in rank among you, for all are God's children and equal before Him; live peaceably together, and do not quarrel with others who serve God in their own way different from yours.

Preach the Gospel everywhere boldly, using the Teacher's name and relying wholly on God to give you through kind men all the help you need. Be polite to all friends, and bear no ill-will to any. Fear nothing once you have made the Message your own; teach it openly without any fear of slander or even of death itself; rather welcome such things as signs that you are God's true messengers and that Jesus is with you. Be ready for all physical discomforts; abandon, even without notice, your family and all social duties if called by God to other service for Him. No compromise is possible, and God must always come first in your life.

Relationship with God : Prayer

You can only meet God when at peace and in friendship with your fellow men. It is only when you freely forgive anything you may have against others that you can expect God to forgive you. Do not make a show of your prayers by performing them in public, but go to God humbly, in private, or in your own room or heart. Do not boast to God of your virtues or of His greatness; He cannot be bought by flattery or pride. Do not make long prayers while your mind is wandering, just in order to appear pious to others; many words, from a hypocrite, win no answer from the God of Truth. So avoid the mechanical repeating of set formal prayers which do not really come from the heart; they do not deceive God.

Prayer must be steady and persevering, full of the faith that God will send the truly good answer to them because He loves us. When we believe at the hour of prayer that God has heard us, we may be sure that we shall receive what we have asked for. Constant prayer drives away evil and keeps the mind pure, so you should be continually at prayer.

Your prayer should be for guidance and protection, so that God's Will may be truly done in you and His Kingdom be manifested in the world; after that you may ask for the daily needs of your earthly life, knowing well that He will certainly give us what we really need so long as we try to serve Him. We pray, not to tell God what He already knows, but to draw near in communion with our Father.

Relationship with Others: Active Love

When disputes arise, quietly withdraw elsewhere. Do not try to control others, for the truly great are those who greatly serve ; that is man's highest duty, to dedicate his life to the service of others. Do not accept titles or honours, for all are equal and you must be friendly with all, not tempting them to jealousy. Avoid all covetousness and ambition, which lead to quarrels. Do not look on other sects as rivals or interfere with their good work ; those who hurt others will themselves be hurt.

Man comes here to save lives and not to destroy them. Killing is a sin—but so also are anger, abuse and contempt. Never despise or hate others, but feel kindly to all, even those who hate and injure you ; in this way you will become truly impartial like your Divine Father. Love others just as you love yourself, and treat all as you would like to be treated ; if you are robbed, make gifts to the robber ; help others more than they demand ; give to every request. God will Himself punish and overwhelm evil ; you may safely leave that work to Him. See that you do not yourself add to the evil.

Freely forgive all, so that you can easily approach God who has so much to forgive in you ; forgiveness conquers hate and fosters love. If you have quarrelled with anyone, take every chance of reconciliation lest it grow more serious with lapse of time ; never go to sleep with a quarrel unsettled, and never be happy unless you can feel affection when looking at anyone. Be ready to forgive again and again, with unending patience—

talking to the offender in private about your grievance so as not to humiliate him in public ; thus you may win him over to your side. Do not judge or criticise others ; see to your own faults first, and then when you are perfect you may look to others if you must.

Give freely to others of all you have, and God will make a full return to you. Carry out your legal obligations in full, so as to give others a good example and avoid needless trouble with the authorities of this world. Accept gladly what people give for you, and do not cause jealousies by wandering from one to another. Be glad when others treat you badly, for God's people will always suffer in this world. If you help the poor and helpless, you are really helping the Lord Himself ; to harm or mislead others is one of the greatest of sins.

Money

Use wealth to help and succour the poor who are near to you. Your life does not depend on your possessions, which bring responsibilities and constant trouble ; it is better to give than to get. Your charities should be secret, so as to avoid the praise of others ; nor should you speak or boast of them afterwards. The little gift of a poor man is far more than a rich donation given lovelessly by the rich.

Though they may use money at need, God's messengers have really no need to keep it, for they can safely rely on God providing helpful friends. Poverty even helps you to win the Kingdom, and there is no use your

winning even the whole world if you thereby lose the Kingdom—which is worth more than your life ; rather should you throw away your life and all you have in order to win the Kingdom. You need not worry about the future, for God will always look after His devotees who trust to Him for everything. If you give up all for His sake, you will find a great spiritual treasure awaiting you in heaven, where death can never deprive you of its joy ; there it will constantly grow, ever drawing your minds higher and higher as your faithfulness is proved.

You cannot at the same time serve both God and the world, or combine the desire for God with a desire for money ; for God hates money, and all worldly business defiles the Temple of God. All the wealth lavished on adorning the Temple cannot save it from ruin if it is once defiled. So you must make a clear choice between these two, once and for all.

Purity

Rules of ritual cleanliness are to be observed, such as washing before a meal, but they are not to be made a fetish. Nothing can make a man unclean by entering his body or adhering to it ; it is only the impure thoughts and deeds that come out of him which can make him really unclean. So you can easily discover a man's inner character by seeing what he does and thinks. Outer purity is useless if the inside is dirty ; when you have cleaned the inside, the heart, the outside will take care of itself. Suffering does much to purify the heart.

Even impure and angry thoughts are as bad as wicked deeds, and all sin leads to disease of the body. This inner impurity can only be expelled with God's help, and even then it may return if you are not always on guard to keep it out. If any sense plays you false, it must be sacrificed at once, or the inner Light of the Spirit may be darkened for ever. The Teacher can mingle freely with impure folk to redeem them; he cannot be defiled by such contact because he is doing God's work. But the company of the good and noble leads you to holiness, and the Kingdom belongs to those who are as pure as a little child. Ignorance itself is of the nature of impurity and must be washed away by the baptism of a new birth in God's grace. Sacred places must not be defiled by worldly things.

Sex

It is adulterous even to look with bad desires at a woman; you must be as pure and innocent as a little child, and the Kingdom will come to you when you are no longer conscious of sex-differences. After death we are all like the angels and have sexless bodies; only so could we always live in God's presence.

No marriage made by God can ever be dissolved; Moses allowed divorce only because of the weakness of the Jews in his days. It is adultery if a divorced person marries again. Celibacy is not practicable for all; some are born without desire, some are trained out of it, and some give it up for God's sake. We cannot know another as he is, so we must not judge even his worst sins unless

we are ourselves wholly pure ; one who loves greatly is forgiven much. Even Jesus himself does not condemn men, but he calls us to a higher life, aiming at perfection like that of our heavenly Father.

5. His Opinion about Himself

As a Prophet of God

It seems clear from all the earliest sources that the Jerusalem Church founded at Pentecost by the Apostles preserved a better memory of what Jesus thought of himself than did the churches founded among pagans in a salvationist environment by St. Paul. Until the destruction of that original Church when Jerusalem was overthrown by the Romans, it clung to the first idea that Jesus was simply God's chosen Prophet, anointed to be the Messiah of his people and to lead them to glorious triumphs in the world. It was only the total ruin of the Jewish people which shattered that early belief, and forced the survivors in Palestine to fall into line with the view then prevailing everywhere else that Jesus was in fact the Redeemer looked for by all the pagan cults of the Mediterranean basin, through whose blood our sins are washed away and we are reconciled to the Eternal Father-God in heaven. We have no space here to go into the overwhelming proofs of this statement ; they have been established by others beyond all honest doubt.

Even in the later books of the Palestinian, or "Petrine" school, which show an ill-veiled hostility to

the "Pauline" conception, Jesus is still the "Prophet" (that is, the mouthpiece or spokesman) of God, as we can see in the 2nd century pseudo-*Clementines*; and in the *Didache*, a book dating from about A.D. 90-100 in its present revised form, he is still "God's holy Servant"; the specially Jewish books of our Canon, such as *James*, *1 Peter* etc. show little trace of the "Pauline" Jesus.

However, like many another saint Jesus was even from the very beginning of his life free from the oppressive sense of sinfulness which tortures others, and he is unwilling (if we can trust the early *Gospel of the Hebrews*) to make a false show of penitence by going to John's baptism along with sinners. He knows that he is always busy doing God's Will and so is always in harmony with Him. Yet he knows too that none save God alone is truly good, that is incapable of sin, or perfect—for he has known what it means to be tempted by sinful thoughts; this saying makes it clear that Jesus does not claim to be God. His work, as he conceives it, is simply to do God's Will and to teach what He has taught him, like a faithful son and messenger obeying his Father.

He has come into the world only for this. His message, as he has understood it, is to proclaim the "Kingdom of God" or "of Righteousness", which has repentance as its doorway, and to work for that sublime Cause in the villages around his home. His mission is first to his immediate neighbours, his own people, the Jews; but if they reject it he will go to

others; the message must be delivered in time to all the world. He has come to fulfil the Law; not to replace it but to extend its meaning and make it a more perfect means to Righteousness. He has not come to condemn those who break or reject it, but to win them to a better life by telling them of God's love for them which led Him to give that Law; he has very little to say to the snug self-righteous souls.

The Kingdom is near, but no man can say exactly when the reign of God on earth will begin; He will give no sign of its coming beyond the actual spread of the teaching and the overthrow of evil spirits to which it leads. It has nothing specially to do with his physical relations, who have no special claim on him as such; but it belongs to all who are his spiritual kindred and devoted to its Cause. He himself is destined to suffer, but no earthly power can stop his work; it would be a great sin and cowardly to try to evade that suffering which is to initiate the new age, and he himself will rather welcome it; his followers should do the same in their turn. During the first mission of his disciples, he sees the overthrow of Satan; and this is for him a sign that the Kingdom has already, in the real inner world, replaced the era of prophecy about it.

He has not come to meddle in worldly matters, nor to resist earthly powers; nor will he accept an earthly kingdom even if men try to thrust one on him. He has, in fact, no power even to confer rank and place in the Kingdom whose herald he is, nor does he himself know

when it will appear openly in the world. His work among men is sure to bring dissension into every family, but he is eager for that struggle to begin, so that the coming of the Kingdom may be hastened.

He refuses to define his authority clearly, but hints that like John he comes as a Prophet, as a "crying voice", and he adds that wise men will act on his words. If like himself his followers trust wholly in God, they will win many fellow-subjects for the Kingdom and serve God well. His own teaching has weight because it is based on direct first-hand knowledge rather than on book-study; so it gives a blessed comfort to the weary.

He freely admits that he is in fact the real Messiah, God's anointed Messenger, but he rather avoids the use of the word because it has political associations which he does not accept. So his real nature must remain a close secret until circumstances at the very end force him to play the Messianic rôle in public; then he does it in his own way. He considers it foolish to look for the Prophet only in David's all-but extinct family, for God chooses whom He will to do His work. (cf. GI 19 and 37 : 3 and GH 37 : 3)

There are no "dead", and the great men of olden days are still alive in the world from which he has come, so Abraham himself has seen him. He is fully conscious of the immortality of his soul, and he knows that he will soon drink the "wine" of the Kingdom, his body being sacrificed for the Cause and becoming a symbol of their union and the eternal food of their fellowship

in the Kingdom. Though at the very end he is afflicted for a moment with a terrible sense of the vastness of the labour of overcoming evil and with a cruel feeling that God has left him alone to face it, he goes forward bravely with open eyes to the final sacrifice. His last cry is one of fervent appeal to the Father, in whose presence always near him he feels full confidence never really shaken (cf. *Jn.* 8 : 29).

As the Son of God

Yet this is not all. It seems certain, even from our earliest and most reliable sources, that Jesus during those stirring days of peril, of devotion and of deep spiritual adventure felt, like many other great heroes of the Divine Life, a certain sense of inner divinity. Gradually he came to feel himself so identified with the Cause of the Kingdom and with the Divine Father who entrusted it to his care, that he realised his essential oneness with that God Himself. The Jews of those days could not have viewed such ideas as other than wild and rash fantasy, almost bordering on blasphemy, but we with far wider knowledge of the religious life and mystic consciousness of one wholly surrendered to God can better understand what Jesus meant, and joyfully admit its truth.

Though we have no full report of what he may have said of this supreme consciousness to his disciples, the analogy of Sri Rāmakrishna's case suggests that he may well have hinted something of this sublime realisation to his intimates. One of them—the “beloved disciple” of

Jerusalem, who was never in early days confused with the Apostle—may well have passed on a true report of this to the “Elder John”, or whoever really wrote the Fourth Gospel in his name.¹

There is nothing unique, strange, or incredible in all this; many of the saints who have been sanctified by their faith in Jesus as the God who lives in their hearts, have known the same blissful union with God. Nor is this a fitting subject for the wrangling or ribaldry of those who know nothing of the mystic experience of at-one-ment or “deification”; it is a shrine before which we should in silent awe draw the veil of reverent adoration—eternally grateful to those who have shown that man can enter that holy tabernacle of God’s Being at His call.

6. Jesus in His Church

“Peter” and “Paul”

For about two centuries after Jesus, these two main ideas of him as Prophet, and as God—strove together in the Church. The former prevailed for some time in Palestine and among Jewish converts elsewhere, who in their passionate loyalty to monotheism rejected what savoured of pagan idolatry. The latter prevailed through-

¹ Indeed, it is quite probable that the “beloved Disciple” is really the same person as John the Elder, who is said to have lived till the turn of the century. That would not make him more than about 75 or 80 when he wrote the Gospel, and he may well have been a youth during the lifetime of Jesus (*cf.* G. M. C. Introduction)

out the wide lands where St. Paul spread his "gospel" of the Risen Saviour mediating between God and man, among the converts from pagan cults whose background made them welcome it gladly.

St. Paul found little scope for his brilliance among the Palestinian believers whom he had himself so cruelly harried a few months before; he almost at once turned to the Hellenistic world outside. Everywhere he met with the most bitter opposition among Jews; he had even to contend openly for apostolic rank with St. Peter and the other "pillars" of the Jerusalem Church, who enjoyed the vast prestige of having once been personal intimates of Jesus himself. He had to denounce loudly those who preached "another gospel" than that which he preached, and which he admitted frankly was not based on real traditions of a physical life of Jesus in the body, but solely upon revelations made to himself by the Divine Spirit of Truth. This position is wholly identical with that of all the Gnostic schools which for many centuries almost captured the Church and overthrew the rule within it of fixed dogma and a fixed Canon.¹

St. Paul found so great a success in the Hellenistic world of Greece and Asia Minor that the earlier church and its Prophet were soon swamped by the numbers of

¹ It is indeed almost shocking to read the terms in which St. Paul speaks of these boasted "Apostles" of the Palestinian Church in his letters to the Galatians, Colossians and Corinthians; he is very forceful in his contempt for them. At the same time, the letters in Rev. 2-3 show us that the other side felt equal hatred and contempt for him and his teachings.

his pagan converts, whose religion was new in name rather than in nature. They poured in with their old fervent faith in a Saviour-God, and they gladly accepted Jesus as a new name for that older universal Deity of many names. In the new Religion they found the same warm faith in Jesus, God's mystically chosen Son who gave his life to uplift men and to save them from their sin; they were quite at home.

While St. Paul himself was still preaching in the cities of pagan culture like that Tarsus where he had been born, the fusion of the earlier Prophet Jesus with this eternal Saviour and Son of God had already made good progress. Though extremists on both sides were still lampooning each other (cf. *Gal.* 1-3 and 5; *2 Cor.* 12; and the *Clementines*), by the time Marcion formed his "Canon" of *Gospel* and *Apostle*, about A.D. 150, the process was almost complete. Gnostics and Catholics had kept up all those years a steady stream of competing scriptures—all of them teaching the Divine and Cosmic Christ, now named Jesus, and the poor and scattered Ebionites and other Palestinian sects could not meet their mighty challenge. So by the end of the 2nd century nearly all Christians held the belief that the Jesus of whom men spoke was really the Eternal Christ incarnate for our sakes, not different from the Infinite God himself. This view has never again been seriously shaken within the Church, though from time to time small sects like the Unitarians have rejected it and reasserted once again the original view of the Palestinian Church in the 1st century.

The Church Spreads

The spread of this new form of the immemorial religion of Europe, West Asia and North Africa was largely aided by the following factors :

(1) It brought a message of new hope to the poor and oppressed, that they are God's favourites and will receive in heaven ample compensation for their troubles here.

(2) The detailed Gospel story of an appealing human life of God among ordinary men and women was not paralleled in any other religion in the field, and this story was confirmed by actual eyewitnesses of that life.

(3) The Church very early organised systematic relief for its distressed members and an efficient body for propaganda and government.

(4) The hatred of the Jews for this new Faith soon convinced friends and loyal subjects of Rome that it was politically safe and respectable. When St. Paul's insistence that Christians were no longer bound to obey the Jewish Law prevailed, they were for the first time expelled from the synagogues about A.D. 120, and then the Jewish hatred for the new sect of heretics grew far more fierce; even the most indifferent of pagans gave up thinking of Christians as a mere variety of those "pestilential" Jews.

It is true that for several centuries occasional ill-organised and ill-maintained persecutions under suspicious Emperors like Domitian went on, but they were spasmodic and resulted only in giving the Church martyrs who increased its glory and its converts. Marcus

Aurelius and Julian, who had nobler motives for trying to check the decay of pagan culture, achieved no more. The new creed began to win many of its converts from among the educated and the ruling classes, especially after the hopeless ruin of the old State-cults had become obvious to all.

Carried by traders and slaves, and then by soldiers also, wherever the Roman standards marched, and by a few devoted missionaries into the vaguer lands beyond, Christianity was already established in its modern ecclesiastical form even before it became the State religion under Constantine—and paid the price of power with a serious loss in spiritual purity. Save for a few outlandish sects of heretics, it had already sold away the Jesus who forbade all oaths, judging, killing and anger, in exchange for the more convenient figure of the theological Second Person of the Godhead. Little but the holy Name was in practice retained by the organisation, though it was still rich in personal piety.

The Church very largely turned its mind to glorifying its rituals and its buildings, spreading profitable relic-worships, exterminating "heretics" like the Montanists, Gnostics, and Priscillianists, who still claimed to be in direct independent touch with the Source of Life and Truth Himself; she gave herself to vain wrangling over dogmas far above the comprehension of angry minds, and to bloodthirsty "elections" of its bishops, which were a scandal and a scoff to educated men outside and a deep pain and humiliation to the righteous men within the Church. The many individuals who still clung to

the Galilean Jesus, trying to live as he had taught, mostly fled from seats of influence in the Church to hide themselves in convents or in desert hermitages ; there they laboured patiently to preserve culture and charity through the dark ages that had begun, and were the inspiration of what education survived to better times. But the beautiful religion given by Jesus while on earth was wholly submerged under a raging torrent of worldliness, wherein swirled ceaseless whirlpools of clamorous theology. Religion once more became the intellectual preserve of a professional class ; save for the few who trod the path of saintship, common men ceased to worry much about it. If they avoided open quarrel with the Church, they went to heaven—and that was all ; it was enough for them.

It Adopts Violence

As soon as it gained political power, the organised Church began to persecute its rivals. The temples of all independent forms of the old Mediterranean Religion—Greek, Egyptian, Syrian, and other—were ruthlessly destroyed or converted to Christian use. Their rites and vestments, liturgies and festivals, were taken over almost wholesale ; many of their priests turned apostate and in time became good Christian saints. The libraries of ancient culture were barbarously destroyed ; the ancient Schools of Philosophy were closed, their teachers being dismissed or subjected to an ill-treatment worse than anything the Church itself had suffered in its days of weakness. This suppression of all non-theological,

secular, and free thought, which had begun with the 1st century assault on Gnosticism, went on until it crushed out the whole of classical culture—and tied all mental life to the tardy wheels of the bullock-cart of Jewish scripture.

Whole nations, at the arbitrary will of their barbarian rulers, were forcibly converted and driven into the Church, literally by fire and sword among the Saxons and the ancient Prussians; but these so-called "conversions" failed utterly to change the hearts of men as Jesus required of those who take his name. The brutal massacres of the Albigenses, the Cathari, and other sects derived from the Manichaeans, were followed by inhuman cruelty shown to one another equally by Catholics and Protestants, by the sadism of the Inquisition and the savage madness of the witch-burnings, especially in Protestant Massachusetts. The common cruelty which still disgraces our modern Europe—Nazi, Bolshevik, reactionary are all alike—owes much to the wrong methods of "conversion" used so long ago by the Church in Europe. Man in the "Christian West" today is in fear and agony because he has never really turned to Jesus, to work out his own salvation through righteousness and a loving trust in God, but has always chosen the easier way of a proxy atonement through the suffering and death of one who, to him, has often been but a theological shadow.

If there be any real tragedy in the life of Jesus, it is not that men crucified his holy body, but that so many who call themselves his followers have through the ages

prostituted his name and teaching to propagate the very evils he died to overthrow—bigotry, ignorance and superstition, formal credalism, outer ceremonialism, cruelty and a blasphemous fear of the all-loving Father. All these were enthroned by such betrayers of their Lord in the very Church that builds upon his name, crying “Lord, Lord!” while doing so many things that he forbade.

And Yet Jesus Reigns ●

Is it then all black darkness in the Church? By no means! Long ago, Elijah, the great Prophet of Israel, once fled to a cave to hide because his people had abandoned God and sought his life; but God sent him back to work for Him, saying there were still many who were faithful and had never bowed to the false gods.

So, all through the ages, even while the organisation went far astray from its Master’s words, He kept His witnesses who had not bowed down to the false god Mammon, but were faithful to Him alone. Fortified by sacramental grace; fed and inspired to spiritual heroism by a real inner communion with God in the personal form of that dear Crucified Man, the Lover of men; comforted, taught, and strengthened by his Mother and the other Saints who went before them—all through the ages the Saints of Jesus, men and women, yes and little children too, have kept the flag of true Religion above the rising tides of materialism and ignorance.

There is no end to the Saints. As one passes to his reward, another takes up the Cross in some lonely

corner of the world and follows in his footsteps; from the days of the Apostles the holy line has stretched unbroken down to our own. Men and women, old and young, gentle girls like the "Little Flower"; mystic women of action and unfathomable depths of prayer like St. Teresa of Avila; men of heroic charity like St. Camillus, of missionary zeal like St. Martin, of burning love like St. Francis of Assisi; tiny children like the Neapolitan Livio Galeota and Maria of Padova; scholars like St. Thomas Aquinas; and great rulers like St. Louis of France and St. Margaret of Scotland. Few have been canonised as saints; yet glorious is every one of that great company, thousands and thousands in number; and it is their strength which has preserved the Church even while today it holds so little in its outward forms of the simple Man of Galilee. They have enriched the Church with their heroism and devotion, or with a perfect faith like Penn's; and by their lives they have testified to God's presence and blessing still brooding over it.

And one and all of these, from every land and every generation, declare with united voice that it is the love and power of Jesus as the crucified and yet triumphant Son of God, which has worked this greatest of all miracles in their lives. We cannot brush aside their testimony, and yet claim to be honest students of the truth. As Karl Adam writes in '*The Son of God*' (p. 262): "He who centuries ago was slain as a felon in an out of the way corner of the world, today lives the same sublime life among us, in us, with us. He is more alive

than all the living." And that is why the Christian Religion is today the most active, the most widely spread, the most dynamic of the great Religions which have shared the world among them.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
The Gospel of Jesus	vii
Preface	x
Introduction : How this Book was Made : Axio- matic Foundations, Building the Text,—Jesus, Prophet of the Kingdom : Palestine in His Day, The People of His Day, (the Pagan World, the Messianists, the Zealots, the Pharisees, the Scribes, the Essenes, the Sad- ducees, the Herodians, the Tax-Collectors)— The Life of Jesus : Early Days, The Popular Preacher, The Political Phase, Preparing for the Crisis, His Enemies Appear to Prevail— His Teaching : The Kingdom of God, Disciple- ship, Relationship with God (prayer), Re- lationship with Others (Active Love), Money, Purity, Sex.—His Opinion about Himself : As a Prophet of God, As the Son of God.— Jesus in His Church : “ Peter ” and “ Paul ”, The Church Spreads, It Adopts Violence, And Yet Jesus Reigns	xvii

CHAPTER ONE : PREPARATION

1. John the Baptist, 2. Jesus is Baptized, 3. Jesus Makes Two Friends, 4. In the Desert, 5. Jesus Parts from John	1

CHAPTER TWO THE EARLY MISSION

6. Jesus Wins Four Disciples, 7. He Cures a Madman, 8. He Heals Many of the Sick, 9. His Work Spreads, 10. He Bids a Leper Obey the Law, 11. Back to Peter's Village, 12. The Law will Not Lapse, 13. But Must be Followed Spiritually, 14. His Teaching is Welcomed, 15. The First Open Criticism, 16. Jesus is for Those in Need, 17. The Grateful Woman, 18. This is No Time for Fasting, 19. Jesus Defends his Disciples, 20. Conscience can Override Law, 21. Helping Others is the Higher Law, 22. The Reply to John, 23. Jesus on John. 9

CHAPTER THREE: HOSTILITY GROWS

24. The First Plot, 25. Jesus Goes into Hiding, 26. Jesus Chooses Apostles, 27. Evil is Driven out by Good, 28. Cures Not Always Permanent, 29. The Saint's Relatives, 30. The Sower, 31. Parables of the Kingdom, 32. Teaching by Metaphor, 33. He Calms a Storm, 34. The Gergesene Madman, 35. Healed by a Touch, 36. A Roman's Faith, 37. Rejected at Home. 37

CHAPTER FOUR: THE POLITICAL
EPISODE

38. The Apostles Sent Out, 39. Herod is Disturbed, 40. The Apostles Return, 41. They Try

to, Find Rest, 42. Simple Folk are Welcome,	
43. Jesus Feeds the Crowd, 44. He Refuses to	
Lead a Revolt, 45. The Story of a Figtree,	
46. Many Leave Him. 47. Talk on Purity, 48. A	
Sample Prayer, 49. Faith in God, 50. First Be	
Friendly with Man, 51. Do not Criticise Others,	
52. They Fail to Reach Bethsaida, 53. Jesus	
Helps a Heathen Woman, 54. A Deaf-Mute	
Cured, 55. No Sign will be Given, 56. A Blind	
Man Cured, 57. Peter Hails Jesus as Messiah .	57

CHAPTER FIVE: FIRST VISIT TO JERUSALEM

58. Pharisees Warn Jesus, 59. Jesus Avoids	
Company, 60. He Goes Alone, 61. The Duty of	
the Holy City, 62. The People Wonder at Him,	
63. A Galilean Messiah? 64. The Messiah Not	
David's Son, 65. Jesus Assaulted	86

CHAPTER SIX: LAST DAYS IN GALILEE

66. The Epileptic Boy Cured, 67. New Con-	
ditions for Discipleship, 68. Only Keen Men are	
Needed, 69. God Gives All We Need, 70. The	
Blessings, 71. Jesus Pays the Temple-Tax,	
72. Avoid Rivalry, 73. The Child, 74. On Spirit-	
ual Purity, 75. Children are Blessed by Jesus,	
76. On Marriage and Divorce, 77. Celibacy is Not	

	PAGE
for All, 78. The Rich Man Disappointed, 79. It is Hard for the Rich, 80. The Return for Sacrifice, 81. Life is Uncertain, 82. Heavenly Treasure is Best, 83. Compromise is Impossible, 84. The Pharisees Rebuked, 85. The Three Religious Duties	98

CHAPTER SEVEN: SECOND VISIT TO JERUSALEM

86. Jesus Expects Trouble, 87. Samaritans Reject Him, 88. He Rebukes Ambition, 89. A Blind Man Cured, 90. Jesus is Not a Judge, 91. A Royal Entry into Jerusalem, 92. Jesus Retires to Bethany, 93. Mary's Choice, 94. The Temple Purified, 95. He has a Prophet's Authority, 96. God is Rejecting the Jews, 97. Choose Good Teachers, 98. Doing is More than Saying, 99. The Widow's Gift, 100. The Fallen Woman, 101. The Temple Ruin Foretold, 102. The Time is Unknown, 103. Signs of God's Kingdom, 104. Jesus Declares Himself	130

CHAPTER EIGHT: THIRD VISIT TO JERUSALEM

105. Our Duty to the State, 106. The Saddu- cees' Question, 107. The Story of the Supper, 108. The Two Children, 109. The Good Samaritan, 110. Decision to Kill Jesus, 111. Jesus Again

in Hiding, 112. Expected for the Passover, 113.	
Jesus Prepares, 114. Greek Jews Try to See Him, 115. God Dislikes Boasters, 116. Jesus Denounces the Scholars, 117. They are Blind Fools, 118. And Enemies of Truth, 119. Jesus Warns his Disciples, 120. He Comforts Them, 121. Elijah has Already Come	160

CHAPTER NINE: PASSION AND VICTORY

122. Jesus Expects Betrayal, 123. The Last Supper, 124. The Talk of Swords, 125. All Will Desert Him, 126. The Agony, 127. The Arrest 128. The Blasphemy Trial, 129. The Sedition Trial, 130. A Mock Royalty, 131. The Wailing Women, 132. The Crucifixion, 133. Jesus is Buried, 134. Women Come to Embalm Him, 135. The Resurrection Announced, 136. Peter Sees Jesus, 137. The Disciples See Him, 138. Jesus Seen by a Big Crowd, 139. Breakfast with the Seven, 140. The Ascension	185
Analysis of the Omitted Passages	218
List of Abbreviations	223
Index	225
Important Books for Study	227
Parallels with the Gospels of Islam, China, Hermes, Zarathushtra and the Mystic Christ	231
The World Gospel Series	237

CHAPTER ONE

PREPARATION

1. John the Baptist

1. John came into all the land around the Jordan (M. 1 : 14), baptizing and calling to the baptism of repentance (L. 3 : 3) in Bethabara across the Jordan. Now John wore camel felt and round his waist a leather belt, and he ate carob-seeds and wild honey. (J. 1 : 28) Then Jerusalem and all Judea went out to him, (Mt. 3 : 5) and all were baptized by him in the River Jordan, confessing their sins. (M. 1 : 5)

2. Therefore he said to the crowds who went out to be baptized by him, "O brood of vipers, who has shown you the need to escape from the coming storm? (L. 3 : 7) I am baptizing you with water, (L. 3 : 16) but after me (M. 1 : 7) one is coming who is stronger

than I and whose shoes I am unworthy to carry (Mt. 3 : 11); he will baptize you with wind and fire. (L. 3 : 16) Now do not begin to say to yourselves, ' We have Abraham for father ', for I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. (L. 3 : 8) Repent, for **God's** Kingdom has drawn near, (Mt. 3 : 2) and the axe already lies at the root of the trees ; every tree not yielding sweet fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire, so yield fruits proving (your) repentance." (L. 3 : 8-9)

The scene opens in the deep gorge of the Jordan, where crowds had swarmed to gape on the newest sensation of the day. This John was a prophet of the old school, like Elijah or Amos, ascetic and fanatical. He called on the people to give up their sins and to take a new birth, symbolised by immersion in the clean river waters. This would fit them to receive the Kingdom of God, whose coming he, like Isaiah and the prophets of old, proclaimed; he added that the time for its inception had now arrived.

At such a time, of national humiliation under Roman tyranny and of reviving hopes for the promised Messianic deliverer, his message naturally drew to him all the idle and the curious, all political hotheads and zealous young men. He was soon surrounded by a motley crowd that could not but raise in Herod, the puppet ruler of the land, a suspicion that John was really a revolutionist. Probably indeed John did, like most of his contemporaries, hold a mainly political view of

the Kingdom, and that view was naturally carried over from him by most of those who later followed Jesus. Much of his preaching, as it has been preserved for us, reads like a fiery threat of revolt and vengeance on the unjust, and the local Government can hardly be blamed for its quick arrest of this dangerous preacher.

Those who underwent his mild baptism in water were to be immune from the coming deluges of wind and fire that would destroy the wicked and heathenizing Jews along with the heathen rulers themselves, and so bring in the reign of God's people all over the world, with their capital at Zion's holy hill in Jerusalem (cf. *Isa.* 66 : 20—24).

2. Jesus is Baptized

1. Now it was in those days (M. 1 : 9) *the mother of Jesus and his brothers began to say to him, "John is baptizing for the forgiveness of sinners ; let us go and be baptized by him."* But he answered them, "*How have I sinned, that I should go and be baptized by him—unless my saying this is perhaps ignorance?*"¹ (A. Ap. 16) Then Jesus went down with them and did as they told him ; (L. 2 : 51) he came from Galilee and was baptized by John in

¹ In this, and other, volumes of the Series passages which are not now included in the orthodox canon of Scripture are printed in italics. But many of these are really more authentic and more primitive in form than the actual "scriptures" recognised by the orthodox.

the Jordan. And coming out of the water he saw heavens opened and the spirit coming down on him like a dove, while a voice came from heaven: "Thou art my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." (M. 1 : 9-11)

The story of how Jesus was led to his baptism is a curious incident recorded only in the "Gospel of the Hebrews" of about A. D. 120, but it seems unlikely to have been invented by men who looked on Jesus as divine; so it is probably a true tradition. It hints at the same family misunderstanding of Jesus that became so acute later on in our sections 27 : 1, 29 and 59 : 1, and it shows how even at the very start of his career he had a vivid sense of sinlessness and was unwilling to perform what seemed like an empty rite. Yet he was ready to obey his mother's wish. (cf. J. 2 : 3, 7)

The wording in Mt. shows that the vision and voice at his baptism were subjective—perceived only by Jesus himself; their authenticity is more or less established by their clear effect upon his whole life.

3. Jesus Makes Two Friends

1. Next day, John was standing with two of his disciples and watching Jesus as he walked along. He said, "There is a 'lamb of God'!" and the two disciples heard what he said. Then they went after Jesus. Turning round, Jesus asked them what they wanted. They said, "Master, where do you live?"

He answered them, "Come and see!" They went, and stayed with him that day. (J. 1 : 35-40)

9. Andrew was one of the two who listened to John and followed **Jesus**. In the morning he hunted up his brother Simon and took him to Jesus. Looking at him closely, Jesus said, "Are you Simon, Jonah's son? You shall be called Peter (=rock)!" (J. 1 : 41-42)

John's exclamation was wrongly coloured by the theologians when they inserted a definite article where no Semitic original could have had one. He could have meant only, "Look! there is a gentle sinless one for you to copy if you will; he is pure enough for a Temple-offering to God."

The natural way Jesus made his first friends after his baptism seems to be a clear mark of historicity. Those who have watched Hindu saints in their daily lives will often recognise features of Jesus's life which have raised scoffing doubts in those without such experience. Such are the occasional flashes of clairvoyance and thought-reading, his almost spontaneous cures of invalids and maniacs, and the constant crowding round him of those who only wanted contact with a holy man and cared nothing for what he said. These things made the arrogant ignorance of many old-fashioned sceptics reject the whole story of Jesus as an elaborate fiction, though those who know where to look for them may see similar things this day.

Later on, Jesus was to call these same two disciples of John into his intimacy, when he met them again in

Galilee. Probably the meeting near the river was their first contact; rumours of the crowds there may well have drawn them also to see the new prophet, little knowing how they were being led by the unseen hand of destiny. They did not dream how that chance meeting with the obscure carpenter would change their lives.

4. In the Desert

And the spirit at once drove him out into the desert, where he was for **many** days with the wild beasts, tempted by Satan, but the angels waited on him. (M. 1 : 12-13)

This "spirit" which drove Jesus into lonely places may well have been a sudden imperative need for solitude to think out the implications of what had happened during his baptism. He had to face alone the ideas awakened in him by the news that the Kingdom of God was near and by the impression that he himself was to be its central figure. Such ideas may have come to him before, vaguely, as he read the Prophets and the later Messianic Literature, but only now would they have taken clear shape in his mind and demanded full consideration.

The temptation-story in "Q" may truly outline some of his thoughts during this retreat of forty (*i.e.* many) days. Jesus must have realised at once that he could say more about the Kingdom than John had said, and he must now decide for himself what part he himself would play in the coming events. Should he rely on himself or on the Father's providence? Should he carry people with him by the wonderful signs and miracles? Should he proclaim a worldly kingdom, with himself

as king, and rally the masses to defend his throne against Rome's mighty legions? Either now or later on these questions must have clamoured like ravenous wild beasts for answer, and it may well have been at the very outset of his career; we know of no other more likely time. Self-conquest, in the great fight between God and self, brought him the angelic comfort of decision and of inner peace. His road lay clear before him; he would proclaim the spiritual Kingdom of God, relying on God alone and obedient to His will.

5. Jesus Parts from John

1. After this, Jesus entered Judea, and he spent some time there baptizing in the springs near Salim because plenty of water was there and people came to be baptized. (J. 3 : 22-23)

2. So a dispute arose between John's disciples and **Jesus** about purification, and going to John they said to him, "Master, the man who was with you in Transjordan is himself baptizing, and all are going to him." In reply John said, "No man can get anything if it is not given him from heaven. (J. 3 : 25-27) That man will wax, while I wane." (J. 3 : 30)

3. Now as soon as **Jesus** heard that, he left Judea and went back to Galilee. (J. 4 : 1, 3) **After this**, Herod arrested John (M. 6 : 17) and shut him up in prison. (L. 3 : 20)

Jesus began his own career as John's disciple, and he acted in the same way as his predecessor—proclaiming the Kingdom and admitting men to its ranks by a purifying rite, as did most of the cults of the day. But naturally one question would soon arise: did the outer rite or the inner moral change really purify the neophyte? Finding that his own more spiritual views while working so close to John were leading to some disputes and jealousy, Jesus soon gave up the physical rite altogether and withdrew to his own district. There seems to be no doubt of the correction to "Jesus" in para 2 instead of the meaningless "the Jews" in our manuscripts. There is no trace of such a conflict between John and his fellow Jews, while § 18 confirms the hint here given of strife between those of John's disciples who followed Jesus and the others who did not.

John's quiet answer to his discontented followers shows a noble tolerance; he could foresee that his young convert would go far further than he, the older man, could go, and he refused to stand in his way. At all events the suspicious Quisling ruler of Galilee, in whose area he was working, soon arrested John, and so his work came to an abrupt end.

CHAPTER TWO

THE EARLY MISSION

6. Jesus Wins Four Disciples

1. After John was seized, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God's Kingdom and saying, "The Kingdom of God has arrived; repent!" (M. 1 : 14-15)

2. Now as he walked along near the Lake of Galilee he saw Simon and his brother Andrew throwing a net in the lake—for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, "Come with me, and I will make you fishers of men." Dropping their nets at once, they followed him. (M. 1 : 16-18)

3. Going on from there a little further, he saw James the son of Zebedee and his brother John, both (of them) in the boat mending their nets. He called them, and leaving their father in the boat they went off after him. (M. 1 : 19-20)

No doubt, Jesus could easily have taken John's fate as a warning to himself and given up what the authorities were evidently looking on as dangerous politics. But he was not the man to shrink from danger. He came out fearlessly and continued in public the arrested prophet's mission. So it was easy for him in such excited days to pick up a large following from among those who had been with John, and from others like them.

His courage, his personal magnetism, and his apt promise to the fishermen, must have been very attractive. They did not hesitate for a moment; they left their social duties and their livelihood, and threw in their lot with the brave young preacher, who would, no doubt, see to all their needs. Who would hereafter earn for Simon's wife and her mother? He himself was not quite indifferent to the matter, as his question in §80 shows us, but he can never really have regretted the step he took that day, save perhaps for a few hours in the wild remorse of his denial of his Master (*Mt.* 26 : 75). A poor fisherman became a pillar in a movement that changed the world—and what a friend he won for himself as well!

7. He Cures a Madman

1. Then they came to Kafr Nahum, and on the next sabbath he went into the synagogue and began to teach. Now a lunatic was there, and he cried out, "Hoho, what do you want with us, Jesus? Have you come to destroy us?" But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be quiet, and come out of him!" and, throwing

the man into a fit, the unclean spirit came out of him with a loud scream. (M. 1 : 21-26)

2. And they were all so amazed that they talked it over together, saying, "What is this? For he is even forcing the evil spirits to obey his orders!" And his fame quickly spread all over Galilee. (M. 1 : 27-28)

Some years ago, the half-knowledge of the nineteenth century laughed at all talk of demons and of possession, and brusquely dubbed Jesus's apparent belief in them as either superstition or the deceitful exploitation of ignorance. But modern psychology and psychic science have put an end to this irrational incredulity among the instructed; we can now look frankly into such Gospel stories on their own merits. Cries such as they attribute to the obsessing spirits are often met in modern cases of "insanity", and the symptoms shown at the moment of exorcism are often paralleled in our own day (see, for example, Dr. Wickland's book). No Catholic priest with experience of such things, and no mental specialist with a mind open to what he sees and hears, can look on these stories as fables. The curious may read of many such in the lives of SS. Gemma Galgani and Jean Vianney.

The calm resolution Jesus shows in dealing with demons proves in him a natural gift for psychiatry—a quality so rare even in that "superstitious and wonder-working age", as it has been called, that it amazed people and spread his name widely, even where he himself was never to go. We find it used already in § 40 : 2 as a name of power for exorcism, and by the third century it was popular among the Hellenized pagans of Egypt for such purposes. The

probability that there was also a pre-Christian god Jesus, or Joshua, in Samaria cannot prove that there was never a prophet Jesus; the name was not a rare one.

8. He Heals Many of the Sick

1. Then they went straight to Simon's house. Now Simon's mother in-law was laid up with fever, and they told him about it at once. Going to her and taking her hand, he raised her up; the fever immediately left her, and she began to attend on them. (M. 1 : 29-31)

2. When evening came, while the sun was going down, they brought him all who were ill or possessed, and he cured many who had various diseases, and drove out many demons. (M. 1 : 32-34)

The cure of Simon's relative was hardly a miracle, for many of ourselves know well how sickness often vanishes at the sudden call of duty. It was probably to excuse her failure to look to the needs of the guest—a primary duty—that the brothers told Jesus about her, and not to get her cured. Anyhow, the story of what took place spread quickly, and at sunset the villagers brought to Jesus many sick and insane, whom he was able to cure. No one seems to have taken him to task for having cured these people before the sabbath ended at sunset; the orthodox had had no time to notice what was beginning in that little country town.

That sunset scene even today stirs our hearts ; it must have been very like those so familiar at Lourdes, where every year people are cured in the evening while the Host passes by amid waves of deep devotion and of soaring faith.

9. His Work Spreads

1. And, getting up early in the morning long before dawn, he went out to a lonely spot, and there prayed. Simon and his companions looked for him, and when they found him they told him that everyone was searching for him. Then Jesus replied to them, "Let us go into the neighbouring villages, so that I may preach there also ; for that is why I have come." (M. 1 : 35-38)

2. Then he began preaching in their synagogues throughout the whole of Galilee, and driving out demons. (M. 1 : 39)

We often read of Jesus retiring to pray alone on the hills, where "the silence of eternity interpreted by love" broods softly over the devotee. It is only by such frequent withdrawals into the stillness and the thrilling quiet of Nature that even a strong man can be braced to a great work. Jesus knew whence came all his strength—from prayer.

From this sweet solitude in the hush of dawn Jesus was soon dragged by his followers, on the plea that crowds were looking for him—one may suppose, to do

more wonders to comfort and amuse them. He replied that other places besides Simon's village had a claim on him.

Then he set out on a preaching tour through the countryside, welcomed everywhere as a Pharisee entitled by his learning to teach the people in the village halls, where his words freed many from the evil spirits of gloom, ignorance and wickedness. People soon began to wonder at the eloquence and confidence of his manner, acquired unknown to them while he had been busy with adze and plane or in the simple household tasks of his village home.

10. He Bids a Leper Obey the Law

1. A leper came to him, begging him on his knees and saying, "If you like you can declare me clean." But Jesus at once . . . scolded him and sent him away, saying to him, "See that you do not speak anything to anyone, but go and show yourself to the priest as Moses ordered." (M. 1 : 40-44)

2. And the story spread all the more about him, (L. 5 : 15) so that he could no longer go openly into any town, but he stayed outside in lonely places, and they came to him from all parts. (M. 1 : 45)

By the early editor of M. (Mark's Gospel), followed by the other evangelists, this story was misunderstood

as a cure of leprosy. But it is clear to the student that the point here lies in the refusal of Jesus to countenance a violation of the Mosaic Law, which prescribed the way a healed leper was to be taken back into society (*Lev. 14:3-4*). The ex-leper had no right to go near others until he had performed the necessary rites before a priest, and Jesus would not begin his ministry by an open attack on a wise and humane hygienic law or by infringing on the priests' prerogatives—and prerequisites.

This incident so increased his popularity that dense crowds soon made it difficult for him to move about, and he had to hold his meetings outside on the open hills or at least away from the narrow village lanes.

11. Back to Peter's Village

Then after some days he returned again to Kafr Nahum ; it was heard that he was in the house, and at once so many gathered that there was no room even at the door. And he began to talk to them (*M. 2:1-2*) while Pharisees and teachers of the Law were sitting there. (*L. 5:17*)

This rush to see the new prophet, so characteristic of Asian people when a new "saint" appears on the scene, soon becomes a recurrent theme in our story. Jesus has now to live with the fierce glare of publicity upon him, a glare which turned away only during the dark hours he spent upon the Cross and which left him only stolen hours for prayer and sweet repose. The rumour that he had returned to the scene of his first great cures swiftly filled the house where he stayed—it

was probably Peter's again—they overflowed it into the street; it was to this excited crowd Jesus gave his first recorded sermon, before the recognised leaders of educated society in the locality. It is of great importance for the understanding of his mission, and for it we are indebted both to the unknown writer of "Q"—who was probably an eyewitness—and to Matthew and Luke, both of whom incorporated it in the compilation generally known as the "Sermon on the Mount".

12. The Law will Not Lapse

Jesus said, "Do not think I have come to destroy the Law; I have not come to destroy but to complete it, for until the heaven and the earth pass away not even one letter of the Law will lapse. Indeed, I tell you that unless you are far more righteous even than the Pharisee scribes you will never get into the Kingdom of **God**. (Mt. 5 : 17-20)

This talk naturally arose as a comment on the attitude to the Law Jesus had already shown in dealing with the leper; he wished to drive the lesson home. Most earlier prophets had been rather indifferent or even hostile to the Mosaic Law of the priests. They claimed their inspiration came direct from the lofty Source of that Law, undiluted by transmission through the minds of scribes and interpreters; so they often enough attacked the Law as it was given to the people, saying it came from a priestly cunning that set rites above righteousness (contrast *Isa.* 1 : 11 with the elaborate details prescribed in *Ex.* and *Lev.*). Jesus began

otherwise. He assured the people that he did not aim at replacing the Law, for that would endure as long as the universal order itself; the revolution he came to set on foot would never strike away what made the Jew a Jew. Indeed, unless they obeyed the Law even more strictly and faithfully than the best had yet done, they could never enter the Kingdom he came to found. Only they must be sure what the Law really is—and not what man has twisted it into meaning. As yet, he shows no sign of the bitter criticism that later whipped the orthodox scholars into a fiery hatred of him. Talking to the common folk, he urged them to obey the Law, not only in letter but in a wider fuller spirit.

•

13. But Must be Followed Spiritually

1. “You have heard how it was said to those of old, ‘Thou shalt not kill, and whoever kills is liable to the judgment’. But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother **so as** to call him a worthless fellow or apostate is subject to the judgment (of God). (Mt. 5 : 21-22)

2. “You have heard how it was said to those of old, ‘Thou shalt not commit adultery’. But I tell you that whoever looks at a woman to desire her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. (Mt. 5 : 27-28)

3. “Again, you have heard how it was said to those of old, ‘Thou shalt not swear falsely,

but shalt keep thy vows unto the Lord '. But I tell you not to swear at all, but to let your saying Yes be Yes and (your) No be No, for whatever goes beyond these is from evil. (Mt. 5 : 33-34) And I tell you that in the day of judgment men will have to give account for every careless word they speak, for by your words you will be justified or by your words you will be condemned. (Mt. 12 : 36-37)

4. " You have heard how it was said, ' An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth '. But I say to you, You are not to resist an injury, but if anyone slaps you on one cheek turn the other to him as well ; if anyone forces you to go one mile, go two with him ; and if anyone wants to take your cloak, let him have the tunic also. Give to the one who asks from you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you. (Mt. 5 : 38-42)

5. " You have heard how it was said, ' Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy '. But I say to you, Love your enemies, treat with kindness those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who repulse you, so that you may become your Father's children. For if you love those who

love you, (Mt. 5 : 43-46) and if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, (L. 6 : 34) what have you special? Do not even the tax-collectors do as much? (Mt. 5 : 46) Be compassionate like your Father, (L. 6 : 36) for He makes His sun rise on both wicked and good, and sends rain on just and unjust (alike). (Mt. 5 : 45)

6. "Whatever you wish men to do to you, so also should you do to them." (Mt. 7 : 12)

To illustrate how he would have the Law obeyed, he then chose five typical commandments (*Ex.* 20 : 13, 14, 7—*Ex.* 21 : 24—*Lev.* 19 : 18) and explained them in a way that proves clearly his knowledge of Pharisaic interpretation according to certain schools, like that of Hillel and the other ethicists. The greatness of Jesus does not lie in *originality* of teaching, but in the fearless example given by his life and in the harmony he built out of many loose ends of Jewish ethic.

Non-killing is not enough—they must feel no anger or contempt for others; *non-adultery* is not enough—their thoughts must be pure and free from all lustful desire; *non-perjury* is not enough—they must avoid all oaths and needless talk, speaking the exact truth with sober simplicity; *non-excess in revenge* is not enough—they must not even defend themselves in any way from injustice; *love for friends* is not enough—they must see all alike as friends, even those who treat them unkindly. Only this equal view towards others, good and bad alike, while themselves adhering strictly to right conduct, could make them like their heavenly Father, in whose eyes all equally deserve His love.

Gentleness, purity, control of speech, non-resistance, universal love—these five virtues would help them to enter God's Kingdom, whose door was the faithful fulfilment of the moral law. Though the Zealots who listened to this little speech must have been disgusted with its prohibition of violent revolt, the principles laid down therein are valid for all time. Even today, those who practise them steadily in our violence-intoxicated age will surely find the narrow gate of that spiritual Kingdom opening before them, while enmity, hatred, malice and cruelty slowly but inevitably die out of their lives.

Jesus himself was an example of the five virtues he recommended in this little sermon; his treatment of the defaulting Judas and Peter is a clear use of the first; his attitude to the erring woman in the temple would have been impossible in anyone without the second; one of our very earliest witnesses, Justin, tells us that all his talk was brief, concise, direct—showing the third; his whole attitude during the trial and his execution prove the fourth; and the whole of his ministry stands out as evidence of the fifth. It was his absolute sincerity which gave him an authority before the people to which they were ill-accustomed in the petty scholiasts who usually lectured in their synagogues.

14. His Teaching is Welcomed

1. Then one of the scribes came up and, feeling that he had spoken well to them, he asked him, "Which is the chief commandment of all?" Then Jesus answered him, "'Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one

Lord, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind and with all thy strength'. And the second is like it: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself'. " (M. 12 : 28-31)

2. Then the scribe said to him, "Right, Teacher! You have spoken the truth, for to love God with the whole heart and to love the neighbour like oneself is more than all the sacrifices and offerings." Then Jesus said to him, "You are not far from God's Kingdom!" (M. 12 : 32-34) And the crowds listened to his teaching with growing wonder, for he was teaching them like one with authority (of his own), and not like the scribes. (Mt. 7 : 28-29)

This incident certainly belongs to an early stage in Jesus's career, when the scholars were still friendly to his teaching and he saw no need to go beyond the Mosaic Law in any real detail. It fits in naturally here.

Speaking as a Jew to Jews and beginning with the ancient holy formula of the "Shema", Jesus summed up in a few words the whole moral law as *love*—love for God and love for man. This love is of vastly greater value than all the sacrifices and precepts laid down in Scripture, as the scribe quoted (cf. *Deut.* 6 : 4-5, *Lev.* 19 : 18 and *1 Sam.* 15 : 22).

We are told that the people wondered at the bold scope of his exegesis, which was vitally creative while

that of the scholars was too often absorbed in pedantic word-splitting and the quotation of others. Jesus was bold enough to speak for himself, without having to lean on the opinion of others, however learned or inspired.

The fact that most of this noble teaching in the first sermon was not in fact original with him, but is to be found almost entire in the Jewish core of the *Didache*, does not discredit the young prophet in any way. He was merely endorsing the highest ideals Jewry had yet put in writing, which may well have been still unknown to the common and unread folk whom he addressed, simple villagers as they mostly were. And the skilled craftsman uses materials made by others, but puts them to a better use than they.

15. The First Open Criticism

1. Then they came to him, carrying a paralytic, and being unable to get near him because of the crowd they stripped off the roofing and through it they let down the mat the paralytic lay on. And when Jesus saw their faith, he said, "Child, your sins are forgiven you." (M. 2 : 3-5)

2. Now some of the scribes sitting there began to argue in their minds, "Why does this man talk so impiously?" Jesus, at once aware that they were thinking in this way, then asked them, "Why do you worry about this in your minds? Which is easier: to say

‘Your sins are forgiven’, or to say ‘Get up and walk’? But (I want) you to know that a man has the power on earth to forgive sins.” (M. 2 : 6-10)

3. To the paralytic he said, “Get up, roll your mat, and go to your house.” Then he got up at once and lifted his mat and went off, so that all wondered and gave the glory to God. Then **Jesus** went out again towards the lake, and the whole crowd came to him and he taught them. (M. 2 : 10-13)

A sudden interruption disturbed the talk of Jesus. Several men came to him with a paralytic to heal. Going straight to the real cause of suffering and disease, which is inner disharmony and the estrangement from God, Jesus simply told the invalid that the sins which had caused his disease were forgiven ; naturally then the results of those sins would soon fade away.

To the scholars present this language seemed arrogant, and they were sorry that a teacher of such ability could so far forget himself as to utter a bold, even blasphemous, speech like that—for God alone can forgive sins, which are an affront to Him. Knowing their mental distress, Jesus asked them if it mattered much how he expressed the fact that the cause of the trouble was exhausted. He had put it in that way because he wanted to teach them that man can forgive his brother’s sins so long as he lives on earth ; it is only after death he may drift out of human reach, and then only God can help him.

Jesus makes no sort of claim here to any special powers or prerogatives ; the phrase “Son of Man”

on which so much ingenious theology has been built means just exactly "human being", and no more, here and in almost every other place where we find it in books derived from Semitic originals. Even in *1 Enoch*, where so much has been made of its use, it simply assures us that the Messiah is a human being.

There is no evidence or likelihood that this important phrase *bar nishā* on Jesus's lips ever meant more than it commonly did at the time. The theological sense we now give it came in only later, when the Christians looked for the return of Jesus to build up the Messianic Kingdom he had failed to build at his first coming; it was they who imported the idea that it was a sort of mystical name for the incarnate Son of God. The late Jewish apocalypses, *Dan.* 7 : 13 and *1 Enoch* 46, 48, seem to have had no such idea in their use of it. By restoring the primitive meaning here, and in almost every other place where it occurs in early texts, we very greatly deepen the sense and value of the passage.

Having established the great dignity of man, who is really God's son, Jesus then satisfied these his first critics by giving a distinct order to the invalid in the form they preferred, for if possible he was eager to avoid any clash with the ruling classes also. After this incident, Jesus went out into the open and taught those who had been unable to hear what he had said in the house—a sort of "overflow meeting".

16. Jesus is for Those in Need

1. Then as he walked along (the beach) he saw Levi sitting at the (customs)-tax-office and said to him, "Follow me." Then he got up and followed him. (M. 2 : 14)

2. Now while **Jesus** sat at table in his home, many tax-collectors and sinners were fellow-guests with Jesus and his disciples—for there were many who followed him, even some of the Pharisee scribes. Seeing it, these said to his disciples, “Why does he eat and drink with tax-collectors and sinners?” (M. 2 : 15-16)

3. Jesus heard it and said to them, “The healthy do not need a doctor, but the sick do, (M. 2 : 17) (and) *the doctor hastens to where the sick are.* (A. 176) I have not come to call the righteous to repentance but sinners, (M. 2 : 17) and to look for and save what was lost. (L. 19 : 10)

4. “If a man has a hundred sheep and loses one of them, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go out to look for the missing one? Then if he happens to find it, he is more happy about it than about the ninety-nine that were never lost. (Mt. 18 : 12-13) I tell you that in the same way there is joy in heaven over one repentant sinner, (L. 15 : 7) *for the Father prefers the sinner's repentance to his chastisement,* (A. 73) *and God wishes all to be given some of His gifts.”* (R. 29)

Jesus calls his fifth disciple. The Jewish legends tell of him choosing only five special followers, and it is notable that the Synoptic Gospels narrate in detail the call of five—Peter and Andrew, James and John, and Levi or Matthew, perhaps the writer of the original gospel “Q”. The idea of “twelve” is little known to Paul, save in one passage where he ignores the defection of Judas, and it was almost certainly based on the twelve disciples of the Jewish High Priest, the twelve tribes, and other mythic parallels. It seems to be added in our Gospels. In practice the five actual Apostles later on seem to be James “the Just”, Paul, Peter, Barnabas, and perhaps Stephen, in the eyes of the writer of “Acts”, who seems to know nothing of the others.

Levi, one of the hated and despised class of tax-collectors for the unclean foreign Government, immediately gave a feast to celebrate the honour done him by the young teacher. Some of the Pharisee disciples of Jesus were annoyed at being asked to take food along with these “untouchable” minions of Rome, and were shocked at Jesus for allowing such social contacts. Though not perhaps actually a breach of the Law, they were certainly against what was felt to be socially proper, and it was really a question whether servants of the heathen were not to be themselves looked upon as heathen because they ate food contaminated by heathen touch.

Jesus replied to their objection gently but firmly. His help and the pleasure of his society were for all who needed and enjoyed them, not for those who got on well enough without. The beautiful little parable with which he drove home his meaning tells how God values every single human soul and rejoices when one, however degraded by sin it may have become, turns once more towards His Light. His blessings can only reach those who are in harmony with Him, as a radio concert

can be heard only by those who are correctly tuned in ; so He is eager for all to turn to Him so that they may enjoy the bliss to be found in Him alone. Luke adds a similar parable mainly to appeal to women.

17. The Grateful Woman

1. Then **one day** he went into the house of **one** of the Pharisees, and a woman who was a sinner stood very close behind him weeping, and she began to wet his feet with her tears and kissed them. The Pharisee who had invited him noticed and said to himself, " If this man were really a prophet, he would know that the woman who is touching him is a sinner." (L. 7 : 36-39)

2. Jesus answered this by saying to him, " Simon, I have something to say to you," and he replied, " Say on, Teacher ! " (Jesus said), " There were two men who borrowed from somebody ; the one owed fifty pounds, and the other five. As they had no means of paying, **the man** freely excused both. Now then, say which of them will love him more ? " Simon answered, " I suppose, the one who had more excused." Then he said to him, " You have judged rightly." (L. 7 : 40-43)

3. Then turning to the woman he said to Simon, "I have come into your house, but you have given me no water for my feet. Do you see this woman? Well, she has washed my feet with tears. (L. 7 : 44) I tell you, her sins are forgiven though they are so many, therefore she loves much—while one who has less forgiven him has but little love." And to her he said, "Your sins are forgiven, go in peace!" Then the other guests began to say to themselves, "Who is this man to forgive sins also?" (L. 7 : 47-50)

Jesus did not limit himself to the poor and lowly; he gladly mingled with people of all classes and was ready to give the benefit of his company to anyone who called him. This dinner-party in the Pharisee's house will probably have taken place earlier than Luke's Gospel might make us think, for so late in Jesus's life such society had more or less broken with Jesus because he was so friendly with outcasts.

The rather sceptical and indifferent host wanted to test the young prophet's clairvoyant powers, which for all his learning he rather foolishly expected as part of a prophet's equipment, by seeing if he could find out the real character of the woman who was touching his feet. Yes, Jesus knew it very well; he not only showed his insight to go deeper into her character than the normal knowledge of his host, but also showed his powers by answering the man's unspoken thought. He knew perfectly well that the unfortunate woman was a prostitute, and it did not shock him at all that such should come

to him; the sick hasten to the doctor. We do not know if Simon was convinced.

The real point in this story does not lie in the neglect of the aristocratic host or in the tender humility of the woman, but in the very direct relationship between our love and the forgiveness of our sins. Charity covers a multitude of sins, as the proverb goes. The woman, sometimes believed to be not only Mary Magdalene but also Mary the sister of Lazarus and Martha, loved Jesus greatly, and she was moved to repentant tears because of her overflowing gratitude that he had ignored her impurity and given her free access to him. As God wins our love by His own goodness without harsh criticism, so we too can win the rich love of others only by kindness and forgiveness. It is interesting to note that Mary Magdalene, "out of whom he cast seven devils", was later one of Jesus's most devoted and understanding disciples, faithful to him even in the darkest days.

18. This is No Time for Fasting

Then came John's disciples and said to him, "Why do **we** and the Pharisees fast, while your disciples do not?" Then Jesus replied to them, "Can the wedding-guests fast while the bridegroom is with them?" But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then in those days they will fast." (M. 2 : 18-20)

Criticism slowly grew up around Jesus as he failed to adjust himself to the standards set up by the orthodox

around him. They thought a prophet must be dour, ascetic, gloomy and harsh—and they found Jesus and his followers mixing freely and joyously with others, ignoring the solemn fasts on which John had insisted, dining out with friends, and in general behaving to all appearances like worldly men and women. Jesus told them there is no meaning in fasting so long as friends can enjoy each other's company; it would be time enough for such things when they were separated.

There is no definite prophecy here of his own early death, nor need the critics be so eager to suspect this passage on that account. The certainty of death is always with us all, and Jesus is only saying, "Let us not run to meet the troubles of to-morrow, they will soon enough be here. Meanwhile let us rejoice in God's good gifts of friendship." We may observe even in our own lives that the true lover of God finds more bliss in the company of God's children than others can ever know.

19. Jesus Defends his Disciples

Now one sabbath he happened to be walking through the cornfields, and his disciples began to make a path while plucking the ears of wheat. Then the Pharisees said to him, "Look at what they are doing on the sabbath; that is not allowed!" Then he answered them, "Have you never read what David did when he and his company were hungry, how he went into God's House and ate the loaves of the Presence, and even gave to those who

were with him ? ” And he also said to them, “ The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath, so that the son of man is master even of the sabbath day.” (M. 2 : 23-28)

The next complaint came when the disciples “ broke the sabbath ” by plucking a few ears of corn on their way through the fields, for that was unlawful, a reaping of the harvest as scholars had defined it. The orthodox critics asked Jesus, who had come to fulfil the Law, to control his lawless followers—the Galileans were never so strict about the Law as the folk of Judea. But he defended them instead of rebuking them, quoting the offence of David, the great national hero and a prototype of the Messiah, who had once even violated the Sanctuary and taken the holy bread from the very altar before God's Presence, simply because his soldiers were hungry. (cf. *1 Sam.* 21 : 6)

“ And then he gave the, to them, shocking ruling that laws not concerned with morality—even those in the holy books—are subject to commonsense and must not be used as instruments of slavery or oppression. Man made them, man has the right to change them ; the freedom of his conscience is worth more than unthinking obedience.

Here Jesus seems to have travelled far from his first attitude to the Law. But it is only the moral Law which is eternal ; all other precepts must change with changing needs. The hygienic laws about leprosy were still in the interests of society, and should be observed ; so were the general laws about a weekly day of rest. But that did not mean that hungry men must go unfed, lost animals remain unsaved, sick people wait for treatment till the seventh day was done. His protest against such misuse of law was wholly reasonable,

and consistent with his general and sincere respect for Law.

20. Conscience Can Override Law

On that same day, noting someone working on the sabbath, he said to him, "Man, if you know what you are doing, you are blessed, but if you do not know, then you are accursed and a breaker of the Law." (A. 23)

This incident, found only in some early Western copies of Luke's Gospel, further explains the principle just enunciated. A law may be deliberately set aside by the human conscience which has transcended it, but it must be obeyed until the inner perception of what is right and needful can replace it. This condition is, incidentally, far more exacting than any mere written law can be.

21. Helping Others is the Higher Law

1. Then another time he went into the synagogue, and a man was there who had his hand shrivelled up. Then they watched him to see if he would heal him on the sabbath. He said to them, "Is it right to do good on the sabbath, or to do harm? To save, or to destroy a life?" But they were silent. Then, gazing angrily at them because of the hardness

of their hearts, he told the man to stretch out his hand. Then he stretched it out, and his hand was restored to health. (M. 3 : 1-5)

2. Jesus then asked them, "Is there a man of you with one sheep who if it falls into a pit on the sabbath day will not take hold of it and pull it out? (Mt. 12 : 11) Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God because he does not keep the sabbath"; but others said, "How can a sinful man work such miracles?" (J. 9 : 16)

The Pharisees in fact allowed only such actions as were necessary to save or to preserve life, but Jesus wanted to point out the foolish way in which their theory was divorced from their actual conduct. Here again, commonsense must be allowed to prevail over legalism whenever any unforeseen circumstances arose. And every day is the proper day for doing the good action God puts before us.

We are grateful to Mark for alone preserving to us here the human Jesus, hidden in the other Gospels by a toning down to fit the idea of his absolute divinity. He felt a momentary disgust and indignation at the hypocritical way in which the orthodox had buried the natural laws of kindness under a heap of silly legalisms. This feeling led him into an open and deliberate defiance of the sabbath laws, a reaction which produced among the leaders of society a party definitely opposed to him and his teachings, while others were still looking on him as a good man. We may note how by now his enemies were actually lying in wait to trap him whenever they found opportunity.

22. The Reply to John

Now John sent two of his disciples to ask him, "Are you the Coming One, or should we look out for another?" Then Jesus gave them this reply, "Go and tell John what you are hearing and seeing; the blind see again and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised and the poor are given good news! And he is indeed blessed who is not disappointed in me." (Mt. 11 : 2-6)

John, still languishing in his gloomy prison at Herod's castle of Machaerus, had heard strange rumours of the young prophet, his pupil and successor. Perhaps a little vexed at the breach with him, which his own followers, the Nasoreans, were later to emphasize with anathemas (cf. *Mandaic Liturgy*, p. 192: "Beware of . . . the worthless Jesus Christ, of him who makes false claims and who distorts my words"), he was anxious to know their meaning. Certain aspects of Jesus's work suggested that he was the Messiah, while others, such as his flagrant breaches of the Law, seemed to make it most unlikely.

Jesus sent a reply some have thought evasive, but to him at least it must have seemed complete and final. The signs of the Messiah's work were abundant in his own mission, and John would be fortunate to recognise God's messenger, even if not all his preconceived ideas of the Messiah were satisfied. The curious summing up of what sounds like miracles by a statement that those in need of it got news of the Kingdom, makes us wonder how far many Gospel cure-stories may in fact be metaphors

of a spiritual enlightenment. In several passages (*e.g.* §§ 8, 9, 26, 38), the "casting out of devils" seems to be the removal of ignorance and sinfulness by successful teaching—as no doubt in the case of Mary of Magdala also. With our present knowledge it is impossible to say how far these states of mind and soul may be due to demon influences.

23. Jesus on John

Now while these were going away Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John—"What did you go out into the desert to look at? A reed swaying in the wind? No, then what did you go out to see? A man arrayed in soft clothes? See, those who wear soft things are in royal palaces! So, then, why did you go out? To see a prophet? Yes, I tell you, and far more than a prophet. For I tell you truly, among those born of woman none has arisen greater than John the Baptist, though even the least in God's Kingdom is greater than he. For until John the Prophets and the Law foretold it, (Mt. 11 : 7-11) but from that time the Kingdom of God is being preached and everyone is pressing in to it (L. 16 : 16) while violent folk take it by storm." (Mt. 11 : 12)

Jesus now gives his own testimony to John's greatness. The crowds that had swarmed out to him in the desert did not go to see a weak or a fickle man, as the doubt just expressed by him might suggest. Nor did they go to gaze at one attached to the luxuries and hypocrisies of courts. No, John was a great prophet, a spokesman, of God, who had renounced the world's comforts to proclaim the truth that God's Kingdom was about to appear on earth and that man must swiftly prepare to meet it.

John came at the end of the long era of mere foreshadowing; now was the hour of realisation, when men of every kind were enrolling as the Kingdom's subjects and thus by their own impetuous zeal hastening its advent. Though John was himself among the very greatest of human beings as the immediate forerunner of God's Kingdom, anyone who has actually entered the divine bliss of that Kingdom is far superior to him.

The wording of the Lucan passage does not at all imply a long interval of time since John lived, as some critics have fancied in order to make out this whole passage a later addition to the text. The interval was perhaps not more than a year by this time.

CHAPTER THREE

HOSTILITY GROWS

24. The First Plot

THEN, (after this), the Pharisees at once went out and plotted with the Herodians against him, to find some way how they could destroy him. (M. 3 : 6)

Appalled by what they had understood Jesus to have said, that the era of Law and Prophets had been replaced by that of this vague "Kingdom of God", of which nothing could yet be certainly known but that it seemed to be connected in some way with the violation of those laws and social customs which alone had held the nation together through so many troubles, the orthodox as a body now withdrew and left Jesus to himself. After this, we rarely meet them except as his open foes, plotting for his downfall. Even at this early stage, they complained to the officers of the State that Jesus was talking sedition when he spoke of violent men grasping the Kingdom by force. There is no reason to doubt their sincerity; they thought Jesus must be planning one more of those futile revolts that so often had disturbed Galilee and brought misery even on the

peaceful and "loyal" elements, and they felt that he must be stopped in time before mischief was done that might ruin the whole nation.

25. Jesus Goes into Hiding

But Jesus retired with his disciples to the Lake, and a great crowd followed him and came to him (there). So he told his disciples that a small boat should be kept ready for him because of the crowd, so that they might not crush him—for many pressed upon him in order to touch him. And he urged them not to make him known (to others). (M. 3 : 7-12)

Jesus withdrew for safety from these enemies to the Lake of Galilee, and there he arranged with his fisherman-friends to have a boat always ready for instant flight over the water-frontier out of Herod's jurisdiction if the State actually made any attempt to arrest him. The time for him to face, or even to welcome, arrest had not yet come; his work was not yet done. Thus began the period of his almost ceaseless wandering, Jesus being practically "on the run", teaching and helping where he could but always warning people to be silent about his doings.

We have here in our texts a sign of the old editor's hand, changing the whole atmosphere by his irrelevant talk of many cures and of people's eagerness to touch him so as to be cured of diseases. Such a motive would make nonsense of the whole context—and the truth slips out, revealing the older stratum left by the

eyewitness, when the editor retains the injunction to secrecy. Not fear of arrest in itself, but the will to finish the work God had given him to do, was the motive of Jesus in thus avoiding publicity so far as at this time was possible.

26. Jesus Chooses Apostles

Then he climbed the hill, (M. 3 : 13) and began to spend the night in prayer to God. Then when daylight came (L. 6 : 12-13) he called to him those whom he wanted, and they went to him so that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach, having power to drive out demons. (M. 3 : 13-15) Then they went into the house, and again a crowd gathered so that it was not possible for them even to eat bread. (M. 3 : 20)

Realising that some sort of crisis was quickly drawing near to him, Jesus as usual sought strength from the inner Father, and then used it to intensify his work. Out of the crowds of excited sensation-hunters that always swarmed around him, he chose men who seemed the most earnest and sincere, to train them as successful heralds that many might announce the Kingdom rather than himself alone. In that way the preparation for its coming could be finished earlier, and at the same time others, not so unpopular with the authorities as himself, might go where it would no longer be possible for him to preach in the open. Though he took all sensible precautions for his own safety, so that his mission

should not fail through his premature arrest, Jesus never lost that boldness and devotion to the Cause which makes him still after all these centuries, even as a man, one of the heroes of humanity. Danger only spurred him on to a more vigorous activity. The names of the "twelve apostles" here given by Mark and the other evangelists are held by most critics to be a later addition, and they are at any rate of little significance in our story.

27. Evil is Driven Out by Good

1. Then his people heard this and came out to seize him, for they said, "He is mad!" But the scribes said, "He has the Lord of Flies!" and "It is by the Prince of the demons he drives out the demons!" (M. 3 : 21-22)

2. But **Jesus** said to them, "How can Satan drive out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself that kingdom cannot stand, and if Satan rises up against himself **how** can he stand? No, but he will come to an end! (M. 3 : 23-26) Also, if I am driving out demons with the help of the Lord of Flies, by whose help do your disciples drive them out? So they shall be your judges. (Mt. 12:27) But if I am driving out demons with the help of God's finger, then God's

Kingdom has already come to you unawares. (L. 11 : 20) Or how can one enter the strong man's home and plunder his goods if he has not first bound the strong man ? (Mt. 12 : 20)

3. " I tell you truly that all sins and blasphemies will be forgiven to men, (M. 3 : 38) and whoever speaks a word against a human being will be forgiven, (Mt. 12 : 32) but whoever speaks against the holy spirit shall never be forgiven (M. 3 : 29), either in this or in the coming age." (Mt. 12 : 32)

Hearing of the danger that now threatened Jesus, his family or his village-intimates and probably the "brethren" of § 90 hurried out to meet him and fetch him home ; they thought he must be mad to talk so recklessly and to arouse suspicion in the Government and hatred in the orthodox. They thought the best service they could render him would be to snatch him out of harm's way into the safe obscurity of his carpenter's shed ! How little even close relations can ever know of a devotee of God !

His power over crowds was obvious to all, and the scholars, now alienated from him by his carelessness of orthodoxy, began to credit it to the help of demons. It was apt to blame Beel-zebul, the old Canaanite god of flies, for those constant swarms of people round Jesus, and it is of some interest to us to note the extraordinary survival of this very ancient pagan name, after a thousand years of Jewish influences.

But the young prophet hit back frankly and effectively ; exorcism was often done by these same scholars

and by their pupils; they must explain also how *they* achieved it. If Jesus used demon help, then what about them? If he did not act by the help of demons (an absurd idea to which the Jews still officially cling as an explanation of undenied miracles by Jesus), then his victories over evil could only have been won by God Himself. And that meant that God was already on the earth, setting up His Kingdom among them, and that the prince of evil, whose castles were thus being captured one by one, was himself already God's prisoner. They must accept the news that the Kingdom was near at hand, and so become followers of Jesus.

Then the prophet burst out in something like anger. To attribute a good and holy work to the powers of evil is the one unpardonable thing a man can do; it is to take good for evil, and that destroys the very basis of morality and in effect enrolls a man on the side of evil. (cf. GI 79:1.) It is remarkable that in the face of the last words of this section some have fancied that there can be no repentance or forgiveness in the next "life". Of course, the oft-quoted passages in Mt. 25:41 etc., refer only to "age-long" punishment and have no such significance as "eternal" imported by the Old Latin translation; the word *aiōnios* never had that significance in early times, nor did the early Fathers maintain the "*eternity*" of hell but rather its drastic purifying and remedial effect.

28. Cures Not Always Permanent

(Then he added) "When the unclean spirit comes out of a man, it wanders through dry places looking for rest, but finds none. Then it says, 'I will go back to the house I left,'

and when it comes it finds everything clean and ready. Then it goes and fetches seven other spirits worse than itself, and they go in and live there. The last state of that man is worse than the first." (Mt. 12 : 43-45)

When some kinds of evil are driven out by force, they are only reinforced and make a new entry, after which it becomes almost impossible to overcome them again. Some have thought that this saying of Jesus implies that at times he failed to cure radically and that some patients relapsed into a worse condition. It may be so, but the passage does not say so. In the books of Drs. Wickland and Ghose many curious sidelights are thrown on such phenomena of "possession", these adding to a mass of evidence which only the very ignorant or very prejudiced will ignore.

29. The Saint's Relatives

At that time his brothers and his mother came up and, standing outside, they sent to call him. But he replied to them, "Who are my mother and my brothers?" Then, looking round at those who sat around him, he said "Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does God's will is my brother and my sister and my mother." (M. 3 : 31-35)

Eager to save him from himself, the little party from his home now arrived. But they could not at once get at Jesus because of the throng that always surrounded

him, so they sent in word to call him out to them—probably intending to seize him at once and carry him off home. But he did not obey his mother, as the pious Jew was expected to do at once. Instead, he replied that from that time onwards his only real relations were those who like himself fought for God's Kingdom—which certainly implies that even his mother, Mary, was not with him in his mission. Jesus had now become like an Indian *sannyasi*; he had renounced the family life and could no longer be recalled to it, those older ties of the body having been dissolved in the acid of his work. Henceforth a supreme loyalty to God alone would guide his steps and claim his whole devotion.

Nothing but this renunciation, which may also be dimly hinted at, foreshadowed, also in L. 2 : 49, could give Jesus the moral right to call others later on to make the same sacrifice for the Kingdom's sake (cf. § 67 : 1). By giving up his bodily relatives he won those deep spiritual friendships which gladden the hearts of all who are comrades in a noble cause—he became the dedicated Friend of the world.

30. The Sower

1. Once again he began to teach beside the Lake, and a huge crowd gathered to him, so that he went on board the boat to sit down while the whole crowd were on the beach near the Lake. And he taught them many things in parables. (M. 4 : 1-2)

2. Thus he said to them, " Listen ! Now a sower is going out to sow, and as he sows

some has chanced to fall on the road and the birds come and eat it. Some has fallen on stony ground, and it at once shoots up, but after the sun has risen high it is scorched and withers away through not having (deep) root. And some has fallen into the thorns, and the thorns grow up and choke it. But the rest has fallen into good soil and yields at the rate of thirty, sixty and a hundred-fold." (M. 4 : 2-8)

3. So when he was alone his companions asked him about the parable, and he said to them, "What, have you not understood this parable? Then how will you make out all the parables?" (M. 4 : 10, 13)

This sacrifice of his home gave him a new confidence and power in the ultimate success of his work, which was reflected in his teaching. Such a sacrifice for God's sake always brings new grace from Him and helps us to do His work better.

The advantage of the parable as a mode of teaching is that it is homely, vivid, concrete, and so it is easily remembered and passed on by hearsay from one to another. Those who have only a shallow interest are amused by the story or the poetry in it, while those who care to dig into their significance will find ever deeper meanings opening out before them as they dig deeper down. (cf. GI 41, 78 : 5)

Though the Gospel explanation of the "Sower" is certainly late and not directly from Jesus himself, it is

hard to find a better ; every teacher in the world hopes that some at least of his words may enter somewhere and bear fruit. Jesus comforted himself for the rejection of his message by so many of the careless and self-opinionated—including his own family—by the fact that there were also many to take to heart what he said and to use it in trying to live better lives. In spite of much seed being lost, the harvest itself is sure. The teacher has only to broadcast his message, leaving its results to God. (cf. GI 31 : 2-3, 2 *Esdras* 8 : 41 and GH 37 : 3-5)

31. Parables of the Kingdom

1. (Then he said to the people), “ What shall I compare the Kingdom of God with, or by what parable shall I describe it ? It is like a grain of mustard, which is smaller than all seeds but as soon as it is sown it grows up and becomes bigger than all vegetables, and produces such big branches that the birds of the sky can roost under its shade. (M. 4 : 30-32)

2. “ **God's** Kingdom is like leaven which a woman takes and hides in three pecks of flour until the whole of it is leavened. (Mt. 13 : 33)

3. “ God's Kingdom is just like when a man has thrown the seed on the soil, he sleeps at night and gets up by day ; and the seed sprouts and grows tall by itself, he does not

know how. But as soon as the crop has ripened he at once sends out the scythe because the harvest has come. (M. 4 : 26-29)

4. "Again, the Kingdom of **God** is like a drag-net that is thrown into the Lake and catches (fish) of every kind. When it has been filled they haul it on to the beach, and sitting down they collect the good (fish) into buckets. (Mt. 13 : 47-48)

5. "Again, **God's** Kingdom is like a treasure buried in the field ; the man who finds it hides it (again), and in his joy he goes and sells all he has and buys that field. (Mt. 13 : 44).

6. "Once more, the Kingdom of **God** is like a trader in search of fine pearls ; when he finds one pearl of great value he is off to dispose of all he has and buys it." (Mt. 13 : 45-46)

We have here six little parables about the Kingdom, which Mt. prefers to call the "Kingdom of Heaven". These teachings seem to belong to this phase of the life of Jesus, but they may well have been given at different times and to various audiences.

From them we learn that it is a secret growth, arising from tiny or invisible beginnings and attaining infinite expansion that changes the whole nature of man and society. It grows "naturally" as the flower grows and it cannot be artificially hastened, for the true spirituality is wholly a gift of God's grace. Admission to it

is thrown open to all, but many are unready or unwilling and turn away; its bliss is open to every kind of person, yet only some care to enjoy it. It is so precious that one who finds it once can no longer care for any other pleasure (cf. GH 38 : 2); he gives up everything he has in order to pass once more the magic door into that hidden mystic garden. It is so wonderful that it cannot be shared with others (cf. GH 41 : 5); when a man by chance comes upon it he must hide the fact, and then turn to it again in private; by talking of his fortune to others he may lose it for himself while he cannot pass it on to them (cf. GH 49 : 2)

All this is true of that ecstatic divine ego-less state of the true Mystic, known to some as "cosmic consciousness" or "liberation", the natural and permanent state of the real Self, which is the seed of all bliss in God and because it is beyond all time and space is infinite and eternal—sharing God's very nature and inmost Being.

32. Teaching by Metaphor

And in such parables he used to speak to them his message, and without a metaphor he never used to speak to them. (M. 4 : 33-34)

To those who have never glimpsed its glories or realised what a truly ego-less state could be, it is almost impossible to talk of the Kingdom except by using such comparisons and metaphors. Not with any mean childish motive of guarding esoteric wisdom for his favoured "elect" did Jesus choose this way of teaching; it is still the only way open to those who know the ineffable Reality, which is indeed the "Kingdom" whose "King" is God Himself. St. Teresa spoke of it as the inmost room in a great Castle, the *Gita Govinda* makes

it Sri Krishna's garden •rbour, and Bunyan the Celestial City. Mystics, philosophers and alchemists of every age and every land have varied the metaphors to hint at this sublime Truth. But none have found words to describe what, being unknown to the lexicographers, has no vocabulary to define it. For how can one define the Infinite or tell of the Ineffable ?

33. He Calms a Storm

That same day, as evening was coming on he said to them, " Let us cross to the other side." But a hurricane of wind got up and the waves splashed into the boat. Now he was asleep, but they woke him up and said to him, " Teacher, does it not matter to you that we are being drowned ? " Then rousing himself he rebuked the wind and the water. And there was a great calm. Then they were awestruck and said to one another, " What sort of man is this, that even the wind and the water obey him ? " (M. 4 : 35-41)

By critics this story has generally been viewed with intense scepticism because it is clear that the disciples believed from the very first that it was Jesus who actually stopped the storm—and that seemed to the critics impossible, crude superstition. Now we can neither prove nor disprove whether a great man who is perfectly at one with the God of Nature could really control the elements—though I must admit that such stories are a commonplace in India. It is, however,

certain that Jesus did still the storm of terror in his followers' hearts, replacing it with awe and wonder at what must have seemed to them the greatest miracle of all.

Squalls arise and cease with great suddenness on the little Lake of Galilee (682 feet below sea level), and perhaps the disciples in their fear of death in the rough waves at night, and in their wild excitement, were rather hasty in connecting their teacher's words with the intense calm that instantly followed them.

Conservative critics made much of the added details "on a pillow in the stern" as proof that the writer was an eyewitness; of course it is the business of every fiction-writer to make his story vivid in such ways, and they really prove nothing of the sort. But we cannot reject them merely because they are inconsistent with the usual baldness of M's narrative; an actual eyewitness does in fact usually show such inconsistencies of style in his story. We must remember that the Gospels were not written as logical or complete biographies of Jesus, but only as outlines to help the Christian preachers in their work. The core of M's Gospel especially seems to be a collection of rough notes of actual memories written down or dictated by an eyewitness as they happened to survive the many years till such written memoirs became necessary. Naturally the record of certain days—such as the first at Kafr Nahum (Capernaum)—was very full, while whole months remain blank. That is exactly what we should expect in a truthful account of what an individual himself saw. We have no right to assume that the first source of the Gospel was present with Jesus day and night during the whole period of his ministry.

34. The Gergesene Madman

Then they came to the Gergesene country on the other side of the Lake, and there met

him a man who was possessed by an unclean spirit and lived in the tombs, no one being able to control him even with chains. Seeing Jesus, he ran and prostrated to him, screaming in a loud voice. . . . Now on the hills nearby there was a large drove of swine grazing, and the drove rushed down the steep slope into the Lake and were drowned. The swineherds ran off and told the story in the town and countryside. Then they came to see Jesus and began urging him to leave their district. (M. 5 : 1-17)

The story of the lunatic possessed by a "legion" of demons is one of the most intriguing and difficult in our Gospels. Even as it appears in our present expanded version of M., it is remarkably typical of cases of multiple possession; nearly the whole account as there recorded can be paralleled in experiences of our own day and may well be historical. But the alleged agreement of Jesus to let the evil spirits infest the unhappy animals—which hosts they immediately and stupidly destroyed—is hardly creditable to him, and seems unlikely to be true.

Some critics think the screams of the madman scared the swine to their death, after which the people firmly but politely drove Jesus away. It is clear that the first witness gave a confused and inaccurate account of what he saw and that the later devotees, who were unwilling to admit that Jesus failed, changed the story to fit their idea of his omnipotence. It is interesting that Mt. seems to have a more primitive version of the story than either M. or L.; which is not the usual case.

35. Healed by a Touch

1. Now when Jesus had recrossed in the boat to the other shore, a great crowd collected round him, and he stayed near the Lake. Then a woman who had suffered for twelve years from a haemorrhage came behind him and touched his robe, and the flowing of her blood immediately stopped. (M. 5 : 21, 25-29)

2. Then Jesus turned round and said, "Who touched my robe? His disciples said, "You can see the crowd pressing on you, yet you ask 'Who touched me?'" And the woman came in fear and trembling and fell down before him and told him the whole truth. "Daughter," he said to her; "go in peace, your faith has cured you. (M. 5 : 30-34).

Here also Mt. has a simpler and probably earlier version than M., our main source. The essential part of the story is the faith-cure arising from a mere contact with the healer, without his conscious knowledge of what was happening. There are many cases of such cures within the experience of modern practitioners of mental healing. The story, traced from Gospel to Gospel, is a good instance of the accretion of details intended to make it more picturesque and impressive, and so of more value for edification. We must remember that the whole purpose of the evangelists was to convince the hearers that Jesus was the expected Messiah and so to edify

their faith. They did not intend to give us bald historical narrations of mere fact.

36. A Roman's Faith

As Jesus was entering Kafr Nahum an army-captain came up to him saying, "Sir my boy is lying down at home (Mt. 8 : 5-6) ill (L. 7 : 2) and in great pain." Jesus replied, "I will come and cure him." But the captain answered, "Sir, I am not fit for you to come under my roof, but only speak a word and my boy will recover." When Jesus heard that, he wondered and said to his followers, "Certainly I tell you I have never found such a faith even in Israel." (Mt. 8 : 6-10)

The wonder of Jesus was to find in a pagan, and a brutalised soldier at that, the faith that without any personal contact at all he could cure the sick boy at a distance. The Gospels may not have originally said that the boy was actually cured ; they rather left that to be inferred from the man's faith. (cf. §53 : 2) Instances of such cures at a distance, though rare, are by no means unknown to modern healers, and there is really nothing superstitious or incredible in any of these "miracles" which filled with righteous ridicule the old-style rationalist.

As a Roman, the captain had no right to invite a Jew of good family, for the orthodox would regard his house as unclean (cf. *J.* 18 : 28). Yet his belief in Jesus's

natural kindness made him risk a possible rebuff in appealing to him. The prophet's instant willingness to go where he was needed (cf. § 16 : 3) shows that, though he had not yet broken all the bonds of the orthodoxy he had been brought up in, it was almost instinctive for him to scorn such distinctions of race or creed when he heard the cry of pain or need. (cf. § 13 : 5)

37. Rejected at Home

1. Then he left that place and went to his birthplace. When the sabbath came he began to teach in the synagogue, and many heard him with amazement asking, "Where did this man get such wisdom that such mighty things are done at his hands? Isn't this the carpenter, Mary's son, brother of James and Joseph and Judah and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?" (M. 6 : 1-3)

2. And they rejected him, so he could work no miracle there because of their unbelief. Jesus said to them, "*A prophet (M. 6 : 3-6) is not acceptable in his birth-place* (Log. 11) and in his own home (M. 6 : 4), *nor can a doctor work cures on those who know him.*" (A. 51) Then he continued his preaching tour round the villages. (M. 6 : 4)

To prove that Jesus was the foretold Messiah, Son of David, Mt. and L. brought in early stories that he

was born in Bethlehem, the city of David, and an early 2nd century legend fixed the actual place in the cave of Tammuz or Adonis, an analogue of the Christ. But our Marcan source seems to show that he was really born in Galilee, not far from Kafr Nahum (possibly at Chorazin ?); more than that we cannot say.

. His childhood home, from which his common surname "of Nazareth" was taken, was early assumed to have been his actual birthplace, though there is no historic record of this village till much later, and the name may be the same as "Gen-nesareth" (=Galilee). Indeed, the name "Jesus of Nazareth" is one of the points most contested by critics, no less than five different meanings being given it—none of which is wholly satisfactory. Its variant "the Nazarene", or probably more correctly "the Nasorean," would connect Jesus with the followers of the Baptist now called the Mandeans. The word means *exorcist* or *healer* (*nasurai*) and is thus almost synonymous with *Essene* (*asiin*) and *Therapeut*,—two communities that seem to have had much to do with the early days of Jesus and his Church. On the other hand, it may link with Netzer, the promised Messianic "Branch" (*Zech.* 3 : 8), or with the Nazarites of *Num.* 6 : 2-21), or again with the Semitic root NSR, *carpenter*, or *helper*. We may just note that the regular name for him among the Jews was "Yeshu ha Notzra", when they did not cryptically refer to him as "Such a one" or by bye-names like "Balaam".

It is natural that those who knew his very ordinary family, young artisans and peasants, and who had seen the young Jesus himself playing in their streets as a boy, or who were using the ploughs made by his busy fingers in the village workshop (Justin, A.D. 150, says some made by him were still in use in his day—good workmanship !), failed to recognise the great man he had now in fact become. We are all more ready to believe in the greatness we have never seen than in that which lives in a humble

cottage next door. Possibly, also, the talk of demon help may have prejudiced them against him, for they do not seem to have denied his powers or wisdom ; yet they did not believe in him. Knowledge that they had thus mentally rejected him paralysed his healing gift. He correctly diagnosed their scepticism, and then went his way.

The immediate threat to his freedom seems to have passed, unless L.'s story of an attempt to kill him here is historical ; it seems rather a doublet of that narrated in § 65. His enemies were probably only watching him at this time, to see what he was really planning before they took any definite action against him.

The Church has treasured from very early days the belief that the "brothers" and "sisters" of Jesus were in fact his cousins and that his mother Mary never had any children beyond himself. This may well be true.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE POLITICAL EPISODE

38. The Apostles Sent Out

THEN he called the **apostles** and began to send them out two by two, giving them power over the unclean spirits. And he ordered them to take for the journey no bread, no bag, and no money in the belt, nor to wear two shirts. He also said to them, (M. 6 : 7-10) " See, I am sending you out like sheep in the midst of wolves. (Mt. 10 : 16) Do not go towards the heathen, and do not enter any Samaritan town, but go only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And on your way preach, saying that **God's** Kingdom has come near, and heal the sick and drive out demons. (Mt. 10 : 5-8) Whenever you go into a house, stay there till you leave that place ; (M. 6 : 10) eat what is put before you, for the workman

deserves his (L. 10 : 8, 7) ration. (Mt. 10 : 10) You will not have visited all the towns of Israel before **God's Kingdom** comes." (Mt. 10 : 23) Then they went out and preached repentance, healing many. (M. 6 : 12-13)

Jesus now passed to a swift offensive, probably as soon as he heard the news of John's death (cf. § 39). He sent out a number of picked followers on a lightning tour of the country, to spread John's message that was now his own. It is not quite clear if by the "Kingdom" Jesus meant the personal reign of Messiah, though it would certainly have been so understood; he may have really meant that the bliss of conscious union with the Father which he knew for himself was now very near to all who changed their life's attitude and made that union their one aim.

These missionaries, now called "apostles", were to rely wholly on the kindness of the villagers to whom they went; if repulsed, they were to go quietly on their way, adds a later text which may also be authentic. They should leave it to God to deal with those who opposed the message, which for the present was to be limited to the Jewish people. There was little time for this rapid mission; it must be concentrated if it were to have its full effect. (cf. § 53 : 2) They were to proclaim nothing but the Kingdom and repentance; God's reign was now so near it would be realised before their tour was ended.

Was this a false prophecy, as many critics have imagined? Then why did the Church censors fail to expunge it when it had been long belied? Did not Jesus rather mean that he himself would fully realise the Kingdom in his own life during their short absence—a period he seems to have spent in solitude, for we know

nothing of it? Certainly we notice from this time an identification of himself with the Kingdom that is new to the story, and a mystic sense of union with God which gave John the chance to weave his lovely poems which have been one of the foundations of Christian theology. It is quite unjustified to imagine that Jesus expected the "end of the world" to come within those few days or weeks.

After Jesus died, the frustrated Messianic dreams of his disciples and their "wishful thinking" that he would return to them in the body, led to so much alteration of the earliest records of his teaching that it is now impossible to be quite sure of what he really did mean. But the adventist use of the phrase "Son of Man" is here almost certainly a substitution for the earlier phrase "God's Kingdom".

39. Herod is Disturbed

Now Herod (M. 6 : 14) the Tetrarch (Mt. 14 : 1) heard **of all this** and said, "John **whom** (M. 6 : 14) I have beheaded (L. 9 : 9) has risen from the dead"! (L. 9 : 7) For Herod, having seized John, had sent and beheaded **him** in the prison, (Mt. 14 : 3, 10) and his disciples had come and taken away his body (M. 6 : 29) and buried it. (Mt. 14 : 12)

Herod had very recently put John to death, as Josephus tells us in the gloomy castle of Machaerus and on political grounds; the romantic story in our Gospels is historically impossible and generally agreed to be a later addition.

Now the news of Jesus's missionaries stirred the whole country and people said, "It is just as if John were alive again, for his message rings everywhere through the land." One Gospel adds that Herod became curious to see this Jesus, and later on it inserts a tale of the meeting of the two just before the Crucifixion—a story unknown to every other source.

40. The Apostles Return

1. Then the apostles returned to Jesus and reported to him all that they had done and taught. (M. 6 : 30) He told them, "I have seen Satan falling down from heaven like lightning." (L. 10 : 18)

2. John answered him, "Teacher, we saw someone using your name to drive out demons, and we stopped him because he does not follow us." But Jesus said, "Do not stop him, for he who is not against us is on our side." (M. 9 : 38-40)

Jesus hints to the returning apostles that while they were away he has witnessed the overthrow of evil and the initiation of God's Kingdom, in this way giving us a precious little glimpse of what went on in his own mind when he was alone with God. Is this also a veiled allusion to some such temptation by the evil one as we have recorded in Mt. 4 and L. 4, a temptation which he overcame, thus winning the power and the grace to go on with his heroic work to the end? (cf. § 27 : 2)

He then, rather unsuccessfully as later history has proved, enjoined on them tolerance of others by the warning that he had followers in "other folds", who did not join him openly but yet shared his fight against the world's evil and loved and honoured his name.

41. They Try to Find Rest

Then he said to them, "Come away by yourselves to some lonely spot and get a little rest," for many were coming and going and they could find no time even to eat. So they quietly sailed away in the boat to a solitary place; but the crowds saw them going and many recognised him, so they ran there on foot and got there in advance. (M. 6 : 31-33)

He then invited them to enjoy that quiet and fruitful solitude which had just given him such joy, for the excitement stirred up by their mission deprived them of every hope of rest in public places. But their moves were watched, and the escape of the little party into the solitudes was noticed. The crowds ran along the shore of the Lake and met them as they landed. It was no spiritual yearning, no love for the man Jesus, that drew them there. They were madly eager to join the expected revolt against the Romans and to set up a national Jewish State under the direct rule of God's Anointed One, the awaited Messiah, whom so many now thought had come. The sudden wide publicity of the apostles' mission prepared them all to look on Jesus as the expected leader.

42. Simple Folk are Welcome

1. So when he landed Jesus saw a great crowd, and he felt pity for them because they were like sheep that had no shepherd. (M. 6 : 34) Then he said to his disciples, "Well, there is a great harvest, but the labourers are few! So pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers for His harvest." (Mt. 9 : 37-38)

2. Then he began to teach them at length about (M. 6 : 34) the Kingdom, saying, (L. 9 : 11) "Come unto me, all who are labouring and overburdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon yourselves and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble of heart; you will find rest in your souls, for my yoke is gracious and the burden is light. (Mt. 11 : 28-30) Blessed are your eyes that see and your ears that hear, for I tell you truly that many prophets have longed to see what you see but have not seen, and to hear what you hear but have not heard." (Mt. 13 : 16-17) At that time Jesus thrilled with spiritual joy and said, "I praise Thee, Father, Lord of heaven, for hiding these things from

the wise and learned and showing them to the simple minded—yes, Father, because such was Thy goodwill beforehand ! ” (L. 10 : 21)

Jesus saw how blind and helpless the people were, running after any false leader who might promise relief from their poverty and humiliations. Filled with an upwelling fount of love and pity for the ignorant suffering of his fellows, he offered them his leadership. He would guide them into a true peace that would refresh their hearts and take away all weariness and anguish. The heavy burden of the Law he would replace with the light task of following his message of simple kindness to all. They were indeed happy to live in days when God's Kingdom, which is love and union with Him, was being revealed, while prophets and saints in the past had only dreamed of but never realised such bliss. A wave of ecstasy then vibrated through him as he thanked God for opening the gates of the Kingdom to these poor, humble, ignorant and simple folk, even if learned scholars, sure of their superiority, refused to enter its blessedness like trustful children.

So intense was his burning love and earnestness that the crowds were held by him spellbound till late in the day, forgetting why they had come, forgetting the wants of the physical body—rapt in the magic words of a revealed Saint of God.

43. Jesus Feeds the Crowd

Then, as it had grown late, his disciples went up to him and said, “ This is a lonely place, and it is already late ; send away

(M. 6 : 35-37) the crowd (L. 9 : 12), that they may go to the farms and villages around to buy loaves for themselves." But he replied to them, "You give them something to eat." Then they said to him, (M. 6 : 36-37) "We have no more than five loaves and a couple of fishes." (L. 9 : 13) Then he told them to seat everyone and, taking the five loaves and the two fishes, looking up to heaven he blessed (them). Then he broke the loaves and gave (them) to his disciples to distribute. And they all ate and had enough. Now those who ate the loaves were about five thousand men. (M. 6 : 39-44)

It was the disciples who at last recalled Jesus to worldly things when they reminded him that the people must be getting hungry. Then followed a symbol of the Messianic Feast, which was traditionally to begin the reign of heaven on earth—a symbol perpetuated in the Church for many years in the *agapai*, love-feasts, which were later on merged into the sacrificial feast of the Eucharist.

Jesus seems to have acted almost nonchalantly, his mind still filled with the spiritual vision before him : probably he had no idea how this picnic in the lonely places would inflame these infatuated people with yet wilder political dreams. While they thought of rebellion, of thrones for loyal Jews, he was lost in joyful wonder at the gracious condescension of the all-loving Father. Interrupted in his talk by their physical needs, he seems

to have thought of just satisfying them so that he might resume his thread as soon as possible. He probably never imagined what results such a miracle would have on their minds.

The credibility of this event must depend on the reader's own subjective mind, and on his experiences of the supernatural. I can only say that such things are not unknown even in our own day—and that modern science has gone so far into realising that matter is only "solidified force" and has already gathered so much evidence of "materialisation" and of "apports" that it would be rash indeed to brush aside the story without evidence that could overturn it. The psychic conditions were all there: an eager crowd expecting some great wonder as a sign, an inspired teacher with great powers in abstracted mood, a crisis in the national life—some such startling event might almost have been expected at such a time.

Certain "rationalising" critics of the text have it that Jesus, like a clever conjuror, talked so much that he hypnotized the people into thinking they had been fed; others, with more reason but still without justification, suggest they had only the spiritual food of the love and wisdom of Jesus, and that the body's desires were thus quieted. But the straightforward meaning of the text need not be buried under all this well-intentioned ingenuity over arguing away what our parents called the "supernatural". We do not yet know all the laws of Nature, and where our text is neither incredible nor self-contradictory we may give it at least a little trust.

This scene captured the imagination of the Church, and it was often figured even in the 1st century catacombs, along with the similar scene of the breakfast on the beach after the Resurrection. (cf. § 139 : 2) Some details of these pictures seem to have been reflected

back into our texts, such as the sitting on the grass in lines of fifty, a mythic element probably drawn from the story of Dionysos in the desert. The story occurred in two variants in M.'s sources, and both were copied by the other Gospels, to one of which J. adds a long discourse on Christ as the eternal Bread of Life, comparing the scene with the giving of manna by Moses in the desert (*Ex.* 16 : 15) and thus replacing the Synoptic story of the Institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper.

44. He Refuses to Lead a Revolt

1. Then Jesus realised that on this account they were about to come and carry him off by force to make him a King, so he withdrew again to the hill alone. (J. 6 : 15) But at that very time some people came to talk to him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. (L. 13 : 1)

2. Then Jesus gave them this answer, "Do you think, because they suffered such a fate, that those Galileans were greater offenders than all others? No, I tell you! But if you do not change your minds you will all perish in the same way. Or those eighteen on whom the wall fell in Siloam and killed them, do you think they were worse offenders than all the men who live in Jerusalem? No, I tell

you ! But if you do not change your minds you will all perish in the same way. (L. 13 : 2-5)
For all those who take the sword will perish by the sword. (Mt. 26 : 52)

The Kingdom had now been proclaimed by its heralds and inaugurated by the Messianic Feast ; all that was now wanting was its King. The thousands who had shared in that wonderful meal were afire to carry Jesus at their head in a sudden march on Jerusalem that would free God's holy land from the heathen yoke and set the whole Jewish world aflame.

They had a sudden shock. The supposed Messiah would not lead them, but retired instead to his solitary prayers on the mountainside. Before the greatest temptation of his life, (cf. *Mt.* 4 : 8-10) Jesus stood firm on the rock of his own view of duty and of God's Will. They followed him up the rocky slopes of that lakeside hill. With shining eyes and fiery gestures they talked to him of previous revolts and of the Roman governor's cruelty to Jewish patriots ; they must have spoken also of the glorious days when the Maccabees had led their countrymen to freedom over those very hills ; they told him how Pilate had even defiled the very Temple by shedding Jewish blood there at the hour of sacrifice. But to their great surprise all this went in vain. Instead of being roused to a flame of patriotic ardour and vengeance like their own, this strange Jesus, who had not seemed to lack courage, only warned them that if they persisted in their mad belief in physical violence they too would all be killed ; he himself could have nothing to do with their wild dreams—he came to save, not to destroy.

Though Marcion omitted this passage there is no real reason to doubt its authenticity. It was far too

dangerous for men who wished to prove that Christians were politically harmless to Rome, to invent such a story; it certainly shows that at least the followers of Jesus were fiercely anti-Roman. Its survival in our Lucan text shows that it preserved a true tradition that in the early days of the Church was too well-known to be concealed.

45. The Story of a Figtree

He went on, "A man had a figtree planted in his vineyard, and he went looking for fruit on it but found none. So he said to the vine-dresser, "Here, I have come now for three years looking for fruit on this figtree and found nothing. Cut it down! Why should it take up space?" But he answered him, "Leave it for this year also, Sir, till I can dig round it and put in (some) manure. Then it may bear fruit, and if not, you can rightly cut it down." (L. 13 : 6-9).

God was often giving the Jewish nation the chance to mend its ways, yet it was constantly plunging into these fruitless bouts of bloodshed. Unless it were wise in time and learned that God has no part in war and in killing, total destruction would soon overwhelm it. This prophecy was only too soon fulfilled in the ghastly tragedy of A.D. 70 and in the total ruin that annihilated Jerusalem in A.D. 135.

46. Many Leave Him

For this reason many of his disciples went back and would no longer keep him company. So Jesus said to the **apostles**, "Would you also like to go away?" Therefore Simon Peter replied, "To whom shall we go, Sir? You have sayings of eternal life, and we believe that you are a saint of God." (J. 6 : 66-69)

What seemed like a sudden cowardice masking itself with philosophic talk disgusted most of these shallow and rather dangerous admirers. They left Jesus. Probably most of them waited for their chance in the Messianic revolt of Theudas in A.D. 45, and some may even have fought in the great war that wrecked the Jewish nation a generation later. So many then abandoned him that Jesus rather pathetically asked his chosen few if they also would turn their backs on him. As usual Peter spoke for them all when he said they would cling to him because his words were full of life and gave them a new courage for living, and also because despite the political disappointment, which no doubt they all shared, they still felt he was one of God's holy ones. (cf. § 97 : 3)

I have restored the word used by Peter as *XPHCTOC*, because if he had really so early made such a Messianic speech as here reported there would have been no room for such a question or declaration as we find in § 57 : 1. There is, in fact, no contemporary evidence of the early use of the word "Christ" (*XPICTOC*); all records of the first generations wrote *XPC*, which does duty equally for both words, or

writing out *XPHCTOC* in full—which later editors have freely, but without authority, changed into *XPICTOC*. The earlier term, *XPHCTOC*, the “Gracious One”, was used by pagans to speak of the Saviour-God of their various cults.

47. Talk on Purity

1. Then the Pharisees came to meet him, together with some of the scribes who came from Jerusalem, and they asked him, “Why do your disciples disobey the traditions of the elders, eating food with unwashed hands?” And he said to them in reply, “Isaiah rightly foretold you hypocrites in the writing, ‘This people honour Me with the lips but their heart is far from Me; they worship Me in vain, teaching human precepts as doctrine.’ For, setting aside God’s command, you hold on to the tradition of men.” (M. 7 : 1-5)

2. Then having called the whole crowd, he said to them, “All of you listen to me and understand! Nothing can make a man unclean by entering him from outside; but the things that come out of him, (M. 7 : 14-15) the evil thoughts of his heart, (M. 7 : 21) these are what make a man unclean.” (M. 7 : 15)

3. Then his disciples approached him and said to him, "Do you know that the Pharisees were shocked on hearing that?" But he replied, "Any plant which my Father has not planted will be uprooted. Let them alone; they are blind leaders of the blind." (Mt. 15 : 12-13)

Worried by their own empty formalism, the orthodox complained that, probably on the occasion of the "Messianic Feast", Jesus had let his disciples eat without the ceremonial washings. It was one of those pinpricking complaints that were meant to sting Jesus into some hot incriminating retorts. In fact he did speak out strongly, calling them hypocrites and referring to them Isaiah's bitter words. (*Isa.* 29 : 13) While making a fuss over the minutiae of tradition, they were forgetting the really important and vital parts of God's Law. (cf. § 118 : 1)

Then as a direct challenge to their elaborate "Mosaic" lists of pure and impure foods, actually to be found in the post-exilic Priestly Code for the most part, he said that nothing a man eats can make him impure, but only his own wickedness. This directly contradicted much of the scriptural law, and when his disciples complained to him that it had infuriated the orthodox he withdrew nothing. He only added to his condemnation of their obtuseness the thrilling words that their untruth would perish, for God could be trusted to overthrow the arrogant blindness of these Jewish leaders. (cf. *GI* 46 : 2) His devotees need not disturb themselves about the unworthiness of others. (cf. *GI* 31 : 2)

48. A Sample Prayer

Now he once chanced to be in a certain place praying; as he stopped, one of his disciples said to him, "Sir, teach us to pray just as John also taught his disciples." He said to them, "Whenever you pray, say, 'Holy Father, may Thy Kingdom come and Thy Will be done in heaven and on earth. Give us, today the bread daily needed, and forgive us our faults as (L. 11:1-4) we also excuse our debtors; (Mt. 6:12) and lead us not into temptation.'" (L. 11:4)

Jesus was still looked on as John's successor and expected to follow his example. So the disciples turned to him for religious teaching, evidently realising they could get nothing nationalistic out of him. They asked him for some formal model prayer.

Now prayer was for Jesus nothing formal, but a natural childlike talking to a loving Father. He does not seem then to have given much attention to this request, but simply to have referred his disciples to some of the petitions even then in use by many other Jews. This "Lord's Prayer", then, as it has come down to us, is almost wholly Jewish, and Jesus seems to have made it up out of his own memories of other prayers. However, as Dr. Klausner rightly says, it was Jesus who combined these isolated petitions into one wonderful prayer, which in fact covers the whole of our life and its needs, both spiritual and material.

This is the form taken by the Jewish "Paternoster", as given by Dr. Klausner: "O our Father who art in heaven (*siddur Rab Amran Gaon*, p. 158), may Thy Name be hallowed and Thy Kingdom come (*Ha-Kaddish*). Do Thy will in heaven and on earth; . . . do what is right in Thy sight (*T. Berachoth*, 3 : 11). Give me the bread that is needful for me (*Prov.* 30 : 8). Forgive us our debts (*Shemoneh Esreh*);—Forgive thy neighbour's sin, and then when thou prayest thy sins will be forgiven (*Ecclus.* 28 : 2)—Lead us not into sin or iniquity or temptation." (*T. Berachoth*).

49. Faith in God

1. "Watch and pray (M. 14 : 38) *without getting weary* (A. 96), so that you may not enter into temptation. (M. 14 : 38) Ask, and it shall be given to you. If a son asks one of you for bread, will he give him a snake? Well, if you for all your evil know how to give your children good things how much more will your Father give to those who ask Him! (Mt. 7 : 7-11)

2. "Have faith in God (M. 11 : 23) like a grain of mustard! (L. 13 : 19) For I tell you truly that whoever says to this hill, 'Take and throw yourself into the Lake', and has no doubt in his mind but believes that what he says will happen, he will have it done. That

is why I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer believe that you have got it (already), and you shall have it. (M. 11 : 23-24)

The commentary on this prayer which follows it, together with our § 85 : 2, gives us Jesus's special teaching on Prayer. It should persevere, even if the answer does not come at once ; every prayer is answered because God loves us, and even we do not ignore our children's requests when they are sensible and harmless. It is true we may not first recognise our answer to prayer, for God may often give us something that is better for us in the long run than that for which we have asked. Even if our faith in Him is very small at first, so long as it grows steadily as we taste God's goodness, just as the tiny mustard seed grows, we shall find that nothing is impossible for us.

It is interesting to note how just at this time, so soon after he had decisively rejected the really big temptation to be a popular national leader, the thoughts of Jesus seem to run on temptation and to recall the very language of the Q-story of his temptation in the desert.

50. First Be Friendly with Man

1. " And whenever you get up for prayer, forgive anything you have against anybody, so that your Father may also forgive your lapses. (M. 11 : 25) Pardon, and you will be pardoned ; give, and you will be given—they will pour into your laps good measure, pressed, shaken down and running over. (L. 6 : 37-38)

2. “ Therefore if you remember there while offering your gift at the altar that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there at the altar and go away. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come back and offer your gift. (Mt. 5 : 23-24) If your brother acts wrongfully, go and speak to him in private ; if he listens to you, then you have won your brother over ; but if he offends (you), forgive him, I do not say to you seven but seventy-seven times. (Mt. 18 : 15, 21-22) *Do not let the sun go down upon your anger.* (A. 94)

3. “ Make terms quickly with your opponent while you are still in touch with him, in case he hands you over to the judge, and the judge to the jailer, and you are thrown into prison. I tell you, certainly you will never get out from there until you have paid up the last copper. (Mt. 5 : 25) *Never be happy save when you can look at your brother with affection.* (A. Ap. 19)

But we cannot have perfect trust in and love for God if we feel anger or hatred for our fellow man, His child. So before we go to God in prayer we must first see that all is peaceful, friendly and loving between ourselves and others—at least so far as we can make

it so. (Cf. *Didachē* 14 : “ Let no one who has variance with his friend come together with you until they are reconciled, that your sacrifice may not be defiled.”) There must be no limit to our goodness and kindness to others, if we would enjoy God’s infinite grace and blessings. (*Ecclus.* 28 : 2 and *GI* 58, and 79 : 2) In seeking reconciliation with one who has wronged us, we must be careful that we do not wound his feelings or expose his fault to others and so harden his heart against us ; then we shall easily win back his goodwill. But if we neglect to put things right while we can meet him in this world, inexorable justice will later exact a penalty we cannot escape. It is only when we can feel a sense of loving friendliness when we look at everyone that we can know real happiness or enter the Kingdom of God ; that is why the saint is known for his benevolence to all, even the most outwardly repulsive of beings.

51. Do Not Criticise Others

“ Do not judge, and you will not be judged ; (L. 6 : 37) for you will be judged just as you judge others, and the same measure you deal out to others will be dealt back to you. Why do you notice the speck that is in your brother’s eye when you fail to see the plank in your own eye ? How can you say to your brother, ‘ Let me take the speck out of your eye ’, when all the time the plank is in your own ? You hypocrite ! First take the plank out of your eye, and then you will see how to take the speck out of your brother’s ! ”

We know so little of another's difficulties, of the weight of the temptation to which he may have yielded after long and heroic resistance, that in fact any judgment we can make of his conduct or character is bound to be totally unjust, founded on all but complete ignorance of the relevant facts. Also, if we go round showing a harsh, critical or carping spirit we are certain thereby to awaken the same mood in others, and in that way we create around us an unfriendly atmosphere of gossip, suspicion, slander and hatred. (cf. GI 73) If we carefully set our own defects to rights, we shall, being then perfect, be qualified to help other folk to rectify theirs. One who radiates love, sympathy and gentleness on all around him is certain in time to draw the same divine light of kindness out of all, and happiness is deepened for all around.

52. They Fail to Reach Bethsaida

Now as evening came on his disciples went down towards the Lake, and (J. 6 : 16) he told **them** to embark in the boat and cross over in advance to Bethsaida on the other side. Then, having sent them away, he climbed the hill for prayer. Now by the time it was dark the boat was in the middle of the Lake, and he was alone on the land . . . But the wind was against them, so they came back to the land of Gennesareth. (M. 6 : 45-53)

Again thirsting for the solitude that refreshed him with divine peace, Jesus himself retired into prayer

while he sent his followers on ahead. But the wind blew the little boat back to land, and Jesus rejoined them during the night.

There has been much ingenious speculation among the critics on how to explain away the story of Jesus walking on the water here omitted. Some have thought it a dream or vision of the disciples; some consider it as a post-Resurrection appearance; some have thought to change the preposition from *on* to *round*; others have seen it only as a parable to illustrate the power of faith (§ 49 : 2) which somehow got historicised later, like that of the figtree in M. 11 : 12-14, 20-24.

53. Jesus Helps a Heathen Woman

1. Then, moving on from there, he went away to the district of Tyre and went into a house, not wanting anyone to know. Yet he could not escape notice, for a woman having heard about him came and fell at his feet, begging him to drive a demon out of her daughter. Now the woman was a pagan of Syrian race. (M. 7 : 24-26) But he gave her no reply. Then his disciples came up and pressed him, saying, "Send her away, because she is crying out behind us." (Mt. 15 : 23-24)

2. And he answered (her), "I have been sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; (Mt. 15 : 24) and it is not fair to take

the children's bread and throw it to puppies." She said to him in reply, "Yes, Sir, (that is true); yet even the puppies eat the children's crumbs under the table!" Then he said to her, "Well, go your way; because you have said that, the demon has left your daughter." Then she went to her home and found the daughter lying on the bed (cured). (M. 7 : 27-30)

Leaving the Holy Land, Jesus stayed for some time in Syria among the heathen. As he had no mind yet to preach his message to non-Jews, this visit abroad could only have been to shake off his enemies and so to get a little rest before his destiny led him on to attack their centre at Jerusalem itself. But he was too famous to enjoy peace and obscurity, even in a foreign land.

His unwillingness to help the Tyrian woman may surprise us till we remember that John's fate had warned him he might have little time for his work; if he had once begun outside Palestine he must have gone on to Antioch, Athens, Alexandria or Rome—and his life would have been frittered away in a premature assault on the Mediterranean cults. Paul could do that better, later on. "Charity begins at home"; it would have been foolish for Jesus to have turned to the wider world before laying at least a foundation in his own little country. (cf. § 38)

But the woman showed such ready wit in using his discouraging reply to her own advantage for the little girl's sake that his natural kindness had its way, as it had had with the Roman captain in § 36. However, this seems to have forced him to leave Tyre, where his

fame at once spread ; this cure at a distance would have drawn to him in no time the usual troublesome and curious crowds, among whom he could have done little for the real work of founding God's Kingdom on earth.

54. A Deaf-Mute Cured

Then coming out of the district of Tyre once more he passed **through** Sidon (?) to the Lake of Galilee. And they brought to him a deaf-mute and begged him to lay a hand on him. Then taking him away by himself from the crowd, **Jesus** put his fingers into his ear and touched his tongue with saliva. Then he looked up to heaven, sighing deeply, and said to him, "Be opened!"; and his ears were at once opened and the string of his tongue was loosened, and he spoke clearly. Then he told them not to tell anyone ; but the more he forbade them, the more eagerly they made it public. (M. 7 : 31-36)

Some have tried to get over the quandary of this extraordinary route by reading *Bethsaida* for *Sidon*, both names signifying "the place of fishes or of fishermen". This would confirm the opinion of many that this story is really a doublet of the cure in § 56. Jesus's apparent difficulty in curing this deaf-mute may have been due to some public loss of faith in him since he had refused to endorse the political dreams of the

Galileans. He also seems to have grown weary of this pointless helping of a few out of the millions of human sufferers, and he sighed as he gratified them. While he was afire with a spiritual message, they cared little for that, and people came to him only to escape from bodily pain. So Jesus did what he could to avoid the publicity to which such cures always led, for he was too tender-hearted to refuse his help altogether, however much his kindness might inconvenience himself.

55. No Sign Will be Given

1. Then he at once went on board with his disciples and went to the region of Magada. Then the (M. 8 : 10-11) scribes (Mt. 12 : 38) came out and began to ask him for a sign from heaven. He sighed deeply and said, "Why does this generation demand a sign? I truly tell you no sign shall be given to this generation (M. 8 : 11-15) but the sign of Jonah. (Mt. 12 : 29) You know how to make out the face of the sky; can you not read the signs of the times?" (Mt. 16 : 3)

2. Then he left them and, again going on board, he returned to the other side. Then he warned them, saying, "See that you beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the leaven of Herod." (M. 8 : 13, 15)

The "sign in heaven" these scholars wanted was like those described in *Dan.*, *Rev.*, *Mt.* 24, etc.—apocalyptic wonders of a darkened sun, falling stars, bloody moon, etc. (cf. *GI* 52 and *Ass. Mos.* 10 : 1-6) Minor prophets had declared that God Himself would thus announce the Messiah's advent, and as no such sign had yet appeared (Jesus's miracles not being so regarded by the people), they put this test in order to expose the falsity of his supposed claim to be the Messiah. But his refusal to gratify their childish demand only exposed the falsity of these apocalyptists, who were so popular in that disturbed age.

No sign would be, can ever be, given of the coming of the greatest of the prophets except his prophecy itself. (cf. *GI* 30, 37, 43) That must be judged on its own merits by those who had the wit and the will to do so. Even pagans had in the past recognised the greatness of Israel's leaders; but now Israelites themselves were blind (cf. *GI* 45 : 2) if we can accept Q's addition to the text here. Filled with unnecessary learning, they could not see a blazing truth under their very eyes.

As Jesus left that part of the country to avoid his persistent enemies, he warned his few followers to shun the characteristics of both an established Church and a military State. The former imprisons the spirit in set laws, dead prophecies, and empty rituals; while the latter binds it to political respectability or diverts it into wicked and futile violence. Jesus came to set man's spirit free, from all prisons, by a direct vision of the naked truth. But Gospel elaborators of the closing gnomon of this section show how utterly they misunderstood it; they were soon enough to ally themselves with the pagan State and to build up a Church of their own. Jesus was betrayed, by his own followers !

56. A Blind Man Cured

So he came to Bethsaida, and they brought him a blind man, begging him to touch him. Then **Jesus**, taking the blind man's hand, led him outside the village and, spitting into his eyes and putting his hands upon him, asked him, "Do you see anything? Then he looked up and said, "I can vaguely see men like trees, walking." At this, he laid his hands again on his eyes, and he was restored and saw everything clearly. Then he sent him home, saying, "Do not talk to anyone in the town." (M. 8 : 22-26)

At the home-town of the disciple Philip (cf. § 114), a blind man was cured with difficulty and in stages. Here also faith was probably dim and Jesus perhaps himself not wholly willing, and the same order of secrecy was imposed on the man.

This miracle may, in fact, be a doublet of that in § 54, to which it corresponds in almost every detail. In this part of M.'s Gospel, (cc. 6-8) there are several signs that two parallel written sources were being used by the evangelist; *e. g.* we have two very similar versions of feeding the crowds. Lester thinks both these miracles are fictitious because they show Jesus using a sort of folk-magic; to me this seems to be an unsound argument, for every doctor varies his treatment with the case he treats. The curative value of saliva is an article of faith, based on experience, with millions

of peasants today—even animals lick their wounds!—, and there are degrees of “blindness,” some quite temporary and functional. This particular case was evidently unlike that of the “man born blind” in J.9.

57. Peter Hails Jesus as Messiah

1. Then Jesus and his disciples set out for the villages of Cesarea-Philippi. On the way he began to ask **them**, “Who do people say I am?” They replied, “John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and others one of the prophets.” Then he said to them, “And you, who do you say I am?” Peter answered him, “You are the Messiah!” (M. 8 : 27-29)

2. Then he warned them not to say that about him to anyone, and he began to tell them that **he** would have to suffer many things. But Peter took him up and began to scold him, (M. 8 : 30-32) “Good heavens, no, Sir; this shall never happen to you!” (Mt. 16 : 22) Then he turned round and reproved Peter, saying, “Get behind me, Satan! (M. 8 : 33) You are a stumbling-block to me, (Mt. 16 : 23) for your outlook is not God’s but man’s!” (M. 8 : 33)

As Jesus again wandered abroad, he asked his followers what was the general opinion about him, for he

knew he could never learn it himself direct. He must have been disappointed by the rather superstitious reply, which presumes a belief in some kind of re-incarnation, and he no doubt hoped for a better understanding among his chosen few intimates. When Peter told him what *he* at any rate thought, Jesus ordered them all never to speak of him as the Messiah. He had already had difficulty enough in his real work because of the political notions mixed up with that idea. The belief, true or false, must not be encouraged, or Jesus would find his mission wrecked on an irrelevance.

When he told the disciples how dangerous such talk was, and seems even to have added that it would lead to his shameful death, Peter as usual thought himself very clever and protested at such gloomy forebodings, but was at once crushed by the terrible retort that he was playing Satan's rôle in tempting Jesus to choose an easy way. The Prophet, however great, was only a man, a son of man, and neither could nor would use any divine powers to save his own life from the Romans—who always gave short shrift to any Messianic claimant. It was indeed a worldly thought that God's messenger could be exempted from danger to his physical body, or could claim God's omnipotence to save it. (cf. *Gl* 36: 3 and 37: 1-20) Some critics have here found a source for the second temptation given in "Q". (cf. *Mt.* 4: 5-7)

CHAPTER FIVE

FIRST VISIT TO JERUSALEM

58. Pharisees Warn Jesus

THAT very day some Pharisees came saying to him, "Go away and leave this place, for Herod means to kill you." Then **Jesus** said to them, "Go and tell that fox, 'See, I shall drive out demons and work cures today and to-morrow, and on the third day I shall finish (my work). But I must go on today and to-morrow and the day after.'" (L. 13 : 31-33)

It is a pleasant surprise to find Pharisees who are unwilling to let Jesus come to any real harm in spite of the plot many of them had made with the "police" in § 24. This passage, though omitted by Marcion, must surely be historical, for it could hardly have been invented after the Pharisees had come to be looked on as unrelenting enemies of Jesus and his Church.

His reply seems at first a little ungracious: "I have nothing to fear from that cowardly rogue till I

finish my work; anyway I am soon leaving his province." The last sentence in L's text is strange—Jesus could not have forgotten that John, for one, was killed outside Jerusalem. It is curious how Jesus harps on this "driving out of demons" as if it were his main work; that is just the Talmudic Jewish view of him.

59. Jesus Avoids Company

1. Now the Feast of Tents was approaching, so his brothers said to him, "Leave these parts and go to Judea, so that there also your disciples may see what you can do, for no one does anything in secret when he wants to become prominent. Since you can do these things, show yourself to the world,"—for not even his brothers believed in him. (J. 7 : 2-5)

2. Therefore Jesus said to them, "My time (for that) has not come yet. Go up to this Feast yourselves; I am not going up to this festival." Saying this to them, he remained in Galilee. (J. 7 : 6-9)

This first visit to Jerusalem, during the Feast of Tents in the autumn (*Lev.* 23 : 34-43) cannot be historically certain as only J. refers to it, but the Johannine tradition of several visits (cf. § 45) can hardly be false, and several of Jesus's sayings fit best in such a context before he openly clashed with the city's rulers.

His brothers' cruel misrepresentation of his motives, that he was only seeking fame and glory for himself,

must have been very bitter to Jesus and may well have decided him not to visit the city in such company. It would certainly have prejudiced his reception there by those who called themselves his disciples and by the general public. As in the book of Acts disciples are found everywhere even before the name of Jesus has been preached, so also here we are not told how these Jerusalemites were won. Some critics lay great stress upon this curious fact that there seems to have been almost a pre-Christian cult of Jesus ; but why not spread by the former disciples of John who had acclaimed Jesus ? (cf. *Acts* 19 : 1-5)

60. He Goes Alone

But when his brothers had gone up, then he also went up, not publicly but as it were in secret. Now the Jews were on the look-out for him at the Feast, asking, "Where is that man?" And there was a great dispute over him in the crowds ; some said that he was a good man, but others said, "No, he is leading the people astray." No one, however, spoke openly about him for fear of the **authorities**. (J. 7 : 10-13)

Having sent his brothers on ahead, Jesus seems to have left his disciples also behind and travelled to Jerusalem alone. He was now so famous that people were looking out for him there, and two parties had the same opposite views of him that have always divided the Jews : the Talmud calls him accursed because he led the people astray into a false religion, while many enlightened

modern Jews consider him a true prophet and one of the greatest sons of Israel.

The last word is *Jews* in the original ; here the writer of J. is as usual obsessed by his queer notion that Jesus and his followers were in some way not Jews—doubtless a sign of the late date of his writing, after the Christians had broken with the Jewish community. Of course, it is a hopeless anachronism to speak of the Jewish people being silent about Jesus because they feared the Jews. The sense is clear.

61. The Duty of the Holy City

1. Just in the middle of the festival Jesus went up to the Temple and began to teach. He said, (J. 7 : 14) “ *A city built on the top of a high hill and established can neither fall nor be hidden.* (Log. 12) You are the light of the world ; your light is so to shine before men that they may see the good you do and give glory to your Father. (Mt. 5 : 14, 16) Is a lamp brought to be put under a bowl or under a bed ? Is it not set on a lampstand ? (M. 4 : 21) Then it gives light to everyone in the house. (Mt. 5 : 15)

2. “ You are the salt of the earth, and (Mt. 5. : 13) salt is good, but if the salt loses its quality, with what can you restore it ?

(M. 9 : 50) It is no longer fit for anything but to be thrown away and trampled on by people." (Mt. 5 : 13)

Jesus began to preach in the Temple, which he being a Rabbi was entitled to do. He said that Jerusalem was set firmly on its rocky hill of Zion, visible to all the world, as an example to the nations, and that it must nobly show them how to live according to God's will. Out of all humanity God had chosen the Jewish people to flavour others with the salt of righteousness and devotion to God; if they gave up that vocation they would be overthrown and put below all peoples.

This was Jesus's appeal and warning to the "peculiar people", his first message as the "Messiah" in the capital city of Israel; it was couched in terms familiar to those acquainted with the earlier prophets. (cf. *Isa.* 56 : 7, 60 : 1-22, 66 : 19-20 and *Mal.* 1 : 11) By the phrase "the salt of the earth" Jesus may have meant the mineral salts that make the soil fertile until they are exhausted.

62. The People Wonder at Him

So some of the Jerusalemites said, "Isn't this the man whom they want to kill? Yet here he is, speaking boldly, and they say nothing to him! Can the authorities really have found out that this man is in fact the Messiah?" (J. 7 : 25-26) And many of the crowd believed in him, saying, "Even when the

Messiah comes will he work more wonders than this man has done?" The Pharisees heard the crowd were discussing him in this way; then **they** and the chief priests sent officers to arrest him. (J. 7 : 31-32)

His boldness and the silence of the authorities made the people think the priests were afraid to touch Jesus, so many of them began to believe him the expected Messiah; certainly he had already done many things the Messiah was to do. They began to discuss him openly, and the report of this reached the chief priests, who at once considered it high time to silence him. It is possible that, as elsewhere, the insertion of the word "Pharisees" in this context is secondary.

63. A Galilean Messiah?

Now on the last day of the Feast, the chief day, Jesus stood up and cried aloud, "If any one who believes in me is thirsty, let him come to me and drink; rivers of living water, as the scriptures say, will flow out of him!" Then many of the crowd, having heard the speech, said, "This is certainly the Prophet!" Others said, "He is the Messiah!" But others again asked, "What! Is the Messiah to come from Galilee? Does not the scripture say that the Messiah will come out of David's family

and from Bethlehem, the village where David was?" Therefore a sharp division over him broke out in the crowd, and some of them wanted to seize him but no one actually laid hands on him. (J. 7: 37-44)

Some such Messianic cry, foreshadowed by *Isa.* 55: 1, almost incoherent unless given the highest mystical significance as in the *Odes of Solomon*, must have precipitated the popular view that Jesus was the Messiah. At this time he was certainly identifying himself with the Path, the Kingdom, and the Godhead itself—as every other illumined soul in history has to some extent done—and practically all the essential *logia* which underlie the long monologues which J. created to expound his mystic Christ to philosophical minds might well fit into such a context. So might many of the Sayings recovered from Egyptian sands and found in the Gnostic books. (cf. *Acts of John*)

This mystic Jesus is as truly historical as the prophet; only as he unfortunately left no writings of his own we cannot elicit what he himself may actually have said from what others have put into his mouth—some of which is all but grotesque in its appalling egoism. This side of the Founder must therefore in its details always remain shadowy and doubtful. For what we know of it the reader is referred to *The Gospel of the Mystic Christ*, vol. 6 of this Series, and to a later volume, *The Gospel of the Gnostics*.

The scripture here referred to by Jesus may be found in *Isa.* 12: 3 and 44: 3, and that quoted by the sceptics is in *Ps.* 132: 11, *Jer.* 23: 5 and *Mic.* 5: 2. The Prophet referred to is that one said to to be like Moses in *Deut.* 18: 15, who was to come and guide the people.

At this time the main objection to Jesus seems to have been, not so much what he did and said—for the Messiah would have the utmost freedom when he came—as his well-known birth in Galilee. For the belief had long been common that the real Messiah would come from Bethlehem, while others followed the tradition that his origin would be unknown (J. 7: 27) but presumably from heaven. The desire to silence Jesus as a dangerous impostor who would get many into trouble naturally grew more intense as his influence increased.

64. The Messiah Not David's Son

Then while Jesus was teaching in the Temple he asked, "How can the scribes say that the Messiah is David's son? For when inspired David himself said, 'The Lord said to my Lord: Sit at My right hand until I put your enemies under your feet.' So David himself calls him Lord; how then can he be his son?" Then most of the people heard him with delight. (M. 12: 35-37)

Jesus at once dealt with this popular objection to him by showing in a way beloved by the scholarly exegesis of the age that the Messiah was David's superior and so could not possibly descend from him. He is quoting here from *Ps.* 110, almost certainly of Maccabean date and written about one of the princes of that line.

Those who claim that Jesus confirms the Mosaic origin of books he quotes under that name will have to explain why he evidently denies the truth of *Mic.* 5: 2, which he here refutes. He must have known well that in fact he was not himself of the old royal line, or he would surely have used that straightforward argument and so crushed all doubts on that score for ever, instead of resorting to this rather laboured and tortuous plea.

At all events his "proof" pleased the people, for descendants of David were now few and far between, and the general belief made a Messiah hard to find. Most of the claimants were in fact discreetly silent on this point—which they could not have been were the belief universally held. By rejecting this condition for Messiahship Jesus helped to pave the way for the tragedy of A.D. 70, for the Zealots then hoped hourly for Messianic intervention to aid in their revolt.

The expected "Suffering Messiah" of *Isa.* 53, etc. was to be a "son of Joseph"—*i.e.* an Ephraimite or a Samaritan; some thought Jesus, son of Joseph, according to L. 2: 48 etc., fulfilled this condition. (cf. *J.* 6: 42 and 8: 48)

65. Jesus Assaulted

Next, Jesus said to those of the Jews who believed in him, (*J.* 8: 31) "Abraham your father was intensely glad that he was to see my day; he has seen it, and is happy." Then the Jews cried out to him, "You are not fifty years old yet, and has Abraham seen you?" Jesus said to them, "In most solemn truth I tell you, before Abraham existed IAOUE, I

am.” Therefore they took up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the Temple. (J. 8: 56-59) Then after that Jesus moved about in Galilee; he did not want to travel in Judea because the Jews had tried to kill him. (J. 7: 1)

Jesus had no wish to bolster up the fanatical patriotism of the Jews, and he at once destroyed his new-found popularity by an amazing claim to be older than Abraham, and thus to be greater than the father of the race. To a non-Jew it seems strange that this should be violently rejected in one whom they were almost ready to accept as the Messiah. But the most terrible thing he ever said to them, which seems at last to have brought him to his death, was the seemingly innocent assertion “I AM”, several times made publicly at crises of his life. For the saying about Abraham might have meant little more than that he was still alive, watching over his people, and so had seen this latest of their prophets (cf. *Test.* and *Apoc. of Abraham*) —a doctrine which would have been rejected by the Sadducees, but could certainly never have been taken as blasphemous.

The secret Name of the God of Israel, now called YAHWEH, is of uncertain origin and meaning, many guesses about it having been made. It was translated in the Authorised Version (*Ex.* 3: 14) of the Bible as “I AM THAT I AM”; it seems to have expressed pure and absolute Being void of predication and to be cognate with HWH, the breath of life. Other forms of the Name were IAO, IAHU and IEU, used by later Gnostics.

Even if Jesus had simply declared his identity with, or mergence into, that One Reality spoken of in the esotericism of all religions and experienced in the

ecstasy of one who has transcended the egoic mind, it would have been in that ignorant and narrow environment a bold and shocking thing to do. But the Jews have always claimed that Jesus was condemned for blasphemy because he used the sacred Name—which must never be uttered but once a year, and that by the High Priest in secret. This fact cannot be ignored by the honest enquirer. Both here, and during his first trial, (§ 128 : 2) when the High Priest specifically declared that those present had heard the “blasphemy” and had no need of the elaborate plans for getting evidence of it laid down in *Pal. Sanh.* 25, etc. (Wellhausen rightly omits *M.* 14: 62 *b*), Jesus must in fact have uttered the Ineffable Name and thus torn away the veil of secrecy that guarded the Mystery of Israel from profanation. Neither the assertion that he was older than Abraham nor the declaration that a human being (or even himself) stood at God’s right hand, could ever be considered as *blasphemy* by a Jewish audience, but only as rather rash fantasies. But as soon as they heard this word from him on both occasions they held him worthy of the death due for blasphemy. After Jesus was dead his Jewish followers took care to hide from the world this real sacrilege which he had actually committed by translating the terrible and unutterable Word into the harmless Greek for “I am”, (*egō eimi*). 10x50

Why should Jesus have done this dreadful and dangerous thing, deliberately violating the most sacred tradition of his people? No evidence has been left in our Gospels on which we could build a theory whereon we could safely rely. It is possible that he knew the time had come for a formal break with the past. The new wine of spiritual freedom could no longer be kept in the old skins of superstitious reverence for the past. The terrible Unseen God was now to give way to the loving Father; and God could not be followed through a direct living knowledge of His Will by a mind and

heart imprisoned in long-dead ideas of what He had once willed. Jesus had come, as he was soon fully to realise, with sword in hand to destroy that which men had made of the Law and the Prophets and their old revelation of God. It was St. Paul who later on, by "withstanding Peter to his face", overthrew the bondage of the old Law on those who had embraced Christ and his spiritual freedom, but his Master had already prepared the way for this revolution.

Also, something in this unreal and idolatrous atmosphere of blood-stained Jerusalem just drove Jesus into violent action whenever he came in touch with it. As fire and ice cannot co-exist in one place, so Jesus and the Jewish religion, fossilised as it had become in the hard moulds of an outworn inspiration, had to clash violently when brought together. Maybe, Jesus simply wanted to clarify the issue once for all, dividing the Future from the Past by a vital struggle in the Present (cf. § 119), and he found that the quickest way to bring about that struggle was a direct challenge to all the Jews held most sacred. We cannot say and are left to guesses only. This we know, that from the beginning the Jews have always held that his miracles were performed only by the blasphemous use of the Divine Name.

The crowd at once began to stone him for this, as prescribed in the "Law of Holiness" for all who took God's (secret) Name in vain (*Lev. 24 : 16*), but he was able to escape from them to the safety of Galilee.

CHAPTER SIX

LAST DAYS IN GALILEE

66. The Epileptic Boy Cured

1. Then, going back to the disciples, he saw a big crowd around them, and one of the crowd said, "Teacher, I have brought you my son who has been possessed ever since a child, and whenever the spirit seizes him it throws him down; then he foams at the mouth, grinds his teeth and becomes rigid. It has often even thrown him into the fire and water to destroy him, and I asked your disciples to drive it out, but they could not." (M. 9 : 14-18)

2. But he answered him, "O faithless people! how long can I endure you? Bring him to me!" (M. 9 : 19) **Then** he rebuked the evil spirit and, having screamed and violently convulsed him, it came out. Then **the boy**

became like a dead body so that many said, "He is dead!" but Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up (M. 9 : 25-27) and handed him over to his father. (L. 9 : 42)

This tremendous declaration by Jesus in Jerusalem must have almost coincided in time with the "Transfiguration" on a hill, which is now often thought a misplaced vision of the risen Jesus; but it may well have been a vision seen by some believer on the Hill of Zion while Jesus spoke there. The talk of his death that followed it may disguise the actual assault on him at that time, which is recorded only by J., who lays special stress on events in the capital city, of which he was probably himself an eyewitness. We must remember that the evangelist was in early times always known as "John the disciple of the Lord", and never as "the Apostle John"; the assumption that he was the blood-thirsty son of Zebedee is wholly gratuitous and rests only on very late traditions.¹

At all events, Jesus seems to have been immediately dragged down again to the level of a medicine-man by the importunity of an epileptic boy's distracted father. The disease is accurately described and was evidently well-known at the time—but this of course adds nothing to the evidence of its historicity. Some see in the failure of the disciples a veiled hint that the Teacher himself failed—an inference hardly needed by evidence. It is almost certain and most reasonable that as his spiritual life deepened and his sense of oneness with the Father grew more real, Jesus found it more distasteful to perform such miracles.

Several of these stories of the later part of his life look like doublets and may be intended only to keep

¹ For full reasons why this view seems to be correct, see the Introduction to the "Gospel of the Mystic Christ" in this series.

up the pretence of an unchanging Jesus—perfect from the start and pursuing his own fated road to the Cross whatever happened. But such an idea of him could be true only if, as the mythicists suggest, “Jesus” was not a real man at all but only a type of the ordained human sacrifice by the old popular rite, and he consciously passed his one year of license with the shadow of voluntary doom always over him, like the ancient scapegoat and the victims of “Days of Atonement” in many cults (cf. books by Frazer, Robertson, etc.). This would vindicate many prophetic texts we now set aside, but it would change utterly our whole idea of Jesus as “Perfect Man” and take away from us for ever the lovable Prophet of Galilee.

67. New Conditions for Discipleship

1. Then he said to them, “Let whoever wants to follow me renounce himself, take up the ‘Cross’, and be my follower. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. For what profit does a man make if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life? Or what can a man give to buy back his life? (M. 8 : 34-37) For everyone will be consecrated by the fire (of suffering). (M. 9 : 49) The one who loves father or mother more than me is unworthy of me, and the one who does not take his ‘Cross’ and follow after me is unworthy of me. . . (Mt. 10 : 37-38)

2. "For which of you wanting to build a tower does not sit down first to count the cost, if he has (enough) to finish it? Lest after he has laid the foundation and has no means for finishing it all who look at it begin to laugh at him, saying, 'This man began to build but has been unable to finish!' (L. 14 : 28-30)

3. "Or which king sets out to fight another king in war without having first sat down to consider if ten thousand men can meet him who is coming against him with twenty thousand? Otherwise, while he is still a long way off he sends a deputation asking for peace." (L. 14 : 31-32)

After what had happened, Jesus knew that death might at any time come to him and his followers, and from this moment he carried his life in his hand, ready to yield it up to his Father whenever required. None should follow him now but those who were equally ready to give up all for the sake of the spiritual freedom that God's Kingdom would bring in. This was no game, no play for children, that he had undertaken; and his followers could no longer play at following a Messiah. They must think well, count the cost, and then give up all personal attachments that might hold them back from the supreme sacrifice. (cf. Gl 60 : 1-2) Only then could they take up the burden of the world's sorrow at his side and share the glory of total self-abnegation that would win the Kingdom. For the heart cannot have two rulers; if the ego rules, there is no room for God; but when God rules, the ego shrinks

away into the nothingness of which it is, and God is all in all. That is the bliss wherein the soul can say with Jesus, "I and the Father are one", (§ 104 : 2) and only he who can truly say this out of his own realisation of the truth can be the gate of life to his fellows and the loving shepherd of those sheep entrusted to him by the Father.

What exactly Jesus meant by the "Cross" in this passage cannot be quite certain. His life was in danger from the Jews and not from the Romans as yet ; but the Jews stoned for blasphemy, while it was the Romans who crucified for rebellion. There seemed no likelihood at this time that Jesus would be sentenced for a political rebellion against the Roman rule, and it is hard to see why Jesus spoke of suffering as "the Cross". But from very ancient times the Cross was a symbol in pagan religions—in Crete, in Egypt, and elsewhere ; it seems to have stood for a gesture of outspread arms, of total giving, of blessing, and as a sign dividing the above from the below, the right from the left, and so of the eternal wheel of creative activity in the universe (cf. the account by Jesus of his crucifixion in the Gnostic *Acts of John*). As the mystic sign for total self-sacrifice it might then well have preceded the actual crucifixion of Jesus, which has converted it into the sign of supreme love and of triumphant life.

68. Only Keen Men are Needed

1. Now it happened as they were going along the road that someone addressed him, (L. 9 : 57) "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go !" Then Jesus said to him, "The foxes have holes and the birds have nests, but

the son of man has nowhere to lay his head.”
(Mt. 8 : 19-20)

2. And another said to him, “Sir, let me turn back first and go and bury my father.” But Jesus said to him, “Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead.” (Mt. 8 : 21-22)

3. And yet another said, “I will follow you, Sir, but let me first go and take leave of the people in my house.” Jesus said to him, “No man who puts his hand to the plough and then looks back is of any use to the Kingdom of God. (L. 9 : 61-62) *You listen with one ear, but have kept the other closed.*” (A. 52)

Three incidents, probably from different occasions, are here put together for doctrinal reasons. It is our world's sorrow that though wild beasts can find a home there is no real home here for a man who devotes himself to the Ideal of human service. He becomes a homeless wanderer, ceaselessly depending on daily chance for shelter.

Jesus tells us that mere personal duties in society are the care of those who are spiritually dead or only half alive to man's real duty. His call to world-service must be obeyed with a whole heart or not at all. Each one must decide for himself, (cf. *Gāthas* : Yasnā 30 : 2) for having once made up his mind he can no longer turn back. Otherwise, the attempt to face both ways at once, to hear the glamorous cries of the world while trying to catch the soft sounds of the Voice within, will lead him only to confusion and futility. The devotee

cannot keep even a shadow of narrow personal loyalties,—all must be merged in devotion to God and to humanity as a whole.

69. God Gives All We Need

1. (Then Jesus said :) “ Oh what little faith you have ! Do not be anxiously asking ‘ What are we to eat ? ’ or ‘ What can we drink ? ’ or ‘ What shall we wear ? ’ ; for the heathen are (always) looking after all these things, and your Father knows that you need all these things. Seek for His Kingdom, and you will have all else as well. (Mt. 6 : 30-33) That is why I tell you not even to begin to worry your mind over what you are to eat or drink or what dress you are to wear on your body ; surely life is more than food, and the body than clothing ! (Mt. 6 : 25)

2. “ Which of you can add a **moment** to his span of life by worrying ? Look at the birds ! They neither sow nor reap, nor do they store up (anything) in barns, yet (Mt. 6 : 26-27) God (L. 12 : 24) feeds them. Are you not worth more (Mt. 6 : 26-27) than birds ? (L. 12 : 24)

3. "And why do you worry about clothing? Learn from the lilies of the field how they grow! They neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendour was ever robed like one of them. Now if God in this way clothes the weeds of the field which exist today and are thrown into a bonfire to-morrow, will (He) not much more (clothe) you? (Mt. 6 : 28-30) So never be anxious about the next day, for the next day will look after its own affairs. Its own troubles are enough for the day!" (Mt. 6 : 34)

It is God's business to see that His servants, who trust Him fully and who do His work, get all they need of this world's goods (cf. GI 59, 60, 87). Indeed, it seems to be a subtle law of Nature that he who seeks little or nothing for himself but simply goes on with his work, with a silent trust in the Father, receives his actual needs without any effort of his own. This has been the experience of countless saints in all lands.¹ One who is a part of Nature, who merges his life in the life around him—all God's life, really—dissolving the artificial barriers of his own egoism and resting in full confidence on the Providence that makes, upholds, destroys—has no fear in life, no worry for the future.

Our concern is to give ourselves wholly to God's Kingdom, to love that, to live and work for it; and the rich stores of Nature will stand open for our use. Worry, anxiety and fear are all signs of the feeble and immature

¹ Cf. for instance the life of Dr. George Müller, and "In Quest of God", by Swami Ramdas.

mind ; they keep up the wall between us and the ocean of God's life and love, which is our real Self, and so they deprive us of His gifts. We cannot avoid the trouble and suffering that are for us in life, but we can confine them to their own moment and not increase them by extensions into the past of memory and the future of dread. "We look before and after", and so our sorrow grows. Most of our dreads are unreal ; the crisis provides its own solution as it comes—"Sorrow may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning." (cf. GI 91 : 2)

It is this joyous trust in our Father's absolute goodness, resting in His arms like a little child, that fits us to do His work of bringing in the Kingdom and a happier world. He will not let us down. He has never yet let anyone down who has trusted in Him absolutely. When we rely wholly on Him, dropping all vain trust in our own cleverness to provide for ourselves, we form a part of the universal life, unselfed, which is His Life, that is God Himself. Then whatever we do in His name becomes His work, and His infinite power is at our side to guard and guide us in His Way. (cf. GI 11-12, 64-67)

70. The Blessings

Then he taught his disciples, saying, "Blessed are you poor, because (Mt. 5 : 1-3) yours is the Kingdom of God. Blessed are you who are hungry now, because you shall be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, because you shall laugh. Blessed are you when men will hate you and drive out your name as evil (L. 6 : 20-22) for my sake ; rejoice and be

extremely glad because your reward in heaven is rich, for that is how they ill-treated the prophets who were before you." (Mt. 5 : 11-13)

Some of the disciples made the great choice—embracing the life of devotion and faith. Jesus congratulated them in words recalling the contemporary book, *2 Enoch*, 42 and 52. Wealth, luxuries, merriment and popularity do not bring us happiness; only the peace that comes to him whose mind and conscience are at rest can do that. Indeed, the earnest devotee must watch himself with eagle eye when praise and fame come his way, for they bring temptations to complacency, self-conceit and egoism.

Suffering and misrepresentation have ever been the lot of true servers of the Kingdom. Their ideal is higher than that of those around them, so in their own day they are misrepresented, misunderstood, insulted, persecuted. (cf. GH 39 : 1 and 34 : 6) Their glory comes to them only later, when it can no longer feed and inflate the ego and can only inspire others to tread the narrow way. St. John of the Cross, persecuted in life, was canonised and declared a Doctor of the Church after his death. Those who enjoy much of this world's comforts are only too easily held back from entering on the path of suffering, the Cross, which leads to God; it is those who have little who can more easily be drawn to it. (§ 79)

71. Jesus Pays the Temple-Tax

And leaving that place they went on their way through Galilee, but he did not want anyone to know. So he came to Kafr Nahum

(M. 9:30, 33), and the collectors of the (temple)-tax went up to Peter and said, "Does not your teacher pay the half-shekel?"¹ He said, "Yes," and went into the house. Before he could (speak) Jesus said, "So that we may not offend them, take a shekel and give it to them for me and for yourself." (Mt 17:24-27)

As Jesus steadily moved on towards the decisive conflict with the formalism of the Church of his day, he was anxious to avoid any needless clash that would prematurely lead the clerics to stop his work. Also, he never, throughout his life, set himself in opposition to the normal duties and obligations incurred by living in society. So he fulfilled the usual obligation laid on all Jews of paying a tax to maintain the Temple. Indeed, it is not clear that he himself was yet convinced that the Temple ritual and hierarchy had outlived their usefulness and would soon have to be overthrown. He still hoped to reform, to revitalise, them for the new age he was proclaiming, even if some of their forms could no longer be retained to hold the new life he was pouring into them.

By now Peter seems to be recognised as the leading disciple, indeed at this moment—in his wife's house at Kafr Nahum—he was probably the host of Jesus and his little band, so it was to him the collectors came. There is no reason to doubt this part of the story, though it has been overlaid with the old tale of a coin found in a fish's mouth, which we meet so often in the folk-tales of many lands; such a miracle would have been childish and

¹ The value of this tax is given by Sadler as about a rupee a head.

most unworthy of the Teacher. It is probably brought in here as a sort of parable to illustrate how God provides for the needs of His own.

72. Avoid Rivalry

Then he asked them, "What were you discussing together on the way?" But they were silent, for on the road they had been disputing together about who was the greatest. Then he sat down and said to them: (M. 9:33-35) "Do not be called Teacher, for One is your Teacher and you are all brothers. And do not call anyone on earth your father, for One is your Father, who is in heaven. (Mt. 23:8-9) If anyone wishes to be first, he will be last of all and servant of all (M. 9:35) Have salt among you, and be at peace with one another." (M. 9:50)

These very human disciples of his, after all their teacher had said, were still largely bothered with glorifying their own little egos, but they had at least the grace to show their shame by silence when he asked them what they had been so eagerly discussing on the way to their Kafr Nahum home. They still dreamed of some earthly kingdom, with themselves as its ministers, generals and high priests!

Jesus gave a check to all this childish talk. No man is wise enough, said he, to teach another. "We are all

equally children in the presence of our Father, the One Reality. None but Life, that is God Himself, can really be our Teacher; we can only share with others what we have learned from Him. Nor can we look on other personalities as our elders, for their egos are as unreal as our own. The only Reality is God. One who tries to push his own little self forward, or another, by that very act puts himself or that other behind all others. The real leader is he who merges himself wholly in this work, losing himself in the service of others. If we can all do that, the salt of fellowship will be among us human beings, and there will be peace in the outer world as well as in our own hearts, which have thus been purged of jealous rivalry and ambition. How true it is that most enmities and quarrels arise from the feeling of a hurt prestige, that others do not honour us as we deserve !

73. The Child

1. Then, taking a little child, he set it in their midst; and he embraced it, saying to them: "Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me receives the One who sent me. I tell you truly, whoever gives in my name a cup of water to drink shall not miss his reward; (M. 9:36-37, 41) in so far as **he** has done it to one of the smallest of these brothers of mine **he** has done it to me. (Mt. 25:40)

2. "But whoever proves a hindrance to one of the little ones who believe, it would be far

better for him if a millstone were tied round his neck and he were thrown into the Lake. (M. 9 : 42) See that you never look down upon one of these little ones, for I tell you that their angels in heaven are always gazing on my Father's face." (Mt. 18 : 10)

This lesson of trustfulness and humility was forcibly repeated in the symbol of the little child.¹ It is service to the weak, the unworthy, the ungrateful, the despised of the world, that brings the greatest blessing, for it is service done to the Beloved Lord Himself, who sees all. And few sins are more terrible than the misleading of those who trust us, the exploitation of those who depend on us, the drawing into error of those who look to us for guidance. For He hears every cry of the helpless and hastens to save them from their troubles. It is these "little ones" who are His especial care.

Few things can be a greater hindrance on the spiritual path to Freedom than that egoistic feeling of proud superiority, of self-righteousness, that sometimes slips in unawares into our hearts and steals supremacy there. Any fate were better, almost, than such deceitful vanity—for in this world of oneness we are in fact all equal, all one, the saint and sinner, wise and fool, hideous and beautiful. Before God's infinite perfection what are the tiny differences between men?

¹ It really seems absurd to distort this simple and natural story into a vague reference to Christian converts in the Apostolic age, as so many critics have tried to do. It is only when a text makes no sense in its historic environment that the critic may be justified in seeking some allegorical explanation for it. Where is the need here?

74. On Spiritual Purity

1. (He said to them), "Now if your hand makes you sin cut it off; it is better for you to enter into life maimed than to go to hell with two hands. And if your foot makes you sin cut it off; it is better for you to enter into life a cripple than to be thrown into hell with two feet. And if your eye makes you sin tear it out; it is better for you to get into God's Kingdom with one eye than to be thrown with two eyes into the hell of fire 'where their worm has no end and the flame is not put out'." (M. 9:43-48)

2. "The eye is the lamp of the body, so if your eye is wide open your whole body is lit up, but if your eye is bad your whole body is darkened. Then if the very light which is in you is darkness, what a darkness it is! (Mt. 6:22-23) *Do not sadden the holy spirit that dwells in you, nor put out the light which shines in you.* (A. 92) *For all who walk by a divine spirit are the sons of God,* (A. 173) and therefore you must be perfect just as your Father is perfect." (Mt. 5:48)

Better any physical loss in an impermanent world than swerving aside from God's path. Most thoughts spring up from what the eye sees; if it looks at evil the mind becomes evil and impure; if it looks at holy things the mind is pure and noble, and then it can "enter into Life". (cf. § 97)

There is a natural spiritual light in each (cf. J. 1:9) of us, lit at the Divine Fire and able to guide us in all dim places. That light is darkened by impurity as an electric light is dimmed by a dirty bulb. Darkening that light is an injury to the Spirit within, and it takes away our consciousness of sonship to God, which is our heritage so long as we—like Him and in His power—do His work as perfectly as we can.

The word "Gehenna", or hell, originally meant the burning rubbish heaps outside Jerusalem, and came later to be used also for the "fires" that burn away the spiritual dross in us and make us pure. Modern thought has emphatically rejected the idea of a concrete hell such as delighted our forefathers, but none who have ever experienced the burning anguish of a vain regret or of wilful and persistent sin, for which no remedy can now be found, can be so foolish as to disbelieve in hell altogether. (cf. GH 28:2) A Jesuit priest, Fr. John Gerard, has well defined it as "the terrible sense of the final loss of God". While shuddering at the horror in these words, we may yet ask ourselves if anything could be final that bars an infinitely loving God from His child, however foolish and wilful that child might be. That hell was irremediable, eternal, was not the teaching of the early Church or of those nearer to the great Prophet himself; among those who taught that its fires were purgative, remedial, we may name SS. Clement of Alexandria, Ambrosius, Gregory Thaumaturgus, Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory Nazianzenus, Didymus of Alexandria, Jerome, John of Jerusalem,

Diodorus of Tarsus, Theodore of Mopsuestia;¹ while others who attacked certain doctrines of some of these never denied or challenged this faith that at last all men, all spirits, would submit to God and He would be "all in all", as St. Paul told the Corinthians. (1 Cor. 15 : 28) It was St. Augustine who first, inheriting the dualism of his Manichean teachers, taught that a part of creation would be *eternally* lost. We owe him no thanks for this blasphemous and wicked doctrine, so remote from the whole spirit of Christianity and of its blessed Founder.

The quotation in paragraph 1 is from *Isa.* 66 : 24 where it is used for the burning corpses and rubbish outside the city of Jerusalem.

75. Children are Blessed by Jesus

Then they brought him young children that he might touch them, but the disciples began to scold those who brought. When Jesus knew it he grew indignant and said to them, "Let the children come to me and do not stop them, for God's Kingdom is of such as these. I tell you truly, whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God in a childlike way will never get

¹ See the study of this question in "Universalism", by a Believer; Catholic doctrine has not rejected the idea of a certain "mitigation" in the pains of hell, which would in time logically result in their termination (see Tanqueray's "Synopsis Theologiae Dogmaticae", III, pp. 635-636). The whole confusion arises from a literalist misunderstanding of the nature of "timeless" condemnation. Eternity is not simply Time indefinitely extended; it is wholly different in its very nature from Time—the coincidence of Past, Present and Future in an ecstasy of bliss or agony.

into it at all. (M. 10 : 13-15) Unless a man is born again he can never see the Kingdom of God." (J. 3 : 3) Then embracing them, he put his hands on them and blessed them. (M. 10 : 16)

Jesus showed a very human love for children who were brought for his blessing, as is often done to saints everywhere. Probably the officious disciples thought to please him by preventing such disturbance to his "peace"; disciples very rarely see through the eyes of their teacher and they little know how wide is his affection. Jesus could never be disturbed by children; his heart is always open to trustful, friendly little people, and it is the self-satisfied and self-important alone who disturb his "peace of mind" and stir him to indignation.

Jesus took this chance of teaching once more that it is only in the simple trustfulness of a child that one enters the Kingdom. (cf. § 69 : 1) It is only when—the ego having been submerged in the baptismal waters of change—man lets himself go joyfully, allowing the flood-tide of God's Life to flow over, into, through him, that he can know the ecstasy which Jesus called "God's Kingdom", which others have called The Gardens, Moksha, Nirvāna, Salvation and The Abode of Song. Therein, as in the moist darkness of a mother's womb, the soul is born again, (cf. GH 44 : 2) a spiritual rebirth in the higher life of blissful activity in God's visible presence.

76. On Marriage and Divorce

1. Next he moved on from there and came into the Judean district on the other side of

the Jordan. Then crowds gathered again to him, and he taught them according to his custom. Then some Pharisees came up and asked him, trying to trap him, if a man is allowed to divorce his wife. And he answered them, "Well, what did Moses lay down for you?" They said, "Moses let (him) write a separation notice and divorce (her)." (M. 10:1-4)

2. Then Jesus answered them, "Because you were hard-hearted he wrote this precept for you. But from the beginning of creation 'God created them male and female: for this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother and join his wife, and the two shall be one flesh.' So that they are no longer two, but one flesh; and let not man separate what God has joined. Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery with her, (M. 10:5-9) and the one who marries a divorced woman commits adultery." (Mt. 19:9)

Jesus, like all great religious reformers found it easiest to argue from premises already accepted by his audience, so he answered the plea for divorce by referring to the very legal source whereon it claimed to be based. (*Deut.* 24: 1-2) Today many people would like to lessen the extreme severity of his reading of God's

Law in this matter, viewing marriage as a social contract rather than a spiritual or moral sacrament. But experimentation with divorce in many lands has resulted in the breaking up of homes, the loosening of sex morality, the undermining of social stability; we are not so wise as the Founder of Christianity and the early teachers of Hinduism, however much we may pride ourselves on being modern, advanced, and civilised. Our society, increasingly based on the looseness of marriage ties, shows few signs of real progress, and we cannot afford to treat with contempt the union on whose stability the happiness, home education and moral character of the child so largely depend—even though we find some cases of unwise marriage extremely hard for the married, and we find the ties they contracted in a careless moment make happiness impossible for both. This unhappiness in the married state is just the “Cross” those unfortunates have to take up, living cheerfully and finding happiness in mutual sacrifices and in learning to consider others instead of themselves.

77. Celibacy is Not for All

His disciples said to him, “If that is a man’s relationship with a wife, it is not profitable to marry!” He said to them, “Not all can manage that matter, but those who are so gifted. For there are some celibates who have been so from the mother’s womb, and there are some who have been made so by men, and there are some who have made themselves celibates for the sake of **God’s** Kingdom.

Let him who can practise this do so.”
(Mt. 19 : 12)

The disciples at once pointed out that if marriage were really so irrevocable it would be intolerable and few could think of assuming such a burden. But Jesus pointed out in his reply that it is nevertheless for most people inevitable. Only three classes can be honourably exempted from the normal duty of carrying on the race—those who are born sexless or chaste (the Greek word means literally: *eunuchs*), those who are made so by others, either through violence or through education and example, and those who for a noble cause which marriage would hinder had voluntarily renounced family life and embraced the ideal of perpetual virginity—the monks, nuns, priests, virgins, *sannyāsis*.—All others must take up the “Cross” of family life and carry it as bravely as they can.

78. The Rich Man Disappointed

1. Now as he was setting out on the road one came running up to him and knelt down to him ; he asked him, “ Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life ? ” Jesus said to him, “ Why do you call me good ? No one is good save one—God. Well, you know the commands : Do not kill, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not bear false witness, do not cheat, and honour your father and your mother.” (M. 10 : 17-19)

2. He said to him in reply, "Teacher, I have carefully kept all these ever since my youth." (M. 10:20) And **Jesus** said to him, "*How can you say you have kept the Law and the Prophets when it is written in the Law 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself'?* For look, many of your brothers, sons of Abraham, are covered with filth and dying of hunger while your house is full of many good things, none of which at any time goes out to them." (A. Ap. 3)

3. And Jesus looked lovingly at him and said to him, "There is one thing more for you (to do); go and sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come and follow me." But at that his face fell, and he went away sadly for he had great possessions. (M. 10:21-22)

Many critics have pointed out how Jesus here bluntly denies the idea of his own divinity in any special sense, but the Church has always politely ignored this denial and thrust on him a title to which he laid no more claim than other true prophets have always laid. (cf. GI 27:7-8 and GH 11:4 and 10:3)

It is a pathetic picture, this of the "virtuous" man who claimed to have obeyed all God's commandments that he knew as binding on him, and who yet could not bring himself to that brave leap in the dark

which would have enlisted him for ever as one of the pioneer heroes of the Kingdom. The extract we have drawn here from the *Gospel of the Hebrews* shows us the hidden weakness in him that the clear insight of Jesus dragged into the pitiless light of day. His eyes were blind to the sufferings at his very gate, and his heart lacked that eagerness to help others which would have softened it and prepared it for the great renunciation.

We must, of course, note that Jesus does not say that all who would please God and show love to men must embrace a life of holy poverty. At this stage in his life he was enlisting a small band of special volunteers as a nucleus for his "army" to bring in the Kingdom; these, by embracing the three vows of Chastity, Poverty and Obedience (cf. §§ 77, 78-83 and 85), even as did the later monks and nuns in the Church, would be able to devote themselves wholly to God's work. Jesus saw many good qualities in this enthusiastic man, whom L. describes as a "lawyer", that is, a scribe; and he wanted to give him a chance to be one of his closest intimates, but he failed in the test, and passes out of the story. Dare we hope that in later years he may have come back and thrown in his lot with the young Church during its heroic struggles in a not over-friendly environment?

79. It is Hard for the Rich¹

Then Jesus said to his disciples, "How hard it is for those who have wealth to get into God's Kingdom! It is easier for a camel to pass through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom." They were extremely surprised and said to one another,

"Then who *can* be saved?" Jesus said, "It is impossible for men, but for God everything is possible." (M. 10: 23-27)

It is not the mere possession of wealth, which may be a noble means for the loving worship of God by the helping of His children, but the selfish use of it—and that is so easy!—which hinders the renouncing of self without which Jesus cannot be fully followed. (cf. GI 60: 1-2, 75, 78 and GH 40: 6)

No self-righteous and punctilious obedience to laws can give a man that love and devotion which alone is real salvation; it can come only from the grace of God as His free gift. To Him everything is possible (cf. GH 28: 5); He can transmute even a selfish clinging to possessions into a glad renunciation of everything in spirit—leading their owner to see them as a trust to be used to God's glory by helping His world. (cf. GI 78: 6)

80. The Return for Sacrifice

Then Peter began to talk to him, "Look, we have left everything and followed you, (M. 10: 28) then what shall we get?" (Mt. 19: 27) And Jesus answered, "I tell you truly, no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or wife or children or lands for my sake (M. 10: 29) and the Kingdom's (L. 18: 29) shall not get (M. 10: 30) many times (L. 18: 30) as much

now in this time and eternal life in the coming age. But many first shall be last, and the last first." (M. 10 : 30-31)

Those who have thus truly renounced property and embraced poverty, men like St. Francis of Assisi, will find their lives wonderfully enriched by their independence of luxury and wealth that enslave so many and by their great joy in poverty and simplicity of life. There seems even to be a natural law which brings back to them unsought and in another form the very comforts they have given up.

Only we must beware of making such an expectation of return our secret motive for renunciation, or we shall find ourselves among the last to enter blessedness where we in our pride had thought we should surely be the first. One who truly renounces thinks of nothing but God and His work ; all other things drop away from him unnoticed. (cf. GI 58-60, 78 and GH 38 : 1-2) Peter had not yet perhaps learned this lesson ; his pride in the greatness of his sacrifice for Jesus was seen to lead to the terrible fall of his denial that he even knew the man.

81. Life is Uncertain

Then he told them a parable : " A certain rich man's land bore well, and he thought over to himself, 'What am I to do? For I have nowhere to store my crops.' Then he said, 'This is what I shall do ; I shall pull down my barns and build bigger ones where

I can store all my harvest and my goods, and I shall say to myself: Soul, you have ample properties good for many years, so be merry.' But God said to him, 'You foolish man, this very night your soul will be required of you, then who will get all you have stored up?' " (L. 12 : 16-20)

Jesus told a little story to press home how foolish it is to rely on earthly possessions. Just when a man thinks he has provided for a comfortable old age, having by long years of drudgery earned a little pension, he finds his life is over ; he has no time to enjoy the fruits of all his labour. What he has gathered will be enjoyed or wasted by others. How often we hear such things in our own experience !

82. Heavenly Treasure is Best

(And he went on), " But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust eat away, nor do thieves break in to steal. For wherever your treasure is, there your heart will also be. (Mt. 6 : 20-21) *Seek the great things and the small will be added to you. (A. 86). If you have not looked after the small things, who will give you the great ? For I tell you that one who can be trusted in the smallest thing is trustworthy also in a*

great (thing). (A. 126) Keep carefully what you have received (A. 155) and it shall be increased into more, (R. 32) for more shall be added to everyone who has, but even what he has shall be taken away from him who has nothing.” (Mt. 25 : 29)

The only real property we can ourselves actually enjoy is the character of our own mind and heart—that is, the wisdom, kindness and courage, and the memories of good thoughts and deeds which we have gathered in a worthy life. We shall find their fruits awaiting us when we retreat into the inner life that men call heaven, after the body drops away. (cf. GI 56, 60) Such treasures grow as time unfolds, for they are part of the living soul and can neither fade nor perish. The more we have of them, the more faithfully we use them, even in this life, the more they will increase, and the greater opportunities of useful work will be entrusted to us. The reward of good service is always the chance of better service; he who has helped a family of five will be in charge of a home for fifty children; there is a surety of endless progress in the ages that lie ahead of us, if we but use well the opportunities we receive now.

83. Compromise is Impossible

(He said also), “ No one stitches a piece of new cloth on to an old garment, otherwise the new patch breaks away and the tear is made worse. Also no one pours new wine into old wineskins, otherwise the new wine bursts the

skins and both wine and skins are ruined. But new wine is put into new wineskins (M. 2:21-22) and both are preserved. (Mt. 9:17) No one can serve two masters ; you cannot serve both God and Gold." (Mt. 6 : 24)

Jesus now shows his growing doubt whether it would after all be possible to put the new wine of moral responsibility and spiritual freedom into the old skins of Jewish obedience to a written code of law. The time, he felt, might well be near when a definite choice must be made between the two, just as a man must choose between a life of service to God and one of slavery to money, between the Ideal and the common sensual life of the world. We cannot have both at once, for they are opposites and irreconcilable. (cf. GH 31 : 2, an exact parallel to our text in Mt.)

84. The Pharisees Rebuked

Now the Pharisees who thought much of money heard all this, and they began to sneer at him. Then he said to them, " You are the people who make a show of your righteousness before men, but God knows your hearts and what is highly valued among men is loathsome in God's sight." (L 15 : 14-15)

The respectable Pharisees, here shown in rather a harsh light, perhaps unfairly, as being attached to the more worldly worship, were now sharply accused as hypocrites. They made a great show of renunciation,

displayed their orthodoxy in showy ways, and pretended to an unusual share of purity in life. But underneath all this veneer was a seething cauldron of vanity and passionate desire. (cf. § 118:3-4) Here the Prophet prepared them for the terrible and cruel public denunciation he made later on in Jerusalem. (§§ 116-118) It stung them into supporting the murder of this inconveniently outspoken young preacher, who had never learned how to cover his thoughts with the decent veils used in polite society.

85. The Three Religious Duties

1. (Then he said to his disciples), "Be careful not to do your good deeds in view of men so as to draw their gaze, otherwise you can have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. Whenever you give in charity, do not blow your own trumpet as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so as to win the praise of men. I truly tell you, they keep their reward away.¹ But when you are giving alms never let your left hand know what your right hand is doing; then your Father who sees in secret will restore (it) openly. (Mt. 6: 1-4)

2. "And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites who like to pray in the synagogues and street corners, standing erect so that

¹ Or: they have already received their reward.

they may be seen by people. I tell you truly, they keep their reward away.¹ But you, when you pray, go alone into your private room, shut your door, and pray to your Father; and your Father who sees in secret will give (it) openly. And at prayer do not repeat mechanically as the heathen do, for they imagine they will be listened to for their many words. So do not copy them, for your Father knows what you need even before you ask Him. (Mt. 6: 5-8)

3. "And when you fast, never put on a gloomy look like the hypocrites, for they look sad to show men they are fasting. I tell you truly, they keep their reward away.¹ But you, when you fast, scent your head and wash your face, so that the fast may be seen not by men but by your Father; then your Father who sees in secret will give you openly." (Mt. 6: 16-18)

Turning to those who felt themselves his own disciples, Jesus improved the occasion by warning them to avoid the weakness of ostentation for which the Pharisees had already become notorious, when they performed the three great "virtuous acts" of Alms, Prayer and Fasting.

¹ Or : they have already received their reward.

Gifts should be made in secret and anonymously if they are really to bring the giver their greatest blessing ; prayers should be offered in private, in the recesses of the heart, if they are really to reach the hidden Father who resides in that silent flower ; renunciation, sacrifice and fasting must be cheerful and happy if they are to bear any real spiritual blessing with them. One who puts on a long sour face to impress others with the greatness of his voluntary suffering for God's sake, only ends by making himself and others as miserable as he looks. (cf. GI 78, 88, 95-97)

The constant harping on the reward theme jars a little on our ears, but no doubt Jesus knew well enough that these religious "duties" are almost always undertaken with a secret motive for return, a desire for compensation—spiritual or worldly. He simply came down here to the level of his hearers, while he tried to lift it a little, as far as he could. Can any teacher do more than this? We cannot but enjoy the somewhat caustic humour with which he points out that those who have secured the admiration of others have little else to gain from their righteousness. They have already received one reward, and have no more due to them—so they miss the eternal fruit of *true* hidden virtue.

There is a very striking logion (A. 48) I am tempted to quote here ; it contains a depth of meaning which can illumine all spiritual practices and, as it is very early (the MS. copy dating from the 2nd century) it may very well preserve a real teaching of Jesus : "Unless you fast to the world you cannot find God's Kingdom, and unless you make the whole week holy you cannot see the Father." The true fast is that inner giving up of selfishness for the Kingdom's sake (cf. the Parsi book *Sad Dar*, 83 : "With us the keeping of fast is this, that we keep fast from committing sin with our eyes and tongue and ears and hands and feet," and *Isa.* 58 : 3-7) ; and the true sabbath is that which dedicates every

day to the eager search for God. For we can never find Him with a part of our hearts, we must love Him and seek Him with *all* that we have and are—not one day in seven, but every day and every night in the year. We may compare the thought here with the beautiful Matthean saying, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God,” with which Mt. enriched his version of § 70,—a saying wherein is the whole of ascetic and of mystic theology.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SECOND VISIT TO JERUSALEM

86. Jesus Expects Trouble

Now they were on the road going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking in front of them ; and they were excited and even alarmed while following (him). Then taking the **apostles** aside he began to tell them what was likely to happen to him, (M. 10 : 32) but they did not know what he meant and were afraid to ask him. (M. 9 : 32)

Jesus now knew that his hour of trial had come ; he must test Judaism and learn whether it could be renewed by the baptism of wind and fire that he was bringing it. So one day during that September he manfully set out on one of the most heroic marches that history records.

See that little band of unarmed peasants, with perhaps a few village scholars and women, and at its head this young teacher with the light of God's love and a burning courage in his eyes. As they go on towards the stronghold of Jewish orthodoxy, memories

of his warnings of possible danger to them there seep into their minds. They dread also the mockery which they, simple peasants from the despised Galilee, must face from the supercilious and learned aristocrats of the capital ; few trials are harder to bear than ridicule.

Nor does their leader try to remove this uneasiness ; he once again shows them he will not deceive himself or them with complacency or any facile optimism. It is clear from our texts that he foresaw this venture might well be crowned with martyrdom. Prepared for the worst, yet to the very end hoping for the best, he goes forward bravely and cheerfully in God's spirit to do His work—at any cost. And they, vaguely uneasy and dreading they know not what, they follow him on to that "great offensive" which seemed to end in a total failure that proved to be the seed for a glorious victory and enriched and changed the world.

87. Samaritans Reject Him

1. And now he confirmed his resolve to go to Jerusalem, so he sent messengers ahead who went forward and entered a Samaritan village to make ready for him. But they did not welcome him because his clear intention was to go to Jerusalem. (L. 9: 51-53)

2. When his disciples James and John learned this, they said, "Sir, do you want us to call down fire from heaven and destroy them, just as Elijah did?" But he turned and rebuked them, saying, "You do not know

what kind of spirit you belong to, for man has not come to destroy but to save the lives of men." Then they went on to another village. (L. 9 : 54-56)

Our early Christian literature gives us several glimpses of the petty mutual hatred of Jew and Samaritan. Perhaps one of the most striking is where the Jews ask Jesus, "Are we not right that you are a Samaritan and mad?" (J. 8 : 48) Jesus, it is good to note, did not deny the first charge while refuting the second; he would not allow any national name to be a term of abuse. Also, there seems in fact some reason to think Samaria *was* closely associated with the origins of Christianity, and J. 4 speaks of a large and warm welcome from Samaritans early in his mission. But here we have a different story, of his being refused shelter for the night by those whom he was always ready to treat as brothers, just because he was on his way to Jerusalem, the hated enemy capital.

Zebedee's sons, full of a new-born belief in the teacher's powers as a prophet and Messiah-elect, wanted to take a violent revenge in the way ascribed by the Scriptures (2 *Kings*, 1 : 10-12) to Messiah's forerunner and prototype. They earned a rebuke from Jesus which would not be out of place in our war-tortured world of today, though its meaning has been so clumsily hidden as usual by the mistranslation of "man" as "Son of Man".

88. He Rebukes Ambition

1. (After this), as he was getting close to Jerusalem and it seemed to them that God's Kingdom was about to be suddenly revealed,

(L. 19:11) James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came up to him saying, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask." He said to them, "What do you want me to do for you?" Then they said to him, "Let us sit, one on your right hand and one on your left, in your glory." But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Can you **endure with me to the end**?" And they answered him, "We can." Then said Jesus to them, "You shall indeed **do so**, but the seating at my right and left hand is not mine to give but (goes) to those who earn it. (M. 10 : 35-40)

2. Then the **others**, having heard this, grew indignant with James and John. So Jesus called them up and said to them, "You know that those who seem to rule the nations lord it over them, and their great men show their power over them. But it must not be like that with you, for whoever wishes to be great among you will be your servant, and whoever wants to become first among you will be a slave of all. For man has not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life for others." (M. 10 : 41-45).

Shaken at times with fear, the little party was also infected with Jesus's vital faith, and at times their dreams of imminent glory—wherein they would personally shine as the Leader's closest intimates—rather ran away with their sober sense.

This John, whom for no discoverable reason later tradition tried to identify with the mystical philosopher of Love who gave us the Fourth Gospel, seems in all our records the one of those least able to understand his teacher. He and his brother, with the crude ambitions of a fisherman who would sit upon a throne, tried to steal a march on their comrades and to secure the best fruits of the expected Messianic victory for themselves. They felt in the air of crisis that enveloped them that the hour was about to strike and the Messiah to sit upon the throne of David and to overthrow the pagan foreigners who had subjected God's ancient people. The symbol of the child's humility (§ 73) had never got into their understanding at all; they did not want to be children, but saw themselves as General and Prime Minister of an earthly King, no doubt with all the usual perquisites and privileges of such high offices. They were ready to promise anything if sure of such a reward, even the mystical "drinking of the chalice" of pain and death which Jesus is said to have held out to them.

Naturally, their companions did not appreciate this prompt efficiency in self-seeking, and protested to Jesus against it. And Jesus once again, though vainly as the history of his Church was later on to prove, tried to teach them to seek self-abnegation, humility, poverty, service—and not the glitter of high office, chancellorship, papal throne, episcopal palace, or imperial crown. He told them that he who best understands this ideal of self-abnegation, of nothingness before men, is nearest to God and has the highest rank in His Kingdom. (cf. GI 7 : 3, 20)

89. A Blind Man Cured

And as he was leaving Jericho (?) with a huge crowd, a blind man sitting on the roadside to beg, when he heard it was Jesus, began to cry out, "O Son of David, Jesus, have pity on me!" Then many ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out all the more. Then Jesus stood still and told them to bring him; he said to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" The blind man said to him, "Master, that I may see again." Jesus said to him, "Your faith has cured you," and he saw again at once and followed Jesus. (M. 10: 46-52)

There is something not quite convincing to the sceptic about this miracle, which is held by some to be a doublet of that in § 56. It is probably narrated to show that even a blind man could see that Jesus was in fact the Messianic "Son of David". The fact that Jesus did not stop this title being used suggests that he himself had begun to think he would have to play the part expected of him, as perhaps the easiest or the only way of getting an audience in the hostile Jerusalem. Was this perhaps the temptation so dramatically hinted at in "Q" (Mt. 4: 8-10)? But those who stood by tried to stop the man from crying such things; such a Messianic claim running ahead of the party on the way to Jerusalem would bring them all into danger.

The appearance of "Jericho" on the route through Samaria to Jerusalem has long been a puzzle; it may be

a corruption of the name of some other village similar to that of the well-known town. Or, starting from Perea, passing through the Samaritan village of Archelais to Phasaelis, one would naturally pass Jericho before approaching Jerusalem by way of the Hill of Olives and the Bethany road. This may well be the solution.

90. Jesus is Not a Judge

Now one of the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the property with me." "Man," he replied to him, "who has set me up as a judge or arbitrator over you?" And he told them, "Be carefully on guard against avarice, for one's life does not consist in the increasing of his possessions. (L. 12:13-15) He who has much given him will have much asked of him, and of him who has been trusted with much they will ask all the more. (L. 12:48) It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts, 20:35)

Encouraged by seeing Jesus accept the Messianic title, someone asked him to exercise the consequent authority as a judge over Israel, which he bluntly refused to do. In Jesus's view of his work, the Messiah was God's servant, not man's ruler; he used this little incident to warn the hearers against just that sort of ambition or greed which his own disciples had so recently shown. (cf. §§ 80 and 88, and GI 75) The Kingdom he came to establish on Earth knew no

worldly rank or wealth but was one of responsibility, of sacrifice and surrender.

91. A Royal Entry into Jerusalem

1. And as they came near to Jerusalem, by Bethany and Bethphage towards the Hill of Olives, he sent out two of his disciples, saying to them, "Go to the village which is in front of you, and you will find a colt tied; loose it and bring it here. And if anyone asks you why you are doing so, say the Master has need of it and he will send it back at once." (M. 11 : 1-4)

2. They went off, and found the colt and brought it to Jesus, and they put their clothes on it. Then he sat down on it. And many spread their garments on the road, while those who walked in front and behind cried out, "Victory! Blessed is he who comes in the Lord's Name! Blessed is David our King! Victory in the highest!" (M. 11 : 7-10) Then while he was entering Jerusalem the whole city was excitedly asking, "Who is this?" and the crowds answered, "This is Jesus, the Prophet from Galilee." (Mt. 21 : 10-11)

Misunderstanding, or ignoring, their Leader's words, the band of disciples really lost control of themselves when he agreed, being probably tired by the long journey and by the nervous strain of what lay before him, to ride on a borrowed ass into the City. They turned the occasion into a triumphal march, and raised the cries of the Messianic Psalm (Ps. 118) as they threw clothes under his donkey's feet and waved reeds before him. The distance covered was about two miles; they must have spent long enough time on the road to allow rumours of his coming to get ahead of him, and quite a little stir was caused in the City, then full of pilgrims for the coming Feast. The story was later confused by one of the evangelists looking for a prophecy of it in Zech. 9:9, so that the impossible idea of Jesus sitting on an ass *and* on a colt at the same time was brought in through ignorance of the Hebrew idiom, to the merriment of sceptics and "Modernists".

92. Jesus Retires to Bethany

So Jesus entered Jerusalem and went into the Temple. Then, having looked round at everything, as the evening hour had already come he went out again to Bethany. (M.11:11)

No doubt the pilgrims who had thus acclaimed their Leader as the true "son of David", the King who came to free the Holy City from the hated Roman pagans, were deeply disappointed when, instead of fulfilling their florid expectations by calling hosts of angels to his aid in storming the Roman towers, he simply looked round the Temple like any other pilgrim, and then without doing anything at all quietly left the City. It must have seemed to them a terrible anticlimax when

he actually returned to that very same little village from which the little procession had started. Such inaction may well have damped the spirits and sudden effervescence of his disciples and led at last to the tragic cowardice they displayed in § 127 : 2. The real reason for it was, we are told, that it was already late in the day ; Jesus may also have wanted time to consider the most striking move to inaugurate his Kingdom of the " New Wine ".

93. Mary's Choice

Here a certain woman called Martha welcomed him to her house ; now she had a sister called Mary, who seated herself at the feet of Jesus to listen to his talk. Now Martha grew worried with the heavy work of serving, so she came up and said, " Sir, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone ? Please tell her to give me some help." Jesus answered her, " Martha, Martha ! Mary has chosen the best dish, which cannot be dragged away from her ! " (L. 10 : 38-42)

In spite of the somewhat suspiciously mythical-sounding names, this story of the two sisters has long been a favourite, and its meaning is obvious and well-known. Mere physical " service ", though loudly applauded by shallow-minded folk, is not always the highest form of love or devotion. The Contemplative is in no way a less helpful servant than the Active ; it

is often no waste of time, but the truest wisdom, for the devotee simply to bask in the sacred presence of a loved and holy Teacher. Only by thus absorbing the peace and power of the Teacher's noble spirit can he prepare himself for more efficient service of his cause, in a more spiritual way, in later days. Jesus gives a playful little dig at Martha's concern over her Master's physical food while Mary was enjoying spiritual nourishment to the point of all-forgetting ecstasy. (cf. *J.* 4 : 34 and *Deut.* 8 : 3)

94. The Temple Purified

Then on the next day Jesus went into the Temple and began to drive out those who were buying and selling in the Temple. Then he upset the tables of the money changers and the stools of the pigeon-sellers, saying to them, "Is it not written, 'My House shall be called a House of Prayer for all nations'? But you have made it a den of robbers." He also did not let anyone carry vessels through the Temple. (*M.* 11 : 12-17)

Overnight, Jesus decided on his course of action. He was pained and shocked at the disgraceful and sacrilegious scenes of bargaining and bickering that defiled the holy Temple, which should have been a silent peaceful shrine of loving contemplation. So he resolved on a quick bold stroke that would capture the imagination of the masses, divert this Messianic fever into a religious channel, and proclaim himself a devotee of Israel's true

ancestral religion even while forced to oppose its modern degeneracy. He may well have hoped thus to disarm Roman suspicions of political revolt, to please the priests by this public homage to the Temple that was their centre and their livelihood, and at the same time to rouse the people to a fervent storm of purifying zeal that would blow away all the chaff gathered by centuries of worldliness and neglect. (*Mt.* 3 : 12)

So he violently threw out those who converted the secular currency into the sacred Hebrew coins that alone could be used in the Temple, he drove out those who sold the birds for sacrifice, and he stopped householders who irreverently used the Temple as a short cut when carrying their heavy water-pots and other burdens. Jesus felt that a new reformed Jewry could only exist around a purified Temple which all looked upon as sacred ground not to be touched for any kind of secular activity—which he denounced in bitter terms, quoting the old prophet Isaiah. (*Isa.* 56 : 7)

95. He has a Prophet's Authority

1. Now while he was walking about in the Temple the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders came to him and said to him, "By what right do you do these things? And who gave you that right?" Jesus answered them, "I also am going to ask you one question; you answer me, and (then) I will tell you by what right I do these things. John's baptism, was it from Heaven or from men?" (*M.* 11 : 27-30)

2. Then they discussed it together, saying, "If we say 'From Heaven', he will ask, 'Then why did you not believe him?' But if we say 'From men,'—" well, they feared the people, for all thought John to be truly a prophet. Then they replied to Jesus, "We do not know," and Jesus answered them, "Then I shall not tell you by what right I do these things." (M. 11 : 31-33)

If this were really Jesus's hope, he was to be disappointed. Instead of welcoming his purifying baptism of "wind and fire", the Temple servants and the leaders of the people came to ask what right he had to meddle in that way with established custom. They challenged him openly, and no doubt they waited with bated breath for his reply. Much hung upon it. Would he declare in public, "I am the Messiah, and so I have purified the Temple"? Such a statement would throw the whole land into the wildest ferment of revolt and enthusiasm.

Jesus took up the challenge, but in a veiled way; he hinted only that he was acting by the supreme right of an inspired prophet, as the very agent of God Himself. The reputation of John, whom many had once fancied to be the Messiah, still stood high among the people. He was generally held to be an inspired prophet, though as usual the priests were the last to admit the fact because of their natural jealousy of all who have direct immediate touch with God. Jesus claimed to have the same right as John. He acted as God's prophet or messenger, doing his work without thought of possible results, as he felt God willed that he should do it. And those priests and elders could hardly have missed his meaning when

he ended by refusing to put into explicit words what must have been obvious to any intelligent mind. Jesus was simply "about his Father's business", (cf. L. 2 : 49) as he told them plainly enough a few days or weeks later on, (§ 104 : 2) and that is, after all, the only work any one of us has to do on earth.

96. God is Rejecting the Jews

1. Then he began to talk to them in parables : " A man planted a vineyard and hedged it round ; then he dug a winepress, and he leased it out to tenants and went abroad. At the proper time he sent a servant to the lessees to collect some of the grapes from them. But they took him, and beat him, and sent him off with nothing. Again, he sent them another servant, and him they stoned and insulted ; once more, he sent another, whom they killed. (M. 12 : 1-4)

2. " Now then, what will the owner of the vineyard do ? He will come and destroy the lessees and give the vineyard out to others. Have you never read this scripture : ' The very stone the builders rejected has now become the chief cornerstone ; it has come from the Lord and is a wonder in our eyes ' ? " (M. 12 : 9-11)

3. Then they tried to seize him, for they knew he had spoken the parable against them ; but they were afraid of the crowd (M. 12 : 12) because the whole crowd were delighted at his teaching. (M. 11 : 18) So they left him and went off. (M. 12 : 12)

This story of the vineyard let out on rent may refer to the priests as custodians of the Temple, or to the ruling classes as custodians of the Holy Land. It seems to have carried a strong hint that Jesus felt the time given them for repentance was almost exhausted. These lessees had often rejected God's messengers to them, the Prophets, had even slain some of them as they had let Herod kill John (cf. GI 27 : 1), the latest of them before Jesus himself ; and they were now in grave danger of finally rejecting Jesus, the crown and consummation of that "goodly fellowship". The end of their long day of grace now slowly dawned.

The parable was later understood to refer to the false expectation of the Christians that Jesus would return to judge the world when Jerusalem was retaken by the Romans in A. D. 70. At the time Jesus uttered it, it must have stung his hearers to a fury of resentment that was made all the more fierce by their fear lest any violence against the speaker would provoke a violent popular reaction against them. For, as usual, the mass of the people, who never rejected Jesus at all, were pleased with his attack on their priestly exploiters. This fear of the people frustrated the desire of their rulers to put Jesus out of the way at once, and they had to look for some more favourable opportunity later.

It is difficult to believe that Jesus, the true Jew in the highest sense, could ever have been eager to hand

over the Temple site which was so sacred to every Jew to the defilement of pagan guardianship, as some have thought from this parable.

97. Choose Good Teachers

1. **Then** he taught the people in the Temple, (saying) (L. 20 : 1), " Beware of false **teachers** who come to you in the clothes of sheep while inside they are ravenous wolves ! You can recognise them by their **deeds**, (Mt. 7 : 15-16) for a tree is known by its fruit. (Mt. 12 : 33) Do they gather grapes from a thorn-bush, or figs from thistles ? So every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. (Mt. 7 : 16-18)

2. " The good man brings out good things from the heart's store of goodness, but the evil man brings evil out of **his** store of evil. (Mt. 12 : 35) For the mouth speaks out of what overflows the heart. (Mt. 12 : 34) *Good things must come, and blessed is the one through whom they come :* (A 82) so also evil things must certainly come, and woe to the one through whom they come ! (Mt. 18 : 7)

3. "*So become prudent money-changers, and test everything carefully ; then accept the good and reject every kind that is bad. (A 87) Give no chance to evil ; (A 83) hold fast to the saints, for those who cling to them will become holy. (A 67) A disciple is not above the teacher ; it is enough for the disciple to become like his teacher.*" (Mt. 10 : 24-25)

Such a little sermon, though it has been scattered through our Gospels and elsewhere, falls naturally at some such time as this when Jesus was denouncing the faithless trustee and proclaiming a new and worthier priesthood to come. There is no reason to agree with sceptics who say it was only Mt. who was obsessed with false preachers and with righteousness ; these are the inevitable topics of every preacher, and they saturate what we have from the lips of Jesus himself, arising naturally from his whole message of repentance which developed from John's preaching in § 1 : 2.

People must learn how to discriminate bad from good, for good can only result from a good source, while a foul source will always give evil consequences ; (cf. § 27 : 2) this has not yet been learned by politicians ! Association with a good teacher makes a good pupil, while deadly peril lies in wait for the disciple who trusts an unworthy teacher, for in time he will surely grow like him. Every religion worthy the name has stressed the danger of bad company and the value of association with saints and devotees of God for those who would find Him.

The logion about money-changers was perhaps in early times the most quoted of all the Agrapha. It was dropped by the Church in the final editing of the new

Scriptures for obvious reasons, as encouraging too much independence of thought in the individual believer and throwing the door wide open to such exaggerations as Montanism. (cf. GI 61-62, 98 : 3)

98. Doing is More than Saying

(He went on) " Not everyone who says Lord, Lord, will be admitted into **God's** Kingdom, but the one who does the Father's will. (Mt. 7 : 21) Now everyone who listens to these sayings of mine and acts on them will be like a sensible man who builds his house upon rock. The streams come and beat on that house, but it does not fall because it is founded on the rock. But anyone who listens to these sayings of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who builds his house upon sand ; then the streams come and strike against that house, and it falls, and great is its ruin ! " (Mt. 7 : 24-27)

No loud profession of devotion to God fits one to enter His Kingdom, but only a sincere dedication to His work on Earth. Christianity is not a dogma but a life, founded on that of the supreme Exemplar, Jesus ; and those who satisfy themselves with a profession of faith and neglect the practice of it have no claim to be called disciples of Jesus. Those who understand this need for sincerity *in action* and mould their lives upon it are

wise, and they can never be shaken by all the storms of life or the rivers of doubt in full flood. Those who merely hear of it and say, "How very true!" and then do nothing more about it, will be overwhelmed by the first trials that come their way; their faith is built on quicksands. (cf. § 108)

It is also interesting to contrast this parable with the similar one in GI 78 : 5, where the intention is to show the value of sincere, even if secret, charity.

99. The Widow's Gift

Then Jesus watched how the people dropped money into the treasury. Many rich folk threw in big sums, and then one poor widow came up and put in two small coppers. Then he called his disciples and said to them, "I tell you truly that this poor widow has put in most of all, for they have all put in out of their surplus, but she in her poverty has put in as much as she had, her whole living." (M. 41 : 44)

Jesus sat for a while in the quiet Temple to rest, after his audience had gone away. Presently he saw people coming forward one by one with their offerings for the Temple Sacrifices fund. He taught his disciples that it is not the amount given that is of value, but the readiness for sacrifice which really prompts the gift. This is what God sees, not the splendid gesture wherewith the millionaire donates a hundred pounds. God cannot

be deceived by a fine show of generosity that costs us little or nothing, but is charmed when He looks into the heart and finds love there. That is why the very beggar is sometimes the biggest donor when he gives a smile or a look of love. (cf. *GI* 78 : 4 and *Gita*, 9 : 26)

100. The Fallen Woman

1. The Pharisee scribes brought him a woman taken in the act of adultery, and pushing her forward they said to him, "Teacher, this woman has been caught in the very act of adultery. Now in the Law Moses told us to stone such people, but what do you say?" But Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. (*J.* 8 : 3-6)

2. And when they persisted in asking him, he looked up and said to them, "Let the innocent man among you be the first to throw a stone at her." Then he again stooped down and wrote upon the ground. When they heard (that), they went away one by one, beginning with the eldest. Then Jesus was left alone with the standing woman. Looking up, Jesus asked her, "Woman, where are those who accused you? Has no one condemned you?" She said, "No one, Sir." And Jesus said,

“Nor do I condemn you ; go, and never sin again.” (J. 8 : 7-11)

This beautiful “Lucan” story, happily preserved for us in J., is a fine instance of the understanding forgiveness, “perfect and full and free”, which Jesus showed to all human frailty save the one sin he so fiercely denounced—a hypocritical show of virtue. It was a dangerous challenge these scholars made to the young revolutionary who had so daringly attacked the Temple customs. Would he be so bold as to contradict the Law on so vital an issue? He had recently condemned divorce, which Moses had tolerated, as leading in fact to adultery (§ 76), which Moses held to be a deadly sin. (*Deut.* 22 : 22 and *Lev.* 20 : 10) How would the Jesus who was so gentle and kind with the “sinner” of § 17 deal with this other case taken in *flagrante delictu*?

We can almost feel the heavy suspense which awaited his reply, even after almost two thousand years, so masterly is the restraint of the Gospel writer’s style. Perhaps even the disciples who were seated around their Master were anxious about the outcome of this challenge ; they must have dreaded lest Jesus further infuriate his enemies as he had so often done before by his commonsense interpretation of the Law.

After a little silent thought to let the seriousness of the challenge sink in to every listening mind, Jesus took it up, and skilfully turned it back upon the accusers themselves. Dared they in the very Temple claim to be wholly sinless, the perjury would at once put them out of court. So they quietly slipped away, one by one, each doubtless hoping the others had not noticed his flight from a most embarrassing position.

That left Jesus with a free field for his all-embracing love, which was ever ready to forgive any offence that arose from love, however lawless and misguided, if

only it showed the supreme virtue of self-giving somewhere hidden in it. The sublime sentence with which he, made a Messianic judge and arbitrator even by his very enemies, dismissed her case, stands on record as one of the divinest, if most antinomian, in all the Scriptures of the world. Jesus dealt with this proved and admitted sin exactly as he had said God would act in §§ 16-17. The sin is wholly evil, of course; but though defiled by his act the sinner is still a child of God, and so divine, essentially and for ever pure in his deepest self. Admission of the defilement, with a readiness to abandon it hereafter, is enough to win God's perfect and free forgiveness.

If our own human society could view lawbreakers in this way, it might become less legalist and Pharisaical, but it would surely be much more divinely human, more truly religious, than it is today.

101. The Temple Ruin Foretold

Then, as he was coming out of the Temple, one of his disciples said to him, "Teacher! See what a size these stones and buildings are!" Then Jesus answered him, "Are you looking at these great buildings? Not one stone shall be left on another without being thrown down!" (M. 13 : 1-2)

Herod's Temple had already in A.D. 29 taken forty-six years to build (cf. J. 2 : 20) and was then almost complete. It was considered as one of the wonders of the world that no traveller could afford to miss. Its huge blocks of alabaster and other fine stones made it a

vision of dignity and beauty. They stirred to excited wonder and pride the rustic visitor from Galilee, who now perhaps saw them for the first time and wanted Jesus to share his enthusiasm, or perhaps to rouse in him a heat of patriotism that would drive him to leading the desired revolt against Rome and all pagan defilements of the Holy Places.

But Jesus was in a different mood from that of the sightseer or that of the nationalist. He was filled with a gloomy premonition that the people's inertia under legalism and priestcraft would defeat his efforts for reform; he could see only the rending of patches, the bursting of bottles, in his own mind as he looked on all this splendour of God's House. His eyes foresaw the utter ruin of this lovely Temple, that should have been a shrine of divine Love but had become an uneasy shelter for seditious plots, a breeding-ground for mad dreams of revolt against the invincible might of Rome. Jesus had not come for such things, but to win man to God his Father.

There is nothing superhuman in such a prophecy; nor is there the slightest reason for any gratuitous assumption that it must be later than the actual event. Jesus was not a fool, and any intelligent man, not blinded by political hatred and madness, could easily have foreseen how these constant futile upheavals of the subject Jews must ultimately end.

102. The Time is Unknown

Then when he sat down on the Hill of Olives they asked him privately, "Tell us when this will happen, and what is the sign that this is about to be fulfilled." Jesus said,

(M. 13 : 3-5) " I tell you truly that this generation will never pass away until all these things take place. But no one knows about that day and hour, not even the Angels in Heaven, but only the Father. Watch, keep awake, and pray, for you do not know when the time is. (M. 13 : 30-33) But learn the parable from the figtree: As soon as its branch turns soft and buds out the leaves, you know that summer is very near." (M. 13 : 28-29)

The disciples' minds were full of the apocalyptic signs of the coming of the Messiah, probably derived ultimately from Zarathushtrian sources picked up during the Exile in Babylonia, which circulated widely in the popular tracts of the day, keeping alive a seditious excitement and a constant hope that the existing régime would soon be overthrown and the Kingdom of God, *i.e.*, of Israel, would soon be established in its place.

Obsessed with these ideas, they sought an interview with Jesus on the subject in private, for it was too dangerous a topic to discuss openly at the time; Government spies were plentiful, and had sharp ears. The early disciples so completely confused the distinct topics of the overthrow of the Temple and the establishment of the Divine Kingdom that the early Church here interpolated bodily one of those Jewish tracts, known to us now as "The Little Apocalypse", which has in every later generation roused so many vain imaginings about the end of the world in the immediate future. By the time our Synoptic Gospels were being written, they no doubt already believed that Jesus might well have spoken these words himself, in spite of his blunt refusal to give any " signs " in § 55 : 1.

Whenever passions ran high and excited folk thought the world had come to irreparable wickedness and ruin, we find a peak-point of such apocalyptic ; one of the most recent examples of this being among Protestants in England during the first Great War, when thousands expected the "end" at Easter 1918. Happily, the Catholic Church, at least, is now a little more cautious about such things, having been very badly bitten by them in the false hopes that ruled in the first days. (cf. *2 Thes.* 4 : 15, based on the confusion of two distinct subjects already referred to in this Section of our "Gospel")

But Jesus himself did not make this mistake ; he knew nothing of all this wild imagining, and when he met it he seems to have tried to correct the blunder made by his disciples, warning them that the end of the world would come "like a thief", who does not usually give signs and warnings of his coming to a house. He replied only that the event he had just foretold—the overthrow of Jerusalem—could not be long delayed, and would certainly occur during the lives of many of those who heard him, though the exact time for the disaster could be known only to God. (cf. *GI* 53 : 1) If they were wise, they would be on the alert so that those terrible days should not catch them unprepared. If they intelligently watched the gradual trend of events they could guess when the ghastly fruit of them was nearly ripe, when the futile revolt would flare up and Rome swoop down in all-destroying vengeance.

Jesus does not seem to have ever spoken of his own return to earth ; all such ideas were wholly absent from his mind if we can read correctly the earliest records of his life.¹ On the other hand he viewed his own work

¹ I am aware that a certain school of Modernist critics are obsessed with the idea that "eschatology", in the usual sense "was in fact the main motive and doctrine of Jesus". But this theory does not cohere with all the earlier evidences of his actual teaching in, for instance, the "Sermon of the Mount".

as complete,¹ and he was leaving his followers to carry it on to later generations under the guidance of the Divine Spirit. All such notions seem to be only the heated imaginations of the anguished disciples after their beloved Teacher had been so cruelly taken from their midst.

103. Signs of God's Kingdom

Being asked by the Pharisees when the Kingdom of God was coming, he answered them, "God's Kingdom does not come at an expected time, (L. 17 : 20-21) for just as the lightning comes out of the east and appears (Mt. 24 : 27) flashing (L. 17 : 24) across even to the west, so also is the coming of **God's Kingdom**. (Mt. 24 : 27) No one can say, 'Here it is', or 'There it is', for look, the Kingdom of God is within you, (L. 17 ; 21) *and whoever shall know himself shall find it.*" (A 56)

2. *His disciples asked him, "When shall (A. Ap. 35) the Kingdom (Cl. 2) appear to us, and when shall we see it?" Jesus said, "When you are stripped and feel no shame, (A. Ap. 35) when the two become one, and the*

¹ cf. his cry on the Cross, "It is finished!" in J. 19 : 30

outside like the inside, and the male with the female neither male nor female." (A. 71)

Certain of the scholars of the day also confused the advent of God's Kingdom with these coming national events, for their minds had been fuddled with vain ideas that God meddles with political events in the world. They asked Jesus what they probably thought was the same question as the disciples had already put him.

Jesus gave a definite reply : God's Kingdom is eternal, timeless, outside this world (cf. J. 18 : 36), regnant in the human heart itself. So there is no one time when we can look for it to be revealed ; it comes with a sudden flash which in one moment lights up the whole of life and leaves the eye bright with its memory even when we can no longer see it. The mystics have said the same thing in language burning with realisation of the truth.

The illuminating end to what is one of Jesus's most disputed sayings, found again at last in an Egyptian logion, seems to have settled its meaning once for all. The Kingdom is not only "in your midst" (cf. § 27 : 2) but "within you", to be found in the deep silence of the Self, as St. Teresa taught in her wonderful treatises on Mystic Theology.

The answer Jesus is said in some lost Gospel to have given some of his disciples to the same question (cf. 2 Clem. 12) seems to add depth to his remarks on celibacy in § 77. Being spiritual, entry to the Kingdom is denied us until we can go beyond the physical desires of sex ; asceticism precedes the mystic way. When these animal urges are overcome, not by mere blind repression but by realisation that in truth there is no great difference between men and women but that all alike are simply God's children, then like the little child in § 75

and the Angels in § 106, the human being can enjoy that heavenly life which is his eternal birthright. But the foul stains of earth must be washed from his feet before he can enter the Shrine above. (cf. *The Voice of the Silence*: "Beware lest thou should'st set a foot still soiled upon the ladder's lowest rung.")

The curious condition that the Kingdom must also be preceded by a union between the "within" and "without" almost seems to posit a Monist view of life. But we need not see in it more than the writer intended. It is probably in fact only saying that when the individual self realises its oneness with the "not-self", when the separate and more or less illusory ego breaks down, then the barrier-walls of isolation vanish; then man transcends all boundaries and overflows into the limitless ocean of infinity that is immortal bliss.

104. Jesus Declares Himself

1. Then came the Renewal Feast in Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking in the Temple in Solomon's Porch. Then the Jews came round him and said to him, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah tell us so plainly!" (J. 10 : 22-24)

2. Jesus answered them, "I have told you, but you do not believe because you are not of my sheep whom the Father has given me. My sheep listen to my voice, and they follow me, and I know them. (J. 10 : 25-29) My Father

has gone on working up to now, so I also work, (J. 5 : 17) for I have not come to carry out my own will but the will of Him who sent me. (J. 6 : 38) I can do nothing of my own accord, (J. 5 : 30) nor is my teaching my own, but His who sent me, (J. 7 : 16) and I tell the world only what I have heard from Him. (J. 8 : 26) He has not left me alone because I always do what pleases Him ; (J. 8 : 29) I and the Father are one." (J. 10 : 30)

3. So the Jews again picked up stones to stone him (J. 10. 31) for blasphemy, (J. 10 : 33) but he slipped out of their hand and went away again across the Jordan, to the place where John was first baptizing. Then he stayed there, and many went to him and believed in him. (J. 10 : 39-42)

Some weeks passed, and Jesus stayed quietly in Jerusalem or at Bethany taking no further action, so that curiosity about his supposed claim to be the Messiah may have died down a little.

But on 25th December came the Feast of the Dedication, which commemorated the renewal of sacrifices in the Temple that had been polluted by Alexander's Syrian successors and recovered by the Maccabees in B. C. 165. That was a time, in mid-winter, when the mind naturally turns to thoughts of rebirth and of brighter days to come (used also for the Christmas Feast), so Messianic dreams awoke again.

The Jews wanted to know clearly just where they stood, so they tackled Jesus with the direct question, "Are you or not?" But his answer did not please them. Jesus replied once more with the simple claim to be God's faithful servant, doing His work with such total devotion that he had grown into a consciousness of unity with Him.

There is nothing in this to justify the Modernist's scepticism. Most "prophets" have at some time in their lives felt this practical identity with the God whom they served and in whose name they spoke; this is of the very essence of inspiration and prophecy itself, and Christian mystics like St. John of the Cross have explained how the soul whose will is lost in the will of God is itself "transformed into God". Indeed, we easily exaggerate the separateness of the individual soul from that God in whom it has its very being.

But to the Jews of that day the claim seemed to go so far beyond the simple Messiahship that it was taken as blasphemy and greeted with stones. Jesus could not have helped the Kingdom by dying obscurely in a Temple riot like this, so he slipped away from the angry mob, and left Jerusalem for a time. He took up his abode in Transjordan, or Perea, in the lonely wastes where he had once faced, and defeated, the Tempter; there in scenes hallowed by memories of John's preaching he safely spent some weeks, teaching all who came to him, and so keeping in touch with the little band of his Jerusalem disciples who later formed the nucleus of the Christian Church.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THIRD VISIT TO JERUSALEM

105. Our Duty to the State

1. Then they sent him some of the Pharisees and the Herodians to trap him in talk. They came up to him and said, "Teacher, we know that you are sincere and have no fear of anyone, for you never seek human favour but truthfully teach the way of God. Is it right to pay the poll-tax or not?" (M. 12 : 13-14)

2. But he knew their deceitfulness, and said to them, "Why do you try to test me? Bring me a shilling." They brought one. Then he asked them, "Whose portrait and inscription are these?" They answered him, "Caesar's." Then Jesus gave them his answer, "Give Caesar's things to Caesar, and God's

things to God." Then they wondered at him, (M. 12 : 15-17) and leaving him went away. (Mt. 22 : 22)

But his enemies did not leave him in peace even there ; by this time they seem to have resolved to hunt him down and ruin him, and they chose a very clever way of doing it. His good name as a national hero would be lost if he could once be led to advise payment of the hated and humiliating poll-tax to the Romans. Then, robbed of his popularity, he could soon be safely put to death. On the other hand, if he advised them to refuse the tribute he could at once be denounced to the Roman Governor as a rebel ; the imperial laws would then effectively deal with him and liquidate the nuisance he had become to their smug domination.

In spite of the flattery they slyly used to sugarcoat the poison of their query, Jesus understood them well and at once saw their motive. He gave a straight but two-edged reply which silenced them as effectively as they had thought to silence him.

He had no concern with political or military revolt, and was not interested in taxes and earthly governments. Let those who wanted taxes collect them ; he would certainly not stand in their way. His interest was in man's duty to God ; let him offer God a life of service, devotion and lovingkindness. While carrying out the duties earthly life lays on him, let not man forget the higher duty he owes to the Supreme. That was the real message of Jesus, and he could not be enticed into irrelevant talk on politics.

Defeated, his enemies were staggered by his apt reply, given in the very presence of the State officers who had been brought to witness his offence against Government if he had answered in the way they half expected,

and ready, no doubt, to arrest him on the spot for the act of treason.

106. The Sadducees' Question

1. Sadducees also came to him and asked him, saying, "Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man dies and leaves no children his brother is to take his wife and raise up a family for him. Now there were seven brothers; the first took a wife, and died, leaving no family. Then the second took her, and died, and so did the third; and all the seven took her, but left no children. Now at the resurrection whose wife will she be, for the seven married her?" (M. 12 : 18-23)

2. Jesus said to them, "Isn't this why you go wrong, that you know neither the Scriptures nor God's power? For when they rise from the dead they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like the Angels in Heaven. And as for the raising of the dead, have you never read how God spoke to Moses out of the bush, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob'? He is not the God of the dead, but a God of the

living." (M. 12 : 24-27) Then no one ever again dared to ask him a question. (M. 12 : 34)

Seeing how hostile to Jesus their great rivals, the Pharisees, had now become, the priests were led to approach him, perhaps in the hope of winning the popular young Prophet as a tool for themselves in the old dispute. But this we cannot know for certain. The question they put to him was an old favourite among those who wanted to make fun of the Pharisaic teaching after the Exile period (probably derived from the detailed doctrines of the Iranian Magi) that the dead would rise again for another life. (cf. *Deut.* 25 : 5) Keeping to the strict letter of the Law, which does not teach survival after death, the priests totally rejected this belief as a heathen innovation—which in fact it was.

Many of our own social customs, such as remarriage, would indeed make a dreadful confusion of human relationships if they were to survive on a physical basis after the body is dropped. And Jesus pointed out, gently enough, that their whole question arose from an imperfect knowledge of God's power ; God can easily create beings like us but with bodies totally different from ours and wholly free from sex, in which our souls could function. (cf. GI 66-57, 67 : 1 and GH 29 : 2) Sex, and all the social relationships that depend on it, is limited to our earthly bodies of crude physical matter. It drops away in death, and can never return, for this same physical body can never be reconstituted in higher worlds. There the spirit is pure and sexless, bodied in light, harmony and fragrance, without the manifold corruptions of our coarser matter. For such angelic beings there is no possibility of sex relations, of husbandhood or the jealousy of one wife for another. It is only the demons, whose life consists of wild lower passions and is trapped into the deadly snare of obsession, who can retain sex for a while in a vile and aggravated form.

Here Jesus totally rejects the whole idea of bodily resurrection, understood as referring to these same physical bodies we used down here; yet this unreasonable dogma somehow again crept into the Church after his days, perhaps as a reaction against the extreme spirituality of the Docetics. The ancient Patriarchs were not to be resurrected or reborn; while still clearly "dead" to this world, they were living all the while in God's world, both in Moses's days and in the time when Jesus himself spoke. God who in Ex. 3 : 6 called Himself their God had thereby declared that they still lived in the Invisible. Paul's understanding of the "rising from the dead" (*1 Cor.* 15 : 35-55) is thus shown to be the same as his Master's, and as a matter of fact it agrees well with the experience of modern psychicists, and also with the demands of rational commonsense. A decayed physical body can never be re-conditioned for our use—in a non-physical world!—nor can the life-principle in us ever cease to be alive; it can only clothe itself in a vehicle or body suited for more subtle environments when this denser world has gone out of its reach. Properly understood, this is also the teaching of all the main Scriptures of the world.

107. The Story of the Supper

1. He said to them, "The Kingdom of God is like a man who (*Mt.* 22 : 2) made a big supper and sent his servant to tell the guests, 'Come, for everything is now ready,' but all alike began to excuse themselves. (*L.* 14 : 16-18) Then the master of the house said to his servant, 'Go quickly out into the streets

and lanes of the town, and press them to come in, so that my house may be filled.' (L. 14 : 21, 23)

2. "*There* will be the weeping and gnashing of teeth when you see all the **righteous** in God's Kingdom and yourselves shut outside (L. 23 : 28-29) into the outer darkness. **Yes**, and I tell you that many will come from the east and the west and will take their seats at the banquet in the Kingdom. (Mt. 8 : 11-12) Do your utmost to go in through the narrow gate (L. 13 : 24) that leads into life, **for** there are few who find it ; (Mt. 7 : 14) many are the called, but the elect are few." (Mt. 22 : 14)

The recent need to flee from Jerusalem had warned Jesus that he must be ready for a possible rejection and the defeat of his plans. This theme of rejection gradually creeps more and more into his talk. Nor does he merely abuse those who will not accept the invitation to the Kingdom which he has brought to them ; he knows they have excellent reasons for that refusal, reasons supported by God's own words in the Scriptures as generally understood in that day, and by that very pious orthodoxy which was the pride of many noble martyrs for the ancient Faith. But however virtuous the refusal might be, it could not admit them to the banquet of God's presence in the Divine Garden of the heart. (cf. GI 56) They have turned away from the little gate that he has opened for them, so they must expect the bitterness of seeing others full of bliss inside while the door is shut upon themselves. God's Kingdom is

open to all, if they care to enter by the ancient narrow way, but very few avail themselves of that freedom, and most prefer the agonies of the separated egoic life. (cf. GI. 54 : 1, 56 : 5, ; GH 49 : 2 ; 1 *Enoch* 38 and 45)

108. The Two Children

Jesus said to them, "Now what do you think? A man had two children; going up to the elder he said, 'Child, go today and work in my vineyard.' He replied, 'Yes, Sir,' but he did not go. Then going up to the younger he said the same thing, and he answered, 'I do not want to,' but later on he changed his mind and went. Which of the two did what the father wanted?" They said to him, "The latter." Jesus said to them, "I assure you that tax-collectors and prostitutes are going in to the Kingdom of God before you." (Mt. 21 : 24, 28-31)

The elder son is usually taken as a type of the Jewish people, to whom God's message was first brought, and the younger son as typifying the other nations of the world who, beginning in idolatry and rejection of the One God, would end in serving Him best of all. But they may equally be understood as the upper and lower classes of the Jewish people, as the last sentence suggests. (cf. *Ecclus.* 19 : 21) It is not impossible that by this time Jesus had frankly faced the chance that foreigners would accept his message better

than his own people. His experience with the Roman captain and the Tyrian woman, and the comparative peace he enjoyed abroad, while in Jerusalem he met little but violent hatred, at least from the leaders of society, must have prepared him for such a thought. Even quite early in his mission, he was clearly more welcome to the outcast and the oppressed than to the virtuous and pious upper class, who were already very well satisfied with their own share of ethic, hygiene and morality and saw little need for him at all. (cf. §§ 16 : 3 and 98, also GI 25 : 1, 3 and 36 : 2)

109. The Good Samaritan

1. Jesus continued speaking, "A man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him, and then went off, leaving him all but dead. Now by chance a priest went down that road, but seeing him passed by on the other side. So also a Levite who chanced to visit the place, coming up he looked, but then passed by. (L. 10 : 30-32)

2. "But a Samaritan traveller came to him and felt pity on seeing him. So he went up to him and dressed his wounds with oil and wine. Mounting him on his own mule, he took him to an inn and looked after him well. The next day, starting off, he took out two silver coins and gave them to the

innkeeper, saying to him, "Look after him, and I shall refund you on my way back whatever you have to spend." Now, which of these three was kindly to the one who fell among robbers?" They said, "**The last.**" Then Jesus said to **them**, "Go and act in that way." (L. 10 : 33-37)

This popular little story drives home the old lesson Jesus so often had to teach. In his eyes true religion is not professional piety or purity, but a kind heart and loving deeds. (cf. GI 76-77) And those are more often found in the "man in the street", as some texts have it, and in the despised outcast than in the respectable and the "unco guid". (cf. § 73 : 1)

110. Decision to Kill Jesus

1. Then the chief priests summoned the Council; "What shall we do?" said they, "for this man is working many miracles. If we leave him like this, everyone will believe in him, and then the Romans will come and blot out both our Shrine and our nation." But one of them, Caiaphas, who was the High Priest in that year, said to them, "You know nothing, nor do you realise that it is good for us for one man to die for the people, and not the whole nation be destroyed." (J. 11 : 47-50)

2. So from that day they discussed plans together to kill him, (J. 11 : 53) and looked for a way to take him by craft. (M. 14 : 1) They issued orders that if anyone learned where he was he should report, so that they could seize him, (J. 11 : 57) "but", said they, "not on the Feast Day, lest there should be a popular riot." (M. 14 : 2)

We owe this vivid sidelight on the motives of Jesus's priestly enemies to J., the author of which was, according to one authority, himself a priest and possibly present at this meeting. It may well be true, for the motives here alleged for the slaying of Jesus were by no means ignoble. It was indeed a real danger for the Hierarchy of the Jews. If Jesus were left unchecked, the man who had once violently cleared the Temple might well use more violence to purge the City itself of the Romans, whose very presence there defiled it and insulted the national God. And Rome was not in the habit of letting such things drift too long. Nor would she discriminate too nicely between this "Messiah" and the priests who had borne with him so long. She might gladly use the pretext for destroying this most restless of all the many nations under her rule.

Some critics have strangely misunderstood J. as saying that Caiaphas was High Priest for the one year only, which would have proved by his gross ignorance of priestly rules in Judea that he was a very poor witness to the Gospel story. Of course, our source only says that he was High Priest at that time—which is historically correct if we accept the traditional date for Jesus.

This decision to stop dangerous activities which might at any time lead, even against Jesus's wish, to an open revolt against Rome, was at once followed up by vigorous action. Orders were issued for his arrest, though that was not to be carried out during the Pass-over Feast, when Jerusalem would be filled with strangers from all parts of the Jewish world, fanatics, many of them. Such pilgrims would easily burst out into violent revolt against any action which seemed unpatriotic or pro-Roman, and such an insurrection would certainly involve the remnants of the Jewish State in total irremediable ruin.

111. Jesus Again in Hiding

Jesus therefore no longer moved openly among the Jews, but he went away from there into the country on the edge of the desert, to a town called Ephraim, and there he stayed with his disciples. (J. 11 : 54) Then Judas, the man of Kerioth, went off to the chief priests to betray him to them, and they were glad ; so he looked for a good chance to hand him over. (M. 14 : 10-11)

Someone evidently told Jesus of this decision, (was it the "beloved disciple"?) and he at once retired further into the arid tracts of Transjordan, where he stayed with his friends in seclusion until the chosen time for his big move. If the tradition of betrayal (of which Paul in *1 Cor.* 15 : 5 and the unknown writer of *Gosp. of Peter* in the 2nd century seem to know nothing) is to be trusted, one of his first band of apostles thought this

a good opportunity to betray his teacher in a lonely place where no disturbance would be caused by the arrest.

Eager to vilify any Jew, our editors brought in the petty motive of a money reward, which could hardly have attracted one whom Jesus had himself chosen as a leading spokesman of the Kingdom. (cf. J. 2 : 25) It seems far more likely that Judas was upset by the Master's growing anti-clericalism, by his violent attack on the Temple customs, and by his steady refusal to lead the people against Rome. The mythicist contention that Judas means simply IOUDAIOS, "a Jew", imported into the Passion story or drama by some anti-Semitist, may well be true. The stories of his death in Mt. and Acts differ too widely to be both historical. Some have thought the betrayal a pure fiction based on Ps. 41 : 9, Obad. 7, and Zech. 11 : 12-13, under the strange delusion of early times that every detail in the life of the Saviour must be found "prophesied" in the Old Testament.

Several critics have noticed that names given to some of the Apostles have a revolutionary sound, e.g. Simon the Zealot, and the Sons of Thunder ; and even after the Resurrection some of the disciples still played with the idea that Jesus was really a rebel. (cf. § 140) Very early manuscripts call the famous rebel brought into the Trial scene "Jesus Bar Abbas", and another Jesus, Bar Anania, was in A.D. 62 scourged for proclaiming woe to the Temple—an act of social disorder, and not of blasphemy. (cf. M. 14 : 58) The Christian, Lactantius (cir. A.D. 320), quoting Hierocles of a century earlier, says, "(Jesus), having been rejected by the Jews, committed acts of brigandage at the head of a band of 900 men", and Josephus's one doubtful reference to Jesus (now generally held to be a forgery to replace another reference perhaps less adulatory) puts him in a list of political rebels. All this certainly points to a very early tradition which we cannot judge now,

owing to the destruction of all early histories of the Church, but if our own portrait of Jesus in this book is a true one it seems to have confused the real Jesus with the ideas of his disciples.

112. Expected for the Passover

Now the Passover was drawing near, and many people went up from the country to Jerusalem to purify themselves before the Passover. So they looked out for Jesus, and asked one another as they stood in the Temple, "What do you think? That he will not come up for the Festival?" (J. 11 : 55-56)

Not only the priests expected "trouble" during that particular Passover; many Jewish pilgrims from all parts of the Mediterranean basin were eagerly looking for some decisive move by the young "Messiah" which would proclaim the hour of liberation. His absence from such a gathering would show fear, which would surely undermine his growing influence with the masses; and up to that time he had not usually given the impression of cowardice. Also we have several hints that he was very regular in going up to the Holy City for all the usual great Festivals, and no loyal Jew would needlessly miss the Passover.

113. Jesus Prepares

Now on the first day of unleavened bread, his disciples said to him, "Where do you

wish us to go and prepare for you to eat the Passover?" Then he said to them, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a pot of water will meet you. Follow him, and wherever he goes in tell the house-owner that the Teacher says, 'Where is the room where I am to eat the Passover with my disciples?' Then he will show you a large upstairs room with couches ready; there prepare for us." Then his disciples went and found as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover. (M. 14 : 12-16). (*Then Jesus went up to Jerusalem with his disciples.*)

The disciples themselves also took his going up to Jerusalem for granted, in spite of the standing order for his arrest. It was easy to guess that his enemies would not like to act while the city was full of excited pilgrims, and Jesus himself does not seem to have thought he would be stopped from keeping the Feast with his friends in the house of a disciple; yet the danger was real enough to force him to adopt secrecy in his plans. We may imagine this disciple had previously invited him for whenever he could come to the city, and certainly he must have been delighted at getting the call; Jesus showed no doubt of his welcome in that house. So the upstairs room, probably only a covered roof, was made ready for the little band, which tradition has always said was joined by the Mother of Jesus and several other disciples besides the "twelve"; Jesus made ready for the crisis which would once for all decide his fate.

114. Greek Jews Try to See Him

Now among those who went up to worship at the Feast there were some Grecians. These, then, went up to Philip, who came from Bethsaida in Galilee, and appealed to him, "Sir, we want to see Jesus." Philip went and spoke to Andrew, and then Andrew and Philip told Jesus. Jesus replied, "The time for me to be famous has come" (J. 12 : 20-23)

This curious little fragment, whose ending was cut off to make room for a typical Johannine monologue, throws interesting light on the last days of the Prophet's life. The fame of Jesus of Galilee, believed by so many to be the long-awaited liberator, had even reached the distant home of these Greek Jews of the Dispersion—unless the mention of the home of Philip, on the verge of "Greek" areas suggests that they might have been old friends of his, seeking an introduction through his means. They wanted to see this young man of promise, so that they might talk of him at home as one of the thrills of that year's pilgrimage.

The round-about mode of approach looks almost as though Jesus were taking precautions against possible assassins, as is also suggested by the call for swords in L. 22 : 36 ; it is very different from the easy access to him formerly open at all times. Unhappily, we do not know if they had their interview, or what Jesus may have said to these seekers from the wider world his feet had never trod. Could he have foretold the spread of his message afield by others, as hinted in the talk about "being glorified" in J.'s substituted passage ?

115. God Dislikes Boasters

Jesus went into the Temple and taught the people, saying, (J. 8 : 2). "Two men went up to the Temple to pray, the one a Pharisee and the other a tax-collector. The Pharisee stood up erect and made this prayer, 'O God, I thank Thee that I am not like other men—robbers, rogues and ravishers—or even like this tax-collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I possess.' But the tax-collector stood far back and dared not even lift up his eyes, but kept beating his breast, crying, 'O God, show mercy to me a sinner !' I tell you, this man went home more approved by God than the other, for everyone who lifts himself up shall be humbled, while he who humbles himself shall be lifted up." (L. 18 : 9-14)

Jesus seems to have done only one thing in public during this last visit to Jerusalem. True to the whole trend of his ministry, this was a violent attack on the hireling shepherds who were betraying God's people, and followed up by a sermon to show what is true religion and what is false. (cf. *Ezek.* 34 : 1-10 and *Isa.* 1 ; 10-20) This little story brings out a vivid contrast between the virtuous and boastful Pharisee and the humble and repentant tax-collector ; it is in Jesus's best and most forceful style and seems to have been told in the Temple itself. This contrast between pride and

humility was one of his favourite topics, equally favoured by L., one of his unknown biographers. (cf. § 108 and *Job* 22 : 29)

116. Jesus Denounces the Scholars

Then he went on teaching them, " Look at the scribes who like to walk about in long robes and (enjoy) salutes in the markets, and the front seats in synagogues, and the best places at banquets ! They prey upon widows *and orphans* and make a fine show at prayers. Such will receive all the heavier condemnation ! (M. 12 : 38-40)

117. They are Blind Fools

1. " Woe to you hypocritical Pharisee scribes ! for you wander over sea and land to make one convert, and when he is won you make him twice as much a son of Hell as yourselves. (Mt. 23 : 15)

2. " Woe to you blind guides, who say, ' If you swear by the Shrine it is nothing, but if you swear by the gold of the Shrine it is binding.' Fools and blind ! Why, which is

greater, the gold, or the Shrine which sanctifies the gold? And (you say), 'If you swear by the Altar it is nothing, but if you swear by the gift that is laid on it that is binding.' Fools and blind! Why, which is greater, the gift, or the Altar that sanctifies the gift? He who swears by the Altar swears by it and by all that is on it; he who swears by the Shrine swears by the Shrine and by what is within it; and he who swears by Heaven swears by God's throne and by Him who sits thereon. (Mt. 23 : 16-22)

118. And Enemies of Truth

1. "Woe to you hypocritical Pharisee scribes! For you give a tenth on mint and rue, but you have left out (Mt. 23 : 23) God's love and justice (L. 11 : 42); these you ought to practise, **even** if you left out the others. (Mt. 23 : 23) **You** load (men) with heavy and difficult burdens but are unwilling to move them **yourselves** with a finger!

2. "Woe to you hypocritical scribes! (L. 11 : 52) *For you have the keys* (Justin), but you do not enter the Kingdom of Heaven

(Mt. 23 : 13) yourselves, and you prevent others from entering. (L. 11 : 52)

3. "Woe to you hypocritical Pharisee scribes! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, while inside they are filled with **dirt** and refuse O blind Pharisee, first clean the inside of the cup and then the outside will also be clean. (Mt. 23 : 25-26)

4. "Woe to you hypocritical Pharisee scribes! For you are like whitewashed graves, which appear decorous outside but inside are full of dead men's bones. So also you appear outside to be **good** and honest men, but inside you are full of (Mt. 23 : 27-28) greed (L. 11 : 39) and passions. (Mt. 23 : 28)

5. "Woe to you hypocritical Pharisee scribes! For you build the tombs of the Prophets (Mt. 23 : 29) whom your fathers killed, (L. 11 : 47) so that you witness against yourselves that you are sons of **your fathers, and you** share in the blood of the Prophets (Mt. 23 : 31, 30). For they slew them, and you build their sepulchres! (L. 11 : 48)

6. "O serpents and brood of vipers! How can you escape from being condemned to Hell?" (Mt. 23 : 33)

In this terrible denunciation of the smug educated classes of his nation and of the leaders of advanced thought in his day, Jesus released all the pent-up frustration and disgust of his life. Fragments of this sermon appear in every Gospel-source, for it made a terrific sensation; echoes of it resound from many works outside the Canon. This is because the bitter anger and contempt it shows portray a Jesus totally unlike the "meek and mild" effeminate some of us have imagined him. This was a revolutionary indeed—not with the futility of physical weapons but with the sharp-edged sword of sarcastic invective which can pierce the stoutest armour.

Though there is certainly some rhetorical overdraw-ing in the picture of the Pharisees with which it presents us, it had the advantage of shaking to its very foundations that smug self-reliance on self-righteousness which many honest Pharisees themselves felt to be a growing weakness of their sect. Started as a popular democratic revolt against the joyless and narrow sectarianism of the priests, the Pharisees had to insist on every member of their own sect being as strict and as pure as any priest. That had made them come to stand as the very emblem of hypocritical sanctimoniousness—perhaps the opposite of their real aim. To prove that their experts in the Law, called "scribes", were as learned as any hereditary Temple priest, they entered into the "dreary desert sands of dead habit" and of mere formalism. Thus they split words and put the letter of the Law in place of its spirit, in a way that would have honoured the most obscurantist of priestly pedants.

Laying great stress on the payment to God of a tenth part of even the tiniest items of their income, they had begun to lose all sight of the love for God and man which could alone give meaning to the laws and precepts of Religion. They themselves knew well enough the real qualifications for God's Kingdom, but were

silent on these ; they imposed absurd conditions on the people which were enough to frighten them away from spiritual life altogether, (cf. GI 28 : 1-2) much as did the later priests in the Magian cult of Zarathushtra at about the same time. They used a ritual and external purity to cover the lack of a real purity of heart, (cf. § 84) and thus misled the people and turned them away from God. Evil indeed must be the fruit of such false teaching and such a sham show of virtue. Jesús did no more than he must in thus strongly denouncing them.

If we would have a view of the brighter side of Pharisaic life and thought, we may well read these books : parts of 1 *Enoch*, 2 *Maccabees*, the *Apocalypse of Baruch* and the *Assumption of Moses* ; the heights of their ethic are reached in the Talmud, portions ascribed to Hillel and Akiba.

119. Jesus Warns his Disciples

Then he said (privately) to his disciples, (L. 12 : 1) "Do you imagine that I have come to give peace to the earth ? (L. 12 : 51) I have come to bring not peace but a sword, for I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother. (Mt. 10 : 34) He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me is scattering. (Mt. 12 : 30) **Yes**, I have come to throw fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already lit ! I have a baptism to

undergo, and how I am urged on until it is all over!" (L. 12 : 49-50)

Probably that same afternoon, when they had him once again to themselves, their ears still tingling with that awful denunciation, the shocked and terrified disciples must have reproved Jesus for his wild outburst in the Temple which seemed so uncalled for from a would-be leader. This was not what the people were expecting and hoping from him. Instead of uniting them all under the banner of an avenging God, he was only breaking their unity before the common enemy and setting them about the ears against one another.

Jesus explained that he knew such internal struggle was inevitable. The Jewish people, through its accredited leaders, had rejected the proffered "new wine" of spiritual reform; those who accepted it as individuals must change their lives to fit themselves to be subjects of the Kingdom, and must be ready for civil strife, for persecution, and even for death, at the hands of those who would have nothing of the new. (cf. *Mic.* 7 : 6, also *GI* 64, 66-67, 90-91, and *GH* 34 : 2 and 39 : 1)

120. He Comforts Them

1. "What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and proclaim on the house-tops what you hear (whispered) in the ear. (*Mt.* 10 : 27) For there is nothing hidden that shall not be revealed, nor does anything become concealed but that it may come into the open. If one has ears to hear with let him listen! But take

care what you listen to, for more shall be given to those who hear, while even what he has shall be taken away from the one who does not **listen**. (M. 4 : 22-25)

2. "And do not fear those who kill the body, but fear rather that which can destroy both soul and body in Hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a copper? Yet not one of them can fall on the ground without your Father's will. So have no fear, you are worth far more than sparrows and the very hairs of your head are numbered! (L. 12 : 4-7) And I truly tell you that there are some of those who are standing here who will never taste of death until they see God's Kingdom come." (M. 9 : 1)

It was time for every one of them to choose. They must be for or against; there was no more time for neutrality. The hour had struck, and they must now come out openly into the world to fight for the Kingdom as he had proclaimed it. So they must be careful what they listened to as his teaching, and use discrimination; knowledge of the truth would increase as they used it and passed it on to others. Suffering and death would come; but they must not fear, for nothing could separate them from the love of God, (*Ecclus.* 34 : 16) and "precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His Saints". So near was the victory of the new age, of the Kingdom Jesus taught, that some of those whom he was addressing would see it before they died;

(cf. GI 11 : 2, 50 : 4, 52 : 6 and 1 *Enoch* 103) but this was not the destruction of the world.

Unhappily, by mixing up this true prophecy with their own vain imaginings of the Return of Jesus, the early Church made nonsense of it and caused Jesus to be mocked as a false Prophet because that Return has even yet not been fulfilled. But Jesus never said that he would return in that sense to earth, or proclaimed a worldly Kingdom at Jerusalem or anywhere else; he taught a spiritual Kingdom in the heart of man. Nor did he ever quote the vain eschatologies of his age, founded one and all on the *Bahman Yasht* and its parent works in the Avesta of Iran; that too was the work of Christians during the great storms of A.D. 70 and A.D. 92, when they added the Jewish political Messianic tract to their Gospel-sources—in ignorant good faith. “This is true, so Christ must have taught it.”

121. Elijah has Already Come

Then they asked him, “Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?” and he replied to them, “Elijah was to come first and reform everything, but I tell you that Elijah has already come and they have done to him whatever they liked” (M. 9 : 11-13)

Doubtful about this last assurance that the Divine Kingdom was so immediately imminent, they asked Jesus about the expected prior return of the old prophet. (*Mal.* 4 : 5) Their doubts were perhaps not unnatural, for Jesus did not seem to them to be helping the cause

overmuch by his violent attacks on the popular leaders. His reply has often been quoted in trying to prove reincarnation, a teaching completely foreign to Jesus and to all writers of the New Testament, and brought in for a while into the Church only through the door of Neoplatonic Gnosticism. The parallel between Elijah and John was simply this : Elijah was the first Prophet of the old Kingdom of Israel, John was the first Prophet of the new Kingdom of God which Jesus had now inaugurated. There is no question of any rebirth.

CHAPTER NINE

PASSION AND VICTORY

122. Jesus Expects Betrayal

Now as evening was coming on he arrived **at the house** with the **disciples**. (M. 14 : 17) And he said to them, " I have intensely longed to eat this Passover with you," (L. 22 : 15) and while they were reclining to eat Jesus said, " I truly tell you that one of you is going to betray me." They became sad, and each began to ask the other, " Not I ? " " Not I ? " But he answered them, " One of those who dip fingers with me into the same dish." (M. 14 : 18-20)

The swift course of the drama resumes at the point we left it in § 113. Soon after sunset on that fatal Thursday evening, he went to his friend's house in the city, where he had planned to eat the Passover on the following Saturday (the Sabbath). We may note in

passing that no one says he actually *did* eat the Pass-over, as some critics have imagined. As J. rightly shows us, he was dead and buried before the Feast came on. As they sat down together for their simple supper, he told them that one of his intimates had arranged to hand him over to those priests who sought his life. Each of them then began to fear that the Master suspected him, but Jesus would not betray the intending traitor to his friends, and—so our fuller story tells us—satisfied himself by giving a secret sign to the man himself.

123. The Last Supper

Jesus took the cup, and having given thanks he gave it to them; then he said to them, "I tell you truly that I shall never again drink of the produce of the vine until that day when I drink it new in God's Kingdom." And while they were eating he took a loaf, and having blessed it he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body." (M. 14 : 23-25)

The origin of the Christian Eucharist, which has developed under the impulse of its originator into so vast a spiritual power and inspiration to those who seek its aid in the spiritual life, seems to have been as simple as this—a cup of wine blessed, and a loaf blessed, and both of them shared among the little band as a sign of unity. One traitor there was, but each man who was there was eager to prove it was not he and Judas may have already abandoned the group.

Jesus was now about to drink the "new wine" of God's Kingdom, which could not be safely kept in the old Jewish wineskins and which could only be consecrated by the free gift of his own blood. His realism showed to him that humanly speaking he had failed, and his life must be the price. His very words show his full knowledge of this and his calm acceptance of it as a part of that very will of God he had been born to do; there is no need to fancy something supernatural about this fore-vision of the end.

The only doubt was whether his chosen inner group would be able to drink that "cup" of sacrifice along with him. Writing to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 11 : 25) after one generation had passed, Paul said they did, dedicating themselves to the Kingdom by a baptism of their own blood—and his words in that letter were added to the Gospel story, with fullest justification, for from the very beginning the disciples viewed this Sacrament as in two elements, the Bread and the Wine, which had so often been the species in earlier sacramental rites.

It is natural and certain that any such solemn farewell rite, however simple, would form for the new cult a rite of remembrance and of union; later experience showed the Church that it was destined to be far more, a very real participation in the Divine Life itself. It is foolish to let scepticism run away with itself in imagining that the actual rite in the Church, inherited from pagans, prompted the invention of the Last Supper: scepticism is not itself science, but should be its servant.

124. The Talk of Swords

Then he said to them, "When I
you out without purse or bag, did you

anything?" They said, "Nothing." Then he said to them, "But now let the man with a purse take it and also a bag, and let him who has no sword sell his cloak and buy one." They said, "Sir, there are two swords here." He replied to them, "It is enough." (L. 22 : 35-36)

This mysterious and rather warlike talk of a dangerous return after that Passover to the Galilee where they had once been among friends, seems to show that Jesus did for a moment think of a desperate resistance to arrest. Could he after all do more for the Kingdom among those simple village folk who loved him than by letting himself be killed like a dog by these hate-driven city priests? The temptation to retreat once more into obscurity may well have come to him now at the very last moment, but if so it was soon put away, and he bravely faced his destiny. Jesus was not acting from motives of cowardice, and it is possible his words here were rather to show the disciples that he could have used human means to escape if he would and that his death was purely voluntary—even if we cannot with almost all Christians accept its piacular character.

It is just possible, as Goguel thinks, that he may have expected a secret night attack by assassins (cf. § 114) and resolved to resist it, because an unknown unseen death could never have inspired his followers to face martyrdom in their turn with fine courage. Whatever their real meaning, these puzzling words do seem to be genuine, even although Marcion rejected them along with all other hints of the essentially human nature of Jesus. (cf. GI 90 and many places in the *Gāthas* and in the *Gītā*.)

125. All Will Desert Him

And having sung a hymn they went out to the Hill of Olives. Then Jesus said to them, "To-night you will all stumble on my account; but **later on** I shall go ahead of you to Galilee." Peter said to him, "Even if all (others) stumble, yet I will not." Then Jesus said to him, "I tell you truly that this very night before cockcrow you will disown me." But he spoke more violently, "Even if I have to die with you, I shall never disown you." So also said they all. (M. 14 : 26-31)

Their last supper together was over, though there is no reason to doubt the beautiful story in J. of Jesus washing his disciples' feet; it coheres with our mental portrait of the man, but we shall take it up for study rather in *The Gospel of the Mystic Christ*. The same may be said of the "comfortable words" then uttered by him and of the beautiful prayer for unity preserved in J. 17.

As they went out of the city to be safe from night-marauders or hired murderers, Jesus warned his followers that they would all fail him in the coming test of their courage unless they kept very careful watch on themselves. (Mt. 26 : 41) As always, pushing and impetuous, Peter boasted of his loyalty; maybe the recent talk of a betrayal still rankled in his mind. Need we doubt that so shrewd a knower of human nature as Jesus could very well foresee that boasting such as Peter's might almost certainly prelude a fall; it is merely prejudice,

and not scepticism, that would see in a fulfilled prophecy like this a proof of divinity to which Jesus laid no claim, or alternatively of a faked history.

Many have held that the whole story of this prophecy and of its fulfilment in Peter's tragic denials recorded in all the four Gospels is in fact quite unhistorical, a Paulist invention to discredit the "pillars" of the Jerusalem Church who so bitterly resented Paul's rise to power. For if Paul had known of any such lapse on Peter's part, he would surely have used it in the bitter mood wherein he wrote to the Galatians, so the whole story may be later than this letter (cir. A.D. 53). But would it not be a little strange for a man with Paul's abounding charity to forget in scourging Peter that he had himself in the "days of ignorance" been a zealous persecutor of the same Lord? On the whole, the fact is that a Church largely dominated by that same Peter put it on record in all its earliest documents that he had failed his Master in the hour of crisis and had also wept bitterly on realising his fall. I believe the story of Peter's denial to be true, therefore, though it does not appear in this *Gospel of Jesus*.

There may have been some idea that the little band would have to scatter *before* the Passover, that very night in fact, and that Jesus would try, travelling alone, to rejoin them in the comparative safety of the Galilean hills, where he had many friends among the rough-hearted villagers who had loved him from the first. This is how Goguel understands the reference to the meeting in Galilee, which orthodox exegetes take as a prophecy of the Resurrection. Jesus knew well the impending betrayal and was no doubt disappointed at being unable after all to keep the Passover in peace; (L. 22 : 15) the idea of flight may well have presented itself to his mind as we have already seen in § 124. Perhaps he did not yet realise how imminent the danger was. At that very moment while he spoke, the traitor

must have been gathering his band of street ruffians to seize the "false Messiah" who was "misleading the people".

126. The Agony

Then they came to a place named Gethsemane,¹ and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." Next he began to feel agitated and in the extreme of misery, and he said to them, "My heart is troubled to death; stay here and keep watch." Then going a little further on he prayed, "Father, (M. 14 : 32-36) if it is possible (Mt. 26 : 39) take this cup away from me! Yet not what I wish, but what Thou wilt." And he comes and finds them sleeping, and says to Peter, "Could you not keep watch even for one hour? (M. 14 : 36-37) Watch and pray lest you enter into trial. (M. 14 : 38) Rise, let us go (now)! See, my betrayer is at hand!" (M. 14 : 42)

The clouds of gloom pressed heavily on Jesus, whose courage seems to have almost wavered for just a moment as he realised how utterly he had failed. What

¹ The name of this place signifies "winepress of the olives", which suggests Isa. 63 : 3 "I have trodden the winepress alone", as Sadler points out. But as it was at the foot of the "Mount of Olives" we need not suspect that the name was faked by Christians; it is natural that olives should be crushed at the foot of the hill where they grow.

had it all amounted to? A short mission, almost all the time "on the run", appearing now and then for a moment to give out a part of his message, again flight, a few fruitless cures, and now perhaps the end, in ignominy and shame. Where were the eager thousands of the first days swarming round him so he had no time even for food? A few tired and unhappy men *slept* through his life's crisis, though they at least were at his side. It all seemed too hard for any man to bear, embittered as it was by the foul treachery of one of his closest and dearest friends. Those who went with him that Thursday night to the little grove below the Hill of Olives, just outside the city walls, could easily have heard his cry of anguish which, though it may have been little more than a murmur, would have carried in the still night to their ears; we are not told that they slept all the time Jesus prayed. Sometimes the critics put up objections that are really facetious, and we are told by L. that he went only a few yards from them.

L.'s single return is much to be preferred to the dramatic and rather unlikely three returns, in which the words of the last two were clumsily mixed up by some copyist. Perhaps stirred to action by the sounds of the mob on its way, he tried to rouse the disciples for instant flight; but if so, they were drowsy and too slow, so the chance of escape, if he had ever really thought of it, slipped away. The mention of Peter by name in the story of how all Jesus's intimates failed him in the crisis seems to be a further kernel for the denial story, if that be actually unhistorical. It may also, as many critics think, be derived from the later "Petrine" rejection of Paul's revealed Gospel of the Divine Redeemer, which must have seemed to the Paulinised Church a denial of the Lord Himself, (Mt. 16 : 22) keeping the belief in Jesus as merely the good prophet. Jesus might himself have rejected Paul's doctrine, for all we know!

127. The Arrest

1. And while he was still speaking, Judas appeared, and with him a huge crowd with swords and clubs from the chief priests and the elders. On arrival, he immediately went up to him and said, "Rabbi, Rabbi!" and kissed him. Then they laid their hands on him and seized him. (M. 14 : 43, 45)

2. Now those who were around him, seeing what was going to happen, asked him, "Sir, shall we use a sword?" (L. 22 : 49) Then one of the bystanders drew the sword and struck the High Priest's servant, cutting off his ear. (M. 14 : 46-47) Then they all left him and fled. And one who had followed him was wearing a sheet, and when they seized him he left the sheet behind and fled from them naked. (M. 14 : 50-52)

Judas's armed gang (it was probably small enough) suddenly arrived in the darkness. It was probably made up mostly of Zealots led by a few servants of the priests. Judas rushed forward to give his Teacher the betraying kiss of peace. There was a brief scuffle, wherein Peter (as J. tells us) may have used one of the swords of § 124; and that would have been a further "denial" of the non-resistance taught by Jesus in § 13. Who else could the bystanders have been, other than

foes of Jesus? Then all was over, and Jesus was a prisoner in the hands of those who had sworn to have his blood. His disciples all fled incontinently as he had foreseen, one of them in such haste that he left his only cloth with his would-be captor. This undoubted tradition makes hard to believe that Peter and a friend of his then quietly proceeded to the High Priest's palace, boldly to watch the trial and then like a coward to deny that he had ever known the man with whom he had supped perhaps little more than an hour before. In this form, the story seems irreconcilable with that of the general flight of all who knew him; we hear nothing of Peter as being at the foot of the Cross like the "beloved disciple". (J. 19 : 26)

128. The Blasphemy Trial

1. Then they led Jesus away to the High Priest, where the chief priests and elders were gathered. And the whole Council tried to get evidence against Jesus to put him to death, but they found none. Then some men stood up and gave evidence against him, saying, "We have heard him say, 'I will destroy this Shrine, and within three days I will build another.'" (M. 14 : 53-58)

2. Then the High Priest got up and asked Jesus, "Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?" Jesus said, "**laoue** (I am)." The High Priest tore his robes and said, "What more need have we of witnesses? You have

heard the blasphemy ; what is your mind ?”
And they all condemned him as fit to die.
(M. 14 : 60-64)

Jesus had been taken on the authority of the Council already noted in §110, and even at that late hour many of the priests and elders who knew of the plans of Judas were gathered to meet him at the High Priest's palace. They had to deal with him before the Feast, to avoid public disturbances if he were left at large until then, so they had very little time for their business. But when they wanted evidence (the midnight search in the city for witnesses, of which Robertson makes so much, is a mere fantasy based on misunderstanding of the text ; such a thing is of course incredible, but we are not asked to believe it !), evidence which would help them to get him sentenced by the Roman Governor, as they had evidently already decided to do, there was at first little success.

Jesus had so stubbornly refused to be entangled in political talk that nothing definite could be found against him on that score ; the Romans would hardly execute a peaceable man on simple Jewish gossip and hearsay. Even the alleged threat against the Temple which J. tells us Jesus actually made, was in no sense a blasphemy ; it was well within the rights of any man claiming to be Messiah. So it was Caiaphas put the question direct to Jesus, which had already raised a storm once in §104, “Are you the Messiah ?” Jesus said again, as he had said in § 65, “I am !”, or he almost certainly pronounced in public the secret Name of Yahweh or IAO.

We have already under § 65 discussed this extraordinary declaration or deliberate profanation of the Holy Name. Exegetes generally ignore the very real difficulty which Jews have always pointed out, that no such trial as our translations of the Gospels depict could

ever have taken place before the Council, nor could any orthodox Jew have condemned for blasphemy a man who merely claimed to be the Messiah. This is because they slur over all save their own partisan stories, and so miss the truth.

Jesus could only have meant, and have been understood to mean, "I am not only God's anointed messenger, but God Himself. You will see for yourselves this human being merged in divine Power and Glory," if we can accept what seems to have been a separate appendage to his reply.

Caiaphas at once received this bold and shocking answer in the way laid down in the Jewish Law on hearing a blasphemy, *i.e.* the improper use of God's Name; he tore his clothes. Jesus had now "blasphemed" in the open court before a score or more of witnesses; there was no need to set spies on his private life and to trap him with words until he repeated it before two or more of them, as required by the Law. Nothing more remained but that the guilty man must die. Their consciences were now clear for handing him over to Pilate for sentence on an irrelevant and framed-up charge, which was necessary because they had no longer the legal right to execute prisoners themselves. (cf. J. 18 : 31)

129. The Sedition Trial

And at earliest dawn the chief priests, having consulted the scribes, bound Jesus and led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. Then Pilate asked him, "Are you the 'King of the Jews'?" He answered him, "You say so." (M. 15 : 1-2) And Pilate, having scourged

him, handed over Jesus to be crucified.
(M. 15 : 15)

After a night of rough-handling by temple servants and, probably, the roughs who had arrested him (as M. and Mt. tell us), Jesus was taken off to Pilate early on the Friday morning, and his real "trial" began. It must have been very brief, and probably everything had already been settled beforehand.

The elaborate story of Pilate's pleading for his Jewish prisoner against the Jewish crowd seems to have been put in to win later Roman sympathies for Christians, who along with their Jewish compatriots were often liable to trouble from the Roman State as being disloyal Jews. It is difficult to picture the Pilate known to history in such a role, and that on behalf of a man charged with a serious political offence; he was notoriously callous, cold-blooded and haughty, and would have thought little of hanging Jesus out of hand, even without the pretence of a trial. His cheerful offer to scourge a man he believed innocent is much more in keeping with his known character.

The strange tale of Bar Abbas may be a literary touch to contrast the gallant revolutionary hero of the mob with a false "Messiah" who had meekly submitted to capture; he is not known otherwise to history, and there are strong evidences of his origin in myth of a theanthropic type. Nothing is known of any custom among the Romans to release a prisoner at the Passover season, but it is doubtful if such a convention would necessarily find its way into historical records.

It is likely that Pilate did not take the case of Jesus very seriously. Had he been a modern, his thoughts might well have wandered during the trial to tea and tennis; as it was, he was very soon convinced that, innocent or guilty, Jesus was at any rate a troublesome

fellow to get himself arrested at such an anxious time, and had better be got out of the way as soon as possible. The life of a single Jew was, after all, of very little moment, and delay might well cause a riot in which good Roman soldiers might be killed. Pilate was far too good a Roman to risk that. The rather laconic or ambiguous reply of Jesus was enough for him; he at once had him flogged and sent off for execution, and probably forgot all about it five minutes later.

The Jewish priests had their will, safely carried out by the enemy of their people, on whom all the blame might safely be thrown later on if things turned out badly after all.

The whole story of the Passion, which was probably written down by "Paulists" in semi-dramatic form before the earlier part of the Life or any of the Teachings (which were little regarded by Paul and his school), was at some early date mixed up inextricably with a medley of pseudo-prophecies and of myths and rituals connected with Saviour-Gods and human sacrifices. Any attempt to elicit a historical core is bound to be very largely subjective, and I offer my own reconstruction with all diffidence; it is not at all improbable that the resemblances may be all coincidence, and the whole story strictly historical in full detail, but if so we have been very unfortunate in the style of the recorders.

130. A Mock Royalty

The soldiers took him into the courtyard, and the whole company dressed him in purple, put on him a thorny crown they had plaited, and began to hail him, "Long live the 'King of the Jews!'" and they bent their knees to

him in homage. Then when they had made a mock of him they took the purple off him and put on his own clothes. Then they led him away to crucify him, and they forced a certain Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus, who was coming up from the country, to carry his cross. (M. 15 : 16-21)

The mock royal homage may be historical, or it may really belong to some mystery-drama of the Dying God, like those partly preserved from Ras-Shamra of about B.C. 1400 and in the old rustic rites of Central Europe up to almost our own days : such a fine chance for a little manly cruel fun could not be lost by the rough soldiers. As these were probably Samaritans and Syrians, their hatred for a Jew who was called a King would have added great gusto to their game.

Jesus seems to have borne it all in patient silence. (cf. *Isa.* 53 : 7) Perhaps he expected his Father to save him, as the Psalms had always taught (cf. *Ps.* 18 : 48 and 23 : 4) ; perhaps he was just stunned by the brutal rejection of his message by those he so truly loved, and by the inhumanity of man so recklessly displayed. We shall never know. His "biographers" had no chance to ask him once his body fell into his enemies' hands. He may have been in a daze, a semi-stupor, from the pain of the scourging ; we can tell that he was not physically robust, and the strain of those last hunted days may have incapacitated him from carrying the cross himself, as custom required. Some other Jewish pilgrim to the Passover, whose sons were evidently well-known in Rome when M. later wrote his Gospel, was casually

impressed in his stead, with characteristic nonchalance and indifference to justice.

131. The Wailing Women

And a great multitude of the people, together with women, followed him and beat their breasts, wailing for him. Turning to them, Jesus said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, rather weep for yourselves and for your children; for days are coming when they will cry, 'Happy are the barren women and the breasts that gave no milk!'" (L. 23 : 27-29)

This scene reminds us forcibly of the mourning women at the death of the young God Adonis, Attis, or Osiris; yet any who have lived in the East will know that it need not be unhistoric on that account. It shows us that to the very end the common people loved Jesus, and that the priests had rightly feared a possible riot if they acted too publicly during the Festival. Certainly this crucifixion just outside the city wall at a time when every road was filled with pilgrims could have been no secret affair, but any public resentment would be overawed by military force and by the fact that it was the Romans who were to carry out the execution; Roman soldiers did not fear an unruly Jewish mob at any time, and if they killed many no questions would be asked at home so long as law and order were promptly restored. It is also likely that many of his sympathisers were, like perhaps Judas, disillusioned by the failure of Jesus to live up to their own expectations of Messianic conduct.

132. The Crucifixion

1. Now it was nine in the morning. Then they took him to a place Golgotha, and having crucified him¹ they divided his clothes, and the statement of his offence was written up 'The King of the Jews'. Then they gave him wine mixed with frankincense to drink, but he did not accept it. (M. 15 : 22-26)

2. And at noon darkness came over the whole land until three o'clock. At three, Jesus called out very loudly, "Elohi, Elohi, lama sabakhtani?"—which means, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" Then some of the bystanders heard it and said, "Look, he is calling for Elijah!" One man ran and soaked a sponge in vinegar, putting it on a stick, and gave him a drink, saying, "Let us see if Elijah comes to take him

¹ Some critics have absurdly denied the truth of the trial and crucifixion of Jesus by saying that no Christian was present to record them. And did any one list the names of those who were in Pilate's court or on the hill of Golgotha, and check up to see if any of them later on became converts to the Christian movement?

Of course, in this "Gospel of Jesus" no attention has been paid to the Jewish story of the *stoning* of Jesus for blasphemy; supported by other and more modern authorities. That may well refer to another Jesus (the name was not rare at the time) known as Ben Stada or Ben Pandera, or it may refer to several attempts to stone the Prophet Jesus while in Jerusalem.

down!" But Jesus, having given a loud cry (M. 15 : 33-37), "It is done!" (J. 19 : 30) expired. (M. 15 : 37)

The hill used for executions, shaped like a big skull, with caves for the eyes and the nostrils, was about half a mile outside the northern wall of the city ; it is probably that whose summit is now covered by a Muslim cemetery. It was a humane custom to let women somewhat deaden the dreadful pain of impalement by an anæsthetic dose of drugged wine, but Jesus wanted to be conscious to the last, even if he did not look for any miraculous rescue ; learning by a taste what the drink was, he refused the kindly offer. It was also usual for the clothes of the condemned to be shared by the executioners, and there is no need to look for prophecies of this in order to explain the normal custom. Our gossellers were unhappily obsessed by memories of Isa. 53 and Ps. 22, and seem to have added to their story details derived from these and similar sources.

Our texts have made it quite clear that Jesus was in fact put to death by the Romans on the definite charge of claiming to be the Messiah, a Jewish King, and by that fact a rebel against Imperial Rome. The share of the priests in the guilt of his death was a very great one, in that they had schemed the whole business, but they were crafty enough to persuade the authorities of the Empire to do their dirty work. Had the story of the Crucifixion been fiction, as some have pretended, the fact that it was Rome which did it would surely have been left out—for very obvious reasons.

The three hours of darkness over the whole land (not *earth*, of course ; an absurd misunderstanding) may have been a violent dust-storm such as is not unknown in that season ; a solar eclipse is out of the question at Passover, when the moon is full. Such miraculous

signs very often appeared at the death of great men, as when Caesar was murdered.

Six hours, from 9 to 3, was a rather short time for the pains of impalement or crucifixion to last, but we have already had a hint in § 130 that Jesus was not physically very strong. The one exclamation from the Cross which has survived attack from critics of almost every kind is the only one preserved for us in the original Aramaic,¹ it may owe its being accurately remembered to the curious fact that it was mis-heard or misunderstood by some non-Jew as an appeal to Elijah, expected by most as the fore-runner of the Messiah. But the loud cry immediately before his death may well have been the word mentioned by J., which would have been in the local dialect something like "Tumma". There is no reason for surprise that Jesus should have expressed himself in the hour of deepest agony in the tragic words of those Psalms (*Ps.* 22 : 1) which have always been the mainstay of the Jewish mind in trouble. We have absolutely no right to read into this terrible cry any final loss of faith by this brave and intrepid Prophet. It was rather a protest against the utter spiritual darkness involved for him in the realisation of the depth of human sin and cruelty; such dereliction as is well known at times in the spiritual life even of the greatest of saints and devotees. Even in the mouth of the original Psalmist this cry was not one of despair, but an anguished appeal for help which did not go in vain (cf. *Ps.* 22 : 23-26).

The offering of vinegar was doubtless prompted by pity, for such a draught was often given to end the sufferings of the condemned. He or some other may have playfully said, "Now we give the 'coup de grâce',

¹ The third century "Gospel of Nicodemus", going back perhaps to some late first century traditions, gives us the Aramaic for the beautiful sigh of resignation to God's hands preserved by L.: "Abbā, bi yadki afkad ruhi!"

let us see if Elijah comes in time to save him; he will have to come very quickly if he does!" At any rate the merciful act had its swift result. With one more loud cry, perhaps not easy to make out so that different traditions rendered it in various ways, of triumph or of resignation, the divine fire of life in one of the greatest and most lovable of the sons of men went out. Jesus was dead. "He came to his own, and his own received him not . . . of whom the world was not worthy." But in death he found his triumph.

133. Jesus is Buried

1. Now as evening was already coming on (M. 15 : 42) a man named (L. 23 : 50) Joseph came and, having taken down the body, he wrapped it in linen¹ and laid it away in a tomb which was hewn out of rock, and rolled a stone over the doorway of the tomb. (M. 15 : 42-43) And it was the day before the sabbath. (M. 15 : 42)

2. Now some women were also watching from a distance, among whom were Mary of Magdala, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and Salome—those also who followed

¹ The authenticity of the Holy Shroud long preserved at Turin, if it can be finally proved, would enable us to print an actual "photograph" of Jesus the Christ. Scientists have recently pointed out that in the Middle Ages no one could have faked this image caused by the chemical action of *ammonia* in the sweat of agony upon the *aloes*, which J. tells us were wrapped with the body awaiting the end of the Sabbath.

Jesus in Galilee and served him, and many others who came up to Jerusalem with him. (M. 15 : 40-41) Now Mary of Magdala and Mary, Joseph's mother, watched where he was laid. (M. 15 : 47)

The gradual additions to the Joseph story need not suggest to us, as it does to some critics, that it is mainly fiction; somebody certainly did bury Jesus, though Acts 13 : 29 rather suggests that it was his enemies (perhaps the writer of this passage heard only that Nicodemus, one of the Jewish "elders" who kept his sympathies for Jesus secret from fear, was concerned in it, and drew his own conclusions). We should not ignore the weight of very early Church tradition, in the absence of hostile proof. It is rather strange, though, that a Joseph and several Marys should preside over his burial, as another Joseph and Mary presided over his birth.

The burial must certainly have been a hasty one, for the body might not be exposed after the beginning of the sabbath at sunset. The curious frequency of the name Mary in our Gospels has made it impossible for us to identify the women who saw these events and who may have been our primary eye-witnesses of them. Nor shall we ever know if the mother of Jesus came with him on this last sad journey, as the earliest non-canonical tradition declares. Her attitude shown in M. 3 : 31 and L. 2 : 48 may well have been a sorrow to him, and it is likely she would have done all she could to make amends for that earlier failure to understand him. If we could have believed the Jewish story of Mary the "hairdresser" (*i.e.* *Megaddala*, corrupted into *of Magdala*) being Jesus's own mother, this would have thrown a curious light on this question; but it would

make nonsense of much of the story of Jesus's life, and may be rejected without hesitation.

Who is this Joseph whose mother was in the little band? Could it possibly have been Joseph "of Arimathea" himself? The service of kindly women has always been lavished on a saint of God; that may be because only the saint can look at them with an equal eye, revering them as "mother" while also treasuring them as "friend". We find some of them constantly at the side of Jesus, showing him that affection and trust which sometimes his men friends were unable to attain. ,

134. Women Come to Embalm Him

Now when the sabbath was over they brought spices to embalm him, and very early on the Sunday morning they came to the tomb. They said to one another, "Who will roll away the stone from the tomb-door for us, for it was very big?" Then, having looked up, they saw that the stone had (already) been rolled away. (M. 16 : 1-4)

The work of embalming could not be done during the sabbath rest, so it was only on Saturday evening, when in the climate of Palestine the body might well have already begun to decay, that the women could buy the necessary spices. Next morning, before sunrise, they came to the tomb, anxious about one thing only—how they were to enter it for their sad task, for the stone blocking the entrance was as usual a rough and heavy boulder.

We must not fail to note that these women devotees who had clung to Jesus all the way from Galilee, had no idea that anything strange or unusual was to happen to his body. They knew nothing of the elaborate "prophecies" of crucifixion and a third-day resurrection which were put into his mouth long afterwards; nor did the men disciples expect any such event, or they would surely have run eagerly to the tomb themselves to welcome it. No, to all his followers Jesus was simply dead like any other man, his life was a total failure, and their own loomed over them as doomed to be an empty loveless future. Indeed, it is just these inconsistencies in our Gospels, impossible if they had been wholly fiction, which convince the careful and honestly unbiassed student that they *do* contain a true history, which patience will enable him to dissect out in spite of the obvious difficulties in his way.

135. The Resurrection Announced

1. Then they went into the tomb and saw a young man, wearing a long white robe and sitting on the right (side), and they were astonished. But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed. You are looking for Jesus the crucified? He has risen, he is not here! See the place where they laid him!" (M. 16 : 5-7)

2. Then they went out quickly and fled from the tomb, being seized by trembling and confusion. And they said nothing to anybody, for they feared. (M. 16 : 8) (that) their

words would seem like idle talk and incredible.
(L. 24 : 11)

136. Peter Sees Jesus

Peter got up and ran to the tomb, and looked (L. 24 : 11) and see! Jesus met **him** saying, "Rejoice!" **He** went forward and clasped his feet and worshipped him. Then Jesus said, (Mt. 28 : 9-10) "Go, tell (M. 16 : 7) my brothers to go away to Galilee, and they will see me there." (Mt. 28 : 10)

137. The Disciples See Him

As evening was coming on that Sunday, the doors where the disciples were gathered having been shut, (J. 20 : 19) Jesus himself stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you!" But they were terrified and afraid, thinking they saw a ghost. So he said to them, "Why are you disturbed, and why do suspicions arise in your hearts? Feel and see (L. 24 : 36-39) *that I am not a bodiless ghost* (A 72), for a ghost has no flesh and bones as you see I have." But still they could not

believe it for joy ; (L. 24 : 39-41) *then they touched him, and at once believed.* (A 72)

138. Jesus Seen by a Big Crowd

After this, he appeared (in Galilee) to more than five hundred of the brethren at one time. (1 Cor. 15 : 6)

139. Breakfast with the Seven

1. After this, near the lake, Simon Peter said to Thomas and Nathanael and the sons of Zebedee, and to two others of the disciples, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We are also coming with you." They went out and embarked in the boat at once, but all that night they caught nothing. (J. 21 : 1-3)

2. Just after dawn came, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. So Jesus said to them, "Children, have you anything to eat?" They answered him, "No." (J. 21 : 5) Then as they came up to the shore, they saw a heap of glowing embers, with fish laid on it and bread. (J. 21 : 9) Said Jesus to them, "Come and

dine!" Jesus then came and took the bread and gave it to them, and some fish also. (J. 21 : 12-13) He also ate, **himself** taking before them. (L. 24 : 43) Then it happened while he was sitting down with them, as he took the bread, he gave thanks and broke it and gave it to them, (L. 24 : 30) *and he said to James, "My brother, eat your bread, for I have risen from the dead."* (A. Ap. 30) And their eyes were opened and they knew him again. But he vanished out of their sight. (L. 24 : 31)

140. The Ascension

1. The disciples travelled to the mountain which Jesus had chosen for them, and Jesus came. Then on seeing him they worshipped him, though some doubted. (Mt. 28 : 16-18) Now when they met they asked him, "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" But he said to them, "It is not for you to know the times or seasons which the Father has kept in His own control. But you shall be witnesses both in Jerusalem and all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends

of the earth. (Acts 1 : 6-8) Go therefore and make all the nations disciples, baptizing them in **my** name." (Mt. 28 : 19)

2. Then he raised his hands and blessed them, (L. 24 : 50) "See, I am with you all the days until the end of the age." (Mt. 28 : 20) Then it happened as he was actually blessing them that he was separated from them, and (L. 24 : 51) a radiant cloud (Mt. 17 : 3) received him out of their sight. (Acts 1 : 9) Then they returned to Jerusalem with great joy and stayed continually in the Temple blessing God. (L. 24 : 52-53)

§§ 135—140. And here the coherency of our story almost wholly breaks down, as we might almost have expected from the amazing nature of what it has to tell. What really happened on that first Easter morning we shall never know in this world. But it was something that shattered despair in one blinding ray of overwhelming joy and triumph. It turned cowards and fools into inspired missionaries and heroic martyrs, and it created a wave of power and confident faith that spread out and across the world and down the ages, transforming lives and inspiring men, women and tiny children to glowing deeds of heroic love and sacrifice.

Of course, we need not with Christians after the days of Paul accept the idea that the tomb was found empty because the dead body had somehow come back to life and walked out of it, and that Jesus wearing that same physical body had somehow passed through into the glorious spirit-world. Such an idea is

purely pagan, derived from the carnal resurrection-doctrines found in the later Avesta literature of Irān ; in our theology it owes more to the " prophetic " understanding of Ps. 16 : 10 than to sober historical fact. Yet we must admit that the disciples were somehow convinced against their will, against all their prepossessions of thought, that the very same Jesus whom they had loved, with whom they had lived and eaten and slept during those unforgettable days in Palestine, whom they knew to have been cruelly tortured and slain before hundreds of witnesses, probably including many of themselves, had survived death. A few of them had actually seen his dead body wrapped up and laid away in a closed tomb ; yet after that many of them had actually seen and spoken with him, had touched him, had eaten with him, had been sent by him to announce God's Kingdom, not to the Jews alone, but to the whole world.

These are facts which it were folly and prejudice to deny, or to ignore. Any honest attempt to understand this strange life of Jesus must face them and try to understand them. Such a living faith, among men who had shown themselves so stolid, so unimaginative, as the apostles did when Jesus moved about with them in his physical body, does not come from mere illusion. Illusion arises from hope, and these men had lost all hope. They had had no expectation of the return of Jesus to their midst ; when they saw him they could not believe their eyes for very joy, and some even then clung to their doubts, like Thomas in J.'s beautiful story. Nor does such a transforming faith arise from the credulous acceptance of the hysterical visions of silly and neurotic women ; our earliest Christians were in fact anything but credulous ; they are rather anxious to portray themselves as " faithless and unbelieving ". Even amidst thrills of joy at the unexpected and overwhelming victory somehow won by their Friend they have faithfully recorded the scepticism which remained even in the minds of eye-witnesses (cf. *Mt.* 28 : 17, *L.* 24 : 11, *J.* 20 : 25) ;

would such men have swallowed the wild tales of women and others who said they had seen a dead man alive again? A dishonest writer, as some critics like to think our evangelists must have been because of their hard sayings, would simply have omitted such awkward passages, which seem to throw doubt on the tremendous events which created Christian faith and yet show the earliest Church in such a poor light. No, we cannot think that the Church has built its agelong faith upon a lie. Nor could such a lie have thriven even up to, and during, our own days of hardy scepticism.

Then what really happened? For I think no modern historian can accept the interpretation put upon it by the pre-scientific age. Paul is the writer nearest to the events whose work still survives for us to read. In his beautiful and revealing chapter on the Resurrection (1 Cor. 15), he clearly shows us that in his belief the body that rose out of death was the inner spiritual body, which some modern "jargon" calls the "astral body". Clad in this subtle body, which could pass through walls and yet seemed solid to the touch, Jesus was seen by Peter (or Mary, as *J.* has it)¹ and was at first hardly recognised. Gradually, as in so many cases recorded by the Society for Psychical Research and by other modern students making scientific enquiry into such things, he succeeded in materialising that body more and more, until at last it could be seen by large crowds at once, and could even eat food. There is nothing unique or magical in all this; the private records of half a thousand seance-circles give exact parallels. Materialised spirits have eaten, kissed, signed cheques, acted in dramas, and spoken for hours on end before people who, like the apostles themselves, began with bitter incredulity and ended with the bubbling joy of a faith that can conquer a world of sorrow and can never be destroyed again.

¹ See Paul's account in 1 Cor. 15

The common view that the "Virgin Birth" is a mystical fact and not a crude physiological phenomenon of abnormality has given back to mankind the glory of owning one of earth's greatest sons as one of its own, born of a woman, humbling himself to our lowly human status; Jesus was one of us, "very man", no Docetic spook or vague phantom that flitted into life by any magical back-door or miraculously appeared from nowhere in Nazareth, as Marcion would have had us believe. So also the frank admission that the Resurrection belongs to all men, that we too rise as he rose—not after dim ages of coma in a shadowland of dream, but as soon after the mental shock of death is passed as we can bear to face the glorious reality of that higher, grander life on which we have already entered—that too will let men find a new value, a new glory, in the life of Jesus.

Jesus is one of us. Born like us, he faced as we too must face all the troubles and tests and disappointments of life. He came through them, as we too can come if we will, triumphant, with his faith in the goodness and omnipotence of God unshaken. He passed the dark valley of death into the glory of the dawn, as we too shall pass. His life is a pattern we can copy, a path we too can tread.

Were these visions of the "risen Jesus" subjective or objective? Of course, in the last generation the materialist, arrogant in his fancied superiority, promptly and contemptuously dismissed them all as fantasies of imagination; today even he is not quite so sure. The true scientist, led by intellectual honesty, prefers to consider the scanty evidence before him in the light of the vast mass of scientific evidence from other sources made available by the patient work of other investigators. He does not stubbornly shut his eyes to proven facts and then say, "I see nothing, so nothing is there." That is what the quack, the common cheat, the exploiter of human ignorance would say. Surely the facts about

"phantasms of the dead" and of materialisation, etc., collected under brutally rigorous conditions by such hard-headed investigators as Richard Hodgson and the Baron Schrenk-Nötzing, and studied by men like Prof. Ernesto Botzano, have now made it impossible to brush aside as incredible these appearances of the living Jesus after his death.

Nor can the later evidence of the Church be ignored. There are visions of the Christ, of Jesus the man, recorded by his devotees and lovers in all the centuries that have since passed away; I need only speak of Sts. Francis of Assisi, Catherine of Siena and Father Doyle, S. J.—all three "men" of the world, with their feet squarely on earth and playing a vigorous and manly part in human affairs. By these, and countless other equally certain proofs, millions of rational persons have been convinced that the great Galilean Teacher whose brief earthly life ended so tragically that Friday long ago did not leave his disciples alone and comfortless but that his presence guiding, teaching, inspiring, has always been with those who fulfilled his own conditions laid down in Galilee—"Renounce the Self, take up the Cross, and follow me." It is irrational to dismiss this vast ocean of evidence, simply because our preconceived ideas cannot accept it as true; the true rationalist will change his ideas which do not fit the uncomfortable facts.

The orthodox claim that such teaching from the spirit-world during the early centuries established the Church and its leading doctrines may not be wholly false; at all events, it has to be fairly enquired into with unprejudiced mind before it is rejected. The noble mysticism of the great Catholic and Gnostic Fathers, like Clement and Valentinus, the lofty and compassionate ethic of Mani who called himself a successor of Jesus, and the deep scholarship of Augustine and Aquinas, owe much to a teaching from Jesus which could hardly have come from him while in the physical body.

I frankly admit that in trying to rebuild these five visions noted by Paul as preceding his own experience on the Damascus road I have used my materials very freely. No critic, using only the Gospel traditions, has yet been able to reconcile the glaring inconsistencies of the four accounts when laid side by side. I believe order can be made out of this chaos only when we follow the pre-evangelic tradition of Paul in 1 Cor. 15 : 5-7, and adjust the broken and often-reused fragments in our Gospels to fit that outline. In this way I have deduced the last six sections of our little *Gospel of Jesus*.

The first visions were almost certainly near Jerusalem or at the tomb itself ; we have no right, without a shred of evidence, to call our only witnesses liars. The later visions seem to have been in Galilee amid the very scenes which were for ever made dear and holy to the disciples by a thousand memories of their Master. And then the young Church was led to return to Jerusalem and to wait there until the spirit had gathered power to send them out to all nations.

Soon Paul came to them, first as a fiery sword of persecution, and then as a bitter tongue of propaganda. His fierce preaching spread the Church among "those of Jesus" to the limits of the Roman Empire, and added to the doctrine a vestment woven out of all the earlier cults of the Mediterranean basin, which led ultimately to a final breach with that Jewish Church which had given it to the world. He built, as he clearly told the Galatians (*Gal.* 1 : 11-12), on no human tradition of what Jesus the man had said, but on direct revelations from the Divine Lord Christ himself. He was either ignorant of or indifferent to all that Palestine could tell him about that sublime human life and of its vivid and vital teachings, even where a single line of them would have saved him pages of tedious and laborious argument.

But these two differing ideas of Jesus could not long exist side by side in one Church. It was the blending of Paul's Christ with the Palestinian Jesus that really created the Christian Church with its elaborate theology of Nicea and later Councils.¹ For all its accretions—many of them perhaps actually inspired by the Founder himself from behind the veil—for all its superstitions and, among the ignorant, idolatries, for all its betrayals by unworthy sons—that Religion remains today a glorious living and growing monument to the life and teaching of its first great Founder, Jesus the working-man of Galilee, who stood so bravely against bitter opposition for the grand dream of God's Kingdom of Liberty and Love and Justice soon to be revealed on earth.

It still rests with us to make his dream come true, so that our children at least may enter the heritage of which we and our fathers have been unworthy. Then we shall become the sons of God, and joy will spread in earth and in heaven as a new age is ushered in, when man shall at last attain that glorious state for which the Creator first destined him.

¹ If Acts 8 : 37 is authentic it would seem to show the earliest form of the Christian Creed : " I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." At all events from the very beginning it seems to have been this recognition of the essential unity in one Person of the two Natures—the human Jesus and the Divine Christ—which separated a man from his fellows and made him a Christian. Those who rejected the Divine and clung to the idea that Jesus was simply a Prophet were regarded as heretics even during the first century and they faded out of the picture almost entirely within the first four.

ANALYSIS OF OMITTED PASSAGES

(E): passages added in the ecclesiastical interest, most of them during the building of the episcopacy, in the days of Ignatius (A.D. 110).

(P): passages concerned with the expected "parousia", or return of Jesus as King and Judge, mainly to refute the taunt that the Christian "God" was after all only an executed criminal. (cir. A.D. 96 ?)

(R): passages mainly designed to remove Roman suspicions of the new faith as Jewish, secret, seditious. Some of these may even be original in the Gospel text, as they may not be later than A.D. 75.

(M): passages intended to prove Jesus to be the Jewish Messiah, mostly based on supposed prophecies from the Old Testament (also very early, probably many of them part of the original text: date A.D. 66 and any time after that till A.D. 135).

(D): passages so exactly reproducing detail from parallel stories that they are considered "doublets" drawn from other written sources.

(F): purely fictitious additions, many of them inventing incidents to hang floating sayings on, etc. (mostly added by the original evangelists ?)

(H): a false history, converting a parable into the story of an event which never occurred.

(S): passages largely based on floating Mediterranean myth, or at least suspicious on account of their close parallelism with such myth connected with the pagan Saviour-Gods.

(G): explanatory glosses originally written by manuscript-owners in the margins and incorporated in the text by the next copyist on the assumption that they are replaced omissions.

Where the passages are of doubtful character, two indicative letters are added in the following analysis.

MATTHEW

3: 3, 11-12 (M), 14-15 (E), 16-17 (M); 4: 2-11a (SH?), 13 (F), 14-16 (M), 23c-25 (S); 5: 1 (S), 5, 7-10, 19 (E), 29-32 (D), 34b-36, 47 (D); 6: 13b (E), 15 (G), 19 (D); 7: 6 (E), 7b-8, 13b-14a (G), 19-20 (D), 22-23 (F); 8: 1 (S), 3 (G), 9 (G), 13 (S), 17 (M), 29, 31-32 (P); 9: 13 (D), 18-19 (F), 21 (G), 23-26 (F), 27-35 (D); 10: 1b-5a (MS), 8, 12-15, 16b-23a, 24b, 25b (E), 32-33 (P), 35b-36 (M), 37b (D), 41-42 (E)

11: 10, 14 (M), 15 (D), 16-19 (F), 20-24 (RF), 27 (EP); 12: 4b (G), 5-7 (E), 12 (G), 17-23 (M), 32-33 (D), 40 (GS), 41-42 (FP), 45c (P), 48 (D); 13: 9 (D), 10b-15, 18-23 (E), 24-30 (P), 35 (M), 36-43 (EP), 48c-50 (P), 51-52 (E), 14: 2c (G), 3b-9, 11 (F), 18 (G), 20b (E), 25-33 (H), 35-36 (M); 15: 4-6 (E), 14b (G), 15-18, 19b-20 (E), 30-31 (M), 32-38 (D); 16: 5, 7-12 (F), 17-19 (E), 21c (S), 27 (P); 17: 1-9a (MH), 9b (S),

12c (S), 13 (G), 19-20a (E), 20b (D), 21 (E), 22-23 (S). 25b-26, 27b-28b (F); 18 : 4, 14, 16-20 (E), 21-22 (part) (F), 23-35 (P); 19 : 28b-c (P); 20 : 1-16a (P), 18-19, 22b (S).

21 : 4-5 (M), 15-16 (F), 17-20, 21b (H), 32 (PE), 36-39 (M), 43-44 (R); 22 : 4-5a (D), 6-8, 10 (R), 11-13 (E), 14-15 (D), 33-34, 38, 40-41 (D) 23 : 2-3, 5-10 (E), 11 (D), 34-39 (Q: Wisdom); 24 : 3d-7 (P), 8-14 (EP), 15-22 (Apocalypse), 23-31 (P), 33, 37-41, 43-51 (P); 25 : 1-28, 30-40a, 41-46 (P); 26 : 6-13 (S), 15 (M), 24 (SM), 25 (H), 28 (S), 31b (M), 32a (S), 41b (S), 42b (D), 45b (D), 48 (G), 52a (S), 53-56a (M), 58 (H) 64 (P), 67 (S), 68 (M), 69-75 (H); 27 : 3-6 (F), 7-10 (M), 12-14 (S), 15-18 (R), 19 (F), 20-26a (R), 30 (S), 33b (G), 35b-36, 38-44 (M), 51-53 (F), 54 (S), 57-60 (F), 62-66 (F); 28 : 2-4 (parts), 11-15 (F), 18-20 (parts) (E).

MARK

1 : 2-3, 7, 10-11 (M), 41-42 (G), 45a (D); 2 : 19b (G); 3 : 8ab, 10-11 (S), 16-19 (MS), 25 (D), 28b (D), 29b, 30 (G), 33 (D); 4 : 11-12, 14-20 (E), 23 (D), 28 (G), 34b (E); 5 : 4-5, 7-10, 12-13, 15-16, 18-20, 22-24, 26, 29b-43 (F); 6 : 5b (SG), 11, 13 (E), 14d-15 (D), 17b-28 (F), 37b-38a (G), 40 (S), 43 (E), 48-51 (H), 52 (G), 54-56 (M); 7 : 3-4 (G), 8 (D), 10-13, 16-20, 22-23 (E), 37 (M); 8 : 1-9 (D), 14, 16-21 (F), 31b (S), 38 (P); 9 : 2-9b (MH), 9c-10, 12b (S), 14c-16, 18c, 20-21, 22b-25 (F), 28-29 (E), 31 (D), 39b (EG),

44, 46 (D) ; 10 : 10 (E), 24, 30b (D), 33-34, 38b, 39b (S), 49b-50 (F) ;

11 : 4-6 (FH), 12-14, 20-21 (H), 26 (E) ; 12 : 6-8 (M), 33b (D) ; 13 : 3b (F), 5b-7 (P), 9-13 (E), 14-20 (Apocalypse), 21-22 (P), 24-25 (Apocalypse?), 26-27, 29 (P), 31 (G), 34-37 (P) ; 14 : 3-9 (S), 21 (MS), 24b (S) 27b (M), 28a, 38b (S), 41d (D), 44 (G), 48-49 (M), 54 (H), 56 (M), 62bc (P), 65a (S), 65b (M), 66-72 (H) ; 15 : 3-5 (S), 6-15 (R), 19 (S), 22b, 24c (G), 27-32 (M), 38 (F), 39 (S), 42-46 (parts) (F) ; 16 : 9-20 (F).

LUKE

3 : 1-2 (L, only in Lk.), 4-6 (M), 10-16a (L), 16c (M), 17 (P), 19 (F), 21-23 (M), 24-38 (F) ; 4 : 2b-13 (SH), 14a, 15 (D), 16-27 (L), 28-30 (F), 41bcd (M), 42b (F) ; 5 : 1-9 (EF), 13 (G), 17acd (L), 26b (L), 39 (G) ; 6 : 4c (G), 14-16 (MS), 17b-19a (S), 19b, 24-26 (L), 33, 35 (D), 39 (G) ; 7 : 1, 3-6 (F), 7a, 8 (G), 11-18 (F), 20 (D), 21 (F), 27 (M) 29-30 (E), 31-35 (F), 44bc (D), 45-46 (L) ; 8 : 1-3 (LF), 8b (D), 10-15 (E), 28b-31, 32b-33a, 35b-36, 38-42, 43b (F), 46 (L), 49-56 (F) ; 9 : 5 (E), 8 (D), 9b (R), 14b-15 (S), 17b (E), 22 (S), 26 (P), 28-36 (MH), 37 (S), 43-44 (D), 45b (G), 51a (S) : 10 : 1 (F), 4-7a, c, 8a, 10-12 (E), 13-15 (RF), 16-17, 19-20, 22 (E), 26, 29, 41b-42a (F) ;

11 : 5-8 (L), 9b-10, 12 (G), 14 (F), 17c, 18b, 22 (G), 27-28 (H), 29a (F), 30 (G), 31-32 (FP), 36 (D), 37-38 (F), 40 (G), 41 (E), 45-46a (F), 49-51 (Q-Wisdom),

53-54 (D); 12 : 1 (F), 8-9 (P), 11-12 (E), 21, 26 (G), 32 (L), 35-48a (P), 52-53 (M), 54-55 (F), 57 (G); 13 : 10-17 (D), 22-23 (F), 25-27 (P), 33b (M), 34-35 (Q); 14 : 1-4 (D), 6 (D), 7-10, 12-14 (L), 15 (F), 18b-21a, 21c-23a (R), 24 (P), 25 (F), 26ac, 33 (D) 15 : 1-3, 6 (D), 7b (G), 8-32 (L); 16 : 1-9 (L), 10b, 12 (G), 19-31 (L); 17 : 2 (G), 4b-5 (F), 7-10 (P), 11-19 (H), 22-32, 34-37 (P); 18 : 1-8 (P), 9 (F), 31ac-33 (S), 34b (D); 19 : 1-9 (LF), 12-27 (P), 28 (F), 33-34 (D), 37, 39-41, 47-48 (F); 20 : 13-15a (S), 18 (R), 20 (DG), 26a, 34b-35a (D), 36ac (G);

21 : 8-11 (P), 12-17 (E), 18 (L), 20-26 (Apocalypse), 27-28, 31, 34-35, 36b (P), 37-38 (F); 22 : 3, 6b-7 (F), 19c-20, 22, 27 (S), 28-30 (MP), 31-32 (E), 37 (M), 42-44 (F), 51 (S), 52-53 (M), 55-62 (H), 63-65 (S), 67b-68 (F), 69-70 (P); 23 : 2, 4-25 (R), 30-32, 33b (M), 34a (L), 35, 37, 39 (M), 40-43 (LF), 45, 46b (F), 47 (S), 48 (L), 49 (D), 50-53 (F); 24 : 7-8 (S) : 10-11, 12b (L), 13-29 (M), 32-35 (M), 40 (F), 44-46 (M), 47-50a (E).

It is not suggested that these passages are in any way untrue, any more than most of the Gospel of John should be considered so, but as they show a marked tendency towards dogma rather than history they have not been incorporated in the text. Passages (L) are found only in the Third Gospel, whose other part—the Book of Acts—is such a tissue of improbable wonders and absurdities that little reliance can fairly be placed on “Luke’s” unsupported evidence, in spite of Dr. Streeter’s pleading.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A.	Agraphon (Resch's book)
A. Ap.	Apokryphon (do.)
Apoc.	Apocalypse
Ass. Mos.	Assumption of Moses
Bab.	Babylonian Talmud
1, 2 Cor.	Epistles to Corinth
2 Clem.	Homily of Clement
Dan.	Book of Daniel
Deut.	Deuteronomy
Ecclus.	Ecclesiasticus
Ep.	Epistle
Ex.	Exodus
Gal.	Epistle to Galatians
GH	Gospel of Hermes
GI	Gospel of Islam
Gosp.	Gospel
Isa.	Isaiah
Jer.	Jeremiah
J., Jn.	Gospel of John
Lev.	Leviticus
L., Lk.	Gospel of Luke
Log.	Logia from Oxyrhynchus
Mal.	Malachi
M., Mk.	Gospel of Mark

Mic.	Micah
Mt.	Gospel of Matthew
Num.	Book of Numbers
Obad.	Obadiah
Pal.	Palestine Talmud
Ps.	Psalms
R.	Ropes, die Sprüche Jesu
Rev.	Book of Revelations
1 Sam.	First Book of Samuel
Sanh.	Sanhedrim
T.	Tractate (Talmud)
Test.	Testament
2 Thes.	Second Epistle to Thessalonica
Zech.	Zechariah

INDEX

ABRAHAM : 1, 65, 78, 106

Andrew, 3, 6, 114

BETHANY, 91-93

Bethsaida, 52, 56, 114

CAIAPHAS : (see *High Priest*)

Charity, 78, 85, 99

Conscience, 12-13

CURES : Madness 7, fever, etc., 8, paralysis 15, shrivelled arm 21,
haemorrhage 35, hunger 43, demons 7-8, 53, deaf-mute 54,
blindness 56, 89, epilepsy 66

DAVID, 19, 63, 64, 91

Demons, 4, 7, 8, 26-28, 40, 53, 58, 66

Discipleship, 29, 38, 40, 46, 49, 67-70, 72, 74, 83, 93, 119, 140

ELIJAH, 57, 87, 121, 132

Ephraim, 111

FAITH and Belief, 15, 35-37, 46, 49, 53, 59, 60, 62, 66, 69, 89, 95,
97, 119

Fasting, 18, 85

Forgiveness : (by God), 16, 27, 45, 50, (by man) 13, 15, 17, 27, 50

GALILEE, 2, 5-7, 9, 44, 54, 59, 65, 71, 91, 125, 136, 138

Golgotha, 132

HEROD, 5, 39, 55, 58

Herodians, 24, 105

High Priest, 110, 127, 128

ISRAEL : 36, 38, 53, 140

JERICO, 89, 109

Jerusalem, 1, 44, 47, 62, 86-88, 91-92, 104, 109, 112-113, 131, 140

Jesus's Family, 2, 27, 37, 59

Jesus as Messiah, 1-2, 6, 9, 12, 14, 16, 17, 22-23, 27, 29, 37, 38,
40, 42, 44, 53, 57, 58, 62-65, 71, 78, 88, 90-91, 94, 95, 98, 100,
104, 119, 121, 123, 126, 129-130, 132, 140

John the Baptist, 1-3, 5-6, 18, 22-23, 39, 48, 57, 95, 104

John and James, 6, 40, 87-88, 139

Judas, 111, 127

Judea, 1, 5, 59, 65, 140

KAFR Nahum, 7, 11, 36, 71

Kingdom of God, 1, 6, 12, 14, 23, 27, 31, 38, 42, 68-70, 74-75, 79-80, 88, 98, 103, 107, 108, 118, 120, 123, 140.

THE LAW, 10-14, 19-20, 23, 47, 74, 78, 100, 106

Levi, 16

LOVE: (God to man), 13, 69, 104, 119, (man to God) 14, (man to man) 13-14, 50, 72, 78, 87, 100, 109

MARY, 93, 133

Money, 31, 38, 67, 69-71, 78-85, 90, 94, 99, 101, 105, 109, 115, 124

Moses, 10, 76, 100, 106

PARABLES: (Lost Sheep) 16, (Sower) 30, (Mustard Seed, Leaven, Harvest, Net, Treasure, Pearl) 31, teaching by 32, (Figtree) 45, 102, (Banquet) 107, (Two Sons) 108, (Vineyard) 96, (Good Samaritan) 109, (Publican and Pharisee) 115

Passover, 110, 112-114, 122

Peter, 3, 6, 8-9, 46, 57, 71, 80, 125, 136, 139

Pharisees, 11-12, 17, 24, 47, 55, 58, 62, 76, 84, 100, 105, 110, 115, 117-118

PRAYER: (by Jesus) 9, 26, 42, 43, 48, 52, 104, 125, 126, 132, (teaching on) 48-50, 85, 98, 115-116

Purity, 2-3, 5, 10, 13, 15-17, 27-28, 42, 47, 74, 75, 87, 94, 118

RELATIONS with Others, 5, 13-14, 17, 138, 40, 44, 47, 48, 50-51, 70, 72-73, 87-88, 90, 100, 105, 109

Retreats, 5, 9, 24-25, 35, 41, 44, 46, 52-55, 57-58, 104, 111

SABBATH-breaking, 7, 19-21

Sadducees, 106

Samaritans, 38, 87, 109

Scribes, 12, 14-15, 27, 47, 100, 116-118, 121, 129

Sex and Chastity, 13, 17, 75-77, 100, 106

Silence, Orders to, 10, 25, 54, 56-57, 71, 89

Simon, 17, 37 (and see *Peter*)

Sincerity, 2, 5, 18, 83, 105

Social Obligations, 6, 10, 13, 16, 18, 21, 29, 38, 40, 42, 44, 47, 60, 61, 67-68, 71, 73, 76-78, 80, 82, 85, 88, 93, 94, 100, 105-106, 108, 110, 119-120

Synagogues, 7, 9, 21, 37, 116

TEACHERSHIP, 3, 5, 9, 14, 17, 22, 15-26, 30, 32-33, 38, 42, 46, 53, 55, 60-62, 68, 72, 97, 113, 119

IMPORTANT BOOKS FOR STUDY

I. Abrahams, Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels ; *Bruno Bauer*, Criticism of the Gospel History ; *Rev. J. Fulton Blair*, The Apostolic Gospel ; *S. J. Case*, The Historicity of Jesus ; * *Walter R. Cassels*, Supernatural Religion, (3 vols.) ; * *Dr. F. C. Conybeare*, The Historical Christ, Myth, Magic and Morals ; *Samuel Davidson*, Introduction to the New Testament ; *Dr. Arthur Drews*, The Christ Myth ; *Dr. G. A. van den Burgh van Eysinga*, Radical Views about the New Testament ; *Dean Farrar*, The Life of Christ ; *Sir James G. Frazer*, The Dying God, The Golden Bough (1 vol.) ; * *Prof. Percy Gardner*, The Ephesian Gospel ; * *Maurice Goguel*, l'Evangile de Marc en ses rapports avec Ceux de Mathieu et de Luc, Jesus the Nazarene Myth or History?, The Life of Jesus ; *Dr. Adolf Harnack*, The Date of the Acts and the Synoptic Gospels, The Sayings of Jesus ; * *Dr. Joseph Klausner*, Jesus of Nazareth ; *Charles Stanley Lester*, The Historic Jesus ; *Alfred Loisy*, La Naissance du Christianisme ; *G. R. S. Mead*, Did Jesus Live 100 Years B.C.?, The Gospels and the Gospel ; *Moeller*, History of the Christian Religion ; * *Dr. James Moffatt*

The New Testament ; *Giovanni Papini*, Life of Jesus ; *Rénan*, Vie de Jésus ; * *Alfred Resch*, Agrapha (cited in text as A and A. Ap.) ; *Jocelyn Rhys*, Shaken Creeds : the Virgin Birth ; * *J. M. Robertson*, Christianity and Mythology, The Historical Jesus. The Jesus Problem. Pagan Christs ; * *Robinson Smith*, The Solution of the Synoptic Problem ; *James Hardy Ropes*, die Spruche Jesu ; *L. G. Rylands*, The Evolution of Christianity, * *Albert Schweitzer*, The Quest of the Historical Jesus ; *Prof. W. B. Smith*, der Vorchristliche Jesus ; *Dr. Paterson Smythe*, The Gospel of the Hereafter ; *Baron von Soden*, The Books of the New Testament ; * *Canon B. H. Streeter*, The Four Gospels. *Dr. T. J. Thorburn*, Jesus the Christ Historical or Mythical ? ; *E. Wendling*, die Entstehung des Marcus-Evangelium ; *Dr. R. F. Weymouth*, The New Testament in Modern Speech ; *H. G. Evelyn White*, The Sayings of Jesus.

ENCYCLOPAEDIAS ETC.

The Catholic Encyclopaedia, Encyclopaedia Biblica (Cheyne and Black), Jewish Encyclopaedia (Singer and Popper), Hastings Dictionary of the Bible, Wace's Dictionary of Christian Biography, Hastings Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Peake's Commentary on the Bible ; Texts and Studies, Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Altchristlichen Literatur, Ante-Nicene Library.

JOURNALS ETC.

The Hibbert Journal (cited as HJ), The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (JRAS), The Journal of the American Oriental Society (JAOS) The Journal of Theological Studies, The Quest, Archiv Orientalni (AO)

OTHER BOOKS USEFUL FOR REFERENCE

Baring-Gould, Lost and Hostile Gospels ; *G. Berguer*, Some Aspects of the Life of Jesus ; *Dr. F. Blass*, The Philology of the Gospels ; *Edward Carpenter*, Pagan and Christian Creeds ; *Dr. R. H. Charles*, Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament ; *Arthur Drews*, The Witnesses to the Historicity of Jesus ; *R. F. Faber*, The Credentials of Christianity ; *Sir James G. Frazer*, Adonis Attis Osiris, The Scapegoat ; *Shishir Kumar Ghose*, Lord Gauranga ; *Dr. J. J. Ghose*, Adventures with Evil Spirits ; *Johnson*, Antiqua Mater ; *Pastor Albert Kalthoff*, The Rise of Christianity ; *A. S. Logan*, Jesus in Modern Life ; *Pierre Loti*, La Galilée ; "M" (*Mahindranath Gupta*), The Gospel of Ramakrishna ; *Joseph MacCabe*, Sources of the Morality of the Gospels ; *G. R. S. Mead*, Fragments of a Faith Forgotten, The Gnostic Crucifixion, The Hymn of Jesus, Pistis Sophia ; *Salomon Reinach*, Orpheus ; *R. Reitzenstein* das iranische Erlösungsmysterium ; *J. M. Robertson*, A Short History of Christianity ; *Gilbert T. Sadler*, The Inner Meaning of the Four Gospels. *Dr. Schechter*, Some

Aspects of Rabbinical Theology; *Paul W. Schmiedel*, The Johannine Writings; *Prof. W. B. Smith*, Ecce Deus; *S. E. Stokes*, The Historical Character of the Gospel; *Count Leo Tolstoi*, My Confessions, etc.; *Judge Joseph Wheless*, Forgeries of Christianity; *Dr. Carl A. Wickland*, Thirty years among the Dead; *Macleod Yearsley*, The Story of the Bible; and two little Catholic publications: The Saviour (Ranchi), and My Daily Reading from the Four Gospels and the New Testament.

PARALLELS WITH THE GOSPEL OF ISLAM

Gospel of Jesus	Gospel of Islam	Gospel of Jesus	Gospel of Islam
13	85-86	74	54-55
13 : 1	98	76	84
13 : 2	83	78	27 : 7-8
13 : 5	73	78-82	60
14	27 : 8	79	75, 78 : 6
16	51, 79	80	28 : 1, 58 : 2, 78
18	88	82	56
22	11 : 6-7	85	72, 78, 88, 95-97
27	34	85 : 2	78 : 6
27 : 3	79 : 1	88	7 : 3, 20
30	31 : 2-3	90	75
31	11 : 2-5	96	27 : 1
47 : 2	87	97 : 3	61-62, 98 : 3
47 : 3	31 : 2, 46 : 2	99	78
49	41, 95	102	37
50	79, 95	102-103	53 : 1
50 : 2	58	104	19 : 3
51	73	106	67 : 1
55	35 : 2, 36-37, 43	106-107	57-58
57	36 : 3, 37 : 1-2	107	54 : 1
59	11-12, 64-67, 87	108	25 : 1-3, 36 : 2
59 : 3	91 : 2	109	77-78
67-68	60	118	28 : 1-2
69	11 : 2-5, 59	120	11 : 2-5

These parallels with other Gospels may be found suggestive for comparative study, but they must not be taken as an exhaustive list.

PARALLELS WITH THE GOSPEL OF CHINA

Gospel of Jesus	Gospel of China	Gospel of Jesus	Gospel of China
12	14 : 2	72-73	42 : 2
12-13	2	74	15 : 6
13	38 : 4	74 : 2	39 : 9
13 : 3	14 : 2, 26 : 5, 41 : 3	75	34 : 3, 44 : 2
13 : 5	10 : 4, 14 : 2, 25 : 1	78-79	36 : 2
14	21 : 1, 36 : 1	82	29 : 3
16-17	25 : 2	84-85	23 : 1
27 : 2	31 : 6	85 : 3	7
40	22 : 3	87	34 : 3
42	6 : 2	88	15 : 5
42 : 2	21 : 1	97 : 3	15 : 2, 21 : 3, 25 : 2
50	31 : 6	100	23 : 4, 25 : 2
50 : 2	25 : 2	103 : 1	11 : 2, 41 : 2, 42 : 4
50-51	15 : 2	104	15 : 2
51	10 : 4, 23 : 4, 30 : 1, 40 : 1, 42 : 4	107 : 2	11 : 1, 12 : 2
55	36 : 1	109	25 : 1, 42 : 2
67 : 1	25 : 4	115-116	38 : 4
68 : 1	29 : 3	118 : 4	38 : 4
69	28 : 2	120 : 2	25 : 4
		123	6 : 2

PARALLELS WITH THE GOSPEL OF HERMES

Gospel of Jesus	Gospel of Hermes	Gospel of Jesus	Gospel of Hermes
1 : 1	8 : 1, 37 : 3	50 : 3	28 : 1, 29 : 9
1 : 2	8 : 2-3, 48 : 4	51	29 : 13
2	37 : 4	54, 56, 57 : 2	48 : 4
5 : 2	11 : 1	60	8 : 4
6 : 1	8 : 1, 37 : 3	61	6 : 4, 28 : 5
7 : 2	28 : 3, 30 : 3		36 : 2, 4
11	8 : 3	63	8 : 3-4
12	28 : 1, 29 : 5	67 : 1	40 : 5-7, 41 : 5
13 : 1-5	5 : 3, 6 : 2	68	40 : 5-7, 41 : 5
13 : 5	11 : 1, 39 : 2	69 : 1	10 : 2
14 : 1	27 : 3, 38 : 3	69 : 3	21 : 3, 22 : 2
14 : 2	43 : 2	70	39
15 : 1-2	29 : 13	72	10 : 1-2, 38 : 6
16 : 2	29 : 4	73 : 1	20 : 1
16 : 3	8 : 2	74 : 1	40 : 6
16 : 4	6 : 3, 11 : 1	74 : 2	42 : 2, 47 : 2
17 : 3	29 : 13	75	44
23	45 : 1	78 : 1	11 : 4
25	48 : 4	79	11 : 5, 28 : 5
27 : 1	39 : 1	80	31 : 3
27 : 3	29 : 13	83	31 : 2
28	29 : 12, 30 : 2	90	40 : 6
30	37 : 4-5	94	9 : 1
31 : 5-6	38 : 5	95	7 : 2
35 : 1	8 : 3	97 : 1-2	48 : 4
37	8 : 4	101	34 : 3
38 : 1	39 : 1	103 : 1	42 : 3, 5
42 : 2	7 : 2, 8 : 3, 16 : 8	103 : 2	3 : 4, 5 : 3
	29 : 9, 43 : 3	104 : 2	45 : 3
	47 : 5, 48 : 2	105 : 2	33
44 : 2	30 : 4-5, 31 : 1	106 : 2	3 : 4, 5 : 3
45	48 : 4	107 : 2	40 : 7, 49 : 2
46	8 : 4	110 : 1	34 : 2
47 : 2	28 : 1, 29 : 4	118 : 6	28 : 2
48	7 : 3, 43	120 : 2	27 : 5, 28 : 2
49 : 1	7 : 2, 10 : 2, 43 : 5		

PARALLELS WITH THE GOSPEL OF ZARATHUSHTRA

Gospel of Jesus	Gospel of Zarathushtra	Gospel of Jesus	Gospel of Zarathushtra
1 : 2	46 - 3-4	40 : 1	26 : 3
4	29	40 : 2	5 : 1
9 : 1	27 : 1, 28 : 5	42 : 1	55 : 4, 79 : 2
11	69 : 1	42 : 2	26 : 3, 78 : 4
12	3, 31 : 1, 5, 17 : 1	46	35
	60 : 3, 67 : 4	47 : 2	37 : 5, 54 : 1
13 : 1-2	37 : 3	48	18, 53 : 2, 61 : 3, 62 : 2
13 : 3	22 : 4	49	52 : 3
13 : 4-5	28 : 2, 37 : 4	50 : 2	37 : 5
13 : 5	76 : 1	50 : 3	33 : 1, 41 : 4, 46 : 7
13 : 6	32 : 1	55 : 2	37 : 1
14 : 1	1 : 1, 61 : 4, 65 : 5	61	43 : 3
14 : 2	30 : 4	64	30 : 3
15 : 1	46 : 3-4	67 : 1	36 : 3, 37 : 1
16 : 3	38 : 3, 81 : 1		50 : 1, 80 : 3
16 : 4	7 : 8, 44 : 5	69 : 1	78 : 2
18	33 : 1-2	70	22 : 5, 70 : 1
19	33 : 2	73 : 1	17 : 2, 33 : 3
21	34 : 1	74 : 2	20 : 2, 28 : 2
22	52 : 6	79	37 : 2, 73 : 2
23	28 : 5, 76 : 2, 78 : 4	80	72 : 4
	79 : 1-2, 80 : 2	81	36 : 1
24	29 : 1-2, 79 : 5	82	37 : 2
26	30 : 5, 31 : 3	85 : 3	33 : 2
27 : 2	49 : 5	87 : 1	50 : 1
27 : 3	50 : 1	97 : 1	59 : 2-3
28	45 : 5, 46 : 1, 54 : 4	97 : 2	46 : 2
29	80 : 2	97 : 3	31 : 3
30 : 2	67 : 6, 68 : 3	99	37 : 2
31 : 1	31 : 6	103 : 1	18 : 2
36	72 : 1	106 : 2	51 : 2, 4
		107 : 2	49 : 5

PARALLELS WITH THE GOSPEL OF THE MYSTIC CHRIST

Gospel of Jesus	Gospel of the Mystic Christ	Gospel of Jesus	Gospel of the Mystic Christ
1:	21	43	34
1 : 2	21 : 1	44 : 1	35 : 1
2	21 : 2	44 : 2	55 : 5
4	22 : 1, 3	46	33 : 2
5 : 3	23 : 1	49	53 : 5
6 : 2-3	26 : 2-4	49 : 1	47 : 4
9 : 1	28 : 1, 36 : 1	50 : 1	27 : 4
10 : 2	34 : 1	50 : 3	53 : 1
11	15 : 5	51 : 1	32 : 3
12	32 : 1, 3	52	36 : 1
13 : 1	32 : 1	56	37 : 1-2
13 : 2	47 : 3	57 : 2	42
13 : 3	2 : 5, 38 : 1	61	38 : 4
13 : 5-6	27 : 4, 38 : 4	62	44 : 2, 55 : 6
14 : 1	53 : 1, 8	63	7 : 1, 24 : 2, 55 : 6
15 : 1	67 : 1	67 : 1	28 : 3, 30 : 2, 49 : 3
15 : 3	31 : 1	68	47 : 4
16 : 3	30 : 4	69 : 1, 70	47 : 1-2
17 : 3	52 : 1	72	54 : 4
21 : 1	32 : 1	73 : 1	33 : 2
21 : 2	37 : 3	74 : 2	38 : 4
22	40 : 2	75	30 : 2
24	31 : 3	77, 79	47 : 3
25	26 : 1	80	49 : 1, 3
27 : 2	48 : 2	82	47 : 3
29	66 : 2	86	42
30 : 2	51 : 3	37	30 : 4
30 : 3	30 : 3	88 : 1-2	49 : 1, 52 : 3
31 : 3	35 : 8	89	37 : 2
31 : 4	26 : 4	91 : 2	45 : 1
33	36 : 4	93	44 : 1
37 : 1	35 : 3	94-95	46 : 1-2
38	47 : 1	97 : 1	48 : 1
41-42	34 : 1	97 : 3, 98	49 : 3

Gospel of Jesus	Gospel of the Mystic Christ	Gospel of Jesus	Gospel of the Mystic Christ
100 : 2	31 : 3	127 : 1	55 : 3, 56 : 1
101	43 : 2	127 : 2	55 : 5-6
102-103 : 1	48 : 2, 49 : 1	128	55 : 3, 56 : 1
103 : 1	48 : 1	128 : 1-2	57 : 2-5
103 : 2	28 : 1, 3, 32 : 6, 35 : 8, 53 : 8-9	129	58-59
104 : 2	55 : 2	130	60 : 1, 61 : 1
107 : 2	49 : 1-2	132	61 : 1-6
110 : 1	45 : 2	133	62
118 : 5	43 : 1	134	65 : 1
120 : 2	49 : 1	136	66 : 2
122	50 : 1, 51 : 1	137	67
123	50 : 2, 51 : 2	139	68 : 1
125	55 : 2-3	140	69-70

THE WORLD GOSPEL SERIES

Vol.

1. THE GOSPEL OF ISLAM, based on a new translation from the *Holy Qur'ān*, with explanatory notes on each topical section, and a short sketch of the Life and Work of the Holy Prophet.
2. THE GOSPEL OF CHINA, based on a new translation from a French version of the Four great *Confucian Classics*, with explanatory notes on each topical section and a brief introduction on the Life, Philosophy and Work of Confucius and Mencius.
3. THE GOSPEL OF HERMES, based on the texts and fragments of *Hermetic Literature* of the few centuries before and after Christ, explained by notes on each topical section and introduced by a brief Introduction on the antecedents of this important system of Western Yoga and Theosophy, illustrated by many quotations of parallel texts from all over the world.
4. THE GOSPEL OF JESUS, based on a new translation from the *Synoptic Gospels* and a few *Agrapha* of Synoptic type, selecting passages critically judged as the most reliable in portraying the Man Jesus and his work in Palestine. With a brief Introduction on his Life and Times, and explanatory notes on each section.

Vol.

5. THE GOSPEL OF ZARATHUSHTRA, based on arranged texts from the *Avesta* and *Pehlevi Scriptures*, together with a new translation of the *Gāthas*, with explanatory notes on each topical section and a brief Introduction on the Life, Work and Environment of the Holy Prophet of Iran.
6. THE GOSPEL OF THE MYSTIC CHRIST, based on a new translation of the *Fourth Gospel* and several Apocrypha, which narrate the spiritual life of the Divine Man, the "Christ in You" of St. Paul, with explanatory notes and introduction.
7. THE GOSPEL OF NARADA, based on the *Nārada Pāncarātra* and the *Nārada Bhakti Sutras*, with explanatory notes and an introduction to show the universal appeal of these Hindu Vaishnava scriptures.

After completing the publication of the first seven volumes of "The World Gospel Series" it is hoped to complete the Series by publishing these additional volumes, several of which are now almost ready.

8. The Gospel of the Guru Granth
9. The Gospel of the Pyramids
10. The Gospel of Advaita
11. The Gospel of the Prophet Māni
12. The Gospel of the Spirits
13. The Gospel of the Gnostics
14. The Gospel of the Apostles
15. The Gospel of the Light
16. The Gospel of Egypt
17. The Gospel of the Buddha
18. The Gospel of Israel
19. The Gospel of the Tirthankaras

Vol.

- 20. The Gospel of the Stoics
- 21. The Gospel of the Sufis
- 22. The Gospel of the Behāis
- 23. The Gospel of Mahayana
- 24. The Gospel of Sri Krishna

It is also proposed to sum up the Series with an Abstract Volume, containing the essential teachings of all these, entitled

- 25. THE WORLD GOSPEL

**Printed by C. Subbarayudu, at the Vasanta Press,
The Theosophical Society, Adyar, Madras**

