

Behold The Man

**The Life and Teaching
of Jesus Christ**

John Everett

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Preface

The original version of Behold The Man was intended for school use, for what was then an examination in the study of the gospels, for pupils aged sixteen.

Now, more than forty years later, I find the book still being offered for sale in second hand book shops, and still being read. The original purpose has long past, but the content remains of supreme value. Who was Jesus Christ, and what relevance might he have today?

Here is a readable account of the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, using the words of the four gospels, with linking passages written by myself. As many are aware, there are lots of events in the four gospels for which there are sometimes two, three, even four accounts. I have tried to ensure that in this continuous narrative there is only one account of any event included, with an appendix specifying which parallel passages have been omitted. Apart from these omissions, there is nothing left out, except for just a little of the fourth gospel.

The other introductory material is as described. For anyone who is coming 'cold' to this material, it really is worthwhile to understand the historical background and context of these four documents.

The text of the gospels is the translation made by R. F. Weymouth, published in the early part of the 20th century. It has been chosen because it is in the public domain, and is relatively modern in language, so avoiding the appearance of antiquity that one gets in

much older and more literal translations. There is a layout difference between what I have written, and the text of the gospels and other quoted material, with the latter having a bigger margin. Each quoted passage from the gospels is identified by a reference number in brackets: the appendix gives the book, chapter, and verse(s) of this passage, and shows also where the same event appears in any other gospel, if it does.

I commend this work to you. I also have a website on the internet: www.johneverettbooks.co.uk and you may use the email address found there if you wish to contact me.

John Everett

Introduction

Some Gentle Persuasion

Before we begin to study the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, let us ask a very basic question. Is it possible? Can we, with any reasonable degree of confidence, find some starting point that no one will dispute? Or do we have to make some act of faith even before we begin? There may be many reading this book who do not yet feel ready to commit themselves to an act of faith. They would want to question whether Jesus Christ ever existed even, let alone believe any and every story with which they are presented that claims to describe something He said or did. So we shall begin with two things that cannot be doubted: the existence of the Christian Church and the writings of the New Testament. And we shall see how far back in history we can trace the existence of each.

The Existence of Christianity

If one were to be permitted to assume the accuracy of Christian writings, one could show that the Christian Church came into existence about the year A.D. 29. But it might be argued that these should be disregarded if one is to enquire absolutely impartially into this question. Therefore, for the present, we will ignore them, and see what evidence is left. About A.D. 112 a Roman called Pliny, engaged in the administration of the province of Bithynia (part of the country we now call Turkey), had a problem on his hands. He was not sure how to treat the outlawed Christians and so

he wrote to the emperor, Trajan, asking for advice on the matter. Here is part of his letter:

‘Meanwhile, this is the course that I have adopted in the case of those brought before me as Christians. I ask them if they are Christians. If they admit it I repeat the question a second and a third time, threatening capital punishment; if they persist I sentence them to death There were others who displayed a like madness and whom I reserved to be sent to Rome, since they were Roman citizens.’

Other parts of the letter give us valuable information about Christian practice and indicate how widespread Christianity then was.

‘Others who recanted declared that the sum of their guilt or error had amounted only to this, that on an appointed day they had been accustomed to meet before daybreak, and recite a hymn antiphonally to Christ, as to a god, and to bind themselves by an oath, not for the commission of any crime but to abstain from theft, robbery, adultery and breach of faith, and not to deny a deposit when it was claimed. After the conclusion of the ceremony it was their custom to depart and meet again to take food The contagion of this superstition has spread not only in the cities, but in the villages and rural districts as well; yet it seems capable of being checked and set right. There is no shadow of doubt that the temples, which have been almost deserted, are beginning to be frequented once more, that the sacred rites which have been long neglected are being renewed, and that sacrificial victims are for sale everywhere, whereas, till recently, a buyer was rarely to be found.’

We are also fortunate enough to possess Trajan’s reply to Pliny’s letter, in which he confirms Pliny’s policy.

However, we can take evidence of Christianity’s existence even closer to the date of A.D. 29 by reference to other Roman writers.

About the time that Pliny wrote his letter to Trajan, the Roman historian Tacitus was writing his history of the Roman Empire. He gave an account of the great fire in Rome in A.D. 64. Many suspected that the emperor Nero himself had caused the fire. Tacitus wrote:

‘But all the endeavours of men, all the emperor’s largesse and the propitiations of the gods, did not suffice to allay the scandal or banish the belief that the fire had been ordered. And so, to get rid of the rumour Nero set up as the culprits and punished with the utmost enormities of cruelty a class hated for their abominations, who are commonly called Christians. Christus, from whom their name is derived, was executed at the hands of the procurator Pontius Pilate in the reign of Tiberius. Checked for the moment, this pernicious superstition again broke out, not only in Judea, the source of the evil, but even in Rome, that receptacle for everything that is sordid and degrading from every quarter of the globe which there finds a following’ The abusive way in which Tacitus refers to Christianity shows that he is in no way sympathetic to it, and the language used completely banishes the possibility that some Christian has tampered with the text of Tacitus’ writings to introduce material not originally there. Besides, another Roman historian, Suetonius, writing a few years later than Tacitus (about A.D. 120), confirms the Neronian persecution of Christians: ‘In his reign many abuses were severely punished and repressed, and as many new laws instituted Punishment was inflicted on Christians, a set of men adhering to a novel and mischievous superstition.’

Suetonius also mentioned that in the reign of Claudius (probably about A.D. 50) ‘ ... since the Jews were continually making disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus, he [Claudius] expelled them from Rome.’ Chrestus could be a variant spelling of Christus, and it may well be that in this statement of Suetonius (compare Acts 18.2) we have a reference to quarrels between Jewish and

Christian leaders in Rome.

A third non-Christian historian must be mentioned. He is Josephus, a Jew who after a chequered career settled down to sustained literary activity in Rome. Among his writings are a *History of the Jewish War* (covering from 170 B.C. to A.D. 70) and his twenty-book-long *Jewish Antiquities*, which he completed in A.D. 93. He refers to many figures who are prominent in the New Testament: Pilate, Annas and Caiaphas, John the Baptist, James the brother of Jesus, and Jesus himself. One passage from the *Jewish Antiquities* deserves particular attention (it is quoted here in the form put forward by Professor Bruce in his book, *The New Testament Documents*):

‘And there arose about this time a source of new troubles, one Jesus, a wise man. He was a doer of marvellous deeds, a teacher of men who receive strange things with pleasure. He led away many Jews, and also many of the Greeks. This man was the so-called Christ. And when Pilate had condemned him to the cross on his impeachment by the chief men among us, those who had loved him at first did not cease; for he appeared to them, as they said, on the third day alive again, the divine prophets having spoken these and thousands of other wonderful things about him, and even now the tribe of Christians, so named after him, has not yet died out.’

Let us now try to assess what we know of Christianity by reference only to non-Christian writers whose works were published while personal memories and public records could verify their trustworthiness, remembering that none of these writers showed any sympathy for Christianity. The following facts are established: that under the procuratorship of Pilate over Judea (that is to say sometime between A.D. 26 and 36) a man called Jesus, and given the title Christ (in Latin Christus) by his followers, was

crucified; that his followers believed he rose from the dead; that there were followers of his commonly called Christians, in Rome by A.D. 50 probably, and by A.D. 64 certainly; that Christians by A.D. 112 had become so widespread as to be a problem even in a comparatively remote part of the vast Roman Empire. This 'problem' was never solved, by the way, for Christianity eventually became the official religion of the Roman Empire.

Now the existence of a Christian Church in the terms just described is more significant than might at first sight appear. For it compels us to ask how it might have come about. How was it that there were men who believed that their leader had risen from the dead? How was it that many Christians were prepared to suffer death, often a very cruel death, rather than recant their beliefs? If we are ever going to find out how these things could be, and they are happening still in the twentieth century as well as in the first, sooner or later we are going to have to examine the documents of Christianity, the writings of those who first held these beliefs. No doubt we shall feel that the obvious starting point is those writings which give an account of the life and teachings of the man whom Pliny tells us the Christians worshipped as god. That is what this book will help us to do, but a few things need to be said about these documents before we can begin.

The New Testament Writings

The most compelling thing about the Christian documents is that they exist. There are billions, literally, of Bibles in the world, translated, in whole or in part, into over one thousand different languages. It has often been the work of a lifetime to provide the Bible (or part of it) in a new language. Men and women today of

the highest intellect are devoting their whole lives, often at great sacrifice of comfort and security, to translating, producing, and distributing the Bible; and these are men and women who are aware of, and have studied, the results of two centuries of intense critical scrutiny of the Bible. For the books of the Bible have been subjected to every test that the mind of man can devise, historical, textual, literary, and scientific. And it is still the world's bestseller.

These facts, I trust, will make us want to know more. How did the New Testament (leaving aside the Old Testament, which is not really within the scope of this book) come to be written? Do we have the original writings, and, if not, how can we be sure that we have accurate copies? In fact, and this is a question that I have actually been asked, how can we be sure that the New Testament is not the work of some monk — or crank — in the Middle Ages ?

The New Testament consists of twenty-seven separate writings. They were all written in Greek, which was the language that nearly every one in the first century knew, at least partially, in addition to his own native language or dialect. Most of them are letters: thirteen of them bearing the name of Paul, one anonymous, one of James, two of Peter, three attributed to John, and one of Jude. Of the remaining six writings one (the Revelation of John) is of rather a special nature, containing seven separate letters within it and the account of a prolonged vision, one is an account of the growth of Christianity up to A.D. 62, and the other four are accounts of the life of Jesus Christ — the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Now the men who wrote these letters and gospels apparently never for one moment thought they were contributing towards a handbook on Christianity which, when completed, would bear the

title ‘The New Testament’. The letters, by and large, were written by the apostles as a means of dealing with a particular situation. Most were intended for a particular community of Christians, though some were intended for a limited or more general circulation. Four of Paul’s letters were written to individual men. None of the letters of the New Testament was a literary work — they were plain letters written for the same reason that any letter is written: because a personal visit is impracticable or impossible; the majority of Paul’s letters, for example, were written when the apostle was in prison.

The background to the gospels and the Acts of the Apostles is somewhat different. Here it will be best to take them one by one. The first gospel to be written, most scholars believe, was that of Mark. It was written probably some time between A.D. 60 and 65, in other words about thirty years after the events it describes. The reason for this long time lag is simple. The early Christians did not need written documents describing the life and teachings of Jesus Christ because of the many eye-witnesses who could personally recount what they knew. They did not feel it necessary, at first, to provide some permanent record because they believed that the end of the world (with the return of Jesus Christ) would come within a few years, certainly within their own lifetime. As time passed these eye-witnesses began to die off and when in A.D. 64 Christianity was declared an illegal religion, for which the penalty was death, the need for written permanent records of the testimony of the remaining eye-witnesses became most urgent. Papias, who was bishop of Hierapolis about A.D. 130, tells us, on the authority of John the Elder, the following about Mark’s Gospel:

‘Mark became the interpreter of Peter and he wrote down accurately, but not in order, as much as he remembered [or, as he (Peter) related]

of the sayings and doings of Christ. For he was not a hearer or a follower of the Lord, but afterwards, as I said, of Peter, who adapted his teachings to the needs of the moment and did not make an ordered exposition of the sayings of the Lord. And so Mark made no mistake when he wrote down some things as he remembered [or, as he (Peter) related] them; for he made it his especial care to omit nothing of what he heard, and to make no false statement therein.'

These words of Papias are supported by other second century writers as well as by an examination of the gospel itself, which accords very well with the view that it is the record by another hand of the recollections of Peter.

Two of the other three, Matthew and Luke, have much in common with Mark, so that these three gospels are often called 'Synoptic', meaning that they can be viewed together. In fact it seems extremely likely that both the author of Matthew's Gospel and Luke had Mark's Gospel in front of them when they wrote their accounts of the life of Jesus Christ. For of the 661 verses of Mark's Gospel (the last twelve and five others singly are later additions) about 600 are to be found, abridged but more or less unchanged, in Matthew and about 380 in Luke. Matthew and Luke also generally follow Mark's order — so that occasionally Matthew diverges from Mark and Luke, and Luke from Mark and Matthew, but never do Matthew and Luke together diverge from Mark's order.

Besides using Mark as a source, Matthew and Luke appear to have another common source, for apart from what we presume they borrowed from Mark there are about 250 verses which are common to both. Nothing certain is known of this source, which scholars refer to as 'Q.', from the German word for source, Quelle. It is a theoretical document that is held to exist because this is the easiest

way of explaining how Matthew and Luke have these 250 or so verses in common which do not appear in Mark. However, it has been suggested that 'Q.' might well be an early composition of Matthew, which was later incorporated by an unknown writer in the gospel traditionally ascribed to Matthew, as well as used by Luke. The evidence for such a document again comes from Papias:

‘So then Matthew recorded the oracles [or sayings, or discourses - the Greek word is Logia] in the Hebrew tongue and each interpreted them to the best of his ability.’

If it is true that this compilation of Matthew is to be identified with 'Q.', it would explain how the first gospel came to be ascribed to Matthew, for many scholars find it difficult to believe that the final version, as found in our Bibles, was wholly the work of Matthew, because of the extent of its dependence upon Mark. Indeed it would have been strange for one of the original twelve apostles, and an eye-witness of Jesus, to have used so much of the work of a man who was neither of these.

Luke's Gospel was the first part of a two-part work, the second part being the Acts of the Apostles. Luke was Paul's companion in much of his journeyings and obtained a great deal of his material for the Acts from him. As regards his gospel, in addition to what we have already noted, Luke's own words tell us more of the background of his writing:

Seeing that many have attempted to draw up a narrative of the facts which are received with full assurance among us on the authority of those who were from the beginning eye-witnesses and were devoted to the service of the divine Message, it has seemed right to me also, after careful investigation of the facts from their commencement, to write for you, most noble Theophilus, a connected account, that you may

fully know the truth of the things which you have been taught by word of mouth.

It is impossible to state with any confidence exactly the date of Matthew and Luke, but a date for both somewhere near A.D. 70 would probably be not far wrong.

When one comes to John's Gospel one enters upon a topic of a complexity beyond the scope of this introduction. There has been much discussion concerning its authorship and date, but in spite of this there do not, to the present writer at any rate, seem to be any really compelling reasons for rejecting the traditional view: that it was written, or caused to be written, by the apostle John some time after the other three, say around A.D. 90, at Ephesus. It seems probable that John knew the other gospels and did not want to go over ground already covered, for only one story outside the narrative of the crucifixion and resurrection appears in John which also appears in the others. John's Gospel is a very personal account of specially chosen events, and often it is difficult to know whether the words used are meant to be taken as those of Jesus or those of the author himself. While the other gospels seem, in many ways, intended for those already Christians — Matthew has a very Jewish outlook, Mark less so, and Luke a distinctly Gentile orientation — John's Gospel seems directed at the non-Christian and was written, the author states, that the reader 'might believe'.

This, very briefly, is how the gospels particularly, and the New Testament as a whole, came to be written. Of course these conclusions are based on internal as well as external evidence. But they are the sort of considerations, which, if applied by historians to any other book of comparable antiquity, would be accepted as having an undeniable validity.

With this information we can now go on to the question of how sure we can be that what we find today written in our Bibles does in fact correspond accurately to what was originally set down by the authors of the New Testament. In spite of what has been said in describing the content of the New Testament, there may still be the suspicion in some minds that it is all a clever hoax.

The Manuscripts of the New Testament

As we have said, there are billions of Bibles in existence today. There are probably very few readers of this book who do not possess one, or have access to one. It is also probable that the copy you possess is a translation of the original Greek and Hebrew, in which the writers of the Biblical books wrote, called the Authorized Version. This translation was completed in 1611 and used the works of previous translators, mainly Tyndale, and, to a much lesser degree, Coverdale. These men were the first to translate the Bible into English directly from the original languages. The very few previous translations, for example that of Wycliffe, had been from a Latin version of the Bible called the Vulgate.

Now the history of Biblical manuscripts is a large subject, so it will help if we leave aside the Old Testament and concentrate on the New. Before printing came to Europe in the fifteenth century all books were written by hand; the word ‘manuscript’ means, strictly speaking, something written by hand. The making of books before printing was used was an extremely laborious business, and books were very scarce and very expensive, and normally were only to be found in places like monasteries, universities, and palaces. The first

printed version of the New Testament in its original Greek was produced by Erasmus in 1516. His work was based on those manuscripts which he had been able to collect, and it was this that Tyndale used. Since 1516 there have been many publications of the Greek New Testament, as the discovery of more ancient manuscripts made some small changes seem desirable. An up-to-date copy today would include all the most recent findings, and would represent the result of meticulous comparisons made by thousands of scholars since Erasmus' day. But what do we know of the New Testament prior to 1516? How many of the manuscripts written before that date survive to this day, and just how old are they?

One can answer these questions fairly exactly. There are about five thousand manuscripts containing either the whole or part of the New Testament, and they date from the first half of the second century onwards. The earliest fragment, containing a few verses from John's Gospel, has been dated at around A.D. 130. Manuscripts containing parts of Luke, John, and the letters of Peter and Jude, are dated around A.D. 200. There are third-century manuscripts with more or less the rest of the New Testament. The material on which these writings were copied is called papyrus. It was made from a reed which grew largely in Egypt; strips of the pith were glued over strips placed at right angles to them, to make separate sheets which were then glued together into rolls which varied in length according to the needs of the writer, up to a maximum of about thirty feet. Papyrus will only survive under certain conditions of dry climate, such as those found in Egypt or Palestine. That some papyri have survived so long is a remarkable thing. However, in the fourth century another writing material, which had not been used a great deal previously, came into popular use. This was vellum, what we would call parchment, made from

the skins of suitable animals. Vellum was arranged in leaves placed on top of each other and bound like a modern book. Such a book is called a codex. Another most important event of the fourth century was the recognition by the Roman Emperor Constantine of Christianity as a permissible religion in 313, which was soon followed by its adoption as the Roman Empire's official religion. This naturally caused a great demand for the Christian writings to be made widely available, and many codices of the New Testament were produced. Vellum survives much more readily than papyrus, and from the fourth century onwards we have ample manuscript evidence of the text of the New Testament. There is a complete vellum copy of the New Testament dated as fourth century in the British Museum, for example, (it is called the *Codex Sinaiticus*) and another almost complete New Testament codex in the Vatican Library (the *Codex Vaticanus*). We possess four codices dated as fifth century, one of which is in the Cambridge University Library. And so on ... to detail the evidence after these dates is clearly unnecessary. Besides pieces of paper on which the New Testament has been copied out, and which by modern methods can be dated with considerable accuracy, there is another form of evidence which is very valuable. This is where we possess writings which can be dated by the lifetime of their authors, and usually much more precisely than that, and which actually quote parts of the New Testament. Thus a letter written by Clement, bishop of Rome, around a.D. 96, has quotations from ten books of the New Testament, possibly more. About the same number of books (but not all the same ones) have quotations from them appearing in a letter written by Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, in A.D. 115. In a letter written by Polycarp to the Philippians around A.D. 120 sixteen books of the New Testament appear in quotation. From then on throughout the second century there are writings which quote from all the books of the New Testament. Clearly, from all this is is

impossible to believe that the New Testament was written later than the second half of the first century, with the majority of the books written within forty years of the events they describe, in other words within the lifetime of many thousands of eye-witnesses.

Conclusion

The point of this introduction has been to show that there are certain things that we just cannot dismiss. There can be no doubt that Jesus really lived, that certain people were willing to die for the belief that he had risen from the dead and was the Son of God, and that the stories of Jesus' deeds and words were spread, both orally and in writing, while it was easily possible to verify their truth. It is of course still possible for us to hold that these beliefs were mistaken, but we would be very narrow-minded if we decided in advance of studying the records that this was the case. The scientific method of study is first observation, then the forming of a theory to explain the observed facts, and finally the testing of the theory. Our first task must be to find out what the gospels actually say.

How can we then find out what really happened, as it all happened so long ago? The job of a historian is very difficult. When all the documents relating to a particular event have been studied, and obvious inconsistencies ruled out, he must in the end work on probabilities. Given my knowledge of human behaviour, he asks himself, what is the most likely thing to have happened in this situation? And even then he knows he is not always going to be right. This leads us to one crucial question — that of miracles. Many assume that a miracle is, by definition, something that cannot happen, and they therefore refuse ever to believe in one. The word

‘miracle’ actually means simply ‘something wonderful’, and we often use it in everyday language in this way, talking of, for example, ‘the miracles of modern science’. When Christians talk about miracles in the gospels, they do not mean that the scientifically observable laws of nature were suspended; they believe rather that there was another factor operating which must be taken into account, namely the direct activity of God. If this really was so, if it is true that in the person of Jesus Christ the God of creation was literally present on earth, what would we expect to happen? It seems to me that it would be more surprising that nothing wonderful should happen.

If Jesus was nothing more than an ordinary human being, I agree, miracles would be a real problem. The important question is — was he? How can we decide on that? In two ways, I think. First we can study the gospels with a view to judging for ourselves, weighing the probabilities as a historian would, whether it is more consistent to look on Jesus as merely human or a great deal more than human. Some one has pointed out that if Jesus was not what he said he was, then either he was insane or else the cruellest man in history, knowingly to lead so many astray — to put it more simply, either mad or bad.

The second way of answering the question is based on one’s own experience. Christians are usually not convinced that Jesus is the Son of God merely on the grounds of their historical judgment. They find that in responding to the claims of Christ and opening their hearts to him, they do grasp a reality. They are aware within them of a friend, and a transformation of themselves, gradually, painfully sometimes, and never magically, with fear giving place to trust and selfishness to love. It is this transforming friendship that confirms their first tentative hopes of a transforming friend.

In this book no one is preaching at you, or trying to bend your mind to think in a particular way. The hope simply is to give you the opportunity of making your own mind up about the one who, by any reckoning, is the most important figure in history.

PART ONE - The Life

CHAPTER ONE

The Time Has Come

Words like 'The time has come' can only be spoken in a situation of expectancy. These were the first recorded words of Jesus' public ministry, and what the people he spoke to were waiting and hoping for was 'the kingdom of God', which Jesus declared was now at hand.

Then, after John had been thrown into prison, Jesus came into Galilee proclaiming God's Good News. "The time has fully come," he said, "and the Kingdom of God is close at hand: repent, and believe this Good News. (1)

To understand the impact that these words of Jesus had upon his hearers, we must look into the beliefs of Jesus' contemporaries. The Jews of Jesus' day looked forward to the time when their centuries of subjection to foreign powers would end, and God would set up His rule over all the nations from Jerusalem, and universal peace would be established. So what the coming of 'the kingdom of God' meant to the Jews at that time was a visible kingdom in which God would exercise dominion over all the world through His chosen people. Their scriptures spoke also of a kingly figure, one like David, who would bring in this new age, and it became customary to call this figure the Messiah, or Anointed One.

These then were the hopes that would be rekindled by an announcement such as Jesus made. But it would be wrong to suppose that Jesus necessarily meant exactly the same by the

phrase 'the kingdom of God' as his hearers. To them it was an earthly and visible kingdom, but not so to Jesus. He later spoke of the kingdom as something to be received.

In solemn truth I tell you that no one who does not receive the Kingdom of God like a little child will by any possibility enter it. (2)

Dismiss your fears, little flock: your Father finds a pleasure in giving you the Kingdom. (3)

He spoke of it as something to be entered, not by taking a journey, but by one's obedience to God's will.

For I assure you that unless your righteousness greatly surpasses that of the Scribes and the Pharisees, you will certainly not find entrance into the Kingdom of the Heavens (4)

Not every one who says to me, 'Master, Master,' will enter the Kingdom of the Heavens, but only those who are obedient to my Father who is in Heaven. (5)

Note that 'the kingdom of the Heavens' in Matthew's gospel has the same meaning as 'the kingdom of God' in the others. Jesus proclaimed even that the kingdom had 'come upon them' and was 'in the midst of them', though at the time the Jews were as far from having dominion over other nations as at any time in their history.

Clearly Jesus did not mean an earthly kingdom. Another meaning of the Greek word translated 'kingdom' (basileia) is 'kingly power'. So the phrase 'the kingdom of God' should be understood as meaning God's kingly power, God's right or authority to rule. To 'receive the kingdom of God' means to accept the rule of God in one's life. We do well to bear in mind this distinction between what Jesus meant, and what many of those

around him probably thought he meant, as we read further into the narrative of Jesus' life and teaching.

CHAPTER TWO

The Forerunner

There was besides Jesus another whose message was: 'The kingdom of God is at hand', and that was John the Baptist. The Old Testament had foretold that there would be such a person to 'prepare the way of the Lord'. His birth was so special that an angel was sent to prepare his father for the arrival of this son, and his particular tasks.

There was in the time of Herod, the king of Judaea, a priest of the name of Zechariah, belonging to the class of Abijah. He had a wife who was a descendant of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. They were both of them upright before God, blamelessly obeying all the Lord's precepts and ordinances. But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren; and both of them were far advanced in life. Now while he was doing priestly duty before God in the prescribed course of his class, it fell to his lot—according to the custom of the priesthood—to go into the Sanctuary of the Lord and burn the incense; and the whole multitude of the people were outside praying, at the hour of incense.

Then there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense; and Zechariah on seeing him was agitated and terrified. But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your petition has been heard: and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to call his name John. Gladness and exultant joy shall be yours, and many will rejoice over his birth. For he will be great in the sight of the Lord; no wine or fermented drink shall he ever drink; but he will be filled with the Holy Spirit from the very hour of his birth. Many of the descendants of Israel will he turn to the Lord

their God; and he will be His forerunner in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn fathers' hearts to the children, and cause the rebellious to walk in the wisdom of the upright, to make a people perfectly ready for the lord."

"By what proof," asked Zechariah, "shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is far advanced in years." "I am Gabriel, who stand in the presence of God," answered the angel, "and I have been sent to talk with you and tell you this good news. And now you will be dumb and unable to speak until the day when this has taken place; because you did not believe my words—words which will be fulfilled at their appointed time."

Meanwhile the people were waiting for Zechariah, and were surprised that he stayed so long in the Sanctuary. When, however, he came out, he was unable to speak to them; and they knew that he must have seen a vision in the Sanctuary; but he kept making signs to them and continued dumb. When his days of service were at an end, he went to his home; and in course of time his wife Elizabeth conceived, and kept herself secluded five months. "Thus has the Lord dealt with me," she said, "now that He has graciously taken away my reproach among men." (6)

This identification of John with the Old Testament prophet Elijah was endorsed by Jesus

For all the Prophets and the Law taught until John. And (if you are willing to receive it) he is the Elijah who was to come. (7)

"Why then," asked the disciples, "do the Scribes say that Elijah must first come?" "Elijah was indeed to come," He replied, "and would reform everything. But I tell you that he has already come, and they did not recognize him, but dealt with him as they chose. And before long the Son of Man will be treated by them in a similar way." Then it

dawned upon the disciples that it was John the Baptist about whom he had spoken to them. (8)

But John himself was too modest (perhaps) to accept this identification.

This also is John's testimony, when the Jews sent to him a deputation of Priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him who he was. He avowed—he did not conceal the truth, but avowed, "I am not the Christ." "What then?" they inquired; "are you Elijah?" "I am not," he said. "Are you the Prophet?" "No," he answered. So they pressed the question. "Who are you?" they said—"that we may take an answer to those who sent us. What account do you give of yourself?"

"I am the voice," he replied, "of one crying aloud, 'Make straight the Lord's way in the Desert,' fulfilling the words of the Prophet Isaiah." They were Pharisees who had been sent. Again they questioned him. "Why then do you baptize," they said, "if you are neither the Christ nor Elijah nor the Prophet?" "I baptize in water only," John answered, "but in your midst stands One whom you do not know— He who is to come after me, and whose sandal-strap I am not worthy to unfasten." This conversation took place at Bethany beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing. (9)

Luke gives us this account of John's birth.

Now when Elizabeth's full time was come, she gave birth to a son; and her neighbours and relatives heard how the Lord had had great compassion on her; and they rejoiced with her. And on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and were going to call him Zechariah, after his father. His mother, however, said, "No, he is to be called John." "There is not one of your family," they said, "who has that name." They asked his father by signs what he wished him to be called. So he asked for a writing-tablet, and wrote, "His name is John." And they all wondered.

Instantly his mouth and his tongue were set free, and he began to speak and bless God. And all who lived round about them were filled with awe, and throughout the hill country of Judaea reports of all these things were spread abroad. All who heard the story treasured it in their memories. "What then will this child be?" they said. For the lord's hand was indeed with him. (10)

Luke also goes on to bring out in the inspired utterances of John's father Zechariah the immense importance of what his son will do.

And Zechariah his father was filled with the Holy Spirit, and spoke in a rapture of praise. "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel," he said, "Because He has not forgotten His people but has effected redemption for them, And has raised up a mighty Deliverer for us In the house of David His servant— As He has spoken from all time by the lips of His holy Prophets— To deliver us from our foes and from the power of all who hate us. He dealt pitifully with our forefathers, And remembered His holy covenant, The oath which He swore to Abraham our forefather, To grant us to be rescued from the power of our foes And so render worship to Him free from fear, In piety and uprightness before Him all our days. And you moreover, O child, shall be called Prophet of the Most High; For you shall go on in front before the Lord to prepare the way for Him, To give to His People a knowledge of salvation In the forgiveness of their sins, Through the tender compassion of our God, Through which the daybreak from on high will come to us, Dawning on those who now dwell in the darkness and shadow of death—To direct our feet into the path of peace."

And the child grew and became strong in character, and lived in the Desert till the time came for him to appear publicly to Israel. (11)

Then, at the appointed time John appears at the river Jordan preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. Both

Matthew and Luke record quite detailed summaries of his preaching. He warned people, particularly the Pharisees and Sadducees (the religious leaders of the day), of the judgment of God that was at hand, in which not even the fact of being members of God's chosen nation would avail those whose lives lacked the 'fruit' of goodness. He taught unselfish charity, honesty in commerce, and gentleness, to those from whom it might least be expected. But above all he pointed away from himself to the one mightier than he, whose baptism (a word that means drenching or soaking) would not be, as his was, with water, but with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

About this time John the Baptist made his appearance, preaching in the Desert of Judaea. "Repent," he said, "for the Kingdom of the Heavens is now close at hand." He it is who was spoken of through the Prophet Isaiah when he said, "The voice of one crying aloud, 'In the desert prepare ye a road for the Lord: make His highway straight.'" This man John wore a garment of camel's hair, and a loincloth of leather; and he lived upon locusts and wild honey. Then large numbers of people went out to him—people from Jerusalem and from all Judaea, and from the whole of the Jordan valley— and were baptized by him in the Jordan, making full confession of their sins.

But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he exclaimed, "O vipers' brood, who has warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Therefore let your lives prove your change of heart; and do not imagine that you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our forefather,' for I tell you that God can raise up descendants for Abraham from these stones. And already the axe is lying at the root of the trees, so that every tree which does not produce good fruit will quickly be hewn down and thrown into the fire.

I indeed am baptizing you in water on a profession of repentance; but He who is coming after me is mightier than I: His sandals I am not

worthy to carry for a moment; He will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and in fire. His winnowing-shovel is in His hand, and He will make a thorough clearance of His threshing-floor, gathering His wheat into the storehouse, but burning up the chaff in unquenchable fire." (12)

Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being Governor of Judaea, Herod Tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip Tetrarch of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias Tetrarch of Abilene, during the High-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, a message from God came to John, the son of Zechariah, in the Desert. John went into all the district about the Jordan proclaiming a baptism of the penitent for the forgiveness of sins; as it is written in the book of the prophet Isaiah, "The voice of one crying aloud! 'In the Desert prepare ye a road for the Lord: make His highway straight. Every ravine shall be filled up, and every mountain and hill levelled down, the crooked places shall be turned into straight roads, and the rugged ways into smooth; and then shall all mankind see God's salvation.'"

Accordingly John used to say to the crowds who came out to be baptized by him, "O vipers' brood, who has warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Live lives which shall prove your change of heart; and do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our forefather,' for I tell you that God can raise up descendants for Abraham from these stones. And even now the axe is lying at the root of the trees, so that every tree which fails to yield good fruit will quickly be hewn down and thrown into the fire." The crowds repeatedly asked him, "What then are we to do?"

"Let the man who has two coats," he answered, "give one to the man who has none; and let the man who has food share it with others." There came also a party of tax-gatherers to be baptized, and they asked him, "Rabbi, what are we to do?" "Do not exact more than the legal amount," he replied. The soldiers also once and again inquired of him, "And we, what are we to do?" His answer was, "Neither intimidate any one nor lay false charges; and be content with your pay."

And while the people were in suspense and all were debating in their minds whether John might possibly be the Anointed One, he answered the question by saying to them all, "As for me, I am baptizing you with water, but One mightier than I is coming, whose very sandal-strap I am not worthy to unfasten: He will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and with fire. His winnowing-shovel is in His hand to clear out His threshing-floor, and to gather the wheat into His storehouse; but the chaff He will burn up in fire unquenchable." With many exhortations besides these he declared the Good News to the people. (13)

Many flocked to hear his bold preaching and to be baptized. Herod, a Roman appointed ruler, noted these activities.

And he would have liked to put him to death, but was afraid of the people, because they regarded John as a Prophet. (14)

They were afraid of the people; for all agreed in holding John to have been really a Prophet. (15)

But John's forthright condemnation of evil was to cause his arrest by Herod, which eventually led to his death.

With many exhortations besides these he declared the Good News to the people. But Herod the Tetrarch, being repeatedly rebuked by him about Herodias his brother's wife, and about all the wicked deeds that he had done, now added this to crown all the rest, that he threw John into prison. (16)

About that time Herod the Tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus, and he said to his courtiers, "This is John the Baptist: he has come back to life—and that is why these miraculous Powers are working in him." For Herod had arrested John, and had put him in chains, and imprisoned him, for the sake of Herodias his brother Philip's wife, because John had persistently said to him, "It is not lawful for you to have her." And he would have liked to put him to death, but was afraid of the people,

because they regarded John as a Prophet.

But when Herod's birthday came, the daughter of Herodias danced before all the company, and so pleased Herod that with an oath he promised to give her whatever she asked. So she, instigated by her mother, said, "Give me here on a dish the head of John the Baptist." The king was deeply vexed, yet because of his repeated oath and of the guests at his table he ordered it to be given her, and he sent and beheaded John in the prison. The head was brought on a dish and given to the young girl, and she took it to her mother. Then John's disciples went and removed the body and buried it, and came and informed Jesus. (17)

John fades from the picture after his arrest, and Jesus holds the centre stage, but not before John had fulfilled his appointed task.

Just at that time Jesus, coming from Galilee to the Jordan, presents Himself to John to be baptized by him. John protested. "It is I," he said, "who have need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" "Let it be so on this occasion," Jesus replied; "for so we ought to fulfil every religious duty." Then he consented; and Jesus was baptized, and immediately went up from the water. At that moment the heavens opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him, while a voice came from Heaven, saying, "This is My Son, the dearly loved, in whom is My delight." (18)

John's gospel now brings out most fully the testimony the baptist bore to the 'Son of God.'

The next day John saw Jesus coming towards him and exclaimed, "Look, that is the Lamb of God who is to take away the sin of the world! This is He about whom I said, 'After me is to come One who has been put before me, because He was before me.' I did not yet know Him; but that He may be openly shown to Israel is the reason why I have come baptizing in water." John also gave testimony by stating: "I

have seen the Spirit coming down like a dove out of Heaven; and it remained upon Him. I did not yet know Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, "'The One on whom you see the Spirit coming down, and remaining, He it is who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.' "This I have seen, and I have become a witness that He is the Son of God." Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples, when he saw Jesus passing by, and said, "Look! that is the Lamb of God!" (19)

The title 'Lamb of God' shows that John not only realised the true identity of Jesus, but had also an insight into the sacrificial death that would be his fate.

Finally, the words of Jesus sum up the greatness of this man.

He was the lamp that burned and shone, and for a time you were willing to be gladdened by his light. (20)

When the messengers had taken their leave, Jesus proceeded to say to the multitude concerning John, "What did you go out into the Desert to gaze at? A reed waving in the wind? But what did you go out to see? A man luxuriously dressed? Those who wear luxurious clothes are to be found in kings' palaces. But why did you go out? To see a prophet? Yes, I tell you, and far more than a prophet. This is he of whom it is written, "'See I am sending My messenger before Thy face, and he will make Thy road ready before Thee.' "I solemnly tell you that among all of woman born no greater has ever been raised up than John the Baptist; yet one who is of lower rank in the Kingdom of the Heavens is greater than he. But from the time of John the Baptist till now, the Kingdom of the Heavens has been suffering violent assault, and the violent have been seizing it by force. For all the Prophets and the Law taught until John. And (if you are willing to receive it) he is the Elijah who was to come. Listen, every one who has ears!

"But to what shall I compare the present generation? It is like children

sitting in the open places, who call to their playmates. "'We have played the flute to you,' they say, 'and you have not danced: we have sung dirges, and you have not beaten your breasts.' "For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon.' The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they exclaim, 'See this man! — given to gluttony and tippling, and a friend of tax-gatherers and notorious sinners!' And yet Wisdom is vindicated by her actions." (21)

What did the baptism of Jesus by John mean? To John, clearly, it was the climax and consummation of his work, but what was it to Jesus? Certainly Jesus was not baptized because he needed any sins forgiven, as John himself saw. The words of Jesus that it was 'to fulfil every religious duty' indicate that He saw it as part of God's will, to identify Himself with the lost souls who were coming to John visibly expressing their repentance and desire for cleansing. We meet this sort of identification in other parts of the gospel story.

When He was sitting at table in Levi's house, a large number of tax-gatherers and notorious sinners were at table with Jesus and His disciples; for there were many such who habitually followed Him. But when the Scribes of the Pharisee sect saw Him eating with the sinners and the tax-gatherers, they said to His disciples, "He is eating and drinking with the tax-gatherers and sinners!" Jesus heard the words, and He said, "It is not the healthy who require a doctor, but the sick: I did not come to appeal to the righteous, but to sinners." (22)

Here is a clue to understanding what was happening when Jesus allowed Himself to be crucified.

CHAPTER THREE

The Witnesses

The first meeting of Jesus with some of his disciples was when two disciples of John the Baptist, Andrew the brother of Simon Peter, and one unnamed man who was probably the disciple John, heard the testimony of John the Baptist and followed Jesus.

Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples, when he saw Jesus passing by, and said, "Look! that is the Lamb of God!" The two disciples heard his exclamation, and they followed Jesus. Then Jesus turned round, and seeing them following He asked them, "What is your wish?" "Rabbi," they replied—"Rabbi' means 'Teacher' —"where are you staying?" "Come and you shall see," He said. So they went and saw where He was staying, and they remained and spent that day with Him. It was then about ten o'clock in the morning. (23)

Then Andrew brought his brother to Jesus.

Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard John's exclamation and followed Jesus. He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah!" —that is to say, the Anointed One. He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon, son of John: you shall be called Cephas" —that is to say, Peter (or 'Rock'). (24)

And on the next day Jesus called Philip and Nathanael

The next day, having decided to leave Bethany and go into Galilee, Jesus found Philip, and invited him to follow Him. (Now Philip came

from Bethsaida, the same town as Andrew and Peter.) Then Philip found Nathanael, and said to him, "We have found him about whom Moses in the Law wrote, as well as the Prophets—Jesus, the son of Joseph, a man of Nazareth." "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" replied Nathanael. "Come and see," said Philip. Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, and said of him, "Look! here is a true Israelite, in whom there is no deceitfulness!" "How do you know me?" Nathanael asked. "Before Philip called you," said Jesus, "when you were under the fig-tree I saw you." "Rabbi," cried Nathanael, "you are the Son of God, you are Israel's King!" "Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig-tree,'" replied Jesus, "do you believe? You shall see greater things than that." "I tell you all in most solemn truth," He added, "that you shall see Heaven opened wide, and God's angels going up, and coming down to the Son of Man." (25)

Nathanael is presumably the same man who is called Bartholomew (the prefix Bar means 'son of'), since he is linked with Philip, in the complete list of the twelve given in Matthew's gospel.

Now the names of the twelve Apostles were these: first, Simon called Peter, and his brother Andrew; James the son of Zabdi, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew, Thomas and Matthew the tax-gatherer, James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Cananaean, and Judas the Iscariot, who also betrayed Him. (26)

This first meeting, in which John brings out their recognition of Jesus as the Messiah, explains the readiness with which they left their occupation as fishermen when Jesus later called them to follow him.

One day, passing along the shore of the Lake of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew, Simon's brother, throwing their nets in the Lake; for they were fisherman. "Come and follow me," said Jesus, "and I will make you fishers for men." At once they left their nets and followed

Him. Going on a little further He saw James the son of Zabdi and his brother John: they also were in the boat mending the nets, and He immediately called them. They therefore left their father Zabdi in the boat with the hired men, and went and followed Him. (27)

Luke's version of this lakeside call includes a miracle that Mark and Matthew do not mention.

On one occasion the crowd was pressing on Him and listening to God's Message, while He was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret. He, however, saw two fishing-boats drawn up on the beach (for the men had gone away from them and were washing the nets), and going on board one of them, which was Simon's He asked him to push out a little from land. Then He sat down and taught the crowd of people from the boat.

When He had finished speaking, He said to Simon, "Push out into deep water, and let down your nets for a haul." "Rabbi," replied Peter, "all night long we have worked hard and caught nothing; but at your command I will let down the nets." This they did, and enclosed a vast number of fish; and their nets began to break. So they signalled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them; they came, and they filled both the boats so that they almost sank. When Simon Peter saw this, he fell down at the knees of Jesus, and exclaimed, "Master, leave my boat, for I am a sinful man." (For he was astonished and terrified—he and all his companions—at the haul of fish which they had taken; and so were Simon's partners James and John, the sons of Zabdi.) But Jesus replied to Simon, "Fear not: from this time you shall be a catcher of men." Then, after bringing their boats to land, they left everything and followed Him. (28)

We are also told of the call of Matthew.

Passing on thence Jesus saw a man called Matthew sitting at the Toll Office, and said to him, "Follow me." And he arose, and followed

Him. (29)

The reason behind the calling of these twelve men (the number itself being significant, pointing to them as founders of the New Israel, or people of God, corresponding to the twelve sons of Jacob who were the leaders of the twelve tribes under the first covenant) is perhaps best seen in the names given to them. They are first called disciples, i.e. ones who learn, and then apostles, i.e. ones who are sent out. But another, and in many ways more important, name given to them comes in a statement of Jesus recorded in the first chapter of Luke's sequel (The Acts of the Apostles): 'you will be my witnesses.'

They were to be witnesses because, when the time came for the preaching of the Good News, what they proclaimed was not so much a creed as a person, and what he had done: 'Jesus Christ and him crucified.' To be with Jesus and to observe all that he did and taught was what mattered. While they were with him they often lacked both understanding and faith.

"Have I been so long among you," Jesus answered, "and yet you, Philip, do not know me? He who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you ask me, 'Cause us to see the Father'?" (30)

"Do you all miss the meaning of this parable?" He added; "how then will you understand the rest of my parables?" (31)

Then He went on board a fishing-boat, and His disciples followed Him. But suddenly there arose a great storm on the Lake, so that the waves threatened to engulf the boat; but He was asleep. So they came and woke Him, crying, "Master, save us, we are drowning!" "Why are you so easily frightened," He replied, "you men of little faith?" Then He rose and rebuked the winds and the waves, and there was a perfect calm; and the men, filled with amazement, exclaimed, "What kind of

man is this? for the very winds and waves obey him!" (32)

When they had returned to the people, there came to Him a man who fell on his knees before Him and besought Him. "Sir," he said, "have pity on my son, for he is an epileptic and is very ill. Often he falls into the fire and often into the water. I have brought him to your disciples, and they have not been able to cure him." "O unbelieving and perverse generation!" replied Jesus; "how long shall I be with you? how long shall I endure you? Bring him to me." Then Jesus reprimanded the demon, and it came out and left him; and the boy was cured from that moment. Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and asked Him, "Why could not we expel the demon?" "Because your faith is so small," He replied; "for I solemnly declare to you that if you have faith like a mustard-seed, you shall say to this mountain, 'Remove from this place to that,' and it will remove; and nothing shall be impossible to you. But an evil spirit of this kind is only driven out by prayer and fasting." (33)

This understanding and faith would later be supplied by their risen Lord and by the Holy Spirit.

And He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you—that everything must be fulfilled that is written in the Law of Moses and in the Prophets and the Psalms concerning me." Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and He said, "Thus it is written that the Christ would suffer and on the third day rise again from among the dead; and that proclamation would be made, in His name, of repentance and forgiveness of sins to all the nations, beginning in Jerusalem. You are witnesses as to these things. And remember that I am about to send out my Father's promised gift to rest upon you. But, as for you, wait patiently in the city until you are clothed with power from on high." (34)

But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send at my request, will teach you everything, and will bring to your memories all

that I have said to you. (35)

But when He has come—the Spirit of Truth—He will guide you into all the truth. For He will not speak as Himself originating what He says, but all that He hears He will speak, and He will make known the future to you. (36)

So although they recognised Jesus as their Messiah, they failed all along to understand the true nature of his mission.

"As for you, store these my sayings in your memory; for, before long, the Son of Man will be betrayed into the hands of men." But they did not understand His meaning: it was veiled from them that they might not perceive it, and they were afraid to ask Him about it. (37)

Finally he was denied by their leader, and forsaken by the rest, to say nothing of his betrayal by Judas.

But Jesus, at the Last Supper, though he knew all that had happened and would happen through their lack of faith, knew also the transformation of the Holy Spirit which was to be theirs at Pentecost, and without which they would be for ever powerless. Thus he was able to say of them:

And you also are witnesses, because you have been with me from the first. (38)

And ultimately the rewards due to them would be theirs.

You however have remained with me amid my trials; and I covenant to give you, as my Father has covenanted to give me, a Kingdom— so that you shall eat and drink at my table in my Kingdom, and sit on thrones as judges over the twelve tribes of Israel. (39)

CHAPTER FOUR

The Signs

Now that the first of the witnesses have been called to his side, Jesus begins his ministry in earnest. His preaching astounded people by its note of authority.

So they came to Capernaum, and on the next Sabbath He went to the synagogue and began to teach. The people listened with amazement to His teaching—for there was authority about it: it was very different from that of the Scribes. (40)

Even more impressive was the authority of his spiritual power, by which he cast out the foul spirit from the man in the synagogue at Capernaum, and from others later.

All at once, there in their synagogue, a man under the power of a foul spirit screamed out: "What have you to do with us, Jesus the Nazarene? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—God's Holy One." But Jesus reprimanded him, saying, "Silence! come out of him." So the foul spirit, after throwing the man into convulsions, came out of him with a loud cry. And all were amazed and awe-struck, so they began to ask one another, "What does this mean? Here is a new sort of teaching—and a tone of authority! And even to foul spirits he issues orders and they obey him!" (41>

Then He cured numbers of people who were ill with various diseases, and He drove out many demons; not allowing the demons to speak, because they knew who He was. (42)

The power over disease which he revealed brought people thronging wherever he went to receive his healing.

Then on leaving the synagogue they came at once, with James and John, to the house of Simon and Andrew. Now Simon's mother-in-law was ill in bed with a fever, and without delay they informed Him about her. So He went to her, and taking her hand He raised her to her feet: the fever left her, and she began to wait upon them. When it was evening, after sunset people came bringing Him all who were sick and the demoniacs; and the whole town was assembled at the door. (43)

One day there came a leper to Jesus entreating Him, and pleading on his knees. "If you are willing," he said, "you are able to cleanse me." Moved with pity Jesus reached out His hand and touched him. "I am willing," He said; "be cleansed." The leprosy at once left him, and he was cleansed. Jesus at once sent him away, strictly charging him, and saying, "Be careful not to tell any one, but go and show yourself to the Priest, and for your purification present the offerings that Moses appointed as evidence for them." But the man, when he went out, began to tell every one and to publish the matter abroad, so that it was no longer possible for Jesus to go openly into any town; but He had to remain outside in unfrequented places, where people came to Him from all parts. (44)

In a matter of days, at a time when all news passed by word of mouth, there could have been few who had not heard of him and what he was doing.

And His fame spread at once everywhere in all that part of Galilee.
(45)

But there is a trace in the narrative of an attitude on the part of Jesus which might at first sight appear strange. He refused to permit the testimony of the demons that he had come from God to be heard. He appeared to hurry away from the scene after

performing miracles, in order - it seems - to escape from the admiration, or even adoration, of the crowds.

In the morning He rose early, while it was still quite dark, and leaving the house He went away to a solitary place and there prayed. And Simon and the others searched everywhere for Him. When they found Him they said, "Every one is looking for you." "Let us go elsewhere, to the neighbouring country towns," He replied, "that I may proclaim my Message there also; because for that purpose I came from God." And He went through all Galilee, preaching in the synagogues and expelling the demons. (46)

Finally we saw in the account of the healing of a leper the first of many instances where he forbids (unsuccessfully) someone who has been healed to tell people about it.

We can seek an explanation of this in the account of the encounter Jesus had already had, prior to starting his ministry, with the 'Prince of Demons':

At that time Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the Desert in order to be tempted by the Devil. There He fasted for forty days and nights; and after that He suffered from hunger. So the Tempter came and said, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to turn into loaves." "It is written," replied Jesus, "'It is not on bread alone that a man shall live, but on whatsoever God shall appoint.'"

Then the Devil took Him to the Holy City and caused Him to stand on the roof of the Temple, and said, "If you are God's Son, throw yourself down; for it is written, "'To His angels He will give orders concerning thee, and on their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any moment thou shouldst strike thy foot against a stone.'" "Again it is written," replied Jesus, "'Thou shalt not put the Lord thy God to the proof.'"

Then the Devil took Him to the top of an exceedingly lofty mountain,

from which he caused Him to see all the Kingdoms of the world and their splendour, and said to Him, "All this I will give you, if you will kneel down and do me homage." "Begone, Satan!" Jesus replied; "for it is written, 'To the Lord thy God thou shalt do homage, and to Him alone shalt thou render worship.'" Thereupon the Devil left Him, and angels at once came and ministered to Him. (47)

Jesus was tempted to accomplish his purposes by the worst means; either by a compromise with the powers of evil, or by setting himself up as a supernatural provider of physical well-being, or by gaining popularity by being a miracle-working wonderman. This last mentioned temptation had - like the others - been rejected. Jesus did not want a following of people who were only awed by his supernatural power.

Now when He was in Jerusalem, at the Festival of the Passover, many became believers in Him through watching the miracles He performed. But for His part, Jesus did not trust Himself to them, because He knew them all, and did not need any one's testimony concerning a man, for He of Himself knew what was in the man. (48)

If this is the case, why did Jesus perform any miracles at all? We get a clue to the answer to this question in this account, again from his early ministry.

After some days He entered Capernaum again, and it soon became known that He was at home; and such numbers of people came together that there was no longer room for them even round the door. He was speaking His Message to them, when there came a party of people bringing a paralytic—four men carrying him. Finding themselves unable, however, to bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, they untiled the roof just over His head, and after clearing an opening they lowered the mat on which the paralytic was lying. Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralytic, "My son, your sins are pardoned."

Now there were some of the Scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts. "Why does this man use such words?" they said; "he is blaspheming. Who can pardon sins but One—that is, God?" At once perceiving by His spirit that they were reasoning within themselves, Jesus asked them, "Why do you thus argue in your minds? Which is easier?—to say to this paralytic, 'Your sins are pardoned,' or to say, 'Rise, take up your mat, and walk?' But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to pardon sins" —He turned to the paralytic, and said, "To you I say, 'Rise, take up your mat and go home.'"

The man rose, and immediately under the eyes of all took up his mat and went out, so that they were all filled with astonishment, gave the glory to God, and said, "We never saw anything like this." (49)

One thing we learn is that Jesus wanted to show people that he had the power (or authority) to forgive sins. But this was not the sort of thing you can prove, even to the man himself, let alone to bystanders. So, in order to show that he can heal a man's soul, Jesus does the nearest thing which definitely can be seen, namely he heals his body. This is a sign, a pointer, that he can do both. In fact in the fourth gospel the word 'sign' is commonly used where the others use the word 'miracle'.

The principle of pointing to a deeper spiritual meaning behind an act of physical healing should therefore be remembered when dealing with what seem very typical stories of healing.

Accordingly Jesus withdrew with His disciples to the Lake, and a vast crowd of people from Galilee followed Him; and from Judaea and Jerusalem and Idumaea and from beyond the Jordan and from the district of Tyre and Sidon there came to Him a vast crowd, hearing of all that He was doing. So He gave directions to His disciples to keep a

small boat in constant attendance on Him because of the throng—to prevent their crushing Him. For He had cured many of the people, so that all who had any ailments pressed upon Him, to touch Him. And the foul spirits, whenever they saw Him, threw themselves down at His feet, screaming out: "You are the Son of God." But He many a time checked them, forbidding them to say who He was. (50)

Having crossed over they drew to land in Gennesaret and came to anchor. But no sooner had they gone ashore than the people immediately recognized Him. Then they scoured the whole district, and began to bring Him the sick on their mats wherever they heard He was. And enter wherever He might—village or town or hamlet—they laid their sick in the open places, and entreated Him to let them touch were it but the tassel of His robe; and all, whoever touched Him, were restored to health. (51)

Returning from the neighbourhood of Tyre, He came by way of Sidon to the Lake of Galilee, passing through the district of the Ten Towns. Here they brought to Him a deaf man that stammered, on whom they begged Him to lay His hands. So Jesus taking him aside, apart from the crowd, put His fingers into his ears, and spat, and moistened his tongue; and looking up to Heaven He sighed, and said to him, "Ephphatha!" (that is, "Open!") And the man's ears were opened, and his tongue became untied, and he began to speak perfectly. Then Jesus charged them to tell no one; but the more He charged them, all the more did they spread the news far and wide. The amazement was extreme. "He succeeds in everything he attempts," they exclaimed; "he even makes deaf men hear and dumb men speak!" (52)

And they came to Bethsaida. And a blind man was brought to Jesus and they entreated Him to touch him. So He took the blind man by the arm and brought him out of the village, and spitting into his eyes He put His hands on him and asked him, "Can you see anything?" He looked up and said, "I can see the people: I see them like trees—only walking." Then for the second time He put His hands on the man's eyes, and the man, looking steadily, recovered his sight and saw

everything distinctly. So He sent him home, and added, "Do not even go into the village." (53)

The opens the eyes of the blind because he wishes to be known and sought as 'the light of the world'.

Once more Jesus addressed them. "I am the Light of the world," He said; "the man who follows me shall certainly not walk in the dark, but shall have the light of Life." (54)

He saves people from disease because he wishes to be loved as 'Saviour' in the deepest sense possible.

While this principle remains generally true, at times it is possible that Jesus' was simply to show that the power of God was present in him and through him.

At that time a demoniac was brought to Him, blind and dumb; and He cured him, so that the dumb man could speak and see. And the crowds of people were all filled with amazement and said, "Can this be the Son of David?" The Pharisees heard it and said, "This man only expels demons by the power of Baal-zebul, the Prince of demons."

Knowing their thoughts He said to them, "Every kingdom in which civil war has raged suffers desolation; and every city or house in which there is internal strife will be brought low. And if Satan is expelling Satan, he has begun to make war on himself: how therefore shall his kingdom last? And if it is by Baal-zebul's power that I expel the demons, by whose power do your disciples expel them? They therefore shall be your judges. But if it is by the power of the Spirit of God that I expel the demons, it is evident that the Kingdom of God has come upon you. Again, how can any one enter the house of a strong man and carry off his goods, unless first of all he masters and secures the strong man: then he will ransack his house. (55)

His purpose was also to show that he was the fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah.

When Jesus had concluded His instructions to His twelve disciples, He left in order to teach and to proclaim His Message in the neighbouring towns. Now John had heard in prison about the Christ's doings, and he sent some of his disciples to inquire: "Are you the Coming One, or is it a different person that we are to expect?" "Go and report to John what you see and hear," replied Jesus; "blind eyes receive sight, and cripples walk; lepers are cleansed, and deaf ears hear; the dead are raised to life, and the poor have the Good News proclaimed to them; and blessed is every one who does not stumble and fall because of my claims." (56)

Jesus' words here are adapted from the prophet Isaiah. The fulfilment of 'setting prisoners free' can be seen in the healing of diseases, but particularly in the casting out of demons. The following episode shows the wonderful release that Jesus' power brought.

So they arrived at the opposite shore of the Lake, in the country of the Gerasenes. At once, on His landing, there came from the tombs to meet Him a man possessed by a foul spirit. This man lived among the tombs, nor could any one now secure him even with a chain; for many a time he had been left securely bound in fetters and chains, but afterwards the chains lay torn link from link, and the fetters in fragments, and there was no one strong enough to master him. And constantly, day and night, he remained among the tombs or on the hills, shrieking, and mangling himself with sharp stones.

And when he saw Jesus in the distance, he ran and threw himself at His feet, crying out in a loud voice, "What hast Thou to do with me, Jesus, Son of God Most High? In God's name I implore Thee not to torment me." For He had said to him, "Foul spirit, come out of the man." Jesus also questioned him. "What is your name?" He said.

"Legion," he replied, "for there are a host of us." And he earnestly entreated Him not to send them away out of the country.

Feeding there, on the mountain slope, was a great herd of swine. So they besought Jesus. "Send us to the swine," they said, "so that we may enter into them." He gave them leave; and the foul spirits came out and entered into the swine, and the herd—about 2,000 in number—rushed headlong down the cliff into the Lake and were drowned in the Lake.

The swineherds fled, and spread the news in town and country. So the people came to see what it was that had happened; and when they came to Jesus, they beheld the demoniac quietly seated, clothed and of sane mind—the man who had had the legion; and they were awe-stricken. And those who had seen it told them the particulars of what had happened to the demoniac, and all about the swine. Then they began entreating Him to depart from their district.

As He was embarking, the man who had been possessed asked permission to accompany Him. But He would not allow it. "Go home to your family," He said, "and report to them all that the Lord has done for you, and the mercy He has shown you." So the man departed, and related publicly everywhere in the Ten Towns all that Jesus had done for him; and all were astonished. (57)

Another aspect of many of the healing stories is that of faith, again showing the miracles not to be the exercise of power for its own sake, but as means of drawing the recipient closer to God.

Leaving that place, Jesus withdrew into the vicinity of Tyre and Sidon. Here a Canaanitish woman of the district came out and persistently cried out, "Sir, Son of David, pity me; my daughter is cruelly harassed by a demon." But He answered her not a word. Then the disciples interposed, and begged Him, saying, "Send her away because she keeps crying behind us." "I have only been sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," He replied.

Then she came and threw herself at His feet and entreated Him. "O Sir, help me," she said.

"It is not right," He said, "to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." "Be it so, Sir," she said, "for even the dogs eat the scraps which fall from their masters' tables." "O woman," replied Jesus, "great is your faith: be it done to you as you desire." And from that moment her daughter was restored to health. (58)

There are three instances in the gospels of Jesus restoring the dead to life.

When Jesus had re-crossed in the boat to the other side, a vast multitude came crowding when there came one of the Wardens of the Synagogue—he was called Jair—who, on beholding Him, threw himself at His feet, and besought Him with many entreaties. "My little daughter," he said, "is at the point of death: I pray you come and lay your hands upon her, that she may recover and live." And Jesus went with him. And a dense crowd followed Him, and thronged Him on all sides.

Now a woman who for twelve years had suffered from haemorrhage, and had undergone many different treatments under a number of doctors and had spent all she had without receiving benefit but on the contrary growing worse, heard of Jesus. And she came in the crowd behind Him and touched His cloak; for she said, "If I but touch His clothes, I shall be cured." In a moment the flow of her blood ceased, and she felt in herself that her complaint was cured.

Immediately Jesus, well knowing that healing power had gone from within Him, turned round in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my clothes?" "You see the multitude pressing you on all sides," His disciples exclaimed, "and yet you ask, 'Who touched me?'" But He continued looking about to see the person who had done this, until the

woman, frightened and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and threw herself at His feet, and told Him all the truth.

"Daughter," He said, "your faith has cured you: go in peace, and be free from your complaint."

While He is yet speaking, men come from the house to the Warden, and say, "Your daughter is dead: why trouble the Rabbi further?" But Jesus, overhearing the words, said to the Warden, "Do not be afraid; only have faith." And He allowed no one to accompany Him except Peter and the brothers James and John. So they come to the Warden's house. Here He gazes on a scene of uproar, with people weeping aloud and wailing. He goes in. "Why all this outcry and loud weeping?" He asks; "the child is asleep, not dead." To this their reply is a scornful laugh. He, however, puts them all out, takes the child's father and mother and those He has brought with Him, and enters the room where the child lies. Then, taking her by the hand, He says to her, "Talitha, koum;" that is to say, "Little girl, I command you to wake!"

Instantly the little girl rises to her feet and begins to walk (for she was twelve years old). They were at once beside themselves with utter astonishment; but He gave strict injunctions that the matter should not be made known, and directed them to give her something to eat. (59)

Shortly afterwards He went to a town called Nain, attended by His disciples and a great crowd of people. And just as He reached the gate of the town, they happened to be bringing out for burial a dead man who was his mother's only son; and she was a widow; and a great number of the townspeople were with her. The Lord saw her, was moved with pity for her, and said to her, "Do not weep." Then He went close and touched the bier, and the bearers halted. "Young man," He said, "I command you, wake!"

The dead man sat up and began to speak; and He restored him to his mother. All were awe-struck, and they gave glory to God—some saying, "A Prophet, a great Prophet, has risen up among us." Others

said, "God has not forgotten His People." And the report of what Jesus had done spread through the whole of Judaea and in all the surrounding districts. (60)

Now a certain man, named Lazarus, of Bethany, was lying ill—Bethany being the village of Mary and her sister Martha. (It was the Mary who poured the perfume over the Lord and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was ill.) So the sisters sent to Him to say, "Master, he whom you hold dear is ill." Jesus received the message and said, "This illness is not to end in death, but is to promote the glory of God, in order that the Son of God may be glorified by it."

Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. When, however, He heard that Lazarus was ill, He still remained two days in that same place. Then, after that, He said to the disciples, "Let us return to Judaea." "Rabbi," exclaimed the disciples, "the Jews have just been trying to stone you, and do you think of going back there again?" "Are there not twelve hours in the day?" replied Jesus. "If any one walks in the daytime, he does not stumble—because he sees the light of this world. But if a man walks by night, he does stumble, because the light is not in him."

He said this, and afterwards He added, "Our friend Lazarus is sleeping, but I will go and wake him." "Master," said the disciples, "if he is asleep he will recover." Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought He referred to the rest taken in ordinary sleep. So then He told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead; and for your sakes I am glad I was not there, in order that you may believe. But let us go to him."

"Let us go also," Thomas, the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "that we may die with him."

On His arrival Jesus found that Lazarus had already been three days in the tomb. Bethany was near Jerusalem, the distance being a little less than two miles; and a considerable number of the Jews were with Martha and Mary, having come to express sympathy with them on the

death of their brother. Martha, however, as soon as she heard the tidings, "Jesus is coming," went to meet Him; but Mary remained sitting in the house.

So Martha came and spoke to Jesus. "Master, if you had been here," she said, "my brother would not have died. And even now I know that whatever you ask God for, God will give you." "Your brother shall rise again," replied Jesus. "I know," said Martha, "that he will rise again at the resurrection, on the last day." "I am the Resurrection and the Life," said Jesus; "he who believes in me, even if he has died, he shall live; and every one who is living and is a believer in me shall never, never die. Do you believe this?" "Yes, Master," she replied; "I thoroughly believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world."

After saying this, she went and called her sister Mary privately, telling her, "The Rabbi is here and is asking for you." So she, on hearing that, rose up quickly to go to Him.

Now Jesus was not yet come into the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met Him. So the Jews who were with Mary in the house sympathizing with her, when they saw that she had risen hastily and had gone out, followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep aloud there. Mary then, when she came to Jesus and saw Him, fell at His feet and exclaimed, "Master, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." Seeing her weeping aloud, and the Jews in like manner weeping who had come with her, Jesus, curbing the strong emotion of His spirit, though deeply troubled, asked them, "Where have you laid him?" "Master, come and see," was their reply.

Jesus wept. "See how dear he held him," said the Jews. But others of them asked, "Was this man who opened the blind man's eyes unable to prevent this man from dying?"

Jesus, however, again restraining His strong feeling, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone had been laid against the mouth of it. "Take

away the stone," said Jesus. Martha, the sister of the dead man, exclaimed, "Master, by this time there is a foul smell; for it is three days since he died." "Did I not promise you," replied Jesus, "that if you believe, you shall see the glory of God?"

So they removed the stone. Then Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, "Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard me. I know that Thou always hearest me; but for the sake of the crowd standing round I have said this—that they may believe that Thou didst send me." After speaking thus, He called out in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out." The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped in cloths, and his face wrapped round with a towel. "Untie him," said Jesus, "and let him go free." (61)

Here the principle of the miracles being signs of deeper things is very clear. For woven into the account of the raising of Lazarus are the words of Jesus: 'I am the Resurrection and the Life ... he who believes in me, even if he has died, he shall live; and every one who is living and is a believer in me shall never, never die.' What better way of helping people to such a faith could there be than by actually raising the dead?

Another class of miracle is that in which Jesus reveals a power over inanimate objects.

The same day, in the evening, He said to them, "Let us cross to the other side." So they got away from the crowd, and took Him—as He was—in the boat; and other boats accompanied Him. But a heavy squall came on, and the waves were now dashing into the boat, so that it was fast filling. But He Himself was in the stern asleep, with His head on the cushion: so they woke Him. "Rabbi," they cried, "is it nothing to you that we are drowning?" So He roused Himself and rebuked the wind, and said to the waves, "Silence! Be still!" The wind sank, and a perfect calm set in. "Why are you so timid?" He asked;

"have you still no faith?" Then they were filled with terror, and began to say to one another, "Who is this, then? For even wind and sea obey Him." (62)

When the Apostles had re-assembled round Jesus, they reported to Him all they had done and all they had taught.

Then He said to them, "Come away, all of you, to a quiet place, and rest awhile." For there were many coming and going, so that they had no time even for meals. Accordingly they sailed away in the boat to a solitary place apart. But the people saw them going, and many knew them; and coming by land they ran together there from all the neighbouring towns, and arrived before them. So when Jesus landed, He saw a vast multitude; and His heart was moved with pity for them, because they were like sheep which have no shepherd, and He proceeded to teach them many things.

By this time it was late; so His disciples came to Him, and said, "This is a lonely place, and the hour is now late: send them away that they may go to the farms and villages near here and buy themselves something to eat."

"Give them food yourselves," He replied. "Are we," they asked, "to go and buy two hundred shillings' worth of bread and give them food?" "How many loaves have you?" He inquired; "go and see." So they found out, and said, "Five; and a couple of fish."

So He directed them to make all sit down in companies on the green grass. And they sat down in rows of hundreds and of fifties. Then He took the five loaves and the two fish, and lifting His eyes to Heaven He blessed the food. Then He broke the loaves into portions which He went on handing to the disciples to distribute; giving pieces also of the two fish to them all. All ate and were fully satisfied. And they carried away broken portions enough to fill twelve baskets, besides pieces of the fish. Those who ate the bread were 5,000 adult men. (63)

Immediately afterwards He made the disciples go on board the boat and cross to the opposite shore, leaving Him to dismiss the people. When He had done this, He climbed the hill to pray in solitude. Night came on, and he was there alone. Meanwhile the boat was far out on the Lake, buffeted and tossed by the waves, the wind being adverse.

But towards daybreak He went to them, walking over the waves. When the disciples saw Him walking on the waves, they were greatly alarmed. "It is a spirit," they exclaimed, and they cried out with terror.

But instantly Jesus spoke to them, and said, "There is no danger; it is I; do not be afraid." "Master," answered Peter, "if it is you, bid me come to you upon the water." "Come," said Jesus. Then Peter climbed down from the boat and walked upon the water to go to Him. But when he felt the wind he grew frightened, and beginning to sink he cried out, "Master, save me."

Instantly Jesus stretched out His hand and caught hold of him, saying to him, "O little faith, why did you doubt?" So they climbed into the boat, and the wind lulled; and the men on board fell down before him and said, "You are indeed God's Son." (64)

About that time there was again an immense crowd, and they found themselves with nothing to eat. So He called His disciples to Him. "My heart yearns over the people," He said; "for this is now the third day they have remained with me, and they have nothing to eat. If I were to send them home hungry, they would faint on the way, some of them having come a great distance."

"Where can we possibly get bread here in this remote place to satisfy such a crowd?" answered His disciples. "How many loaves have you?" He asked. "Seven," they said.

So He passed the word to the people to sit down on the ground. Then taking the seven loaves He blessed them, and broke them into portions and proceeded to give them to His disciples for them to distribute, and

they distributed them to the people. They had also a few small fish. He blessed them, and He told His disciples to distribute these also. So the people ate an abundant meal; and what remained over they picked up and carried away—seven hampers of broken pieces. The number fed were about 4,000. Then He sent them away, and at once going on board with His disciples He came into the district of Dalmanutha. (65)

The next day, after they had left Bethany, He was hungry. But in the distance He saw a fig-tree in full leaf, and went to see whether perhaps He could find some figs on it. When however He came to it, He found nothing but leaves (for it was not fig time); and He said to the tree, "Let no one ever again eat fruit from thee!" And His disciples heard this. (66)

To understand the feeding stories we are helped again by John's treatment, for he records the feeding of the five thousand as an introduction to a lengthy discourse in which Jesus proclaims himself to be 'the bread of life ... which if anyone eat he will live for ever.' And the cursing of the fig-tree can also be seen as an acted parable; in other words, instead of teaching the need for a life which brought forth the 'fruit' of love and caring and so on, Jesus acted out the parable for greater effect. The message is simply that a life without 'fruit' is worthless.

It is probably right for us to look always for the deepest meaning in the actions of Jesus, especially those that seem important simply because of the display of supernatural power. They were more than that. They were signs, pointing to something much deeper than was visible on the surface.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Opposition

Amid all the enthusiasm that surrounded Jesus as he went about Galilee healing and preaching, there is a discordant note. We have already noted the occasion (section 55) when the Pharisees interpreted the power that Jesus had over demons as being because he himself was in league with Satan. One could hardly imagine a stronger condemnation.

The Pharisees were an influential group of very devout men, who prided themselves on their piety. In the early months of Jesus' ministry we find a pattern of misunderstanding and conflict building up. They regarded Jesus' claim to have authority to forgive sins (section 49) as blasphemy, an insult to God. They thought that Jesus' association with sinners, people who did not observe the Jewish ritual laws strictly, was utterly wrong for a man claiming to be, or acting as, a prophet of God. Jesus lost their respect by not engaging in the kind of piety they taught and practised.

(Now John's disciples and those of the Pharisees were keeping a fast.) And they came and asked Him, "How is it that John's disciples and those of the Pharisees are fasting, and yours are not?" "Can a wedding party fast while the bridegroom is among them?" replied Jesus. "So long as they have the bridegroom with them, fasting is impossible. But a time will come when the Bridegroom will be taken away from them; then they will fast. No one mends an old garment with a piece of unshrunk cloth. Otherwise, the patch put on would tear away from it—the new from the old—and a worse hole would be

made. And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise the wine would burst the skins, and both wine and skins would be lost. New wine needs fresh skins!" (67)

They disapproved of his disregard of the Sabbath regulations that they set so much store by.

One Sabbath He was walking through the wheatfields when His disciples began to pluck the ears of wheat as they went. So the Pharisees said to Him, "Look! why are they doing what on the Sabbath is unlawful?" "Have you never read," Jesus replied, "what David did when the necessity arose and he and his men were hungry: how he entered the house of God in the High-priesthood of Abiathar, and ate the Presented Loaves—which none but the priests are allowed to eat—and gave some to his men also?" And Jesus said to them: "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath; so that the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath." (68)

They even condemned him for healing on the Sabbath, for their own regulations, forbidding work on the Sabbath, permitted this only when life was at stake.

At another time, when He went to the synagogue, there was a man there with one arm shrivelled up. They closely watched Him to see whether He would cure him on the Sabbath—so as to have a charge to bring against Him. "Come forward," said He to the man with the shrivelled arm. Then He asked them, "Are we allowed to do good on the Sabbath, or to do evil? to save a life, or to destroy one?" They remained silent. Grieved and indignant at the hardening of their hearts, He looked round on them with anger, and said to the man, "Stretch out your arm." He stretched it out, and the arm was completely restored. (69)

The result of all these incidents was that they decided that Jesus was a dangerous man whom they must get rid of at all costs.

But no sooner had the Pharisees left the synagogue than they held a consultation with the Herodians against Jesus, to devise some means of destroying Him. (70)

To understand this opposition we must know something of the background of first century Palestine, and the various political and religious ideals of the Jews. On a political level there were the Herodians, who were the supporters of the Herodian dynasty, which generally speaking was unpopular with the Jews and was maintained in power only by the help of the Roman government. There was good reason for the Herods' unpopularity. In the political chaos that followed the conquest of Palestine by the Romans in 63 B.C. (for the Romans at first tried to rule Palestine indirectly, by appointing local rulers or kings) one name emerged as predominant, the name of Herod. The line was not Jewish, but Idumean. Antipater gained the favour of the Romans, and his two sons, Phasael and Herod (the Great), were appointed co-rulers of Judea by Antony. Both were soon ousted by the Jews, and Phasael killed, but Herod returned, with Roman backing, as King of the Jews in 37 B.C. Herod tried hard to win the goodwill of the people, beginning a magnificent restoration and rebuilding of the temple in 19 B.C., which took about eighty-five years to complete. Herod was plagued with family intrigues, too complicated to detail here, and many within his own family he had killed for plotting his own death. The slaughter of the babes at Bethlehem (section 237) was quite in character. Three sons of Herod, against all popular wish, were given parts of his kingdom when he died in 4 B.C.: Archelaus was given Judea, Samaria, and Idumea, Philip the north-east territory of Palestine, and Herod Antipas (who brought about John the Baptist's death and was concerned in the trial of Jesus) was made ruler of Galilee and Perea, with the title of tetrarch. There is no very clear reason why the Herodians on this occasion (section

70) or later (section 132) should be the allies of the Pharisees in opposing Jesus, unless it is that they saw in the great popularity of Jesus among the common people a threat to the established regime, and therefore to Herod himself.

At the other extreme, politically, to the Herodians were the Zealots, who were totally opposed to any foreign intervention, political or religious. Highly nationalistic, they were prepared to fight in guerilla bands against the Romans. One of Jesus' disciples, Simon (not Simon Peter, of course) probably belonged to this group.

The Sadducees were a group whose background was both political and religious. They were the members of a small, but influential, number of aristocratic and priestly families. Their religious ideals were very conservative, and they did not believe in angels, spirits, or life after death. They had no hopes of a Messiah, and they rejected any harsh strictness in keeping the religious side of the Jewish Law. They were more interested in political power and sought to maintain their influence in the Jewish High Court (the Sanhedrin), and also through the office of High Priest, by compromising with the Romans in order to benefit from their support. Their reasons for allying themselves with the Pharisees, whom they would normally regard as enemies, in opposing Jesus are probably on the same lines as the Herodians. In fact many Sadducees may have been Herodians. As long as Jesus looked likely to upset established positions, he was a threat to them.

The group most bitterly opposed to Jesus, and for purely religious reasons, was the Pharisees. Their name means 'the Separated' and was first used in the second century B.C., but their ideals can be traced to a much earlier time, the destruction of Jerusalem and the subsequent exile of almost its whole population. When the temple

was destroyed in 586 B.C., the ritual associated with worship there could no longer take place. All that the loyal Jews in exile had left was the Law, all the precepts and commandments of the first five books of the Old Testament. Judaism, as a religion, now centred around the Law, and continued to do so even after the temple was rebuilt and its rituals restored. Later, in the second century B.C., Judaism again survived the crisis of a deliberate attempt to stamp it out only through the devotion of pious men who would accept no compromise with the prevailing Greek culture. It was the Sadducees who accepted compromise, but the Pharisees stood firm. Thus the movement that based its faith firmly on the Law of God did indeed have noble beginnings.

But the righteousness of the Pharisees turned gradually into self-righteousness, and their piety into pride. They became Separated, not as originally from heathenism, but from their fellow-countrymen, whom they now looked down upon. In their veneration for the Law they surrounded it with a great mass of regulations, explanations, and sophistical refinements. Literally hundreds of regulations and escape clauses were multiplied to interpret the Sabbath law, and the spirit of this and other laws, intended to make life better rather than virtually impossible, was forgotten amid the most fanatical kind of literalism and pedantry.

In this they were assisted by the group known as the scribes, literally 'the learned ones'. They did a great deal more than simply copy out sacred texts, as their name might suggest. Their main task was to study and instruct in the Law. They taught, debated about, and added to the oral traditions, meticulously memorised, regarding the interpretation of the written Law (the Torah) and to them this oral tradition carried almost the same authority. It was this tradition, often ridiculous in its minute details, that Jesus attacked

most strongly.

The Pharisees were very influential among the people, but their power was balanced fairly evenly by the Sadducees in the Sanhedrin. This was the court of the Jews, presided over by the High Priest, having a maximum of seventy-one members, in whose voting at a trial a simple majority was enough.

We can see what sort of an affront a person like Jesus was to the Pharisees. His popularity wounded their pride, and no doubt they looked down upon His humble origin and lack of the legal training they valued. But his simple and direct teaching held an authority that their refinements and appeals to tradition lacked. Since they rejected him and His claims, they could only conclude that he was a dangerous blasphemer. A confrontation follows the decision noted in section 70.

At that time a demoniac was brought to Him, blind and dumb; and He cured him, so that the dumb man could speak and see. And the crowds of people were all filled with amazement and said, "Can this be the Son of David?" The Pharisees heard it and said, "This man only expels demons by the power of Baal-zebul, the Prince of demons."

Knowing their thoughts He said to them, "Every kingdom in which civil war has raged suffers desolation; and every city or house in which there is internal strife will be brought low. And if Satan is expelling Satan, he has begun to make war on himself: how therefore shall his kingdom last? And if it is by Baal-zebul's power that I expel the demons, by whose power do your disciples expel them? They therefore shall be your judges. But if it is by the power of the Spirit of God that I expel the demons, it is evident that the Kingdom of God has come upon you. Again, how can any one enter the house of a strong man and carry off his goods, unless first of all he masters and secures the strong man: then he will ransack his house.

"The man who is not with me is against me, and he who is not gathering with me is scattering abroad. This is why I tell you that men may find forgiveness for every other sin and impious word, but that for impious speaking against the Holy Spirit they shall find no forgiveness. And whoever shall speak against the Son of Man may obtain forgiveness; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, neither in this nor in the coming age shall he obtain forgiveness."

"Either grant the tree to be wholesome and its fruit wholesome, or the tree poisonous and its fruit poisonous; for the tree is known by its fruit. O vipers' brood, how can you speak what is good when you are evil? For it is from the overflow of the heart that the mouth speaks. A good man from his good store produces good things, and a bad man from his bad store produces bad things. But I tell you that for every careless word that men shall speak they will be held accountable on the day of Judgement. For each of you by his words shall be justified, or by his words shall be condemned." (71)

Jesus, who, as many times before, has freed a man from the power of Satan, is condemned as being in league with Satan. Jesus not only demonstrates how illogical this charge is, but also points out how serious a matter it is to call the goodness of God the work of the devils, to call God's Spirit an evil spirit, to call good evil. Such an attitude of mind puts people beyond forgiveness, if not beyond God's giving of it, then certainly beyond their receiving of it.

After this incident there seems no possibility of reconciliation. Open conflict ensues. On Jesus' part there is scathing condemnation, while on the part of the Pharisees there is plotting, trickery, and finally judicial murder.

Then there came to Jesus a party of Pharisees and Scribes from Jerusalem, who inquired, "Why do your disciples transgress the tradition of the Elders by not washing their hands before meals?" "Why do you, too," He retorted, "transgress God's commands for the sake of your tradition? For God said, 'Honour thy father and thy mother'; and 'Let him who reviles father or mother be certainly put to death'; but you—this is what you say: 'If a man says to his father or mother, That is consecrated, whatever it is, which otherwise you should have received from me—he shall be absolved from honouring his father'; and so you have abrogated God's Word for the sake of your tradition. Hypocrites! well did Isaiah prophesy of you, "'This is a People who honour Me with their lips, while their heart is far away from Me; but it is in vain they worship Me, while they lay down precepts which are mere human rules.'"

Then, when He had called the people to Him, Jesus said, "Hear and understand. It is not what goes into a man's mouth that defiles him; but it is what comes out of his mouth—that defiles a man."

Then His disciples came and said to Him, "Do you know that the Pharisees were greatly shocked when they heard those words?" "Every plant," He replied, "which my Heavenly Father has not planted will be rooted up. Leave them alone. They are blind guides of the blind; and if a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into some pit."

"Explain to us this figurative language," said Peter. "Are even you," He answered, "still without intelligence? Do you not understand that whatever enters the mouth passes into the stomach and is afterwards ejected from the body? But the things that come out of the mouth proceed from the heart, and it is these that defile the man. For out of the heart proceed wicked thoughts, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, perjury, impiety of speech. These are the things which defile the man; but eating with unwashed hands does not defile." (72)

Here the Pharisees and Sadducees came to Him; and, to make trial of Him, they asked Him to show them a sign in the sky. He replied, "In

the evening you say, 'It will be fine weather, for the sky is red;' and in the morning, 'It will be rough weather to-day, for the sky is red and murky.' You learn how to distinguish the aspect of the heavens, but the signs of the times you cannot. A wicked and faithless generation are eager for a sign; but none shall be given to them except the sign of Jonah." and He left them and went away.

When the disciples arrived at the other side of the Lake, they found that they had forgotten to bring any bread; and when Jesus said to them, "See to it: beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees," they reasoned among themselves, saying, "It is because we have not brought any bread." Jesus perceived this and said, "Why are you reasoning among yourselves, you men of little faith, because you have no bread? Do you not yet understand? nor even remember the 5,000 and the five loaves, and how many basketfuls you carried away, nor the 4,000 and the seven loaves, and how many hampers you carried away? How is it you do not understand that it was not about bread that I spoke to you? But beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees." Then they perceived that He had not warned them against bread-yeast, but against the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees. (73)

Once He was teaching on the Sabbath in one of the synagogues where a woman was present who for eighteen years had been a confirmed invalid: she was bent double, and was unable to lift herself to her full height. But Jesus saw her, and calling to her, He said to her, "Woman, you are free from your weakness." And He put His hands on her, and she immediately stood upright and began to give glory to God.

Then the Warden of the Synagogue, indignant that Jesus had cured her on a Sabbath, said to the crowd, "There are six days in the week on which people ought to work. On those days therefore come and get yourselves cured, and not on the Sabbath day."

But the Lord's reply to him was, "Hypocrites, does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his bullock or his ass from the stall and lead him to

water? And this woman, daughter of Abraham as she is, whom Satan had bound for no less than eighteen years, was she not to be loosed from this chain because it is the Sabbath day?"

When He had said this, all His opponents were ashamed, while the whole multitude was delighted at the many glorious things continually done by Him. (74)

One day—it was a Sabbath—He was taking a meal at the house of one of the Rulers of the Pharisee party, while they were closely watching Him. In front of Him was a man suffering from dropsy. This led Jesus to ask the lawyers and Pharisees, "Is it allowable to cure people on the Sabbath?" They gave Him no answer; so He took hold of the man, cured him, and sent him away. Then He turned to them and said, "Which of you shall have a child or an ox fall into a well on the Sabbath day, and will not immediately lift him out?" To this they could make no reply. (75)

Soon on His feet once more, He enters the district of Judaea and crosses the Jordan: again the people flock to Him, and ere long, as was usual with Him, He was teaching them once more. Presently a party of Pharisees come to Him with the question—seeking to entrap Him, "May a man divorce his wife?" "What rule did Moses lay down for you?" He answered. "Moses," they said, "permitted a man to draw up a written notice of divorce, and to send his wife away."

"It was in consideration of your stubborn hearts," said Jesus, "that Moses enacted this law for you; but from the beginning of the creation the rule was, 'Male and female did God make them. For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cling to his wife, and the two shall be one'; so that they are two no longer, but 'one.' What, therefore, God has joined together let not man separate." Indoors the disciples began questioning Jesus again on the same subject. He replied, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another woman, commits adultery against the first wife; and if a woman puts away her husband and marries another man, she commits adultery."

(76)

And to some who relied on themselves as being righteous men, and looked down upon all others, He addressed this parable. "Two men went up to the Temple to pray," He said; "one being a Pharisee and the other a tax-gatherer. The Pharisee, standing erect, prayed as follows by himself: "'O God, I thank Thee that I am not like other people — I am not a thief nor a cheat nor an adulterer, nor do I even resemble this tax-gatherer. I fast twice a week. I pay the tithe on all my gains.'

"But the tax-gatherer, standing far back, would not so much as lift his eyes to Heaven, but kept beating his breast and saying, "'O God, be reconciled to me, sinner that I am.' "I tell you that this man went home more thoroughly absolved from guilt than the other; for every one who uplifts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be uplifted." (77)

Then Jesus addressed the crowds and His disciples. "The Scribes," He said, "and the Pharisees sit in the chair of Moses. Therefore do and observe everything that they command you; but do not imitate their lives, for though they tell others what to do, they do not do it themselves. Heavy and cumbrous burdens they bind together and load men's shoulders with them, while as for themselves, not with one finger do they choose to lift them. And everything they do they do with a view to being observed by men; for they widen their phylacteries and make the tassels large, and love the best seats at a dinner party or in the synagogues, and like to be bowed to in places of public resort, and to be addressed by men as 'Rabbi.'

"As for you, do not accept the title of 'Rabbi,' for one alone is your Teacher, and you are all brothers. And call no one on earth your Father, for One alone is your Father—the Heavenly Father. And do not accept the name of 'leader,' for your Leader is one alone—the Christ. He who is the greatest among you shall be your servant; and one who exalts himself shall be abased, while one who abases himself shall be exalted.

"But alas for you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you lock the door of the Kingdom of the Heavens against men; you yourselves do not enter, nor do you allow those to enter who are seeking to do so. "Alas for you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you scour sea and land in order to win one convert—and when he is gained, you make him twice as much a son of Gehenna as yourselves. "Alas for you, you blind guides, who say, "'Whoever swears by the Sanctuary it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the Sanctuary, is bound by the oath.' "Blind fools! Why, which is greater? —the gold, or the Sanctuary which has made the gold holy? And you say, "'Whoever swears by the altar, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the offering lying on it is bound by the oath.' "You are blind! Why, which is greater? —the offering, or the altar which makes the offering holy? He who swears by the altar swears both by it and by everything on it; he who swears by the Sanctuary swears both by it and by Him who dwells in it; and he who swears by Heaven swears both by the throne of God and by Him who sits upon it.

"Alas for you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you pay the tithe on mint, dill, and cumin, while you have neglected the weightier requirements of the Law—just judgement, mercy, and faithful dealing. These things you ought to have done, and yet you ought not to have left the others undone. You blind guides, straining out the gnat while you gulp down the camel!

"Alas for you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you wash clean the outside of the cup or dish, while within they are full of greed and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee, first wash clean the inside of the cup or dish, and then the outside will be clean also. "Alas for you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you are just like whitewashed sepulchres, the outside of which pleases the eye, though inside they are full of dead men's bones and of all that is unclean. The same is true of you: outwardly you seem to the human eye to be good and honest men, but, within, you are full of insincerity and disregard of God's Law.

"Alas for you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you repair the

sepulchres of the Prophets and keep in order the tombs of the righteous, and your boast is, "'If we had lived in the time of our forefathers, we should not have been implicated with them in the murder of the Prophets.'" "So that you bear witness against yourselves that you are descendants of those who murdered the Prophets. Fill up the measure of your forefathers' guilt. O serpents, O vipers' brood, how are you to escape condemnation to Gehenna? "For this reason I am sending to you Prophets and wise men and Scribes. Some of them you will put to death—nay, crucify; some of them you will flog in your synagogues and chase from town to town; that all the innocent blood shed upon earth may come on you, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Berechiah whom you murdered between the Sanctuary and the altar. I tell you in solemn truth that all these things will come upon the present generation. (78)

Then the High Priests and Elders of the People assembled in the court of the palace of the High Priest Caiaphas, and consulted how to get Jesus into their power by stratagem and put Him to death. (79)

Here is complete rejection. The rulers and leaders of God's chosen people plot (and accomplish) the death of the one who claimed to come from God, bringing the promise of His kingdom. If this strikes us as odd, imagine the problem it was for the Jewish mind that pictured the kingdom of God as all-powerful and overwhelming. For the Jew the kingdom of God and rejection were two ideas quite incompatible, quite contradictory. Our next chapter will focus on what Jesus taught about the kingdom of God.

CHAPTER SIX

The Parables

As we saw in chapter one, when the Jews of Jesus' day spoke of the kingdom of God they pictured God sweeping aside the pagan kingdoms and establishing His dominion over the whole world. The words of Daniel's prophecy no doubt were very prominent in their minds.

And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall its sovereignty be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand for ever. (*Dan 2:44*)

But the events that surround Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom seem very far from this picture. The pagan kingdoms of the world are not being broken in pieces; in fact the Roman legions are at the height of their power. To many Jews this must have been a very great problem, for even John the Baptist seems to have had misgivings about the one he had heralded when he observed the way he went about his mission.

Now John had heard in prison about the Christ's doings, and he sent some of his disciples to inquire: "Are you the Coming One, or is it a different person that we are to expect?" (80)

How could Jesus be the promised Messiah when not only the leaders but even his own people were rejecting him?

He came to Nazareth also, where He had been brought up; and, as was His custom, He went to the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read. And there was handed to Him the book of the Prophet Isaiah, and, opening the book, He found the place where it was written, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to proclaim Good News to the poor; He has sent me to announce release to the prisoners of war and recovery of sight to the blind: to send away free those whom tyranny has crushed, to proclaim the year of acceptance with the Lord." And rolling up the book, He returned it to the attendant, and sat down—to speak. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him.

Then He proceeded to say to them, "To-day is this Scripture fulfilled in your hearing." And they all spoke well of Him, wondering at the sweet words of kindness which fell from His lips, while they asked one another, "Is not this Joseph's son?" "Doubtless," said He, "you will quote to me the proverb, 'Physician, cure yourself: all that we hear that you have done at Capernaum, do here also in your native place.'" "I tell you in solemn truth," He added, "that no Prophet is welcomed among his own people. But I tell you in truth that there was many a widow in Israel in the time of Elijah, when there was no rain for three years and six months and there came a severe famine over all the land; and yet to not one of them was Elijah sent: he was only sent to a widow at Zarephath in the Sidonian country. And there was also many a leper in Israel in the time of the Prophet Elisha, and yet not one of them was cleansed, but Naaman the Syrian was."

Then all in the synagogue, while listening to these words, were filled with fury. They rose, hurried Him outside the town, and brought Him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, to throw Him down the cliff; but He passed through the midst of them and went His way. (81)

The problem arises in the minds of Jesus' followers because they had not rightly understood what sort of a thing the kingdom of God

was. Jesus gave much teaching to explain the true nature of the kingdom of God>

That same day Jesus had left the house and was sitting on the shore of the Lake, when a vast multitude of people crowded round Him. He therefore went on board a boat and sat there, while all the people stood on the shore. He then spoke many things to them in figurative language. "The sower goes out," He said, "to sow. As he sows, some of the seed falls by the way-side, and the birds come and peck it up. Some falls on rocky ground, where it has but scanty soil. It quickly shows itself above ground, because it has no depth of earth; but when the sun is risen, it is scorched by the heat, and through having no root it withers up. Some falls among the thorns; but the thorns spring up and stifle it. But a portion falls upon good ground, and gives a return, some a hundred for one, some sixty, some thirty. Listen, every one who has ears!" (82)

The kind]gdom of God is not irresistible. It comes like seeds that are scattered - some never to germinate, some to germinate but never successfully grow, some to grow and ripen and be harvested. Why? Because the kingdom of God comes not by weapons but by words, and words can be silenced or forgotten, or twisted, as well as heeded.

"To you then I will explain the parable of the Sower. When a man hears the Message concerning the Kingdom and does not understand it, the Evil one comes and catches away what has been sown in his heart. This is he who has received the seed by the road-side. He who has received the seed on the rocky ground is the man who hears the Message and immediately receives it with joy. It has struck no root, however, within him. He continues for a time, but when suffering comes, or persecution, because of the Message, he at once stumbles and falls. He who has received the seed among the thorns is the man who hears the Message, but the cares of the present age and the delusions of riches quite stifle the Message, and it becomes unfruitful.

But he who has received the seed on good ground is he who hears and understands. Such hearers give a return, and yield one a hundred for one, another sixty, another thirty.") (83)

But if the kingdom of God has really come, is it not true that evil will at once be silenced and obliterated? No, evil will survive mixed in with the good until the end of the age. The time is coming for evil to be destroyed, but that time is not yet.

Another parable He put before them. "The Kingdom of the Heavens," He said, "may be compared to a man who has sown good seed in his field, but during the night his enemy comes, and over the first seed he sows darnel among the wheat, and goes away. But when the blade shoots up and the grain is formed, then appears the darnel also. "So the farmer's men come and ask him, "'Sir, was it not good seed that you sowed on your land? Where then does the darnel come from?' "'Some enemy has done this,' he said. "'Shall we go, and collect it?' the men inquire. "'No,' he replied, 'for fear that while collecting the darnel you should at the same time root up the wheat with it. Leave both to grow together until the harvest, and at harvest-time I will direct the reapers, Collect the darnel first, and make it up into bundles to burn it, but bring all the wheat into my barn.'" (84)

When He had dismissed the people and had returned to the house, His disciples came to Him with the request, "Explain to us the parable of the darnel sown in the field." "The sower of the good seed," He replied, "is the Son of Man; the field is the world; the good seed—these are the sons of the Kingdom; the darnel, the sons of the Evil one. The enemy who sows the darnel is the Devil; the harvest is the Close of the Age; the reapers are the angels. As then the darnel is collected together and burnt up with fire, so will it be at the Close of the Age. The Son of Man will commission His angels, and they will gather out of His Kingdom all causes of sin and all who violate His laws; and these they will throw into the fiery furnace. There will be the weeping

aloud and the gnashing of teeth. Then will the righteous shine out like the sun in their Father's Kingdom. Listen, every one who has ears! (85)

Then surely the kingdom of God is weak and impotent? It may outwardly seem to be so, but do not despise it, for its strength and magnitude will one day be apparent.

Another parable He put before them. "The Kingdom of the Heavens," He said, "is like a mustard-seed, which a man takes and sows in his ground. It is the smallest of all seeds, and yet when full-grown it is larger than any herb and forms a tree, so that the birds come and build in its branches." Another parable He spoke to them. "The Kingdom of the Heavens," He said, "is like yeast which a woman takes and buries in a bushel of flour, for it to work there till the whole mass has risen." (86)

But if it is so insignificant now, what is its value? It is the most precious thing anyone can find, worthy of any sacrifice.

"The Kingdom of the Heavens is like treasure buried in the open country, which a man finds, but buries again, and, in his joy about it, goes and sells all he has and buys that piece of ground. "Again the Kingdom of the Heavens is like a jewel merchant who is in quest of choice pearls. He finds one most costly pearl; he goes away; and though it costs all he has, he buys it. (87)

Very well then, if it is so valuable how can people spread the kingdom of God? By themselves they cannot, any more than a farmer can *make* his seed grow.

Another saying of His was this: "The Kingdom of God is as if a man scattered seed over the ground: he spends days and nights, now awake, now asleep, while the seed sprouts and grows tall, he knows not how. Of itself the land produces the crop— first the blade, then the ear; afterwards the perfect grain is seen in the ear. But no sooner is the crop

ripe, than he sends the reapers, because the time of harvest has come."
(88)

All a farmer can do is watch his seed grow and harvest it when it has. The life of the seed is within itself, and so it is with the kingdom of God. Only God's power can cause it to grow.

Then, if one cannot build the kingdom of God, can we at least recognise it? In the mass, yes, but in the individual, no, for many will seem to be members of it who, when the time comes for separation, will be found not to have been true members.

"Again the Kingdom of the Heavens is like a draw-net let down into the sea, which encloses fish of all sorts. When full, they haul it up on the beach, and sit down and collect the good fish in baskets, while the worthless they throw away. So will it be at the Close of the Age. The angels will go forth and separate the wicked from among the righteous, and will throw them into the fiery furnace. There will be the weeping aloud and the gnashing of teeth." (89)

The kingdom of God is inward. It comes when someone opens their heart to God and accepts God's rule in their life. There is no outward demonstration when the kingdom of God comes, no trumpets blown. Those who are spiritually blind, who are unable to hear, will not recognise it even though it is right among them.

Being asked by the Pharisees when the Kingdom of God was coming, He answered, "The Kingdom of God does not so come that you can stealthily watch for it. Nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' — for the Kingdom of God is within you." (90)

'The kingdom of God is within you.' This is the best summary of Jesus' teaching about the kingdom of God. The implications of this simple statement are massive.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Apostles

Then He called to Him His twelve disciples and gave them authority over foul spirits, to drive them out; and to cure every kind of disease and infirmity. (91)

The twelve men whom Jesus chose to be his witnesses and disciples, or pupils, now for the first time become apostle, i.e. those who are sent out.

These twelve Jesus sent on a mission, after giving them their instructions: "Go not," He said, "among the Gentiles, and enter no Samaritan town; but, instead of that, go to the lost sheep of Israel's race. And as you go, preach and say, 'The Kingdom of the Heavens is close at hand.' Cure the sick, raise the dead to life, cleanse lepers, drive out demons: you have received without payment, give without payment. (92)

Notice how the scope of their mission was to be the same as Jesus' (the lost sheep of Israel's race). Their message was to be the same too, a simple announcement of the nearness of the kingdom of God. And they were given power to perform the same accompanying signs as Jesus.

To deepen their faith in God's power to provide all their physical needs, they were sent out devoid of material support.

"Provide no gold, nor even silver nor copper to carry in your pockets; no bag for your journey, nor change of linen, nor shoes, nor

stick; for the labourer deserves his food. (93)

And because they would inevitably meet in some places the same rejection as Jesus met, they were told how to treat it.

"Whatever town or village you enter, inquire for some good man; and make his house your home till you leave the place. When you enter the house, salute it; and if the house deserves it, the peace you invoke shall come upon it. If not, your peace shall return to you. And whoever refuses to receive you or even to listen to your Message, as you leave that house or town, shake off the very dust from your feet. I solemnly tell you that it will be more endurable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of Judgement than for that town. (94)

Jesus goes on to give them many warnings of the persecution that will attend their efforts to spread the good news and many words encouraging them to steadfastness and trust in God. For they were to share not only their master's ministry and power, but also the hatred of those who opposed him.

"Remember it is I who am sending you out, as sheep into the midst of wolves; prove yourselves as sagacious as serpents, and as innocent as doves. But beware of men; for they will deliver you up to appear before Sanhedrins, and will flog you in their synagogues; and you will even be put on trial before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness to them and to the Gentiles. But when they have delivered you up, have no anxiety as to how you shall speak or what you shall say; for at that very time it shall be given you what to say; for it is not you who will speak: it will be the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. Brother will betray brother to death, and father, child; and children will rise against their own parents and will put them to death. And you will be objects of universal hatred because you are called by my name; but he who holds out to the End—he will be saved. Whenever they persecute you in one town, escape to the next; for I solemnly tell you that you will not have gone the round of all the

towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.

"The learner is never superior to his teacher, and the servant is never superior to his master. Enough for the learner to be on a level with his teacher, and for the servant to be on a level with his master. If they have called the master of the house Baal-zebul, how much more will they slander his servants? Fear them not, however; there is nothing veiled which will not be uncovered, nor secret which will not become known. What I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what is whispered into your ear, proclaim upon the roofs of the houses. "And do not fear those who kill the body, but cannot kill the soul; but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna. Do not two sparrows sell for a halfpenny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground without your Father's leave. But as for you, the very hairs on your heads are all numbered. Away then with fear; you are more precious than a multitude of sparrows. "Every man who acknowledges me before men I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in Heaven. But whoever disowns me before men I also will disown before my Father who is in Heaven.

"Do not suppose that I came to bring peace to the earth: I did not come to bring peace but a sword. For I came to set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's own family will be his foes. Any one who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and any one who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and any one who does not take up his cross and follow where I lead is not worthy of me. To save your life is to lose it, and to lose your life for my sake is to save it.

"Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives Him who sent me. Every one who receives a prophet, because he is a prophet, will receive a prophet's reward, and every one who receives a righteous man, because he is a righteous man, will receive a righteous man's reward. And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of

cold water to drink because he is a disciple, I solemnly tell you that he will not lose his reward." (95)

Much of what Jesus said here was to have greater relevance after his departure from them, and their ministry in Jerusalem and beyond, when organised persecution became a definite reality. No doubt Jesus intended his words to be remembered and applied then, as also the other lessons learnt on this preaching tour. This was a real training exercise in every sense.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Turning Point

We have now mentioned nearly all the incidents of Jesus' early ministry in Galilee and the surrounding districts. It is impossible to tell how much the gospels are intended to be a connected narrative and how much a collection of stories, each significant in its way, but not arranged in any particular order. It seems that about two years of public ministry have passed when Jesus makes quite a long journey northwards and the following incident takes place.

When He arrived in the neighbourhood of Caesarea Philippi, Jesus questioned His disciples. "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" He asked. "Some say John the Baptist," they replied; "others Elijah; others Jeremiah or one of the Prophets." "But you, who do you say that I am?" He asked again. "You," replied Simon Peter, "are the Christ, the Son of the ever-living God." "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-jonah," said Jesus; "for mere human nature has not revealed this to you, but my Father in Heaven. And I declare to you that you are Peter, and that upon this Rock I will build my Church, and the might of Hades shall not triumph over it. I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of the Heavens; and whatever you bind on earth shall remain bound in Heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall remain loosed in Heaven." Then He urged His disciples to tell no one that He was the Christ. (96)

Jesus asks the disciples to say who they think he is. Peter, no doubt voicing the thoughts of them all, confess his faith in Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of the living God. This, you might think, was

a fitting climax to the two years of ministry. But the confession is overshadowed by what follows.

From this time Jesus began to explain to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer much cruelty from the Elders and the High Priests and the Scribes, and be put to death, and on the third day be raised to life again. (97)

The disciples had learnt that Jesus was the Messiah. Now they must learn what kind of Messiah; one who, not in spite of, but because of being the Messiah, must suffer many things and be killed. This was the purpose of his coming.

For the Son of Man also did not come to be waited upon, but to wait on others, and to give His life as the redemption-price for a multitude of people. (98)

The disciples are aghast at this declaration. A retiring and self-effacing leader like Jesus was difficult to understand, but now that he has accepted the title of Messiah and confirmed their highest hopes they cannot bear to hear him speak of his own rejection and death. Peter is again their spokesman.

Then Peter took Him aside and began taking Him to task. "Master," he said, "God forbid; this will not be your lot." But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Adversary; you are a hindrance to me, because your thoughts are not God's thoughts, but men's." (99)

There is no relenting, and now they learn that the way of self-sacrifice must be theirs too if they would serve God.

Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If any one desires to follow me, let him renounce self and take up his cross, and so be my follower. For whoever desires to save his life shall lose it, and whoever loses his life

for my sake shall find it. Why, what benefit will it be to a man if he gains the whole world but forfeits his life? Or what shall a man give to buy back his life? For the Son of Man is soon to come in the glory of the Father with His angels, and then will He requite every man according to his actions. I solemnly tell you that some of those who are standing here will certainly not taste death till they have seen the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom." (100)

You will perhaps have noticed that in this passage, and in 98, Jesus has used a special title for himself, 'the Son of Man'. It is a title, with but one exception in the New Testament, that only Jesus used of himself. It is in fact the title he most frequently uses, and comes 81 times in the gospels altogether. It seems likely, though scholars are divided on this, that the phrase was, like 'Son of David', a commonly accepted title for the Messiah, originating from Daniel 7:13-14. It certainly seems to be used in this sort of way in a Jewish book of the first century B.C. called the Similitudes of the Book of Enoch. Jesus mainly uses this title of himself in two connections. He uses it when drawing attention to his role as the one who would suffer in redeeming his people, as in section 98, and this title is a very apt one to emphasize his work as representative of man, or identified with man. The other is typified in section 100, and follows very closely the thought of the Daniel prophecy, where Jesus speaks of himself as coming in glory, exercising dominion, and bringing judgment. In this title two ideas are combined, the suffering servant and the glorious king, or - to use other terms - the cross and the resurrection; and, as we will see, Jesus rarely speaks of his death without also referring to his resurrection.

The turning point has been reached. With the prediction of his

rejection and death Jesus has taken the first steps on the road to the cross. And at this point comes just a glimpse of his glory.

Six days later, Jesus took with Him Peter, James, and John, and brought them alone, apart from the rest, up a high mountain; and in their presence His appearance underwent a change. His garments also became dazzling with brilliant whiteness—such whiteness as no bleaching on earth could give. Moreover there appeared to them Elijah accompanied by Moses; and the two were conversing with Jesus, when Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, we are thankful to you that we are here. Let us put up three tents—one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." For he knew not what to say: they were filled with such awe. Then there came a cloud spreading over them, and a voice issued from the cloud, "This is my Son, dearly loved: listen to Him." Instantly they looked round, and now they could no longer see any one, but themselves and Jesus. (101)

At what were perhaps the two most critical points in Jesus' ministry, namely at his baptism and now, when for the first time he has announced his determination to go forward to his death, the voice of God is heard from the sky proclaiming Jesus to be his Son. These were intended for encouragement to Jesus, and also, surely, to confirm the faith of the bewildered disciples, the leading three of whom were present.

After this incident Jesus again referred to his death and resurrection, but they still failed to understand.

As they were coming down from the mountain, He very strictly forbade them to tell any one what they had seen "until after the Son of Man has risen from among the dead." So they kept the matter to themselves, although frequently asking one another what was meant by the rising from the dead. (102)

On two more occasions, at least, Jesus spoke of his impending death and resurrection.

Departing thence they passed through Galilee, and He was unwilling that any one should know it; for He was teaching His disciples, and telling them, "The Son of Man is to be betrayed into the hands of men, and they will put Him to death; and after being put to death, in three days He will rise to life again." They, however, did not understand what He meant, and were afraid to question Him. (103)

They were still on the road going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them; they were full of wonder, and some, though they followed, did so with fear. Then, once more calling to Him the Twelve, He began to tell them what was about to happen to Him. "See," He said, "we are going up to Jerusalem, where the Son of Man will be betrayed to the High Priests and the Scribes. They will condemn Him to death, and will hand Him over to the Gentiles; they will insult Him in cruel sport, spit on Him, scourge Him, and put Him to death; but on the third day He will rise to life again." (104)

But in spite of these warnings the arrest of Jesus and the subsequent events proved too much for the disciples, who 'all forsook him and fled', except Peter who stayed close only in the end to deny his master when challenged. It was not until Jesus had finally risen from the tomb that he was able to convince them 'that the Messiah should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead.'

Thus the stage has been set for Calvary. All that follows has over it the shadow of the cross.

CHAPTER NINE

The Journey to Jerusalem

In the same chapter in which Luke records Peter's statement of faith in Jesus as the Messiah and then what we usually call the Transfiguration, we read that Jesus set his face to go to Jerusalem. For the next ten chapters Luke records what seems to be a connected account of this final journey to Jerusalem. Throughout this narrative, with Jesus himself facing the suffering that he knew lay ahead for him if he went through with his purposes, comes the theme of discipleship, and particularly the cost of discipleship.

The journey southward takes Jesus and his disciples through Samaria (who were traditionally opposed to Jewish ways), and Jesus has to rebuke two of them for an unloving attitude towards the Samaritans.

Now when the time drew near for Him to be received up again into Heaven, He proceeded with fixed purpose towards Jerusalem, and sent messengers before Him. They went and entered a village of the Samaritans to make ready for Him. But the people there would not receive Him, because He was evidently going to Jerusalem. When the disciples James and John saw this, they said, "Master, do you wish us to order fire to come down from Heaven and consume them?" But He turned and rebuked them. And they went to another village. (105)

This was not the only time Jesus rebuked his disciples, as the following two passages show.

Now there arose a dispute among them, which of them was to be the greatest. And Jesus, knowing the reasoning that was in their hearts, took a young child and made him stand by His side and said to them, "Whoever for my sake receives this little child, receives me; and whoever receives me, receives Him who sent me. For the lowliest among you all—he is the greatest." (106)

"Rabbi," replied John, "we have seen a man making use of your name to expel demons; and we forbid him, because he does not come with us." "Do not forbid him," said Jesus, "for he who is not against you is on your side." (107)

In all these three incidents Jesus wants them to learn that the true disciple is the one who cares least for the recognition of his own status.

More on discipleship comes when Jesus warns a would-be follower of the hardships must face a disciple of his.

And, as they proceeded on their way, a man came to Him and said, "I will follow you wherever you go." "The foxes have holes," said Jesus, "and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head." (108)

Another is told that nothing, not even the settling of family affairs, must come before discipleship

"Follow me," He said to another. "Master," the man replied, "allow me first to go and bury my father." "Leave the dead," Jesus rejoined, "to bury their own dead; but you must go and announce far and wide the coming of the Kingdom of God." (109)

A third is told that there can be no turning back.

"Master," said yet another, "I will follow you; but allow me first to go and say good-bye to my friends at home." Jesus answered him, "No one who has put his hand to the plough, and then looks behind him, is fit for the Kingdom of God. (110)

Then follows a training mission for seventy disciples with the same rigorous instructions that had been given to the twelve on their mission previously, which we noted in chapter seven.

After this the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them before Him, by twos, to go to every town or place which He Himself intended to visit. And He addressed them thus: "The harvest is abundant, but the reapers are few: therefore entreat the Owner of the harvest to send out more reapers into His fields. And now go. Remember that I am sending you out as lambs into the midst of wolves. Carry no purse, bag, nor change of shoes; and salute no one on your way." "Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace be to this house!' And if there is a lover of peace there, your peace shall rest upon it; otherwise come back upon you. And in that same house stay, eating and drinking at their table; for the labourer deserves his wages. Do not move from one house to another. "And whatever town you come to and they receive you, eat what they put before you. Cure the sick in that town, and tell them, "'The Kingdom of God is now at your door.' "But whatever town you come to and they will not receive you, go out into the broader streets and say, "'The very dust of your town that hangs about us we wipe off as a protest. Only be sure of this, that the Kingdom of God is close at hand.' "I tell you that it will be more endurable for Sodom on the great day than for that town. "Alas for thee, Chorazin! Alas for thee, Bethsaida! For had the miracles been performed in Tyre and Sidon which have been performed in you, long ere now they would have repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. However, for Tyre and Sidon it will be more endurable at the Judgement than for you. And thou, Capernaum, shalt thou be lifted high as Heaven? Thou shalt be driven down as low as Hades. "He who listens to you listens to me; and he who disregards you disregards me, and he who disregards me

disregards Him who sent me."

When the Seventy returned, they exclaimed joyfully, "Master, even the demons submit to us when we utter your name." "I saw Satan fall like a lightning-flash out of Heaven," He replied. "I have given you power to tread serpents and scorpions underfoot, and to trample on all the power of the Enemy; and in no case shall anything do you harm. Nevertheless rejoice not at this, that the spirits submit to you; but rejoice that your names are registered in Heaven." (111)

Luke now goes on to record two incidents in which Jesus deals with individuals and reveals to them what they each needed to know concerning discipleship. To the smug self-satisfied lawyer Jesus gives a most penetrating lesson on practical devotion to the needs of others.

Then an expounder of the Law stood up to test Him with a question. "Rabbi," he asked, "what shall I do to inherit the Life of the Ages?" "Go to the Law," said Jesus; "what is written there? how does it read?" "'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God,'" he replied, "'with thy whole heart, thy whole soul, thy whole strength, and thy whole mind; and thy fellow man as much as thyself.'" "A right answer," said Jesus; "do that, and you shall live."

But he, desiring to justify himself, said, "But what is meant by my 'fellow man'?" Jesus replied, "A man was once on his way down from Jerusalem to Jericho when he fell among robbers, who after both stripping and beating him went away, leaving him half dead. Now a priest happened to be going down that way, and on seeing him passed by on the other side. In like manner a Levite also came to the place, and seeing him passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, being on a journey, came where he lay, and seeing him was moved with pity. He went to him, and dressed his wounds with oil and wine and bound them up. Then placing him on his own mule he brought him to an inn, where he bestowed every care on him. The next day he took

out two shillings and gave them to the innkeeper. "'Take care of him,' he said, 'and whatever further expense you are put to, I will repay it you at my next visit.' "Which of those three seems to you to have acted like a fellow man to him who fell among the robbers?" "The one who showed him pity," he replied. "Go," said Jesus, "and act in the same way." (112)

To the over-busy Martha he teaches the value of a mind set on other things besides the purely material.

As they pursued their journey He came to a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed Him to her house. She had a sister called Mary, who seated herself at the Lord's feet and listened to His teaching. Martha meanwhile was busy and distracted in waiting at table, and she came and said, "Master, do you not care that my sister is leaving me to do all the waiting? Tell her to assist me." "Martha, Martha," replied Jesus, "you are anxious and worried about a multitude of things; and yet only one thing is really necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion and she shall not be deprived of it." (113)

It is fitting that Luke should soon record a long section of Jesus' teaching in which the theme is discipleship. He begins by warning against hypocrisy, saying that the hidden motives and secrets that reveal the true person will one day be brought to light.

Meanwhile the people had come streaming towards Him by tens of thousands, so that they were trampling one another under foot. And now He proceeded to say to His disciples first, "Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees, that is to say, beware of hypocrisy. There is nothing that is covered up which will not be uncovered, nor hidden which will not become known. Whatever therefore you have said in the dark, will be heard in the light; and what you have whispered within closed doors will be proclaimed from the house-tops. (114)

Jesus then tells his disciples to proclaim the message they have been given without fear of bodily harm, for their Heavenly Father is in control of everything and will guide them in what they say.

"But to you who are my friends I say, "Be not afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do nothing further. I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who after killing has power to throw into Gehenna: yes, I say to you, fear him. Are not five sparrows sold for a penny? and yet not one of them is a thing forgotten in God's sight. But the very hairs on your heads are all counted. Away with fear: you are more precious than a multitude of sparrows.' "And I tell you that every man who shall have acknowledged me before men, the Son of Man will also acknowledge before the angels of God. But he who disowns me before men will be disowned before the angels of God. "Moreover every one who shall speak against the Son of Man, may obtain forgiveness; but he who blasphemes the Holy Spirit will never obtain forgiveness. And when they are bringing you before synagogues and magistrates and governors, do not anxiously ponder the manner or matter of your defence, nor what you are to say; for the Holy Spirit shall teach you at that very moment what you must say." (115)

They are told not to worry about the provision of material needs.

Just then a man in the crowd appealed to Him. "Rabbi," he said, "tell my brother to give me a share of the inheritance." "Man," He replied, "who has constituted me a judge or arbitrator over you?" And to the people He said, "Take care, be on your guard against all covetousness, for no one's life consists in the superabundance of his possessions." And He spoke a parable to them. "A certain rich man's lands," He said, "yielded abundant crops, and he debated within himself, saying, "'What am I to do? for I have no place in which to store my crops.' "And he said to himself, "'This is what I will do: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and in them I will store up all my harvest and my wealth; and I will say to my life, "'Life, you have ample possessions laid up for many years to come: take your ease, eat, drink,

enjoy yourself.' "But God said to him, "'Foolish man, this night your life is demanded from you; and these preparations—for whom shall they be?' "So is it with him who amasses treasure for himself, but has no riches in God."

Then turning to His disciples He said, "For this reason I say to you, 'Dismiss all anxious care for your lives, inquiring what you are to eat, and for your bodies, what you are to put on.' For life is a greater gift than food, and the body is a greater gift than clothing. Observe the ravens. They neither sow nor reap, and have neither store-chamber nor barn. And yet God feeds them. How far more precious are you than the birds! And which of you is able by anxious thought to add a moment to his life? If then you are unable to do even a very little thing, why be over-anxious about other matters? Observe the lilies, how they grow. They neither labour nor spin. And yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendour was as beautifully dressed as one of these. But if God so clothes the vegetation in the fields, that blooms to-day and to-morrow will be thrown into the oven, how much more certainly will He clothe you, you men of feeble faith!

"Therefore, do not be asking what you are to eat nor what you are to drink; and do not waver between hope and fear. For though the nations of the world pursue these things, as for you, your Father knows that you need them. But make His Kingdom the object of your pursuit, and these things shall be given you in addition. "Dismiss your fears, little flock: your Father finds a pleasure in giving you the Kingdom. Sell your possessions and give alms. Provide yourselves with purses that will never wear out, a treasure inexhaustible in Heaven, where no thief can come nor moth consume. For where your wealth is stored, there also will your heart be. (116)

They are to behave as servants anticipating the return of their master at any moment.

"Have your girdles on, and let your lamps be alight; and be yourselves like men waiting for their master—on the look-out till he shall return from the wedding feast—that, when he comes and knocks, they may open the door instantly. Blessed are those servants, whom their Master when He comes shall find on the watch. I tell you in solemn truth, that He will tie an apron round Him, and will bid them recline at table while He comes and waits on them. And whether it be in the second watch or in the third that He comes and finds them so, blessed are they. Of this be sure, that if the master of the house had known what time the robber was coming, he would have kept awake and not have allowed his house to be broken into. Be you also ready, for at an hour when you are not expecting Him the Son of Man will come."

"Master," said Peter, "are you addressing this parable to us, or to all alike?" "Who, then," replied the Lord, "is the faithful and intelligent steward whom his Master will put in charge of His household to serve out their rations at the proper times? Blessed is that servant whom his Master when He comes shall find so doing. I tell you truly that He will put him in authority over all His possessions. But if that servant should say in his heart, 'My Master is a long time in coming,' and should begin to beat the menservants and the maids, and to eat and drink, drinking even to excess; that servant's Master will come on a day when he is not expecting Him and at an hour that he knows not of, and will punish him severely, and make him share the lot of the unfaithful. And that servant who has been told his Master's will and yet made no preparation and did not obey His will, will receive many lashes. But he who had not been told it and yet did what deserved the scourge, will receive but few lashes. To whomsoever much has been given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been entrusted, of him a larger amount will be demanded. (117)

But, Jesus warns them, the clash between the forces of good and evil will produce much bitterness and strife.

"I came to throw fire upon the earth, and what is my desire? Oh that it were even now kindled! But I have a baptism to undergo; and how am I pent up till it is accomplished! Do you suppose that I came to give peace on earth? No, I tell you that I came to bring dissension. For from this time there will be in one house five persons split into parties. Three will form a party against two and two will form a party against three; father against son and son against father; mother attacking daughter and daughter her mother, mother-in-law her daughter-in-law, and daughter-in-law her mother-in-law." (118)

As Jesus nears Jerusalem a new urgency seems to come into his preaching. With severe warnings he urges everyone to repent.

Just at that time people came to tell Him about the Galilaeans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. "Do you suppose," He asked in reply, "that those Galilaeans were worse sinners than the mass of the Galilaeans, because this happened to them? I tell you, certainly not. On the contrary, if you are not penitent you will all perish as they did. Or those eighteen on whom the tower at Siloam fell, do you suppose they had failed in their duty more than all the rest of the people who live in Jerusalem? I tell you, certainly not. On the contrary, if you do not repent you will all perish just as they did." (119)

He warns of the fate of those whose lives prove worthless in God's sight.

And He gave them the following parable. "A man," He said, "who had a fig-tree growing in his garden came to look for fruit on it and could find none. So he said to the gardener, "'See, this is the third year I have come to look for fruit on this fig-tree and cannot find any. Cut it down. Why should so much ground be actually wasted?' "But the gardener pleaded, "'Leave it, Sir, this year also, till I have dug round it and manured it. If after that it bears fruit, well and good; if it does not, then you shall cut it down.'" (120)

He warns also that there may come a time when it is too late to turn to God.

He was passing through town after town and village after village, steadily proceeding towards Jerusalem, when some one asked Him, "Sir, are there but few who are to be saved?" "Strain every nerve to force your way in through the narrow gate," He answered; "for multitudes, I tell you, will endeavour to find a way in and will not succeed. As soon as the Master of the house shall have risen and shut the door, and you have begun to stand outside and knock at the door and say, "'Sir, open the door for us' —"'I do not know you,' He answers; 'you are no friends of mine.' "Then you will plead, "'We have eaten and drunk in your company and you have taught in our streets.' "But He will reply, "'I tell you that you are no friends of mine. Begone from me, all of you, wrongdoers that you are.' "There will be the weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the Prophets in the Kingdom of God, and yourselves being driven far away. They will come from east and west, from north and south, and will sit down at the banquet in the Kingdom of God. And I tell you that some now last will then be first, and some now first will then be last." (121)

But he must press on to Jerusalem, the city which he loved, but which was going to kill him.

Just at that time there came some Pharisees who warned Him, saying, "Leave this place and continue your journey; Herod means to kill you." "Go," He replied, "and take this message to that fox: "'See, to-day and to-morrow I am driving out demons and effecting cures, and on the third day I finish my course.' "Yet I must continue my journey to-day and to-morrow and the day following; for it is not conceivable that a Prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou who murderest the Prophets and stonest those who have been sent to thee, how often have I desired to gather thy children just as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you

would not come! See, your house is left to you. But I tell you that you will never see me again until you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!'" (122)

This rejection is the idea behind a parable he tells.

After listening to this teaching, one of His fellow guests said to Him, "Blessed is he who shall feast in God's Kingdom." "A man once gave a great dinner," replied Jesus, "to which he invited a large number of guests. At dinner-time he sent his servant to announce to those who had been invited, "'Come, for things are now ready.' "But they all without exception began to excuse themselves. The first told him, "'I have purchased a piece of land, and must of necessity go and look at it. Pray hold me excused.' "A second pleaded, "'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and am on my way to try them. Pray hold me excused.' "Another said, "'I am just married. It is impossible for me to come.' "So the servant came and brought these answers to his master, and they stirred his anger. "'Go out quickly,' he said, 'into the streets of the city—the wide ones and the narrow. You will see poor men, and crippled, blind, lame: fetch them all in here.' "Soon the servant reported the result, saying, "'Sir, what you ordered is done, and there is room still.' "Go out,' replied the master, 'to the high roads and hedge-rows, and compel the people to come in, so that my house may be filled. For I tell you that not one of those who were invited shall taste my dinner.'" (123)

But the invitation to be a disciple, which is implied in this parable, is immediately contrasted with stern teaching on counting the cost of discipleship

On His journey vast crowds attended Him, towards whom He turned and said, "If any one is coming to me who does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes and his own life also, he cannot be a disciple of mine. No one who does not carry his own cross and come after me can be a disciple of mine. "Which of

you, desiring to build a tower, does not sit down first and calculate the cost, asking if he has the means to finish it? — lest perhaps, when he has laid the foundation and is unable to finish, all who see it shall begin to jeer at him, saying, 'This man began to build, but could not finish.' Or what king, marching to encounter another king in war, does not first sit down and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand men to meet the one who is advancing against him with twenty thousand? If not, while the other is still a long way off, he sends messengers and sues for peace. Just as no one of you who does not detach himself from all that belongs to him can be a disciple of mine. "Salt is good: but if even the salt has become tasteless, what will you use to season it? Neither for land nor dunghill is it of any use; they throw it away. Listen, every one who has ears to listen with!" (124)

Jesus has other stern words to say on discipleship.

But which of you who has a servant ploughing, or tending sheep, will say to him when he comes in from the farm, 'Come at once and take your place at table,' and will not rather say to him, 'Get my dinner ready, make yourself tidy, and wait upon me till I have finished my dinner, and then you shall have yours'? Does he thank the servant for obeying his orders? So you also, when you have obeyed all the orders given you, must say, "'There is no merit in our service: what we have done is only what we were in duty bound to do.'" (125)

Later Jesus was to demonstrate in deed these hard words, when he would not accept the allegiance of one who was not prepared to give up everything to follow him.

The question was put to Him by a Ruler: "Good Rabbi, what shall I do to inherit the Life of the Ages?" "Why do you call me good?" replied Jesus; "there is no one good but One, namely God. You know the Commandments: 'Do not commit adultery;' 'Do not murder;' 'Do not steal;' 'Do not lie in giving evidence;' 'Honour thy father and thy mother.'" "All of those," he replied, "I have kept from my youth."

On receiving this answer Jesus said to him, "There is still one thing wanting in you. Sell everything you possess and give the money to the poor, and you shall have wealth in Heaven; and then come, follow me."

But on hearing these words he was deeply sorrowful, for he was exceedingly rich. Jesus saw his sorrow, and said, "With how hard a struggle do the possessors of riches ever enter the Kingdom of God! Why, it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God."

"Who then can be saved?" exclaimed the hearers. "Things impossible with man," He replied, "are possible with God." Then Peter said, "See, we have given up our homes and have followed you." "I solemnly tell you," replied Jesus, "that there is no one who has left house or wife, or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of God's Kingdom, who shall not certainly receive many times as much in this life, and in the age that is coming the Life of the Ages." (126)

The standards he set were high, but then, as he also emphasized, so were the rewards. Were his standards too high? He asked no one to give more than he himself gave.

CHAPTER TEN

The Final Week

Events now begin to move rapidly to their climax. On the outskirts of Jerusalem Jesus pauses to give instructions for an ass to be fetched for him. He plans that the manner of his entry into Jerusalem shall reveal that he is indeed the promised Messiah, fulfilling a prophecy of Zechariah (9:9) that the king would arrive humbly, riding on an ass.

When they were come near Jerusalem and had arrived at Bethphage and the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of the disciples on in front, saying to them, "Go to the village you see facing you, and as you enter it you will find a she-ass tied up and a foal with her. Untie her and bring them to me. And if any one says anything to you, say, 'The Master needs them,' and he will at once send them." This took place in order that the Prophet's prediction might be fulfilled: "Tell the Daughter of Zion, 'See, thy King is coming to thee, gentle, and yet mounted on an ass, even on a colt the foal of a beast of burden.'"

So the disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them: they brought the she-ass and the foal, and threw their outer garments on them. So He sat on them; and most of the crowd kept spreading their garments along the road, while others cut branches from the trees and carpeted the road with them, and the multitudes—some of the people preceding Him and some following—sang aloud, "God save the Son of David! Blessings on Him who comes in the Lord's name! God in the highest Heavens save Him!" When He thus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was thrown into commotion, every one inquiring, "Who is this?" "This is Jesus, the Prophet, from Nazareth in Galilee," replied the crowds. (127)

He is hailed as the Son of David, which was one of the titles reserved for the Messiah. But Jesus knew that this apparently enthusiastic welcome would soon turn to rejection - that the crowds had really failed to understand both him and his mission.

When He came into full view of the city, He wept aloud over it, and exclaimed, "O that at this time thou hadst known—yes even thou—what makes peace possible! But now it is hid from thine eyes. For the time is coming upon thee when thy foes will throw up around thee earthworks and a wall, investing thee and hemming thee in on every side. And they will dash thee to the ground and thy children within thee, and will not leave one stone upon another within thee; because thou hast not recognized the time of thy visitation." (128)

For later events of this week show that most of the delighted crowd had not realised what kind of Messiah it was in whom they were rejoicing. This was no king returning in triumph from war, as riding on a horse might suggest, but one who was humble and mounted on an ass.

This acceptance by the crowd of Jesus as their Messiah, and a further clash with him over the commercialisation of the Temple, bring the enmity of the religious leaders of the Jews to a head; Jesus must be destroyed at all costs. But how, while so many were constantly around him, listening in awe to his teaching?

And when He was now getting near Jerusalem, and descending the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began in their joy to praise God in loud voices for all the mighty deeds they had witnessed. "Blessed is the King," they cried, "who comes in the name of the Lord: in Heaven peace, and glory in the highest realms." Thereupon some of the Pharisees in the crowd appealed to Him, saying, "Rabbi, reprove your disciples." "I tell you," He replied, "that if they became silent, the very stones would cry out." (129)

They reached Jerusalem, and entering the Temple He began to drive out the buyers and sellers, and upset the money-changers' tables and the stools of the pigeon-dealers, and would not allow any one to carry anything through the Temple. And He remonstrated with them. "Is it not written," He said, "'My House shall be called The House of Prayer for all the nations?' But you have made it what it now is—a robbers' cave." This the High Priests and Scribes heard, and they began to devise means to destroy Him. For they were afraid of Him, because of the deep impression produced on all the people by His teaching. When evening came on, Jesus and His disciples used to leave the city. (130)

The total area of the temple was quite large, something like 200 metres by 400 (12 football pitches). In Herod's magnificent rebuilding scheme, by Jesus' day there were fine courtyards, pillared porticoes, and semi-public rooms where teachers held forth. The ritual of sacrifice, in which the ordinary Jew brought the animal himself and the priests completed the sacrifice, was in Judaism the symbolic act by which God was worshipped. If he could get to Jerusalem, the devout Jew would offer a sacrifice at the major festivals of the year, such as the Passover, and on other special occasions (for example after childbirth). Rarely would he be able to bring the required animal with him (it would in any case have to be passed as unblemished by the priests) so one lucrative trade controlled by the priests was the sale of sacrificial animals and birds in the large outer court, the court of the Gentiles. Only a special temple currency was permitted, so there was another profitable source of income in the changing of normal coinage of the Roman Empire into temple coins. Jesus was outraged at this profiteering, and the traditional picture of 'gentle Jesus, meek and mild' is far from true of his actions on this occasion.

Jesus was temporarily safe from the rage of the religious authorities

because of the adulation of the crowd. So their first hope was to trap him into making some compromising statement, which would destroy his popularity with the crowd.

He entered the Temple; and while He was teaching, the High Priests and the Elders of the people came to Him and asked Him, "By what authority are you doing these things? and who gave you this authority?" "And I also have a question to ask you," replied Jesus, "and if you answer me, I in turn will tell you by what authority I do these things. John's Baptism, whence was it? —had it a heavenly or a human origin?" So they debated the matter among themselves. "If we say 'a heavenly origin,'" they argued, "he will say, 'Why then did you not believe him?' and if we say 'a human origin' we have the people to fear, for they all hold John to have been a Prophet." So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." "Nor do I tell you," He replied, "by what authority I do these things."

"But give me your judgement. There was a man who had two sons. He came to the elder of them, and said, "'My son, go and work in the vineyard to-day.' "'I will not,' he replied. "But afterwards he was sorry, and went. He came to the second and spoke in the same manner. His answer was, "'I will go, Sir.' "But he did not go. Which of the two did as his father desired?" "The first," they said. "I solemnly tell you," replied Jesus, "that the tax-gatherers and the notorious sinners are entering the Kingdom of God in front of you. For John came to you observing all sorts of ritual, and you put no faith in him: the tax-gatherers and the notorious sinners did put faith in him, and you, though you saw this example set you, were not even afterwards sorry so as to believe him.

"Listen to another parable. There was a householder who planted a vineyard, made a fence round it, dug a wine-tank in it, and built a strong lodge; then let the place to vine-dressers, and went abroad. When vintage-time approached, he sent his servants to the vine-dressers to receive his share of the grapes; but the vine-dressers seized

the servants, and one they cruelly beat, one they killed, one they pelted with stones. Again he sent another party of servants more numerous than the first; and these they treated in the same manner. Later still he sent to them his son, saying, "'They will respect my son.'" "But the vine-dressers, when they saw the son, said to one another, "'Here is the heir: come, let us kill him and get his inheritance.'" "So they seized him, dragged him out of the vineyard, and killed him. When then the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vine-dressers?" "He will put the wretches to a wretched death," was the reply, "and will entrust the vineyard to other vine-dressers who will render the produce to him at the vintage season."

"Have you never read in the Scriptures," said Jesus, "'The Stone which the builders rejected has been made the Cornerstone: this Cornerstone came from the Lord, and is wonderful in our eyes'?" "That, I tell you, is the reason why the Kingdom of God will be taken away from you, and given to a nation that will exhibit the power of it. He who falls on this stone will be severely hurt; but he on whom it falls will be utterly crushed." After listening to His parables the High Priests and the Pharisees perceived that He was speaking about them; but though they were eager to lay hands upon Him, they were afraid of the people, for by them He was regarded as a Prophet. (131)

Then the Pharisees went and consulted together how they might entrap Him in His conversation. So they sent to Him their disciples together with the Herodians; who said, "Teacher, we know that you are truthful and that you faithfully teach God's truth; and that no fear of man misleads you, for you are not biased by men's wealth or rank. Give us your judgement therefore: is it allowable for us to pay a poll-tax to Caesar, or not?" Perceiving their wickedness, Jesus replied, "Why are you hypocrites trying to ensnare me? Show me the tribute coin." And they brought Him a shilling. "Whose likeness and inscription," He asked, "is this?" "Caesar's," they replied. "Pay therefore," He rejoined, "what is Caesar's to Caesar; and what is God's to God." They heard this, and were astonished; then left Him, and went their way.

On the same day a party of Sadducees came to Him, contending that there is no resurrection. And they put this case to Him. "Teacher," they said, "Moses enjoined, 'If a man die childless, his brother shall marry his widow, and raise up a family for him.' Now we had among us seven brothers. The eldest of them married, but died childless, leaving his wife to his brother. So also did the second and the third, down to the seventh, till the woman also died, after surviving them all. At the Resurrection, therefore, whose wife of the seven will she be? for they all married her."

The reply of Jesus was, "You are in error, through ignorance of the Scriptures and of the power of God. For in the Resurrection, men neither marry nor are women given in marriage, but they are like angels in Heaven. But as to the Resurrection of the dead, have you never read what God says to you, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not the God of dead, but of living men." All the crowd heard this, and were filled with amazement at His teaching.

Now the Pharisees came up when they heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, and one of them, an expounder of the Law, asked Him as a test question, "Teacher, which is the greatest Commandment in the Law?" "'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God,'" He answered, "'with thy whole heart, thy whole soul, thy whole mind.' This is the greatest and foremost Commandment. And the second is similar to it: 'Thou shalt love thy fellow man as much as thyself.' The whole of the Law and the Prophets is summed up in these two Commandments."

While the Pharisees were still assembled there, Jesus put a question to them. "What think you about the Christ," He said, "whose son is He?" "David's," they replied. "How then," He asked, "does David, taught by the Spirit, call Him Lord, when he says, "'The Lord said to my Lord, sit at My right hand until I have put thy foes beneath thy feet'? "If therefore David calls Him Lord, how can He be his son?" No one could say a word in reply, nor from that day did any one venture again to put a question to Him. (132)

It is interesting to observe how, in this concluding passage, Jesus tackles the very point which summed up the difference in outlook between himself and his opponents: what sort of a Messiah were they expecting? In Jewish idiom, to say that a person is 'son of' someone is to say that he is that sort of person. Most of the Jews believed that the Messiah would be just like David, in other words a warrior who by force of arms would make their nation great. When the ordinary people used this term about the Messiah, and in the gospels 'Son of David' seems to have been the most commonly used title of the Messiah, they were showing how limited was their view of the role the Messiah would fill. Even at this late stage Jesus does not give up trying to prompt their thoughts beyond the material level, to suggest that the messiah was such a figure that even David would call 'Lord'. Jesus treats the words of Psalm 110:1 as a prophecy about the Messiah, thus showing the Pharisees in this incident, and the Sadducees previously in their turn, that if they had known the true meaning of the scriptures they would have avoided this misunderstanding.

All their attempts to trap Jesus in public debate had failed, so only one way was left - judicial murder - but the problem of detaching him from the crowds of admirers still remained.

Then the High Priests and Elders of the People assembled in the court of the palace of the High Priest Caiaphas, and consulted how to get Jesus into their power by stratagem and put Him to death. But they said, "Not during the Festival, lest there be a riot among the people."
(133)

Then out of the blue, came the solution. One of his own followers was prepared, for a fee, to let them know where he could be caught alone.

At that time one of the Twelve, the one called Judas Iscariot, went to the High Priests and said, "What are you willing to give me if I betray him to you?" So they weighed out to him thirty shekels, and from that moment he was on the look out for an opportunity to betray Him. (134)

The question of what motives Judas had in betraying Jesus is one that many have thought long over. In view of his final remorse it is impossible to create a completely black picture of him, as some have done. It has been suggested that he did it merely for the money; after all thirty pieces of silver was quite a large sum of money for those days. John's gospel (12:6) records that he was a thief, and took money from the common purse used by the twelve for their everyday needs. Others suggest that Judas never intended that Jesus should die as a result of his actions, but that Judas, perhaps a fanatical zealot, wished to force Jesus to come out into the open; that once Jesus was arrested he would have to call up divine help to free himself, and this would set in motion all of God's supposed intentions to rid the country of the hated Romans. But if Judas' motive were honourable, though mistaken, the view of two gospel writers was that Satan had entered his heart (Luke 22:3 and John 13:2). Perhaps somewhere nearer the truth is the view that sees Judas as in many ways typical of the populace of Jerusalem. Just as the crowd who welcomed Jesus when he rode into Jerusalem on an ass, hoping him to turn out to be a Deliverer, was capable of calling for his crucifixion when he was clearly not that, being a humiliated prisoner, a corporate betrayal, here was an individual betrayal of the same type.

Meanwhile, on this same day, Wednesday, Jesus had again announced his crucifixion, even specifying the day.

When Jesus had ended all these discourses, He said to His disciples, "You know that in two days' time the Passover comes. And the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified." (135)

And when he was anointed by a woman in Bethany, he accepted it as the preparation of his body for burial.

Now when Jesus was come to Bethany and was at the house of Simon the Leper, a woman came to Him with a jar of very costly, sweet-scented ointment, which she poured over His head as He reclined at table. "Why such waste?" indignantly exclaimed the disciples; "for this might have been sold for a considerable sum, and the money given to the poor." But Jesus heard it, and said to them, "Why are you vexing her? For she has done a most gracious act towards me. The poor you always have with you, but me you have not always. In pouring this ointment over me, her object was to prepare me for burial. In solemn truth I tell you that wherever in the whole world this Good News shall be proclaimed, this deed of hers shall be spoken of in memory of her." (136)

On the next day, Thursday, came what was perhaps the most memorable occasion on Jesus' ministry besides his death and resurrection; the farewell meal with his disciples at which Jesus revealed the real purpose of both his life and his death. Everything had been arranged for Jesus to eat the Passover meal with the Twelve.

On the first day of the feast of Unleavened Bread—the day for killing the Passover lamb—His disciples asked Him, "Where shall we go and prepare for you to eat the Passover?" So He sent two of His disciples with instructions, saying, "Go into the city, and you will meet a man carrying a pitcher of water: follow him, and whatever house he enters, tell the master of the house, 'The Rabbi asks, Where is my room where I can eat the Passover with my disciples?' Then he will himself show you a large room upstairs, ready furnished: there make

preparation for us." So the disciples went out and came to the city, and found everything just as He had told them; and they got the Passover ready. (137)

This was the ceremony carried out each year in remembrance of the original Passover, when the blood of a sacrificed lamb was the token of salvation for all those who shared the meal.

Then Moses summoned all the elders of Israel and said to them, "Go at once and select the animals for your families and slaughter the Passover lamb. Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it into the blood in the basin and put some of the blood on the top and on both sides of the doorframe. None of you shall go out of the door of your house until morning. When the LORD goes through the land to strike down the Egyptians, he will see the blood on the top and sides of the doorframe and will pass over that doorway, and he will not permit the destroyer to enter your houses and strike you down. Obey these instructions as a lasting ordinance for you and your descendants." (Exodus 12:21-24 - New International Version)

Jesus first brought out into the open a matter which shocked his companions.

When evening came, He was at table with the twelve disciples, and the meal was proceeding, when Jesus said, "In solemn truth I tell you that one of you will betray me." Intensely grieved they began one after another to ask Him, "Can it be I, Master?" "The one who has dipped his fingers in the bowl with me," He answered, "is the man who will betray me. The Son of Man is indeed going as is written concerning Him; but alas for that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It had been a happy thing for that man if he had never been born." Then Judas, the disciple who was betraying Him, asked, "Can it be I, Rabbi?" "It is you," He replied. (138)

There was at table one of His disciples—the one Jesus loved—

reclining with his head on Jesus's bosom. Making a sign therefore to him, Simon Peter said, "Tell us to whom he is referring." So he, having his head on Jesus's bosom, leaned back and asked, "Master, who is it?" "It is the one," answered Jesus, "for whom I shall dip this piece of bread and to whom I shall give it." Accordingly He dipped the piece of bread, and took it and gave it to Judas, the son of the Iscariot Simon. Then, after Judas had received the piece of bread, Satan entered into him. "Lose no time about it," said Jesus to him. But why He said this no one else at the table understood. Some, however, supposed that because Judas had the money-box Jesus meant, "Buy what we require for the Festival," or that he should give something to the poor. So Judas took the piece of bread and immediately went out. And it was night. (139)

Now that the betrayer had left, Jesus was free to commit to his faithful followers the supreme revelation of the meaning of his life and death. This he conveyed by actions as well as words.

During the meal Jesus took a Passover biscuit, blessed it and broke it. He then gave it to the disciples, saying, "Take this and eat it: it is my body." And He took the cup and gave thanks, and gave it to them saying, "Drink from it, all of you; for this is my blood which is to be poured out for many for the remission of sins—the blood which ratifies the Covenant. I tell you that I will never again take the produce of the vine till that day when I shall drink the new wine with you in my Father's Kingdom." (140)

What did Jesus mean by these actions and words? No answer can be completely adequate, but we can say, first, that the death of Jesus was a vitally important event, so important that a perpetual reminder of it is to be preserved by the Church in sacramental (or symbolic) form. These are Paul's words:

For it was from the Lord that I received the facts which, in turn, I handed on to you; how that the Lord Jesus, on the night He was to be

betrayed, took some bread, and after giving thanks He broke it and said, "This is my body which is about to be broken for you. Do this in memory of me." In the same way, when the meal was over, He also took the cup. "This cup," He said, "is the new Covenant of which my blood is the pledge. Do this, every time that you drink it, in memory of me." For every time that you eat this bread and drink from the cup, you are proclaiming the Lord's death—until He returns. (1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

By offering 'himself' instead of the lamb, Jesus was showing that he was the Passover lamb; he was saying that his death will be for the new community of believers what the sacrifice of the lamb was for the old, namely the way or means of salvation. This much was put into words by Paul: 'Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed' (1 Corinthians 5:7). References to Christ as 'the Lamb' are frequent in the New Testament, including over 20 times in the Revelation of John.

Jesus referred to his blood as being poured out for many for the remission of sins. He thereby revealed that his death was procuring a spiritual salvation, not a physical one as the first Passover had been. How could the death of Christ be effective for the forgiveness of sins? In a passage steeped in the thoughts of Isaiah 53, Peter says:

The burden of our sins He Himself carried in His own body to the Cross and bore it there, so that we, having died so far as our sins are concerned, may live righteous lives. By His wounds yours have been healed. (1 Peter 2:24)

Jesus also stated that his death was to be the seal of a new agreement (for that is what the words 'covenant' and 'testament'

mean) between God and man. He wanted his disciples to understand that the words of Jeremiah were being fulfilled:

"The time is coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. "This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the LORD. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more." (Jeremiah 31:31-34 New International Version)

At the end of the meal Luke tells us that, for at least the second time, there was a quarrel among the disciples as to which of them was the greatest.

There arose also a dispute among them which of them should be regarded as greatest. But He said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles are their masters, and those who exercise authority over them are called Benefactors. With you it is not so; but let the greatest among you be as the younger, and the leader be like him who serves. For which is the greater—he who sits at table, or he who waits on him? Is it not he who sits at table? But my position among you is that of one who waits on others. (141)

The gentle words of rebuke here bear a strong resemblance to what John records as happening during the meal.

Now just before the Feast of the Passover this incident took place. Jesus knew that the time had come for Him to leave this world and go

to the Father; and having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. While supper was proceeding, the Devil having by this time suggested to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, the thought of betraying Him, Jesus, although He knew that the Father had put everything into His hands, and that He had come forth from God and was now going to God, rose from the table, threw off His upper garments, and took a towel and tied it round Him. Then He poured water into a basin, and proceeded to wash the feet of the disciples and to wipe them with the towel which He had put round Him.

When He came to Simon Peter, Peter objected. "Master," he said, "are you going to wash my feet?" "What I am doing," answered Jesus, "for the present you do not know, but afterwards you shall know." "Never, while the world lasts," said Peter, "shall you wash my feet." "If I do not wash you," replied Jesus, "you have no share with me." "Master," said Peter, "wash not only my feet, but also my hands and my head." "Any one who has lately bathed," said Jesus, "does not need to wash more than his feet, but is clean all over. And you my disciples are clean, and yet this is not true of all of you." For He knew who was betraying Him, and that was why He said, "You are not all of you clean."

So after He had washed their feet, put on His garments again, and returned to the table, He said to them, "Do you understand what I have done to you? You call me 'The Rabbi' and 'The Master,' and rightly so, for such I am. If I then, your Master and Rabbi, have washed your feet, it is also your duty to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example in order that you may do what I have done to you. In most solemn truth I tell you that a servant is not superior to his master, nor is a messenger superior to him who sent him. If you know all this, blessed are you if you act accordingly. I am not speaking of all of you. I know whom I have chosen, but things are as they are in order that the Scripture may be fulfilled, which says, 'He who eats my bread has lifted up his heel against me.' From this time forward I tell you things before they happen, in order that when they do happen you may believe that I am He. In most solemn truth I tell you that he who

receives whoever I send receives me, and that he who receives me receives Him who sent me." (142)

Luke has recorded the verbal lesson, and John the practical lesson as well. The latter in fact goes on to record much more which will be dealt with when we look at the teaching of Jesus.

The final act of the suppoer is the warniong of Jesus to Peter that he would dening him that very night.

"Simon, Simon, I tell you that Satan has obtained permission to have all of you to sift as wheat is sifted. But I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail, and you, when at last you have come back to your true self, must strengthen your brethren." "Master," replied Peter, "with you I am ready to go both to prison and to death." "I tell you, Peter," said Jesus, "that the cock will not crow to-day till you have three times denied that you know me." (143)

"Even if I must die with you," declared Peter again and again, "I will never disown you." In like manner protested also all the disciples. (144)

Jesus also spoke to the disciples generally about the hard times that lay ahead for them.

Then He asked them, "When I sent you out without purse or bag or shoes, was there anything you needed?" "No, nothing," they replied. "But now," said He, "let the one who has a purse take it, and he who has a bag must do the same. And let him who has no sword sell his outer garment and buy one. For I tell you that those words of Scripture must yet find their fulfilment in me: 'And He was reckoned among the lawless'; for indeed that saying about me has its accomplishment." "Master, here are two swords," they exclaimed. "That is enough," He replied. (145)

Then they go to the foot of the Mount of Olives, to the Garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus would wait till they came to arrest him.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

The Cross

The story of the crucifixion really begins in the Garden of Gethsemane. If Jesus had wanted to, he could have avoided the agony of the cross by slipping off quietly into the night. But the terrible choice that was his he faced in prayer.

Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane. And He said to the disciples, "Sit down here, whilst I go yonder and there pray." And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zabdi. Then He began to be full of anguish and distress, and He said to them, "My soul is crushed with anguish to the very point of death; wait here, and keep awake with me." Going forward a short distance He fell on His face and prayed. "My Father," He said, "if it is possible, let this cup pass away from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt."

Then He came to the disciples and found them asleep, and He said to Peter, "Alas, none of you could keep awake with me for even a single hour! Keep awake, and pray that you may not enter into temptation: the spirit is right willing, but the body is frail."

Again a second time He went away and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it is impossible for this cup to pass without my drinking it, Thy will be done."

He came and again found them asleep, for they were very tired. So He left them, and went away once more and prayed a third time, again using the same words.

Then He came to the disciples and said, "Sleep on and rest. See, the

moment is close at hand when the Son of Man is to be betrayed into the hands of sinful men. Rouse yourselves. Let us be going. My betrayer is close at hand." (146)

Some words, found only in Luke's gospel, give some idea of the intensity of his praying.

And there appeared to Him an angel from Heaven, strengthening Him; while He—an agony of distress having come upon Him—prayed all the more with intense earnestness, and His sweat became like clots of blood dropping on the ground. (147)

Perhaps we have no better clue to the tremendous cost to Jesus of carrying out the will of God through his death in the way he shrank from, but accepted, the 'cup' of suffering that lay ahead. in this, surely, was more than simply the physical pain of crucifixion.

The decision has been made. He will carry out the will of God. He rises to meet his betrayer and the party sent to arrest him.

Rouse yourselves. Let us be going. My betrayer is close at hand." He had scarcely finished speaking when Judas came—one of the Twelve—accompanied by a great crowd of men armed with swords and bludgeons, sent by the High Priests and Elders of the People. Now the betrayer had agreed upon a sign with them, to direct them. He had said, "The one whom I kiss is the man: lay hold of him." So he went straight to Jesus and said, "Peace to you, Rabbi!" And he kissed Him eagerly. "Friend," said Jesus, "carry out your intention." Then they came and laid their hands on Jesus and seized Him firmly. (148)

There is no question of resisting or escaping, though that was always possible. The plan of God, as revealed in the writings of the prophets, must be fulfilled.

But one of those with Jesus drew his sword and struck the High Priest's servant, cutting off his ear. "Put back your sword again," said Jesus, "for all who draw the sword shall perish by the sword. Or do you suppose I cannot entreat my Father and He would instantly send to my help more than twelve legions of angels? In that case how are the Scriptures to be fulfilled which declare that thus it must be?"

Then said Jesus to the crowds, "Have you come out as if to fight with a robber, with swords and bludgeons to apprehend me? Day after day I have been sitting teaching in the Temple, and you did not arrest me. But all this has taken place in order that the writings of the Prophets may be fulfilled." At this point the disciples all left Him and fled. (149)

The first of Jesus' 'trials' now takes place.

So the battalion and their tribune and the Jewish police closed in, and took Jesus and bound Him. They then brought Him to Annas first; for Annas was the father-in-law of Caiaphas who was High Priest that year. (It was this Caiaphas who had advised the Jews, saying, "It is to your interest that one man should die for the People.") (150)

So the High Priest questioned Jesus about His disciples and His teaching. "As for me," replied Jesus, "I have spoken openly to the world. I have continually taught in some synagogue or in the Temple where all the Jews are wont to assemble, and I have said nothing in secret. Why do you question me? Question those who heard what it was I said to them: these witnesses here know what I said." Upon His saying this, one of the officers standing by struck Him with his open hand, asking Him as he did so, "Is that the way you answer the High Priest?" "If I have spoken wrongly," replied Jesus, "bear witness to it as wrong; but if rightly, why that blow?" So Annas sent Him bound to Caiaphas the High Priest. (151)

Then Jesus is brought before a hastily convened meeting of the Sanhedrin, the highest Jewish court.

So they led Jesus away to the High Priest, and with him there assembled all the High Priests, Elders, and Scribes. Peter followed Jesus at a distance, as far as the outer court of the High Priest's palace. But there he remained sitting among the officers, and warming himself by the fire. (152)

The trial that followed was a mockery of Jewish law. The rules laid down that a trial must take place in daylight hours, and not on the day before (or the actual day of) the Sabbath or festival. Both these rules were ignored.

The procedure in court was that a charge should be formed based on the agreed testimony of at least two witnesses before the trial could begin. Although hired false witness had been arranged, their evidence did not agree, and so no legal charge had been formed.

Meanwhile the High Priests and the entire Sanhedrin were endeavouring to get evidence against Jesus in order to put Him to death, but could find none; for though many gave false testimony against Him, their statements did not tally. Then some came forward as witnesses and falsely declared, "We have heard him say, 'I will pull down this Sanctuary built by human hands, and three days afterwards I will erect another built without hands.'" But not even in this shape was their testimony consistent. (153)

Jesus should have been released at this point, but the High Priest now solemnly challenged Jesus with the one question that would force Jesus' hand.

At last the High Priest stood up, and advancing into the midst of them all, asked Jesus, "Have you no answer to make? What is the

meaning of all this that these witnesses allege against you?" But He remained silent, and gave no reply. A second time the High Priest questioned Him. "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?" he said. (154)

The rules of the Sanhedrin stated that a man could not be convicted by his own evidence alone, but Jesus' affirmative answer to the High Priest's question is seized upon as blasphemy and for it he is sentenced to death.

"I am," replied Jesus, "and you and others will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the divine Power, and coming amid the clouds of the sky." Rending his garments the High Priest exclaimed, "What need have we of witnesses after that? You all heard his impious words. What is your judgement?" Then with one voice they condemned Him as deserving of death. (155)

This again was a disregard of the rules of the court, for a verdict of conviction had always to be held over to the next day before being given, to avoid a hasty sentence being pronounced in the heat of the moment. But, for these men held in the grip of passionate hatred, the heat of the moment triumphed over qualms of conscience, and these supposedly venerable men, like spiteful schoolboys, spit on and push and slap the prisoner they have just condemned to death.

Thereupon some began to spit on Him, and to blindfold Him, while striking Him with their fists and crying, "Prove that you are a prophet." The officers too struck Him with open hands as they took Him in charge. (156)

Meanwhile, in the courtyard, another tragedy is being played out.

Now while Peter was below in the quadrangle, one of the High Priest's maidservants came, and seeing Peter warming himself she looked at him and said, "You also were with Jesus, the Nazarene." But he denied it, and said, "I don't know—I don't understand—What do you mean?" And then he went out into the outer court. Just then a cock crowed. Again the maidservant saw him, and again began to say to the people standing by, "He is one of them." A second time he repeatedly denied it. Soon afterwards the bystanders again accused Peter, saying, "You are surely one of them, for you too are a Galilaean." But he broke out into curses and oaths, declaring, "I know nothing of the man you are talking about." No sooner had he spoken than a cock crowed for the second time, and Peter recollected the words of Jesus, "Before the cock crows twice, you will three times disown me." And as he thought of it, he wept aloud. (157)

Peter alone of the disciples had the courage to follow Jesus this far. Now even Peter's courage failed, and three times, each with greater vehemence, he denied knowing his master. Then he remembered Jesus' words - and wept. There was another who was filled with remorse, but with a different outcome. Peter repented and was restored; Judas was firmly in the grip of Satan, and for him the only outcome was to complete his self-destruction.

Then when Judas, who had betrayed Him, saw that He was condemned, smitten with remorse he brought back the thirty shekels to the High Priests and Elders and said, "I have sinned, in betraying to death one who is innocent." "What does that matter to us?" they replied; it is your business." Flinging the shekels into the Sanctuary he left the place, and went and hanged himself.

When the High Priests had gathered up the money they said, "It is illegal to put it into the Treasury, because it is the price of blood." So after consulting together they spent the money in the purchase of the Potter's Field as a burial place for people not belonging to the city; for which reason that piece of ground received the name, which it still

bears, of 'the Field of Blood.' Then were fulfilled the words spoken by the Prophet Jeremiah, "And I took the thirty shekels, the price of the prized one on whom Israelites had set a price, and gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord directed me." (158)

The sentence of death has been passed on Jesus, but, under the terms by which the Roman Empire had delegated a certain amount of governing power to the Jewish authorities, permission to carry out the death penalty must be granted by the Roman governor. Pilate was in Jerusalem at this time, and not Caesarea, the Roman administrative capital, because Jerusalem was always likely to provide trouble at the Passover festival.

Therefore at dawn - and the Romans always did as much business as possible before the midday heat brought discomfort - Jesus is hustled before Pilate. But the charge of blasphemy would be meaningless to this Roman, so the charge against Jesus was changed to one of stirring up revolt against the Roman Empire.

Then the whole assembly rose and brought Him to Pilate, and began to accuse Him. "We have found this man," they said, "an agitator among our nation, forbidding the payment of tribute to Caesar, and claiming to be himself an anointed king." (159)

A brief interrogation satisfies Pilate that the man is harmless.

Then Pilate asked Him, "You, then, are the King of the Jews?" "It is as you say," He replied. Pilate said to the High Priests and to the crowd, "I can find no crime in this man." (160)

The result is furious protests, but Pilate sees a way out of what is becoming a tiresome business in a reference to Galilee. Jesus, as a Galilaean, can be sent to be judged by Herod, who was the Roman-appointed ruler of that district.

But they violently insisted. "He stirs up the people," they said, "throughout all Judaea with His teaching—even from Galilee (where He first started) to this city." On hearing this, Pilate inquired, "Is this man a Galilaean?" And learning that He belonged to Herod's jurisdiction he sent Him to Herod, for he too was in Jerusalem at that time. To Herod the sight of Jesus was a great gratification, for, for a long time, he had been wanting to see Him, because he had heard so much about Him. He hoped also to see some miracle performed by Him. So he put a number of questions to Him, but Jesus gave him no reply.

Meanwhile the High Priests and the Scribes were standing there and vehemently accusing Him. Then, laughing to scorn the claims of Jesus, Herod (and his soldiers with him) made sport of Him, dressed Him in a gorgeous costume, and sent Him back to Pilate. And on that very day Herod and Pilate became friends again, for they had been for some time at enmity. (161)

John's gospel does not record Herod's involvement, but does give us quite a detailed account of Pilate's conversation with Jesus, which may well have taken place on his return from Herod.

Re-entering the Praetorium, therefore, Pilate called Jesus and asked Him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" "Do you say this of yourself, or have others told it you about me?" replied Jesus. "Am I a Jew?" exclaimed Pilate; "it is your own nation and the High Priests who have handed you over to me. What have you done?"

"My kingdom," replied Jesus, "does not belong to this world. If my kingdom did belong to this world, my subjects would have resolutely fought to save me from being delivered up to the Jews. But, as a matter of fact, my kingdom has not this origin."

"So then you are a king!" rejoined Pilate. "Yes," said Jesus, "you say truly that I am a king. For this purpose I was born, and for this purpose

I have come into the world—to give testimony for the truth. Every one who is a friend of the truth listens to my voice."

"What is truth?" said Pilate. But no sooner had he spoken the words than he went out again to the Jews and told them, "I find no crime in him." (162)

Pilate, now even more convinced of Jesus' innocence, offers to make Jesus the prisoner who was customarily released at the Passover. Sadly overestimating the chief priests' sense of justice, he offered them a choice between Jesus and the most notorious criminal then in custody, a robber, rebel, and murderer named Barabbas.

Now it was the Governor's custom at the Festival to release some one prisoner, whomsoever the populace desired; and at this time they had a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. So when they were now assembled Pilate appealed to them. "Whom shall I release to you," he said, "Barabbas, or Jesus the so-called Christ?" For he knew that it was from envious hatred that Jesus had been brought before him. (163)

They chose Barabbas, and the crowd that had gathered took up the cry, while Pilate's dismay was heightened by what his wife told him.

While he was sitting on the tribunal a message came to him from his wife. "Have nothing to do with that innocent man," she said, "for during the night I have suffered terribly in a dream through him." The High Priests, however, and the Elders urged the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to demand the death of Jesus. So when the Governor a second time asked them, "Which of the two shall I release to you?" — they cried, "Barabbas!" "What then," said Pilate, "shall I do with Jesus, the so-called Christ?" With one voice they shouted, "Let him be crucified!" "Why, what crime has he committed?" asked Pilate. But they kept on furiously shouting, "Let him be crucified!" (164)

Seeing that the crowd was growing dangerous, but unwilling to condemn this puzzling and obviously harmless man, Pilate hopes that having Jesus scourged (a very violent and wounding punishment) will satisfy them.

Then Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him. And the soldiers, twisting twigs of thorn into a wreath, put it on His head, and threw round Him a crimson cloak. Then they began to march up to Him, saying in a mocking voice, "Hail King of the Jews!" And they struck Him with the palms of their hands. Once more Pilate came out and said to the Jews, "See, I am bringing him out to you to let you clearly understand that I find no crime in him." So Jesus came out, wearing the wreath of thorns and the crimson cloak. And Pilate said to them, "See, there is the man." (165)

But this does not satisfy them, and again their words worry Pilate, as they reveal in their passion the real reason why they want Jesus killed.

As soon then as the High Priests and the officers saw Him, they shouted "To the cross! To the cross!" "Take him yourselves and crucify him," said Pilate; "for I, at any rate, find no crime in him." "We," replied the Jews, "have a Law, and in accordance with that Law he ought to die, for having claimed to be the Son of God." (166)

Another, and this time final, interview convinces Pilate that he must release Jesus. But his resolve is turned by a cunning threat to his own political career, and he finally gives way to their clamorous demands.

More alarmed than ever, Pilate no sooner heard these words than he re-entered the Praetorium and began to question Jesus. "What is your origin?" he asked. But Jesus gave him no answer. "Do you refuse to speak even to me?" asked Pilate; "do you not know that I have it in my

power either to release you or to crucify you?" "You would have had no power whatever over me," replied Jesus, "had it not been granted you from above. On that account he who has delivered me up to you is more guilty than you are."

Upon receiving this answer, Pilate was for releasing Him. But the Jews kept shouting, "If you release this man, you are no friend of Caesar's. Every one who sets himself up as king declares himself a rebel against Caesar." On hearing this, Pilate brought Jesus out, and sat down on the judge's seat in a place called the Pavement—or in Hebrew, Gabbatha. It was the day of Preparation for the Passover, about six o'clock in the morning. Then he said to the Jews, "There is your king!" This caused a storm of outcries, "Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!" "Am I to crucify your king?" Pilate asked. "We have no king, except Caesar," answered the High Priests. Then Pilate gave Him up to them to be crucified. (167)

But he did so in a way that showed with whom he thought the real responsibility for Jesus' death lay.

So when he saw that he could gain nothing, but that on the contrary there was a riot threatening, he called for water and washed his hands in sight of them all, saying, "I am not responsible for this murder: you must answer for it." "His blood," replied all the people, "be on us and on our children!" (168)

Jesus is mocked by the Roman soldiers.

Then the Governor's soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium, and called together the whole battalion to make sport of Him. Stripping off His garments, they put on Him a general's short crimson cloak. They twisted a wreath of thorny twigs and put it on His head, and they put a sceptre of cane in His right hand, and kneeling to Him they shouted in mockery, "Long live the King of the Jews!" Then they spat upon Him,

and taking the cane they repeatedly struck Him on the head with it.
(169)

The comes the journey to a place called Golgotha.

As soon as they led Him away, they laid hold on one Simon, a Cyrenaeon, who was coming in from the country, and on his shoulders they put the cross, for him to carry it behind Jesus. A vast crowd of the people also followed Him, and of women who were beating their breasts and wailing for Him.

But Jesus turned towards them and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For a time is coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the women who never bore children, and the breasts which have never given nourishment.' Then will they begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us;' and to the hills, 'Cover us.' For if they are doing these things in the case of the green tree, what will be done in that of the dry?" They brought also two others, criminals, to put them to death with Him. (170)

Jesus refuses the potion offered to him, which would have dulled his pain.

Here they gave Him a mixture of wine and gall to drink, but having tasted it He refused to drink it. (171)

He is stripped and the soldiers shared out his clothes among themselves.

So the soldiers, as soon as they had crucified Jesus, took His garments, including His tunic, and divided them into four parts—one part for each soldier. The tunic was without seam, woven from the top in one piece. So they said to one another, "Do not let us tear it. Let us draw lots for it." This happened that the Scripture might be fulfilled

which says, "They shared my garments among them, and drew lots for my clothing." That was just what the soldiers did. (172)

Luke records Jesus' prayer for those who nailed him to the cross.

Jesus prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they are doing." (173)

Pilate adds his own touch, to spite the Jewish leaders.

And Pilate wrote a notice and had it fastened to the top of the cross. It ran thus: JESUS THE NAZARENE, THE KING OF THE JEWS. Many of the Jews read this notice, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the notice was in three languages—Hebrew, Latin, and Greek. This led the Jewish High Priests to remonstrate with Pilate. "You should not write 'The King of the Jews,'" they said, "but that he claimed to be King of the Jews." "What I have written I have written," was Pilate's answer. (174)

When the cross was raised upright, with now only the prospect of a slow agonizing death ahead, the suffering of Jesus is heightened by the mocking of the crowd.

And the passers-by reviled Him. They shook their heads at Him and said, "You who would pull down the Sanctuary and build a new one within three days, save yourself. If you are God's Son, come down from the cross." In like manner the High Priests also, together with the Scribes and the Elders, taunted Him. "He saved others," they said, "himself he cannot save! He is the King of Israel! Let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe in him. His trust is in God: let God deliver him now, if He will have him; for he said, 'I am God's Son.'" Insults of the same kind were heaped on Him even by the robbers who were being crucified with Him. (175)

And the soldiers also made sport of Him, coming and offering Him

sour wine and saying, "Are you the King of the Jews? Save yourself, then!" (176)

Now one of the criminals who had been crucified insulted Him, saying, "Are not you the Christ? Save yourself and us." But the other, answering, reproved him. "Do you also not fear God," he said, "when you are actually suffering the same punishment? And we indeed are suffering justly, for we are receiving due requital for what we have done. But He has done nothing amiss." And he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come in your Kingdom." "I tell you in solemn truth," replied Jesus, "that this very day you shall be with me in Paradise." (177)

Only one of the two thieves crucified on either side of Jesus spoke up for him.

Jesus speaks for the last time in his earthly life to his mother, tense words, committing her to the care of the disciple whom he loved, always presumed to be John, who records this in his gospel.

Now standing close to the cross of Jesus were His mother and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. So Jesus, seeing His mother, and seeing the disciple whom He loved standing near, said to His mother, "Behold, your son!" Then He said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that time the disciple received her into his own home. (178)

Then followed three hours of darkness, so that even the midday sun no longer lightened the desolation of the scene.

At noon there came a darkness over the whole land, lasting till three o'clock in the afternoon. (179)

At three o'clock in the afternoon, after being on the cross for six hours, the end had come for Jesus. He cried out desperately,

revealing that he felt himself separated even from God.

But at three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Elohi, Elohi, lama sabachthani?" which means, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" (180)

These words are the opening words of Psalm 22, which is full of details that correspond strikingly to the crucifixion Jesus suffered. But some thought he was calling for Elijah.

"The man is calling for Elijah," said some of the bystanders. One of them ran forthwith, and filling a sponge with sour wine put it on the end of a cane and offered it Him to drink; while the rest said, "Let us see whether Elijah is coming to deliver him." (181)

Jesus now at last accepted a drink.

After this, Jesus, knowing that everything was now brought to an end, said—that the Scripture might be fulfilled, "I am thirsty." 19:29 There was a jar of wine standing there. With this wine they filled a sponge, put it on the end of a stalk of hyssop, and lifted it to His mouth. (182)

Fortified by this he uttered his final words.

As soon as Jesus had taken the wine, He said, "It is finished." (183)

and Jesus cried out in a loud voice, and said, "Father, to Thy hands I entrust my spirit." And after uttering these words He yielded up His spirit. (184)

Immediately fantastic happenings mark the event of his death.

Immediately the curtain of the Sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom: the earth quaked; the rocks split; the tombs opened; and

many of God's people who were asleep in death awoke. And coming out of their tombs after Christ's resurrection they entered the holy city and showed themselves to many. As for the Captain and the soldiers who were with Him keeping guard over Jesus, when they witnessed the earthquake and the other occurrences they were filled with terror, and exclaimed, "Assuredly he was God's Son." (185)

These events are highly significant. The opening of tombs reveals that Christ's death promises a victory over death. The curtain (or veil) of the Temple was that which separated the Holy of Holies (where the ark of the covenant which symbolized the very presence of God was) from the rest of the Temple. So the tearing in two of this curtain signifies that the barrier between God and man has been removed in the death of Christ, and a direct way of access opened. The real barrier between God and man is man's sin. God being perfectly holy, can react to sin in only one way - rejection. How can the sinner avoid God's rejection falling upon him? In his mercy God has provided the way. Paul explains what God, in sending his Son to die for mankind, was doing.

He has made Him who knew nothing of sin to be sin for us, in order that in Him we may become the righteousness of God. (2 Corinthians 5:21)

CHAPTER TWELVE

The Empty Tomb

John records, in what is obviously an eye-witness account, the taking down of the body of Jesus from the cross.

Meanwhile the Jews, because it was the day of Preparation for the Passover, and in order that the bodies might not remain on the crosses during the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was one of special solemnity), requested Pilate to have the legs of the dying men broken, and the bodies removed. Accordingly the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first man and also of the other who had been crucified with Jesus. Then they came to Jesus Himself: but when they saw that He was already dead, they refrained from breaking His legs. One of the soldiers, however, made a thrust at His side with a lance, and immediately blood and water flowed out. This statement is the testimony of an eye-witness, and it is true. He knows that he is telling the truth—in order that you also may believe. For all this took place that the Scripture might be fulfilled which declares, "Not one of His bones shall be broken." And again another Scripture says, "They shall look on Him whom they have pierced." (186)

Then we read how the body was taken by Joseph of Arimathea and laid in his own tomb, hitherto completely unused.

After this, Joseph of Arimathaea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but for fear of the Jews a secret disciple, asked Pilate's permission to carry away the body of Jesus; and Pilate gave him leave. So he came and removed the body. Nicodemus too—he who at first had visited Jesus by night—came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, in weight about seventy or eighty pounds. Taking down the body they wrapped it

in linen cloths along with the spices, in accordance with the Jewish mode of preparing for burial. There was a garden at the place where Jesus had been crucified, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had yet been buried. Therefore, because it was the day of Preparation for the Jewish Passover, and the tomb was close at hand, they put Jesus there. (187)

He then laid it in his own new tomb which he had hewn in the solid rock, and after rolling a great stone against the door of the tomb he went home. Mary of Magdala and the other Mary were both present there, sitting opposite to the sepulchre. (188)

Thus ended that never-to-be-forgotten Friday.

On the next day, in spite of it being the Sabbath, the Jewish rulers went to obtain from Pilate permission to use their own Temple guard, the same force that had arrested Jesus, to secure the tomb and so prevent the disciples of Jesus secretly removing the body and claiming falsely that Jesus had risen from the dead.

On the next day, the day after the Preparation, the High Priests and the Pharisees came in a body to Pilate. "Sir," they said, "we recollect that during his lifetime that impostor pretended that after two days he was to rise to life again. So give orders for the sepulchre to be securely guarded till the third day, for fear his disciples should come by night and steal the body, and then tell the people that he has come back to life; and so the last imposture will be more serious than the first." "You can have a guard," said Pilate: "go and make all safe, as best you can." So they went and made the sepulchre secure, sealing the stone besides setting the guard. (189)

At dawn of the first day of the week the women came to complete the burial embalming.

When the Sabbath was over, Mary of Magdala, Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices, in order to come and anoint His body. So, very soon after sunrise on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb; and they were saying to one another, 'Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?' But then, looking up, they saw that the stone was already rolled back: for it was of immense size. Upon entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting at their right hand, clothed in a long white robe. They were astonished and terrified. (190)

But the stone had been rolled to one side and the scene that greeted them was far from what they expected.

But to their amazement there had been a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord had descended from Heaven, and had come and rolled back the stone, and was sitting upon it. His appearance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow. For fear of him the guards trembled violently, and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, "As for you, dismiss your fears. I know that it is Jesus that you are looking for—the crucified One. He is not here: He has come back to life, as He foretold. Come and see the place where He lay. And go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead and is going before you into Galilee: there you shall see Him. Remember, I have told you." They quickly left the tomb and ran, still terrified but full of unspeakable joy, to carry the news to His disciples. (191)

When the disciples heard their story they were unable to believe it. Only Peter and John (described here as 'the other disciople') thought it worth while going to see for themselves.

Peter and the other disciple started at once to go to the tomb, both of them running, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter and reached it before he did. Stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths lying there on the ground, but he did not go in. Simon Peter, however, also came, following him, and entered the tomb. There on the ground he

saw the cloths; and the towel, which had been placed over the face of Jesus, not lying with the cloths, but folded up and put by itself. Then the other disciple, who had been the first to come to the tomb, also went in and saw and was convinced. For until now they had not understood the inspired teaching, that He must rise again from among the dead. Then they went away and returned home. (192)

Then Jesus showed himself first, of all his followers, to Mary Magdalene

Meanwhile Mary remained standing near the tomb, weeping aloud. She did not enter the tomb, but as she wept she stooped and looked in, and saw two angels clothed in white raiment, sitting one at the head and one at the feet where the body of Jesus had been. They spoke to her. "Why are you weeping?" they asked. "Because," she replied, "they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have put him." While she was speaking, she turned round and saw Jesus standing there, but did not recognize Him. "Why are you weeping?" He asked; "who are you looking for?" She, supposing that He was the gardener, replied, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him and I will remove him." "Mary!" said Jesus. She turned to Him. "Rabboni!" she cried in Hebrew: the word means 'Teacher!' "Do not cling to me," said Jesus, "for I have not yet ascended to the Father. But take this message to my brethren: 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"

Mary of Magdala came and brought word to the disciples. "I have seen the Master," she said. And she told them that He had said these things to her. (193)

Meanwhile the resurrection had been reported elsewhere. The chief priests accepted the account of what had happened more readily than the disciples, but by now the path they had chosen was fixed.

While they went on this errand, some of the guards came into the city and reported to the High Priests every detail of what had happened. So the latter held a conference with the Elders, and after consultation with them they heavily bribed the soldiers, telling them to say, "His disciples came during the night and stole his body while we were asleep." "And if this," they added, "is reported to the Governor, we will satisfy him and screen you from punishment." So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this story was noised about among the Jews, and is current to this day. (194)

Then comes another appearance.

On that same day two of the disciples were walking to Emmaus, a village seven or eight miles from Jerusalem, and were conversing about all these recent events; and, in the midst of their conversation and discussion, Jesus Himself came and joined them, though they were prevented from recognizing Him. "What is the subject," He asked them, "on which you are talking so earnestly, as you walk?" And they stood still, looking full of sorrow.

Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered, "Are you a stranger lodging alone in Jerusalem, that you have known nothing of the things that have lately happened in the city?" "What things?" He asked. "The things about Jesus the Nazarene," they said, "who was a Prophet powerful in work and word before God and all the people; and how our High Priests and Rulers delivered Him up to be sentenced to death, and crucified Him. But we were hoping that it was He who was about to ransom Israel. Yes, and moreover it was the day before yesterday that these things happened. And, besides, some of the women of our company have amazed us. They went to the tomb at daybreak, and, finding that His body was not there, they came and declared to us that they had also seen a vision of angels who said that He was alive. Thereupon some of our party went to the tomb and found things just as the women had said; but Jesus Himself they did not see."

"O dull-witted men," He replied, "with minds so slow to believe all

that the Prophets have spoken! Was there not a necessity for the Christ thus to suffer, and then enter into His glory?" And, beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He explained to them the passages in Scripture which refer to Himself.

When they had come near the village to which they were going, He appeared to be going further. But they pressed Him to remain with them. "Because," said they, "it is getting towards evening, and the day is nearly over." So He went in to stay with them. But as soon as He had sat down with them, and had taken the bread and had blessed and broken it, and was handing it to them, their eyes were opened and they recognized Him. But He vanished from them. "Were not our hearts," they said to one another, "burning within us while He talked to us on the way and explained the Scriptures to us?"

So they rose and without an hour's delay returned to Jerusalem, and found the Eleven and the rest met together, who said to them, "Yes, it is true: the Master has come back to life. He has been seen by Simon." Then they related what had happened on the way, and how He had been recognized by them in the breaking of the bread. (195)

Finally, on this first Easter Sunday, Jesus showed himself to the assembled disciples.

While they were thus talking, He Himself stood in their midst and said, "Peace be to you!" Startled, and in the utmost alarm, they thought they were looking at a spirit; but He said to them, "Why such alarm? And why are there such questionings in your minds? See my hands and my feet—it is my very self. Feel me and see, for a spirit has not flesh and bones as you see I have." And then He showed them His hands and His feet.

But, while they still could not believe it for joy and were full of astonishment, He asked them, "Have you any food here?" And they gave Him a piece of roasted fish, and He took it and ate it in their

presence.

And He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you—that everything must be fulfilled that is written in the Law of Moses and in the Prophets and the Psalms concerning me." Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and He said, "Thus it is written that the Christ would suffer and on the third day rise again from among the dead; and that proclamation would be made, in His name, of repentance and forgiveness of sins to all the nations, beginning in Jerusalem. You are witnesses as to these things. And remember that I am about to send out my Father's promised gift to rest upon you. But, as for you, wait patiently in the city until you are clothed with power from on high." (196)

But another visit was necessary for the sake of the one who was absent.

Thomas, one of the twelve—surnamed 'the Twin' —was not among them when Jesus came. So the rest of the disciples told him, "We have seen the Master!" His reply was, "Unless I see in his hands the wound made by the nails and put my finger into the wound, and put my hand into his side, I will never believe it."

A week later the disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them, when Jesus came—though the doors were locked—and stood in their midst, and said, "Peace be to you." Then He said to Thomas, "Bring your finger here and feel my hands; bring you hand and put it into my side; and do not be ready to disbelieve but to believe." "My Lord and my God!" replied Thomas. "Because you have seen me," replied Jesus, "you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." (197)

Paul also adds to our knowledge of the resurrection appearances, mentioning appearances to Peter, to over five hundred disciples together, and to James (probably the James who was the brother of

Jesus).

After some time came the rendezvous in Galilee where Jesus had told the disciples to go. This meeting in Galilee brought reassurance to Peter that in spite of his denial of Jesus his apostolic commission was still in force.

After this, Jesus again showed Himself to the disciples. It was at the Lake of Tiberias. The circumstances were as follows. Simon Peter was with Thomas, called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zabdi, and two others of the Master's disciples. Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." "We will go too," said they. So they set out and went on board their boat; but they caught nothing that night. When, however, day was now dawning, Jesus stood on the beach, though the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. He called to them. "Children," He said, "have you any food there?" "No," they answered. "Throw the net in on the right hand side," He said, "and you will find fish." So they threw the net in, and now they could scarcely drag it along for the quantity of fish.

This made the disciple whom Jesus loved say to Peter, "It is the Master." Simon Peter therefore, when he heard the words, "It is the Master," drew on his fisherman's shirt—for he had not been wearing it—put on his girdle, and sprang into the water. But the rest of the disciples came in the small boat (for they were not far from land—only about a hundred yards off), dragging the net full of fish. As soon as they landed, they saw a charcoal fire burning there, with fish broiling on it, and bread close by. Jesus told them to fetch some of the fish which they had just caught. So Simon Peter went on board the boat and drew the net ashore full of large fish, 153 in number; and yet, although there were so many, the net had not broken.

"Come this way and have breakfast," said Jesus. But not one of the disciples ventured to question Him as to who He was, for they felt sure that it was the Master. Then Jesus came and took the bread and gave

them some, and the fish in the same way. This was now the third occasion on which Jesus showed Himself to the disciples after He had risen from among the dead.

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus asked Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these others do?" "Yes, Master," was his answer; "you know that you are dear to me." "Then feed my lambs," replied Jesus. Again a second time He asked him, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" "Yes, Master," he said, "you know that you are dear to me." "Then be a shepherd to my sheep," He said. A third time Jesus put the question: "Simon, son of John, am I dear to you?" It grieved Peter that Jesus asked him the third time, "Am I dear to you?" "Master," he replied, "you know everything, you can see that you are dear to me." "Then feed my much-loved sheep," said Jesus. "In most solemn truth I tell you that whereas, when you were young, you used to put on your girdle and walk whichever way you chose, when you have grown old you will stretch out your arms and some one else will put a girdle round you and carry you where you have no wish to go." This He said to indicate the kind of death by which that disciple would bring glory to God; and after speaking thus He said to him, "Follow me."

Peter turned round and noticed the disciple whom Jesus loved following—the one who at the supper had leaned back on His breast and had asked, "Master, who is it that is betraying you?" On seeing him, Peter asked Jesus, "And, Master, what about him?" "If I desire him to remain till I come," replied Jesus, "what concern is that of yours? You, yourself, must follow me." Hence the report spread among the brethren that that disciple would never die. Yet Jesus did not say, "He is not to die," but, "If I desire him to remain till I come, what concern is that of yours?" (198)

'The disciple whom Jesus loved' is John's way of referring to himself.

The disciples return to Jerusalem, for there they must begin their task of proclaiming what they knew to the world. Jesus' final appearance to them, just outside Jerusalem, will be mentioned in the last chapter, in the context of his teaching on the still unfinished task which he entrusted to his apostles and to his whole church. But first there is much of Jesus' teaching which will need to study.

PART TWO - The Teaching

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

The New Law

We have surveyed the events of the life of Jesus without dwelling very much upon his teaching, except where it was so bound up with the events of his life as to be inseparable from it. The reason for studying the life of Jesus in this way is that the teaching interprets the life. What Jesus did and was is, in a sense, more important than what he said, though it is what he said that enables us to draw this conclusion. In fact it has been said that Jesus came not so much in order to proclaim the 'Good News' but to be the 'Good News'.

So let us turn now to look at the teaching. A natural starting point is the collection of sayings and teaching which Matthew has compiled, usually called the 'Sermon on the Mount'. It is doubtful whether these sayings were ever the content of a single sermon or discourse of Jesus. There seems to be too much to be digested on a single occasion, added to which is the fact that Luke gives us much of this material in various separate parts of his narrative. Probably Matthew brought all these sayings together, and gave them a particular setting, the mountain, in order to draw a parallel between this teaching of Jesus and the old Law, which was also given on a mountain, mount Sinai. Matthew sees this teaching of Jesus as the New Law.

The Old Law was concerned primarily with outward actions; the New Law deals almost exclusively with the inward workings of the

mind and will, the secret motives of the heart. The letter of the Law gives way to the spirit of the Law. In this sense Jesus can say that he has come to fulfil the Law, to complete it. This new understanding of the requirements of purity of motive as well as actions shows how demanding God's Law for mankind really is.

Seeing the multitude of people, Jesus went up the Hill. There He seated Himself, and when His disciples came to Him, He proceeded to teach them, and said: (199)

"Do not for a moment suppose that I have come to abrogate the Law or the Prophets: I have not come to abrogate them but to give them their completion. Solemnly I tell you that until Heaven and earth pass away, not one iota or smallest detail will pass away from the Law until all has taken place. Whoever therefore breaks one of these least commandments and teaches others to break them, will be called the least in the Kingdom of the Heavens; but whoever practises them and teaches them, he will be acknowledged as great in the Kingdom of the Heavens. For I assure you that unless your righteousness greatly surpasses that of the Scribes and the Pharisees, you will certainly not find entrance into the Kingdom of the Heavens. (200)

He gives many examples of the inner law that was only implied or hinted at in the old. If killing is wrong, so is wishing to kill.

"You have heard that it was said to the ancients, 'Thou shalt not commit murder', and whoever commits murder will be answerable to the magistrate. But I say to you that every one who becomes angry with his brother shall be answerable to the magistrate; that whoever says to his brother 'Raca,' shall be answerable to the Sanhedrin; and that whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be liable to the Gehenna of Fire. If therefore when you are offering your gift upon the altar, you remember that your brother has a grievance against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go and make friends with your brother first, and then return and proceed to offer your gift. Come to terms without delay

with your opponent while you are yet with him on the way to the court; for fear he should obtain judgement from the magistrate against you, and the magistrate should give you in custody to the officer and you be thrown into prison. I solemnly tell you that you will certainly not be released till you have paid the very last farthing. (201)

The same principle is true of adultery.

"You have heard that it was said, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery.' But I tell you that whoever looks at a woman and cherishes lustful thoughts has already in his heart become guilty with regard to her. If therefore your eye, even the right eye, is a snare to you, tear it out and away with it; it is better for you that one member should be destroyed rather than that your whole body should be thrown into Gehenna. And if your right hand is a snare to you, cut it off and away with it; it is better for you that one member should be destroyed rather than that your whole body should go into Gehenna. "It was also said, 'If any man puts away his wife, let him give her a written notice of divorce.' But I tell you that every man who puts away his wife except on the ground of unfaithfulness causes her to commit adultery, and whoever marries her when so divorced commits adultery. (202)

The old law was not to *swear* falsely; the new law is not to *speak* falsely.

"Again, you have heard that it was said to the ancients, 'Thou shalt not swear falsely, but shalt perform thy vows to the Lord.' But I tell you not to swear at all; neither by Heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is the footstool under His feet; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the City of the Great King. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. But let your language be, 'Yes, yes,' or 'No, no.' Anything in excess of this comes from the Evil one. (203)

The old law limited compensation to the value of the thing lost; the new law says that the finest way is to seek no compensation at all, but rather to suffer more than is required.

"You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, tooth for tooth.' But I tell you not to resist a wicked man, but if any one strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other to him as well. If any one wishes to go to law with you and to deprive you of your under garment, let him take your outer one also. And whoever shall compel you to convey his goods one mile, go with him two. To him who asks, give: from him who would borrow, turn not away. (204)

The old law commended loving those whom there was every reason to love; the new law says that everyone, even those who hate you, are to be loved.

"You have heard that it was said, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy.' But I command you all, love your enemies, and pray for your persecutors; that so you may become true sons of your Father in Heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the wicked as well as the good, and sends rain upon those who do right and those who do wrong. For if you love only those who love you, what reward have you earned? Do not even the tax-gatherers do that? And if you salute only your near relatives, what praise is due to you? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? You however are to be complete in goodness, as your Heavenly Father is complete. (205)

The last sentence raises the question: is perfection possible in this life? Perhaps it is best understood as the destination God has in mind for each one of us, ultimately, even though we are likely to be continually aware, in this life, how far short we are falling from God's ideal.

Jesus also defines the qualities of life that are the key to happiness.

The word translated 'blessed' really means 'happy' in the original Greek.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for to them belongs the Kingdom of the Heavens.

"Blessed are the mourners, for they shall be comforted.

"Blessed are the meek, for they as heirs shall obtain possession of the earth.

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be completely satisfied.

"Blessed are the compassionate, for they shall receive compassion.

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for it is they who will be recognized as sons of God.

"Blessed are those who have borne persecution in the cause of Righteousness, for to them belongs the Kingdom of the Heavens.

"Blessed are you when they have insulted and persecuted you, and have said every cruel thing about you falsely for my sake. Be joyful and triumphant, because your reward is great in the Heavens; for so were the Prophets before you persecuted. (206)

Luke adds four 'woes' to this list of beatitudes.

"But alas for you rich men, because you already have your consolation!

"Alas for you who now have plenty to eat, because you will be hungry!

"Alas for you who laugh now, because you will mourn and weep aloud!

"Alas for you when men shall all have spoken well of you; for that is just the way their forefathers behaved to the false Prophets! (207)

But these qualities are not to be practised, indeed cannot be practised, in a vacuum. As salt and light are only of value in the effect they have on their surroundings and the way in which they react on them for good, so it is with those who would follow Jesus.

"You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has become tasteless, in what way can it regain its saltiness? It is no longer good for anything but to be thrown away and trodden on by the passers by.

You are the light of the world; a town cannot be hid if built on a hill-top. Nor is a lamp lighted to be put under a bushel, but on the lampstand; and then it gives light to all in the house. Just so let your light shine before all men, in order that they may see your holy lives and may give glory to your Father who is in Heaven. (208)

One of the faults Jesus condemned most strongly was hypocrisy. In the New Law he emphasizes that what counts most is the real motive behind an action. Those who perform religious duties solely to be praised by people, may win that praise from people, but certainly not from God.

"But beware of doing your good actions in the sight of men, in order to attract their gaze; if you do, there is no reward for you with your Father who is in Heaven. 'When you give in charity, never blow a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and streets in order that their praises may be sung by men. I solemnly tell you that they already have their reward. But when you are giving in charity, let not your left hand perceive what your right hand is doing, that your

charities may be in secret; and then your Father—He who sees in secret—will recompense you. (209)

"When any of you fast, never assume gloomy looks as the hypocrites do; for they disfigure their faces in order that it may be evident to men that they are fasting. I solemnly tell you that they already have their reward. But, whenever you fast, pour perfume on your hair and wash your face, that it may not be apparent to men that you are fasting, but to your Father who is in secret; and your Father—He who sees in secret—will recompense you. (210)

This temptation to impress others can even invade prayer.

"And when praying, you must not be like the hypocrites. They are fond of standing and praying in the synagogues or at the corners of the wider streets, in order that men may see them. I solemnly tell you that they already have their reward. But you, whenever you pray, go into your own room and shut the door: then pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father—He who sees in secret—will recompense you. (211)

"And when praying, do not use needless repetitions as the Gentiles do, for they expect to be listened to because of their multitude of words. Do not, however, imitate them; for your Father knows what things you need before ever you ask Him. "In this manner therefore pray: 'Our Father who art in Heaven, may Thy name be kept holy; let Thy kingdom come; let Thy will be done, as in Heaven so on earth; give us to-day our bread for the day; and forgive us our shortcomings, as we also have forgiven those who have failed in their duty towards us; and bring us not into temptation, but rescue us from the Evil one.' "For if you forgive others their offences, your Heavenly Father will forgive you also; but if you do not forgive others their offences, neither will your Father forgive yours. (212)

Jesus never condemned material things, but he did teach the dangers of an excessive regard or concern for the material side of life. He warns that one can easily become a slave to the wealth one desires or possesses.

"Do not lay up stores of wealth for yourselves on earth, where the moth and wear-and-tear destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But amass wealth for yourselves in Heaven, where neither the moth nor wear-and-tear destroys, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your wealth is, there also will your heart be. "The eye is the lamp of the body. If then your eyesight is good, your whole body will be well lighted; but if your eyesight is bad, your whole body will be dark. If however the very light within you is darkness, how dense must the darkness be! "No man can be the bondservant of two masters; for either he will dislike one and like the other, or he will attach himself to one and think slightingly of the other. You cannot be the bondservants both of God and of gold. (213)

The antidote to anxiety about material things is first to rely upon God's power to provide, and also to see how they are basically unimportant besides the real priority of a person's life, which is to serve God.

For this reason I charge you not to be over-anxious about your lives, inquiring what you are to eat or what you are to drink, nor yet about your bodies, inquiring what clothes you are to put on. Is not the life more precious than its food, and the body than its clothing? Look at the birds which fly in the air: they do not sow or reap or store up in barns, but your Heavenly Father feeds them: are not you of much greater value than they? Which of you by being over-anxious can add a single foot to his height? And why be anxious about clothing? Learn a lesson from the wild lilies. Watch their growth. They neither toil nor spin, and yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his magnificence could array himself like one of these. And if God so clothes the wild herbage which to-day flourishes and to-morrow is thrown into the

oven, is it not much more certain that He will clothe you, you men of little faith? Do not be over-anxious, therefore, asking 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For all these are questions that Gentiles are always asking; but your Heavenly Father knows that you need these things—all of them. But make His Kingdom and righteousness your chief aim, and then these things shall all be given you in addition. Do not be over-anxious, therefore, about to-morrow, for to-morrow will bring its own cares. Enough for each day are its own troubles. (214)

One of the qualities which underlies many of the beatitudes previously noted is humility. Jesus again commends this quality in saying saying that no one should criticize another when he himself is not perfect.

"Judge not, that you may not be judged; for your own judgement will be dealt—and your own measure meted—to yourselves. And why do you look at the splinter in your brother's eye, and not notice the beam which is in your own eye? Or how say to your brother, 'Allow me to take the splinter out of your eye,' while the beam is in your own eye? Hypocrite, first take the beam out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly how to remove the splinter from your brother's eye. (215)

Of course reproving those infinitely worse than oneself is not likely to be successful

"Give not that which is holy to the dogs, nor throw your pearls to the swine; otherwise they will trample them under their feet and then turn and attack you. (216)

Further teaching on prayer emphasizes confidence in coming to God in prayer, confidence in God's love and willingness to give the good things we seek.

"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you. For it is always he who asks that receives, he who seeks that finds, and he who knocks that has the door opened to him. What man is there among you, who if his son shall ask him for bread will offer him a stone? Or if the son shall ask him for a fish will offer him a snake? If you then, imperfect as you are, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in Heaven give good things to those who ask Him! (217)

No teacher can provide detailed instructions to cover every circumstance, but there is a 'golden rule'.

Everything, therefore, be it what it may, that you would have men do to you, do you also the same to them; for in this the Law and the Prophets are summed up. (218)

The 'sermon' ends on a stern note of warning. Jesus warns against drifting through life without actively seeking God.

"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad the road which leads to ruin, and many there are who enter by it; because narrow is the gate and contracted the road which leads to Life, and few are those who find it. (219)

He warns against being led astray by false teachers.

"Beware of the false teachers—men who come to you in sheep's fleeces, but beneath that disguise they are ravenous wolves. By their fruits you will easily recognize them. Are grapes gathered from thorns or figs from brambles? Just so every good tree produces good fruit, but a poisonous tree produces bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor a poisonous tree good fruit. Every tree which does not yield good fruit is cut down and thrown aside for burning. So by their fruits at any rate, you will easily recognize them. (220)

He warns against presuming that one is serving him, when really there has been no true fellowship

"Not every one who says to me, 'Master, Master,' will enter the Kingdom of the Heavens, but only those who are obedient to my Father who is in Heaven. Many will say to me on that day, "'Master, Master, have we not prophesied in Thy name, and in Thy name expelled demons, and in Thy name performed many mighty works?' "And then I will tell them plainly, "I never knew you: begone from me, you doers of wickedness.'" (221)

And finally he warns against merely hearing, but failing to carry out the teachings he has given.

"Every one who hears these my teachings and acts upon them will be found to resemble a wise man who builds his house upon rock; and the heavy rain falls, the swollen torrents come, and the winds blow and beat against the house; yet it does not fall, for its foundation is on rock. And every one who hears these my teachings and does not act upon them will be found to resemble a fool who builds his house upon sand. The heavy rain descends, the swollen torrents come, and the winds blow and burst upon the house, and it falls; and disastrous is the fall." (222)

The astounding thing about this 'sermon' is not only what is said, but the way in which it is said. Jesus spoke with an absolute authority, in a way that astounded those who heard him.

When Jesus had concluded this discourse, the crowds were filled with amazement at His teaching, for He had been teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their Scribes taught. (223)

When he wished to give weight to a particular teaching, he did not appeal to some external standard, but simply uttered the words 'I tell you.' This comes nine times all told. If in this chapter we have

seen the handing over of the New Law, it is equally true to say that we have met the one who claimed to be the New Lawgiver. In the next chapter we will see on what that claim rested.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

'I Am ...'

Who was Jesus? A great teacher in the line of the Old Testament prophets? Or something more? As we saw in chapter eight, when the disciples acknowledged, through Peter, that he was something more, in fact no less than the Messiah and the Son of God, that moment proved to be the turning point of Jesus' ministry. When they had seen who he was, he began to teach them what he had come to do.

Jesus did not concentrate on proclaiming himself as the Messiah to the general public. He knew that their ideas of what sort of a figure the Messiah should be were far from the truth. They were expecting a king like David, who would be a mighty warrior and would restore Israel to her former glory; a leader who would drive the hated Roman legions from their land. But the kingship of Jesus was a different kind of kingship.

"My kingdom," replied Jesus, "does not belong to this world. If my kingdom did belong to this world, my subjects would have resolutely fought to save me from being delivered up to the Jews. But, as a matter of fact, my kingdom has not this origin." (224)

The purpose of his coming was far removed from popular expectations.

For the Son of Man also did not come to be waited upon, but to wait on others, and to give His life as the redemption-price for a multitude of people." (225)

He therefore only rarely claimed the title of Messiah, but there were times when he did, as the following incident shows.

Now as soon as the Master was aware that the Pharisees had heard it said, "Jesus is gaining and baptizing more disciples than John"—though Jesus Himself did not baptize them, but His disciples did—He left Judaea and returned to Galilee. His road lay through Samaria, and so He came to Sychar, a town in Samaria near the piece of land that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Jacob's Well was there: and accordingly Jesus, tired out with His journey, sat down by the well to rest. It was about six o'clock in the evening.

Presently there came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus asked her to give Him some water; for His disciples were gone to the town to buy provisions. "How is it," replied the woman, "that a Jew like you asks me, who am a woman and a Samaritan, for water?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) "If you had known God's free gift," replied Jesus, "and who it is that said to you, 'Give me some water,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water." "Sir," she said, "you have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep; so where can you get the living water from? Are you greater than our forefather Jacob, who gave us the well, and himself drank from it, as did also his sons and his cattle?" "Every one," replied Jesus, "who drinks any of this water will be thirsty again; but whoever drinks any of the water that I shall give him will never, never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become a fountain within him of water springing up for the Life of the Ages." "Sir," said the woman, "give me that water, that I may never be thirsty, nor continually come all the way here to draw from the well."

"Go and call your husband," said Jesus; "and come back." "I have no husband," she replied. "You rightly say that you have no husband," said Jesus; "for you have had five husbands, and the man you have at present is not your husband. You have spoken the truth in saying that." "Sir," replied the woman, "I see that you are a Prophet. Our forefathers

worshipped on this mountain, but you Jews say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem." "Believe me," said Jesus, "the time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship One of whom you know nothing. We worship One whom we know; for salvation comes from the Jews. But a time is coming—nay, has already come—when the true worshippers will worship the Father with true spiritual worship; for indeed the Father desires such worshippers. God is Spirit; and those who worship Him must bring Him true spiritual worship." "I know," replied the woman, "that Messiah is coming—'the Christ,' as He is called. When He has come, He will tell us everything." "I am He," said Jesus—"I who am now talking to you."

Just then His disciples came, and were surprised to find Him talking with a woman. Yet not one of them asked Him, "What is your wish?" or "Why are you talking with her?" The woman however, leaving her pitcher, went away to the town, and called the people. "Come," she said, "and see a man who has told me everything I have ever done. Can this be the Christ, do you think?" They left the town and set out to go to Him.

Meanwhile the disciples were urging Jesus. "Rabbi," they said, "eat something." "I have food to eat," He replied, "of which you do not know." So the disciples began questioning one another. "Can it be," they said, "that some one has brought Him something to eat?" "My food," said Jesus, "is to be obedient to Him who sent me, and fully to accomplish His work. Do you not say, 'It wants four months yet to the harvest'? But look round, I tell you, and observe these plains— they are already ripe for the sickle. The reaper gets pay and gathers in a crop in preparation for the Life of the Ages, that so the sower and the reapers may rejoice together. For it is in this that you see the real meaning of the saying, 'The sower is one person, and the reaper is another.' I sent you to reap a harvest which is not the result of your own labours. Others have laboured, and you are getting benefit from their labours." Of the Samaritan population of that town a good many believed in Him because of the woman's statement when she declared,

"He has told me all that I have ever done."

When however the Samaritans came to Him, they asked Him on all sides to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. Then a far larger number of people believed because of His own words, and they said to the woman, "We no longer believe in Him simply because of your statements; for we have now heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Saviour of the world." (226)

It was of course this claim which led to his condemnation by the Sanhedrin, as we saw in chapter eleven.

Though Jesus was reticent in making public his claim to be the Messiah, there were times when his claims went very much further. He claimed a unique relationship with God.

On that same occasion Jesus was filled by the Holy Spirit with rapturous joy. "I give Thee fervent thanks," He exclaimed, "O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, that Thou hast hidden these things from sages and men of understanding, and hast revealed them to babes. Yes, Father, for such has been Thy gracious will. All things are delivered to me by my Father; and no one knows who the Son is but the Father, nor who the Father is but the Son, and he to whom the Son may choose to reveal Him." (227)

He claimed that the words heard at his Baptism and Transfiguration were true - that he was the Son of God. This claim brought intense opposition from those who rejected it and therefore saw it only as blasphemy.

After this there was a Festival of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, called in Hebrew 'Bethesda.' It has five arcades. In these there used to lie a great number of sick persons, and of people who were blind or lame or paralyzed. And there was one man there who had been an

invalid for thirty-eight years. Jesus saw him lying there, and knowing that he had been a long time in that condition, He asked him, "Do you wish to have health and strength?" "Sir," replied the sufferer, "I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is moved; but while I am coming some one else steps down before me." "Rise," said Jesus, "take up your mat and walk." Instantly the man was restored to perfect health, and he took up his mat and began to walk.

That day was a Sabbath. So the Jews said to the man who had been cured, "It is the Sabbath: you must not carry your mat." "He who cured me," he replied, "said to me, 'Take up your mat and walk.'" "Who is it," they asked, "that said to you, 'Take up your mat and walk'?" But the man who had been cured did not know who it was; for Jesus had passed out unnoticed, there being a crowd in the place. Afterwards Jesus found him in the Temple and said to him, "You are now restored to health. Do not sin any more, or a worse thing may befall you." The man went and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had restored him to health; and on this account the Jews began to persecute Jesus—because He did these things on the Sabbath. His reply to their accusation was, "My Father works unceasingly, and so do I." On this account then the Jews were all the more eager to put Him to death—because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also spoke of God as being in a special sense His Father, thus putting Himself on a level with God. (228)

There had been a well remembered account in the Old Law (the Torah) of the calling by God of Moses to lead God's people out of slavery in Egypt. When Moses had asked what name he should tell the people was God's name, the reply had been: "Tell them 'I am' has sent you." (Exodus 3:14) It was too much for His opposers to bear when Jesus used this divine name 'I am' of himself

"Now," exclaimed the Jews, "we know that you are possessed by a demon. Abraham died, and so did the Prophets, and yet you say, 'If any one shall have obeyed my teaching, he shall in no case ever taste

death.' Are you really greater than our forefather Abraham? For he died. And the prophets died. Who do you make yourself out to be?" "Were I to glorify myself," answered Jesus, "I should have no real glory. There is One who glorifies me—namely my Father, who you say is your God. You do not know Him, but I know Him perfectly; and were I to deny my knowledge of Him, I should resemble you, and be a liar. On the contrary I do know Him, and I obey His commands. Abraham your forefather exulted in the hope of seeing my day: and he saw it, and was glad." "You are not yet fifty years old," cried the Jews, "and have you seen Abraham?" "In most solemn truth," answered Jesus, "I tell you that before Abraham came into existence, I am." Thereupon they took up stones with which to stone Him, but He hid Himself and went away out of the Temple. (229)

At the Last Supper he amplified these claims to his disciples.

"Let not your hearts be troubled. Trust in God: trust in me also. In my Father's house there are many resting-places. Were it otherwise, I would have told you; for I am going to make ready a place for you. And if I go and make ready a place for you, I will return and take you to be with me, that where I am you also may be. And where I am going, you all know the way." "Master," said Thomas, "we do not know where you are going. In what sense do we know the way?" "I am the Way," replied Jesus, "and the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you—all of you—knew me, you would fully know my Father also. From this time forward you know Him and have seen Him." "Master," said Philip, "cause us to see the Father: that is all we need." "Have I been so long among you," Jesus answered, "and yet you, Philip, do not know me? He who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you ask me, 'Cause us to see the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and that the Father is in me? The things that I tell you all I do not speak on my own authority: but the Father dwelling within me carries on His own work. Believe me, all of you, that I am in the Father and that the Father is in me; or at any rate, believe me because of what I do. (230)

The best summing up of all these claims are Jesus' own words: "I and the Father are one." (John 10:30)

It is clear that Jesus was claiming to have both a common and a separate identity with God. The gospel-writer John expresses this in the profound words with which he begins his gospel.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing that exists came into being. In Him was Life, and that Life was the Light of men. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overpowered it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, in order that he might give testimony concerning the Light—so that all might believe through him. He was not the Light, but he existed that he might give testimony concerning the Light.

The true Light was that which illumines every man by its coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into existence through Him, and the world did not recognize Him. He came to the things that were His own, and His own people gave Him no welcome. But all who have received Him, to them—that is, to those who trust in His name—He has given the privilege of becoming children of God; who were begotten as such not by human descent, nor through an impulse of their own nature, nor through the will of a human father, but from God.

And the Word came in the flesh, and lived for a time in our midst, so that we saw His glory—the glory as of the Father's only Son, sent from His presence. He was full of grace and truth.

John gave testimony concerning Him and cried aloud, saying, "This is He of whom I said, 'He who is coming after me has been put before me,' for He was before me." For He it is from whose fulness we have

all received, and grace upon grace. For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No human eye has ever seen God: the only Son, who is in the Father's bosom—He has made Him known. (231)

In their own way too both Luke and Matthew are expressing the same view in their accounts of how 'the Word came in the flesh'. John presents us with theology, Luke and Matthew with a factual account. But their purpose is the same - to show that Jesus is the promised Saviour, the Son of God.

Matthew and Luke first show that Jesus, humanly speaking, was descended from David, through Joseph and Mary respectively (taking 'son of Heli' to be 'son-in-law of Heli' in Luke's list), as was prophesied the Messiah would be (Jeremiah 23:5-6)

The Genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham was the father of Isaac; Isaac of Jacob; Jacob of Judah and his brothers. Judah was the father (by Tamar) of Perez and Zerah; Perez of Hezron; Hezron of Ram; Ram of Amminadab; Amminadab of Nahshon; Nahshon of Salmon; Salmon (by Rahab) of Boaz; Boaz (by Ruth) of Obed; Obed of Jesse; Jesse of David—the King. David (by Uriah's widow) was the father of Solomon; Solomon of Rehoboam; Rehoboam of Abijah; Abijah of Asa; Asa of Jehoshaphat; Jehoshaphat of Jehoram; Jehoram of Uzziah; Uzziah of Jotham; Jotham of Ahaz; Ahaz of Hezekiah; Hezekiah of Manasseh; Manasseh of Amon; Amon of Josiah; Josiah of Jeconiah and his brothers at the period of the Removal to Babylon. After the Removal to Babylon Jeconiah had a son Shealtiel; Shealtiel was the father of Zerubbabel; Zerubbabel of Abiud; Abiud of Eliakim; Eliakim of Azor; Azor of Zadok; Zadok of Achim; Achim of Eliud; Eliud of Eleazar; Eleazar of Matthan; Matthan of Jacob; and Jacob of Joseph the husband of Mary, who was the mother of JESUS who is called CHRIST. There are therefore, in all, fourteen generations from

Abraham to David; fourteen from David to the Removal to Babylon; and fourteen from the Removal to Babylon to the Christ. (232)

And He—Jesus—when He began His ministry, was about thirty years old. He was the son (it was supposed) of Joseph, son of Heli, son of Matthat, son of Levi, son of Melchi, son of Jannai, son of Joseph, son of Mattathias, son of Amos, son of Nahum, son of Esli, son of Naggai, son of Mahath, son of Mattathias, son of Semein, son of Josech, son of Joda, son of Johanan, son of Resa, son of Zerubbabel, son of Shealtiel, son of Neri, son of Melchi, son of Addi, son of Cosam, son of Elmadam, son of Er, son of Joshua, son of Eliezar, son of Jorim, son of Maththat, son of Levi, son of Symeon, son of Judah, son of Joseph, son of Jonam, son of Eliakim, son of Melea, son of Menna, son of Mattatha, son of Nathan, son of David, son of Jesse, son of Obed, son of Boaz, son of Salmon, son of Nahshon, son of Amminadab, son of Admin, son of Arni, son of Hezron, son of Perez, son of Judah, son of Jacob, son of Isaac, son of Abraham, son of Terah, son of Nahor, son of Serug, son of Reu, son of Peleg, son of Eber, son of Shelah, son of Cainan, son of Arpachshad, son of Shem, son of Noah, son of Lamech, son of Methuselah, son of Enoch, son of Jared, son of Mahalalel, son of Kenan, son of Enosh, son of Seth, son of Adam, son of God. (233)

But more than this, as Luke and Matthew record, the very manner of his conception and its angelic heralding, the homage paid to him by Jew and Gentile, the divine protection given in his birth and after it, the spirit revealed in his boyhood, all point in one direction, to the conclusion accepted by all Christians, that Jesus is the Son of God.

Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a maiden betrothed to a man of the name of Joseph, a descendant of David. The maiden's name was Mary. So Gabriel went into the house and said to her, "Joy be to you, favoured one! the Lord is with you." She was greatly agitated at his words, and wondered what such a greeting meant. But the angel said,

"Do not be frightened, Mary, for you have found favour with God. You will conceive in your womb and bear a son; and you are to call His name JESUS. He will be great and He will be called 'Son of the Most High.' And the Lord God will give Him the throne of His forefather David; and He will be King over the House of Jacob for the Ages, and of His Kingdom there will be no end." "How can this be," Mary replied, "seeing that I have no husband?" The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for this reason your holy offspring will be called 'the Son of God.' And see, your relative Elizabeth—she also has conceived a son in her old age; and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For no promise from God will be impossible of fulfilment." "I am the Lord's maidservant," Mary replied; "may it be with me in accordance with your words!" And then the angel left her.

Not long after this, Mary rose up and went in haste into the hill country to a town in Judah. Here she came to the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth; and as soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the babe leapt within her. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and uttered a loud cry of joy. "Blest among women are you," she said, "and the offspring of your body is blest! But why is this honour done me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For, the moment your greeting reached my ears, the babe within me leapt for joy. And blessed is she who has believed, for the word spoken to her from the Lord shall be fulfilled."

Then Mary said: "My soul extols the Lord, And my spirit triumphs in God my Saviour; Because He has not turned from His maidservant in her lowly position; For from this time forward all generations will account me happy, Because the mighty One has done great things for me—Holy is His name!— And His compassion is, generation after generation, Upon those who fear Him. He has manifested His supreme strength. He has scattered those who were haughty in the thoughts of their hearts. He has cast monarchs down from their thrones, And exalted men of low estate. The hungry He has satisfied with choice gifts, But the rich He has sent empty-handed away. His servant Israel

He has helped, Remembering His compassion— In fulfillment of His promises to our forefathers—For Abraham and his posterity for ever."

So Mary stayed with Elizabeth about three months, and then returned home. (234)

The circumstances of the birth of Jesus Christ were these. After his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they were united in marriage, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. But Joseph her husband, being a kind-hearted man and unwilling publicly to disgrace her, had determined to release her privately from the betrothal. But while he was contemplating this step, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to bring home your wife Mary, for she is with child through the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a Son, and you are to call His name JESUS for He it is who will save His People from their sins." All this took place in fulfillment of what the Lord had spoken through the Prophet, "Mark! The maiden will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call His name Immanuel" —a word which signifies 'God with us'.

When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded, and brought home his wife, but did not live with her until she had given birth to a son. The child's name he called JESUS. (235)

Just at this time an edict was issued by Caesar Augustus for the registration of the whole Empire. It was the first registration made during the governorship of Quirinius in Syria; and all went to be registered—every one to the town to which he belonged. So Joseph went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judaea, to David's town of Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to have himself registered together with Mary, who was betrothed to him and was with child.

But while they were there, her full time came, and she gave birth to her first-born son, and wrapped Him round, and laid Him in a manger,

because there was no room for them in the inn.

Now there were shepherds in the same part of the country, keeping watch over their sheep by night in the open fields, when suddenly an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the glory of the Lord shone round them; and they were filled with terror. But the angel said to them, "Put away all fear; for I am bringing you good news of great joy—joy for all the People. For a Saviour who is the Anointed Lord is born to you to-day, in the town of David. And this is the token for you: you will find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger." And immediately there was with the angel a multitude of the army of Heaven praising God and saying, "Glory be to God in the highest Heavens, And on earth peace among men who please Him!"

Then, as soon as the angels had left them and returned to Heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us now go over as far as Bethlehem and see this that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." So they made haste and came and found Mary and Joseph, with the babe lying in the manger. And when they saw the child, they told what had been said to them about Him; and all who listened were astonished at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things, often dwelling on them in her mind. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen in accordance with the announcement made to them.

When eight days had passed and the time for circumcising Him had come, He was called JESUS, the name given Him by the angel before His conception in the womb.

And when the days for their purification appointed by the Law of Moses had passed, they took Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord—as it is written in the Law of the Lord: "Every first-born male shall be called holy to the Lord." And they also offered a sacrifice as commanded in the Law of the Lord, "a pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons." Now there was a man in Jerusalem of the name of Symeon, an upright and God-fearing man, who was waiting for the

consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. To him it had been revealed by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death until he had seen the Lord's Anointed One. Led by the Spirit he came to the Temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do with regard to Him according to the custom of the Law, he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said,

"Now, O Sovereign Lord, Thou dost send Thy servant away in peace, in fulfilment of Thy word, Because mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, Which Thou hast made ready in the sight of all nations— A light to shine upon the Gentiles, And the glory of Thy people Israel."

And while the child's father and mother were wondering at the words of Symeon concerning Him, Symeon blessed them and said to Mary the mother, "This child is appointed for the falling and the uprising of many in Israel and for a token to be spoken against; and a sword will pierce through your own soul also; that the reasonings in many hearts may be revealed."

There was also Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, belonging to the tribe of Asher. She was of a very great age, having had after her maidenhood seven years of married life, and then being a widow of eighty-four years. She was never absent from the Temple, but worshipped, by day and by night, with fasting and prayer. And coming up just at that moment, she gave thanks to God, and spoke about the child to all who were expecting the deliverance of Jerusalem.

Then, as soon as they had accomplished all that the Law required, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. And the child grew and became strong and full of wisdom, and the favour of God rested upon Him. (236)

Now after the birth of Jesus, which took place at Bethlehem in Judaea in the reign of King Herod, excitement was produced in Jerusalem by the arrival of certain Magi from the east, inquiring, "Where is the newly born king of the Jews? For we have seen his Star in the east, and

have come here to do him homage." Reports of this soon reached the king, and greatly agitated not only him but all the people of Jerusalem. So he assembled all the High Priests and Scribes of the people, and anxiously asked them where the Christ was to be born. "At Bethlehem in Judaea," they replied; "for so it stands written in the words of the Prophet, "And thou, Bethlehem in the land of Judah, by no means the least honorable art thou among princely places in Judah! For from thee shall come a prince—one who shall be the Shepherd of My People Israel."

Thereupon Herod sent privately for the Magi and ascertained from them the exact time of the star's appearing. He then directed them to go to Bethlehem, adding, "Go and make careful inquiry about the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and do him homage." After hearing what the king said, they went to Bethlehem, while, strange to say, the star they had seen in the east led them on until it came and stood over the place where the babe was. When they saw the star, the sight filled them with intense joy. So they entered the house; and when they saw the babe with His mother Mary, they prostrated themselves and did Him homage, and opening their treasure-chests offered gifts to Him—gold, frankincense, and myrrh. But being forbidden by God in a dream to return to Herod, they went back to their own country by a different route.

When they were gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise: take the babe and His mother and escape to Egypt, and remain there till I bring you word. For Herod is about to make search for the child in order to destroy Him." So Joseph roused himself and took the babe and His mother by night and departed into Egypt. There he remained till Herod's death, that what the Lord had said through the Prophet might be fulfilled, "Out of Egypt I called My Son."

Then Herod, finding that the Magi had trifled with him, was furious, and sent and massacred all the boys under two years of age, in Bethlehem and all its neighbourhood, according to the date he had so

carefully ascertained from the Magi. Then were these words, spoken by the Prophet Jeremiah, fulfilled, "A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and bitter lamentation: It was Rachel bewailing her children, and she refused to be comforted because there were no more."

But after Herod's death an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, and said to him, "Rise from sleep, and take the child and His mother, and go into the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead." So he roused himself and took the child and His mother and came into the land of Israel. But hearing that Archelaus had succeeded his father Herod on the throne of Judaea, he was afraid to go there; and being instructed by God in a dream he withdrew into Galilee, and went and settled in a town called Nazareth, in order that these words spoken through the Prophets might be fulfilled, "He shall be called a Nazarene." (237)

Now His parents used to go up year by year to Jerusalem at the Feast of the Passover. And when He was twelve years old they went up as was customary at the time of the Feast, and, after staying the full number of days, when they started back home the boy Jesus remained behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not discover this, but supposing Him to be in the travelling company, they proceeded a day's journey. Then they searched up and down for Him among their relatives and acquaintances; but being unable to find Him they returned to Jerusalem, making anxious inquiry for Him.

On the third day they found Him in the Temple sitting among the Rabbis, both listening to them and asking them questions, while all who heard Him were astonished at His intelligence and at the answers He gave. When they saw Him, they were smitten with amazement, and His mother said to Him, "My child, why have you behaved thus to us? Your father and I have been searching for you in anguish." "Why is it that you have been searching for me?" He replied; "did you not know that it is my duty to be engaged upon my Father's business?" But they did not understand the significance of these words.

Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was always obedient to them; but His mother carefully treasured up all these incidents in her memory. And as Jesus grew older He gained in both wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man. (238)

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

'... The Truth ...'

When Jesus said, 'He who has seen me has seen the Father' (John 14:9), he was doing more than claiming a unique relationship with God. He was showing part of the purpose of his coming: to make it possible for people to see God, to reveal God to mankind. Jesus was the final stage of God's revealing of Himself. Up till now God had used men, the prophets of the Old Testament, through whom to communicate something of His nature. But now, in Jesus, God Himself has stepped into human life, to life among people, so that they might 'see his glory.' (John 1:14). Jesus has come to reveal God, and 'to bear witness to the truth' (John 18:37).

When we looked at the miracles of Jesus in chapter four, we saw that they served to make clearer the object of his coming. They were signs, as well as deeds of mercy and compassion, and John brings this out in his account of the wedding at Cana which Jesus attended.

Two days later there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there, and Jesus also was invited and His disciples. Now the wine ran short; whereupon the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine." "Leave the matter in my hands," He replied; "the time for me to act has not yet come." His mother said to the attendants, "Whatever he tells you to do, do it." Now there were six stone jars standing there (in accordance with the Jewish regulations for purification), each large enough to hold twenty gallons or more. Jesus said to the attendants, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them

to the brim. Then He said, "Now, take some out, and carry it to the President of the feast." So they carried some to him. And no sooner had the President tasted the water now turned into wine, than—not knowing where it came from, though the attendants who had drawn the water knew—he called to the bridegroom and said to him, "It is usual to put on the good wine first, and when people have drunk freely, then that which is inferior. But you have kept the good wine till now." This, the first of His miracles, Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee, and thus displayed His glorious power; and His disciples believed in Him. (239)

To those who were ready to believe, signs enough were given. But to those who came with with prejudiced minds, wishing only to challenge and confront, no signs were given.

Then He was accosted by some of the Scribes and of the Pharisees who said, "Teacher, we wish to see a sign given by you." "Wicked and faithless generation!" He replied, "they clamour for a sign, but none shall be given to them except the sign of the Prophet Jonah. For just as Jonah was three days in the sea-monster's belly, so will the Son of Man be three days in the heart of the earth. There will stand up men of Nineveh at the Judgement together with the present generation, and will condemn it; because they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and mark! there is One greater than Jonah here. The Queen of the south will awake at the Judgement together with the present generation, and will condemn it; because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and mark! there is One greater than Solomon here. (240)

Here the Pharisees and Sadducees came to Him; and, to make trial of Him, they asked Him to show them a sign in the sky. He replied, "In the evening you say, 'It will be fine weather, for the sky is red;' and in the morning, 'It will be rough weather to-day, for the sky is red and murky.' You learn how to distinguish the aspect of the heavens, but the signs of the times you cannot. A wicked and faithless generation are

eager for a sign; but none shall be given to them except the sign of Jonah." And He left them and went away. (241)

It was only promised that in his resurrection there would be enough evidence to leave no excuse for rejecting him. If people could tell much about what kind of weather to expect from signs in nature, there was no excuse for failing to recognize the vital significance of his words and actions.

Then He said to the people also, "When you see a cloud rising in the west, you immediately say, 'There is to be a shower;' and it comes to pass. And when you see a south wind blowing, you say, 'It will be burning hot;' and it comes to pass. Vain pretenders! You know how to read the aspect of earth and sky. How is it you cannot read this present time? (242)

This condemnation of their failure to believe or understand the great blessings he was bringing is a clue that will help in solving a quite difficult problem. The problem is that often Jesus seems to be deliberately obscuring what he has to teach in the method he uses.

All this Jesus spoke to the people in figurative language, and except in figurative language He spoke nothing to them, in fulfilment of the saying of the Prophet, "I will open my mouth in figurative language, I will utter things kept hidden since the creation of all things." (243)

The problem certainly had occurred to the disciples.

And His disciples came and asked Him, "Why do you speak to them in figurative language?" (244)

The reason was not to obscure, which as Jesus implied (using yet another piece of figurative language, which we often call a parable), would be ridiculous.

He went on to say, "Is the lamp brought in in order to be put under the bushel or under the bed? Is it not rather in order that it may be placed on the lampstand? Why, there is nothing hidden except with a view to its being ultimately disclosed, nor has anything been made a secret but that it may at last come to light. Listen, every one who has ears to listen with!" He also said to them, "Take care what you hear. With what measure you measure, it will be measured to you, and that with interest. For those who have will have more given them; and from those who have not, even what they have will be taken away." (245)

Part of this passage comes in Jesus' answer to the disciples' question as Matthew records it.

"Because," He replied, "while to you it is granted to know the secrets of the Kingdom of the Heavens, to them it is not. For whoever has, to him more shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but whoever has not, from him even what he has shall be taken away. I speak to them in figurative language for this reason, that while looking they do not see, and while hearing they neither hear nor understand. And in regard to them the prophecy of Isaiah is receiving signal fulfilment: "'You will hear and hear and by no means understand, and you will look and look and by no means see. For this people's mind is stupefied, their hearing has become dull, and their eyes they have closed; to prevent their ever seeing with their eyes, or hearing with their ears, or understanding with their minds, and turning back, so that I might heal them.' "But as for you, blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. For I solemnly tell you that many Prophets and holy men have longed to see the sights you see, and have not seen them, and to hear the words you hear, and have not heard them. (246)

The method of figurative language (parables) acts like a sieve to separate the willing to learn from the unwilling. 'Whoever has ...', to the willing person who already partly understand, '... to him more shall be given'; the method of parables will be helpful,

leading on to great understanding. But to those not willing to learn, the parables will be no help at all, and will only confuse. As with signs, so with teaching, those who come with faith and eagerness to believe are granted more to strengthen their faith; those who come without this willingness are granted no sign, and no helpful word. The parables teach, but they all challenge people to show whether they have the attitude and resources which they must contribute to benefit from them.

"Have you understood all this?" He asked. "Yes," they said. "Therefore," He said, "remember that every Scribe well trained for the Kingdom of the Heavens is like a householder who brings out of his storehouse new things and old." (247)

So much for the method of teaching Jesus employed. In his revealing of God what did he teach? It should be noted first that he took for granted all that the Old Testament said about the nature of God: that here is one God, perfect, almighty, infinite. Building on this picture of God, Jesus emphasizes a factor which might have escaped perfect understanding in a knowledge of the Old Testament by itself: that God is infinitely willing to forgive. His whole life teaches this, but the lesson is unmistakably told in these three parables.

Now the tax-gatherers and the notorious sinners were everywhere in the habit of coming close to Him to listen to Him; and this led the Pharisees and the Scribes indignantly to complain, saying, "He gives a welcome to notorious sinners, and joins them at their meals!" So in figurative language He asked them,

"Which of you men, if he has a hundred sheep and has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in their pasture and go in search of the lost one till he finds it? And when he has found it, he lifts it on his shoulder, glad at heart. Then coming home he calls his friends and

neighbours together, and says, 'Congratulate me, for I have found my sheep—the one I had lost.' I tell you that in the same way there will be rejoicing in Heaven over one repentant sinner—more rejoicing than over ninety-nine blameless persons who have no need of repentance.

"Or what woman who has ten silver coins, if she loses one of them, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and search carefully till she finds it? And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbours, and says, "'Congratulate me, for I have found the coin which I had lost.' "I tell you that in the same way there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one repentant sinner."

He went on to say, "There was a man who had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, "'Father, give me the share of the property that comes to me.' "So he divided his wealth between them. No long time afterwards the younger son got all together and travelled to a distant country, where he wasted his money in debauchery and excess. At last, when he had spent everything, there came a terrible famine throughout that country, and he began to feel the pinch of want. So he went and hired himself to one of the inhabitants of that country, who sent him on to his farm to tend swine; and he longed to make a hearty meal of the pods the swine were eating, but no one gave him any. "But on coming to himself he said, "'How many of my father's hired men have more bread than they want, while I here am dying of hunger! I will rise and go to my father, and will say to him, Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before you: I no longer deserve to be called a son of yours: treat me as one of your hired men.'

"So he rose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and pitied him, and ran and threw his arms round his neck and kissed him tenderly. "'Father,' cried the son, 'I have sinned against Heaven and before you: no longer do I deserve to be called a son of yours.' "But the father said to his servants, "'Fetch a good coat quickly—the best one—and put it on him; and bring a ring for his finger and shoes for his feet. Fetch the fat calf and kill it, and let us feast and enjoy ourselves; for my son here was dead and has come

to life again: he was lost and has been found.' "And they began to be merry.

"Now his elder son was out on the farm; and when he returned and came near home, he heard music and dancing. Then he called one of the lads to him and asked what all this meant. "'Your brother has come,' he replied; 'and your father has had the fat calf killed, because he has got him home safe and sound.' "Then he was angry and would not go in. But his father came out and entreated him. "'All these years,' replied the son, 'I have been slaving for you, and I have never at any time disobeyed any of your orders, and yet you have never given me so much as a kid, for me to enjoy myself with my friends; but now that this son of yours is come who has eaten up your property among his bad women, you have killed the fat calf for him.' "'You my dear son,' said the father, 'are always with me, and all that is mine is also yours. We are bound to make merry and rejoice, for this brother of yours was dead and has come back to life, he was lost and has been found.'" (248)

God's plan is, in and through Jesus, to seek what has been lost. Here is how the gospel-writer John explains it

There is no one who has gone up to Heaven, but there is One who has come down from Heaven, namely the Son of Man whose home is in Heaven. And just as Moses lifted high the serpent in the Desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, in order that every one who trusts in Him may have the Life of the Ages." For so greatly did God love the world that He gave His only Son, that every one who trusts in Him may not perish but may have the Life of Ages. For God did not send His Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. (249)

The love of God is seen not only in His purposing to do this, but also in the cost, which was the death of His Son. And Jesus knew that this was the purpose of his coming.

Now some of those who used to come up to worship at the Festival were Greeks. They came to Philip, of Bethsaida in Galilee, with the request, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." Philip came and told Andrew: Andrew and Philip told Jesus. His answer was, "The time has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. In most solemn truth I tell you that unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains what it was—a single grain; but that if it dies, it yields a rich harvest. He who holds his life dear, is destroying it; and he who makes his life of no account in this world shall keep it to the Life of the Ages. If a man wishes to be my servant, let him follow me; and where I am, there too shall my servant be. If a man wishes to be my servant, the Father will honour him.

Now is my soul full of trouble; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour. But for this purpose I have come to this hour. Father, glorify Thy name." Thereupon there came a voice from the sky, "I have glorified it and will also glorify it again."

The crowd that stood by and heard it, said that there had been thunder. Others said, "An angel spoke to him." "It is not for my sake," said Jesus, "that that voice came, but for your sakes. Now is a judgement of this world: now will the Prince of this world be driven out. And I — if I am lifted up from the earth—will draw all men to me." He said this to indicate the kind of death He would die.

The crowd answered Him, "We have heard out of the Law that the Christ remains for ever. In what sense do you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is that Son of Man?" "Yet a little while," He replied, "the light is among you. Be faithful to the light that you have, for fear darkness should overtake you; for a man who walks in the dark does not know where he is going. In the degree that you have light, believe in the Light, so that you may become sons of Light." Jesus said this, and went away and hid Himself from them. (250)

As we have seen, Jesus taught by word and deed the willingness of God to forgive. But forgiveness is a two-way process. It has to be sought and received as well as offered. The very fact of offering it means that people are compelled to choose whether they will take it or not. Those who reject the offer and the Offerer bring condemnation and judgment upon themselves.

He who trusts in Him does not come up for judgement. He who does not trust has already received sentence, because he has not his trust resting on the name of God's only Son. And this is the test by which men are judged—the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness more than they loved the Light, because their deeds were wicked. For every wrongdoer hates the light, and does not come to the light, for fear his actions should be exposed and condemned. But he who does what is honest and right comes to the light, in order that his actions may be plainly shown to have been done in God. (251)

After listening to this teaching, one of His fellow guests said to Him, "Blessed is he who shall feast in God's Kingdom." "A man once gave a great dinner," replied Jesus, "to which he invited a large number of guests. At dinner-time he sent his servant to announce to those who had been invited, "'Come, for things are now ready.' "But they all without exception began to excuse themselves. The first told him, "'I have purchased a piece of land, and must of necessity go and look at it. Pray hold me excused.' "A second pleaded, "'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and am on my way to try them. Pray hold me excused.' "Another said, "'I am just married. It is impossible for me to come.' "So the servant came and brought these answers to his master, and they stirred his anger. "'Go out quickly,' he said, 'into the streets of the city—the wide ones and the narrow. You will see poor men, and crippled, blind, lame: fetch them all in here.' "Soon the servant reported the result, saying, "'Sir, what you ordered is done, and there is room still.' "Go out,' replied the master, 'to the high roads and hedge-rows, and compel the people to come in, so that my house may be filled. For I

tell you that not one of those who were invited shall taste my dinner." (252)

It is in this light that we best approach the subject of judgment, of heaven and hell. Heaven is offered, but Jesus clearly taught that there was an outcome of anguish for those who refused or neglected the offer and simply lived for themselves.

"There was once a rich man who habitually arrayed himself in purple and fine linen, and enjoyed a splendid banquet every day, while at his outer door there lay a beggar, Lazarus by name, covered with sores and longing to make a full meal off the scraps flung on the floor from the rich man's table. Nay, the dogs, too, used to come and lick his sores. "But in course of time the beggar died; and he was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died, and had a funeral. And in Hades, being in torment, he looked and saw Abraham in the far distance, and Lazarus resting in his arms. So he cried aloud, and said, "'Father Abraham, take pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame.' "'Remember, my child,' said Abraham, 'that you had all your good things during your lifetime, and that Lazarus in like manner had his bad things. But, now and here, he is receiving consolation and you are in agony. And, besides all this, a vast chasm is immovably fixed between us and you, put there in order that those who desire to cross from this side to you may not be able, nor any be able to cross over from your side to us.' "'I entreat you then, father,' said he, 'to send him to my father's house. For I have five brothers. Let him earnestly warn them, lest they also come to this place of torment.' "'They have Moses and the Prophets,' replied Abraham; 'let them hear them.' "'No, father Abraham,' he pleaded; 'but if some one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' "'If they are deaf to Moses and the Prophets,' replied Abraham, 'they would not be led to believe even if some one should rise from the dead.'" (253)

Not only this, Jesus taught that the present order of things is only temporary; that one day it will all be wound up; the Son of Man will be revealed and the judgment of mankind will take place.

Then, turning to His disciples, He said, "There will come a time when you will wish you could see a single one of the days of the Son of Man, but will not see one. And they will say to you, 'See there!' 'See here!' Do not start off and go in pursuit. For just as the lightning, when it flashes, shines from one part of the horizon to the opposite part, so will the Son of Man be on His day. But first He must endure much suffering, and be rejected by the present generation.

"And as it was in the time of Noah, so will it also be in the time of the Son of Man. Men were eating and drinking, taking wives and giving wives, up to the very day on which Noah entered the Ark, and the Deluge came and destroyed them all. The same was true in the time of Lot: they were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building; but on the day that Lot left Sodom, God rained fire and brimstone from the sky and destroyed them all. Exactly so will it be on the day that the veil is lifted from the Son of Man.

"On that day, if a man is on the roof and his property indoors, let him not go down to fetch it; and, in the same way, he who is in the field, let him not turn back. Remember Lot's wife. Any man who makes it his object to keep his own life safe, will lose it; but whoever loses his life will preserve it. On that night, I tell you, there will be two men in one bed: one will be taken away and the other left behind. There will be two women turning the mill together: one will be taken away and the other left behind."

"Where, Master?" they inquired. "Where the dead body is," He replied, "there also will the vultures flock together." (254)

Salvation is freely offered, and though it can be refused (and at what cost) there is never any need for it to be refused; for Jesus

taught, in parable form, that it is offered equally to all without distinction, however great their need of it might be; no one can earn it or deserve it more than anyone else - in God's sight all have an equal need of it.

"For the Kingdom of the Heavens is like an employer who went out early in the morning to hire men to work in his vineyard, and having made an agreement with them for a shilling a day, sent them into his vineyard. About nine o'clock he went out and saw others loitering in the market-place. To these also he said, "'You also, go into the vineyard, and whatever is right I will give you.' "So they went. Again about twelve, and about three o'clock, he went out and did the same. And going out about five o'clock he found others loitering, and he asked them, "'Why have you been standing here all day long, doing nothing?' "Because no one has hired us,' they replied. "'You also, go into the vineyard,' he said. "When evening came, the master said to his steward, "'Call the men and pay them their wages. Begin with the last set and finish with the first.' "When those came who had begun at five o'clock, they received a shilling apiece; and when the first came, they expected to get more, but they also each got the shilling. So when they had received it, they grumbled against the employer, saying, "'These who came last have done only one hour's work, and you have put them on a level with us who have worked the whole day and have borne the scorching heat.' "My friend,' he answered to one of them, 'I am doing you no injustice. Did you not agree with me for a shilling? Take your money and go. I choose to give this last comer just as much as I give you. Have I not a right to do what I choose with my own property? Or are you envious because I am generous?' "So the last shall be first, and the first last." (255)

Just how this salvation may be obtained will be the theme of the next chapter.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

'... The Way ...'

Having seen that Jesus taught God's willingness to forgive, and that His purpose is to reconcile the world to Himself, let us now look at Jesus' teaching on how mankind is to be restored to fellowship with God. What is the way back to God? Jesus gave a very simple answer to this question.

"I am the Way," replied Jesus, "and the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through me. (256)

His appeal to the care-worn of the world was to come to him and submit to him.

"Come to me, all you toiling and burdened ones, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For it is good to bear my yoke, and my burden is light." (257)

Jesus claims that he is the one upon whom people should feed their souls, using this striking metaphor, in spite of the misunderstanding it caused, to indicate the utter dependence on him that people need to have.

Next morning the crowd who were still standing about on the other side of the Lake found that there had been but one small boat there, and they had seen that Jesus did not go on board with His disciples, but that His disciples went away without Him. Yet a number of small boats came from Tiberias to the neighbourhood of the place where they had

eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. When however the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor His disciples were there, they themselves also took boats and came to Capernaum to look for Jesus.

So when they had crossed the Lake and had found Him, they asked Him, "Rabbi, when did you come here?"

"In most solemn truth I tell you," replied Jesus, "that you are searching for me not because you have seen miracles, but because you ate the loaves and had a hearty meal. Bestow your pains not on the food which perishes, but on the food that remains unto the Life of the Ages—that food which will be the Son of Man's gift to you; for on Him the Father, God, has set His seal." "What are we to do," they asked, "in order to carry out the things that God requires?"

"This," replied Jesus, "is above all the thing that God requires—that you should be believers in Him whom He has sent." "What miracle then," they asked, "do you perform for us to see and become believers in you? What do you do? Our forefathers ate the manna in the Desert, as it is written, 'He gave them bread out of Heaven to eat'."

"In most solemn truth I tell you," replied Jesus, "that Moses did not give you the bread out of Heaven, but my Father is giving you the bread—the true bread—out of Heaven. For God's bread is that which comes down out of Heaven and gives Life to the world." "Sir," they said, "always give us that bread."

"I am the bread of Life," replied Jesus; "he who comes to me shall never hunger, and he who believes in me shall never, never thirst. But it is as I have said to you: you have seen me and yet you do not believe. Every one whom the Father gives me will come to me, and him who comes to me I will never on any account drive away. For I have left Heaven and have come down to earth not to seek my own pleasure, but to do the will of Him who sent me. And this is the will of Him who sent me, that of all that He has given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it to life on the last day. For this is my

Father's will, that every one who fixes his gaze on the Son of God and believes in Him should have the Life of the Ages, and I will raise him to life on the last day."

Now the Jews began to find fault about Him because of His claiming to be the bread which came down out of Heaven. They kept asking, "Is not this man Joseph's son? Is he not Jesus, whose father and mother we know? What does he mean by now saying, 'I have come down out of Heaven'?"

"Do not thus find fault among yourselves," replied Jesus; "no one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him; then I will raise him to life on the last day. It stands written in the Prophets, 'And they shall all of them be taught by God'. Every one who listens to the Father and learns from Him comes to me. No one has ever seen the Father—except Him who is from God. He has seen the Father.

"In most solemn truth I tell you that he who believes has the Life of the Ages. I am the bread of Life. Your forefathers ate the manna in the Desert, and they died. Here is the bread that comes down out of Heaven that a man may eat it and not die. I am the living bread come down out of Heaven. If a man eats this bread, he shall live for ever. Moreover the bread which I will give is my flesh given for the life of the world."

This led to an angry debate among the Jews. "How can this man," they argued, "give us his flesh to eat?"

"In most solemn truth I tell you," said Jesus, "that unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no Life in you. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has the Life of the Ages, and I will raise him up on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in union with me, and I remain in union with him. As the ever-living Father has sent me, and I live because of the Father, so also he who eats me will live because of me. This is the bread which came

down out of Heaven; it is unlike that which your forefathers ate—for they ate and yet died. He who eats this bread shall live for ever." Jesus said all this in the synagogue while teaching at Capernaum.

Many therefore of His disciples, when they heard it, said, "This is hard to accept. Who can listen to such teaching?" But, knowing in Himself that His disciples were dissatisfied about it, Jesus asked them, "Does this seem incredible to you? What then if you were to see the Son of Man ascending again where He was before? It is the spirit which gives Life. The flesh confers no benefit whatever. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and are Life. But there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who those were that did not believe, and who it was that would betray Him. So He added, "That is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it be granted him by the Father."

Thereupon many of His disciples left Him and went away, and no longer associated with Him. Jesus therefore appealed to the Twelve. "Will you go also?" He asked. "Master," replied Simon Peter, "to whom shall we go? Your teachings tell us of the Life of the Ages. And we have come to believe and know that you are indeed the Holy One of God." (258)

Jesus also uses two metaphors based on the ways of sheep-farming familiar to them all, but still, as always, pointing to himself.

"In most solemn truth I tell you that the man who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs over some other way, is a thief and a robber. But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter opens the door, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by their names and leads them out. When he has brought out his own sheep—all of them—he walks at the head of them; and the sheep follow him, because they know his voice. But a stranger they will by no means follow, but will run away from him,

because they do not know the voice of strangers." Jesus spoke to them in this figurative language, but they did not understand what He meant.

Again therefore Jesus said to them, "In most solemn truth I tell you that I am the Door of the sheep. All who have come before me are thieves and robbers; but the sheep would not listen to them. I am the Door. If any one enters by me, he will find safety, and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy: I have come that they may have Life, and may have it in abundance.

"I am the Good Shepherd. A good shepherd lays down his very life for the sheep. The hired servant—one who is not a shepherd and does not own the sheep—no sooner sees the wolf coming than he leaves the sheep and runs away; and the wolf worries and scatters them. For he is only a hired servant and cares nothing for the sheep. "I am the Good Shepherd. And I know my sheep and my sheep know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I am laying down my life for the sheep. I have also other sheep—which do not belong to this fold. Those also I must bring, and they will listen to my voice; and they shall become one flock under one Shepherd. For this reason my Father loves me, because I am laying down my life in order to receive it back again. No one is taking it away from me, but I myself am laying it down. I am authorized to lay it down, and I am authorized to receive it back again. This is the command I received from my Father." (259)

The invitation is to believe in him and to receive him

"I am the Resurrection and the Life," said Jesus; "he who believes in me, even if he has died, he shall live; and every one who is living and is a believer in me shall never, never die. (260)

He came to the things that were His own, and His own people gave Him no welcome. But all who have received Him, to them—that is, to those who trust in His name—He has given the privilege of becoming children of God; (261)

This is the way into the kingdom of God: to come to Jesus, to submit to Jesus, to feed on Jesus, to believe in Jesus, to receive Jesus. But for every person this involves a change in life so radical that it is like the beginning of a new life, like being born again.

Now there was one of the Pharisees whose name was Nicodemus—a ruler among the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher from God; for no one can do these miracles which you are doing, unless God is with him. "In most solemn truth I tell you," answered Jesus, "that unless a man is born anew he cannot see the Kingdom of God."

"How is it possible," Nicodemus asked, "for a man to be born when he is old? Can he a second time enter his mother's womb and be born?"

"In most solemn truth I tell you," replied Jesus, "that unless a man is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God. Whatever has been born of the flesh is flesh, and whatever has been born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished at my telling you, 'You must all be born anew.' The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it is going. So is it with every one who has been born of the Spirit." (262)

We may be as bewildered as Nicodemus was by these ideas.

"How is all this possible?" asked Nicodemus.

"Are you," replied Jesus, "'the Teacher of Israel,' and yet do you not understand these things? In most solemn truth I tell you that we speak what we know, and give testimony of that of which we were eye-witnesses, and yet you all reject our testimony. If I have told you earthly things and none of you believe me, how will you believe me if I tell you of things in Heaven? (263)

How can we have any dealings with a man who lived two thousand years ago? How can coming to Jesus, believing in Jesus, receiving Jesus, make sense today? Let Jesus' own words, spoken sixty years after his earthly life, provide the answer.

"Do not be afraid: I am the First and the Last, and the ever-living One. I died; but I am now alive until the Ages of the Ages. (Revelation 1:17-18)

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

'... The Life ...'

We come now to another aspect of the teaching of Jesus, based on the last of the three key words of his memorable saying, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life.' We need to look at what Jesus taught on how to live the Christian life, and having pointed always to himself as the way it is begun, it is no surprise that he points to himself as the source of strength for leading such a life.

"I am the Vine—the True Vine, and my Father is the vine-dresser. Every branch in me—if it bears no fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. Already you are cleansed—through the teaching which I have given you. Continue in me, and let me continue in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself—that is, if it does not continue in the vine—so neither can you if you do not continue in me. I am the Vine, you are the branches. He who continues in me and in whom I continue bears abundant fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. If any one does not continue in me, he is like the unfruitful branch which is at once thrown away and then withers up. Such branches they gather up and throw into the fire and they are burned.

"If you continue in me and my sayings continue in you, ask what you will and it shall be done for you. By this is God glorified—by your bearing abundant fruit and thus being true disciples of mine. As the Father has loved me, I have also loved you: continue in my love. If you obey my commands, you will continue in my love, as I have obeyed my Father's commands and continue in His love.

"These things I have spoken to you in order that I may have joy in you, and that your joy may become perfect. (264)

During the time of his ministry there were many examples of his putting this teaching into practice. He did not help those who would not come humbly to him in dependence and trust, as for example at Nazareth.

And He performed but few mighty deeds there because of their want of faith. (265)

But he always readily helped those who came in faith - which in own word sums up the whole idea of trust and dependence.

After His entry into Capernaum a Captain came to Him, and entreated Him. "Sir," he said, "my servant at home is lying ill with paralysis, and is suffering great pain." "I will come and cure him," said Jesus. "Sir," replied the Captain, "I am not a fit person to receive you under my roof: merely say the word, and my servant will be cured. For I myself am also under authority, and have soldiers under me. To one I say 'Go,' and he goes, to another 'Come,' and he comes, and to my slave 'Do this or that,' and he does it."

Jesus listened to this reply, and was astonished, and said to the people following Him, "I solemnly tell you that in no Israelite have I found faith as great as this. And I tell you that many will come from the east and from the west and will recline at table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of the Heavens, while the natural heirs of the Kingdom will be driven out into the darkness outside: there will be the weeping aloud and the gnashing of teeth."

And Jesus said to the Captain, "Go, and just as you have believed, so be it for you." And the servant recovered precisely at that time. (266)

As Jesus passed on, two blind men followed Him, shouting and saying,

"Pity us, Son of David." And when He had gone indoors, they came to Him. "Do you believe that I can do this?" He asked them. "Yes, Sir," they replied. So He touched their eyes and said, "According to your faith let it be to you." Then their eyes were opened. And assuming a stern tone Jesus said to them, "Be careful to let no one know." But they went out and published His fame in all that district. (267)

They came to Jericho; and as He was leaving that town—Himself and His disciples and a great crowd—Bartimaeus (the son of Timaeus), a blind beggar, was sitting by the way-side. Hearing that it was Jesus the Nazarene, he began to cry out, "Son of David, Jesus, have pity on me." Many angrily told him to leave off shouting; but he only cried out all the louder, "Son of David, have pity on me."

Then Jesus stood still. "Call him," He said. So they called the blind man. "Cheer up," they said; "rise, he is calling you." The man flung away his outer garment, sprang to his feet, and came to Jesus. "What shall I do for you?" said Jesus. "Rabboni," replied the blind man, "let me recover my sight." "Go," said Jesus, "your faith has cured you." Instantly he regained his sight, and followed Him along the road. (268)

As for the time when he would be physically removed from this world, Jesus taught that dependence on him should show itself in prayer, for without him people can do nothing. So he encouraged prayer, by his example, by his teaching (see chapter thirteen), and by parables.

And He said to them, "Which of you shall have a friend and shall go to him in the middle of the night and say, "'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; for a friend of mine has just come to my house from a distance, and I have nothing for him to eat'? "And he from indoors shall answer, "'Do not pester me. The door is now barred, and I am here in bed with my children. I cannot get up and give you bread.' "I tell you that even if he will not rise and give him the loaves because he is his friend, at any rate because of his persistency he will rouse

himself and give him as many as he requires. "So I say to you, 'Ask, and what you ask for shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and the door shall be opened to you.' (269)

He also taught them by a parable that they must always pray and never lose heart. "In a certain town," He said, "there was a judge who had no fear of God and no respect for man. And in the same town was a widow who repeatedly came and entreated him, saying, "'Give me justice and stop my oppressor.' "For a time he would not, but afterwards he said to himself, "'Though I have neither reverence for God nor respect for man, yet because she annoys me I will give her justice, to prevent her from constantly coming to pester me.'"

And the Lord said, "Hear those words of the unjust judge. And will not God avenge the wrongs of His own People who cry aloud to Him day and night, although He seems slow in taking action on their behalf? Yes, He will soon avenge their wrongs. Yet, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on earth?" (270)

The Christian life is one of dependence. Without Christ one has no strength, but with him nothing is impossible. Paul the apostle had every opportunity to put this teaching to the test, and this is his verdict.

And judging by the stupendous grandeur of the revelations—therefore lest I should be over-elated there has been sent to me, like the agony of impalement, Satan's angel dealing blow after blow, lest I should be over-elated. As for this, three times have I besought the Lord to rid me of him; but His reply has been, "My grace suffices for you, for power matures in weakness." Most gladly therefore will I boast of my infirmities rather than complain of them—in order that Christ's power may overshadow me. In fact I take pleasure in infirmities, in the bearing of insults, in distress, in persecutions, in grievous difficulties—for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Corinthians 12:7-10)

I have strength for anything through Him who gives me power.
(Philippians 4:13)

It is interesting to note a silence in Jesus' teaching. As far as one can tell he left no instructions for the new community he was founding as to how they should worship God. The evidence of the Acts of the Apostles is that the first Christians felt no need to make a radical break from the traditional manner of worship that they already knew as Jews. This centred mainly on the weekly service in the synagogue. After the destruction of Solomon's temple in 586 B.C., and during the subsequent exile, the Jews had had to adapt their religious life in a way that no longer depended on the sacrificial rituals of the temple. They met each sabbath for communal prayer and to have read aloud the Law, most particularly, and the other books of the Old Testament, the Prophets. Suitable instruction was given on the reading by a scribe or other competent person. This reading of the Scriptures was the central part of the service, and a richly decorated box (or ark) containing the scrolls of the sacred writings was the focal point of the whole building, with in front of it a raised platform on which was a lectern and chair for the preacher. The synagogue served the community in other than religious ways, as a school, a court of law, and a general meeting place, and it became such an important part of Jewish community life that even when the temple in Jerusalem was rebuilt the importance and use of the synagogue was not diminished. All over the Roman Empire, certainly by the time of Paul's travel, wherever there were enough Jews (ten men were held to be the minimum) there was a synagogue.

The first Christians, themselves Jews, met together, often in each other's houses, to worship God in this simple way, and to

commemorate the means of their salvation, as Jesus had instructed them. This is how Paul explains it.

For it was from the Lord that I received the facts which, in turn, I handed on to you; how that the Lord Jesus, on the night He was to be betrayed, took some bread, and after giving thanks He broke it and said, "This is my body which is about to be broken for you. Do this in memory of me." In the same way, when the meal was over, He also took the cup. "This cup," He said, "is the new Covenant of which my blood is the pledge. Do this, every time that you drink it, in memory of me." For every time that you eat this bread and drink from the cup, you are proclaiming the Lord's death—until He returns. (1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

The Ethics

We have seen how the Christian life is to be begun and from comes the strength for living that life. Now we turn to the question: 'How are Christians to live?' What did Jesus teach on the ethics of the Christian life?

Much that answers these questions has been looked at in chapter thirteen, in what we call the Sermon on the Mount. But John's account of Jesus' teaching during the Last Supper takes us to two passages where Jesus reduces to a single command the whole of Christian ethics.

So when he was gone out, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. Moreover God will glorify Him in Himself, and will glorify Him without delay. Dear children, I am still with you a little longer. You will seek me, but, as I said to the Jews, 'Where I am going you cannot come,' so for the present I say to you. A new commandment I give you, to love one another; that as I have loved you, you also may love one another. It is by this that every one will know that you are my disciples—if you love one another." (271)

This is my commandment to you, to love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this—a man laying down his life for his friends. You are my friends, if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, because a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, because all that I have heard from the Father I have made known to you. It is not you

who chose me, but it is I who chose you and appointed you that you might go and be fruitful and that your fruit might remain; so that whatever petition you present to the Father in my name He may give you. "Thus I command you to love one another. (272)

This commandment, to love one another, is the basic principle to cover all situations, and where there is doubt as to what actions best show love, Jesus has given (as we saw) a perfect yardstick.

Everything, therefore, be it what it may, that you would have men do to you, do you also the same to them; for in this the Law and the Prophets are summed up. (273)

When Jesus speaks of love, he does not mean a vague attitude, but action, as we may clearly see from this passage.

"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then will He sit upon His glorious throne, and all the nations will be gathered into His presence. And He will separate them from one another, just as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; and will make the sheep stand at His right hand, and the goats at His left.

"Then the King will say to those at His right, "'Come, my Father's blessed ones, receive your inheritance of the Kingdom which has been divinely intended for you ever since the creation of the world. For when I was hungry, you gave me food; when I was thirsty, you gave me drink; when I was homeless, you gave me a welcome; when I was ill-clad, you clothed me; when I was sick, you visited me; when I was in prison, you came to see me.'

"'When, Lord,' the righteous will reply, 'did we see Thee hungry, and feed Thee; or thirsty, and give Thee drink? When did we see Thee homeless, and give Thee a welcome? or ill-clad, and clothe Thee? When did we see Thee sick or in prison, and come to see Thee?'

"But the King will answer them, "'In solemn truth I tell you that in so far as you rendered such services to one of the humblest of these my brethren, you rendered them to myself.'

"Then will He say to those at His left, "'Begone from me, with the curse resting upon you, into the Fire of the Ages, which has been prepared for the Devil and his angels. For when I was hungry, you gave me nothing to eat; when thirsty, you gave me nothing to drink; when homeless, you gave me no welcome; ill-clad, you clothed me not; sick or in prison, you visited me not.'

"Then will they also answer, "'Lord, when did we see Thee hungry or thirsty or homeless or ill-clad or sick or in prison, and not come to serve Thee?'

"But he will reply, "'In solemn truth I tell you that in so far as you withheld such services from one of the humblest of these, you withheld them from me.'

"And these shall go away into the Punishment of the Ages, but the righteous into the Life of the Ages." (274)

Love is not to be shown only when it brings advantage.

Also to His host, who had invited Him, He said, "When you give a breakfast or a dinner, do not invite your friends or brothers or relatives or rich neighbours, lest perhaps they should invite you in return and a requital be made you. But when you entertain, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind; and you will be blessed, because they have no means of requiting you, but there will be requital for you at the Resurrection of the righteous." (275)

Love is to be shown to all, particularly to the weak and vulnerable.

Then young children were brought to Him for Him to put His hands on them and pray; but the disciples interfered. Jesus however said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them; for it is to those who are childlike that the Kingdom of the Heavens belongs." So He laid His hands upon them and went away. (276)

And whoever for my sake receives one young child such as this, receives me. But whoever shall occasion the fall of one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for him to have a millstone hung round his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.

"Alas for the world because of causes of falling! They cannot but come, but alas for each man through whom they come! If your hand or your foot is causing you to fall into sin, cut it off and away with it. It is better for you to enter into Life crippled in hand or foot than to remain in possession of two sound hands or feet but be thrown into the fire of the Ages. And if your eye is causing you to fall into sin, tear it out and away with it; it is better for you to enter into Life with only one eye, than to remain in possession of two eyes but be thrown into the Gehenna of fire.

"Beware of ever despising one of these little ones, for I tell you that in Heaven their angels have continual access to my Father who is in Heaven. (277)

Love shows itself in humility.

Then, when He noticed that the invited guests chose the best seats, He used this as an illustration and said to them, "When any one invites you to a wedding banquet, do not take the best seat, lest perhaps some more honoured guest than you may have been asked, and the man who invited you both will come and will say to you, 'Make room for this guest,' and then you, ashamed, will move to the lowest place. On the contrary, when you are invited go and take the lowest place, that when your host comes round he may say to you, 'My friend, come up higher.' This will be doing you honour in the presence of all the other guests.

For whoever uplifts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be uplifted. (278)

Then the mother of the sons of Zabdi came to Him with her sons, and knelt before Him to make a request of Him. "What is it you desire?" He asked. "Command," she replied, "that these my two sons may sit one at your right hand and one at your left in your Kingdom." "None of you know what you are asking for," said Jesus; "can you drink out of the cup from which I am about to drink?" "We can," they replied. "You shall drink out of my cup," He said, "but a seat at my right hand or at my left it is not for me to allot, but it belongs to those for whom it has been prepared by my Father."

The other ten heard of this, and their indignation was aroused against the two brothers. But Jesus called them to Him, and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. Not so shall it be among you; but whoever desires to be great among you shall be your servant, and whoever desires to be first among you shall be your bondservant; just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as the redemption-price for many." (279)

Jesus, although He knew that the Father had put everything into His hands, and that He had come forth from God and was now going to God, rose from the table, threw off His upper garments, and took a towel and tied it round Him. Then He poured water into a basin, and proceeded to wash the feet of the disciples and to wipe them with the towel which He had put round Him. When He came to Simon Peter, Peter objected. "Master," he said, "are you going to wash my feet?" "What I am doing," answered Jesus, "for the present you do not know, but afterwards you shall know." "Never, while the world lasts," said Peter, "shall you wash my feet." "If I do not wash you," replied Jesus, "you have no share with me."

"Master," said Peter, "wash not only my feet, but also my hands and my head." "Any one who has lately bathed," said Jesus, "does not need

to wash more than his feet, but is clean all over. And you my disciples are clean, and yet this is not true of all of you." For He knew who was betraying Him, and that was why He said, "You are not all of you clean."

So after He had washed their feet, put on His garments again, and returned to the table, He said to them, "Do you understand what I have done to you? You call me 'The Rabbi' and 'The Master,' and rightly so, for such I am. If I then, your Master and Rabbi, have washed your feet, it is also your duty to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example in order that you may do what I have done to you. In most solemn truth I tell you that a servant is not superior to his master, nor is a messenger superior to him who sent him. If you know all this, blessed are you if you act accordingly. (280)

Love is to be always practical and dynamic, as the example of Zachaeus shows.

So He entered Jericho and was passing through the town. There was a man there called Zacchaeus, who was the local surveyor of taxes, and was wealthy. He was anxious to see what sort of man Jesus was; but he could not because of the crowd, for he was short in stature. So he ran on in front and climbed up a mulberry tree to see Him; for He was about to pass that way. As soon as Jesus came to the place, He looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down quickly, for I must stay at your house to-day." So he came down in haste, and welcomed Him joyfully.

When they all saw this, they began to complain with indignation. "He has gone in to be the guest of a notorious sinner!" they said. Zacchaeus however stood up, and addressing the Lord said, "Here and now, Master, I give half my property to the poor, and if I have unjustly exacted money from any man, I pledge myself to repay to him four times the amount." Turning towards him, Jesus replied, "To-day salvation has come to this house, seeing that he too is a son of

Abraham. For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." (281)

Jesus was often in need of reminding people just how practical true devotion is.

As He thus spoke a woman in the crowd called out in a loud voice, "Blessed is the mother who carried you, and the breasts that you have sucked." "Nay rather," He replied, "they are blessed who hear God's Message and carefully keep it." (282)

While He was still addressing the people His mother and His brothers were standing on the edge of the crowd desiring to speak to Him. So some one told Him, "Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, and desire to speak to you." "Who is my mother?" He said to the man; "and who are my brothers?" And pointing to His disciples He added, "See here are my mother and my brothers. To obey my Father who is in Heaven—that is to be my brother and my sister and my mother." (283)

Love in a vacuum is impossible, and a vacuum is a dangerous state spiritually.

"No sooner however has the foul spirit gone out of the man, then he roams about in places where there is no water, seeking rest but finding none. Then he says, 'I will return to my house that I left;' and he comes and finds it unoccupied, swept clean, and in good order. Then he goes and brings back with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they come in and dwell there; and in the end that man's condition becomes worse than it was at first. So will it be also with the present wicked generation." (284)

Love will always try to find a way to bring peace where there is discord, though this may not always be possible, and above all love will always forgive.

"If your brother acts wrongly towards you, go and point out his fault to him when only you and he are there. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not listen to you, go again, and ask one or two to go with you, that every word spoken may be attested by two or three witnesses. If he refuses to hear them, appeal to the Church; and if he refuses to hear even the Church, regard him just as you regard a Gentile or a tax-gatherer. I solemnly tell you that whatever you as a Church bind on earth will in Heaven be held as bound, and whatever you loose on earth will in Heaven be held to be loosed.

I also solemnly tell you that if two of you here on earth agree together concerning anything whatever that they shall ask, the boon will come to them from my Father who is in Heaven. For where there are two or three assembled in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

At this point Peter came to Him with the question, "Master, how often shall my brother act wrongly towards me and I forgive him? seven times?" "I do not say seven times," answered Jesus, "but seventy times seven times.

"For this reason the Kingdom of the Heavens may be compared to a king who determined to have a settlement of accounts with his servants. But as soon as he began the settlement, one was brought before him who owed 10,000 talents, and was unable to pay. So his master ordered that he and his wife and children and everything that he had should be sold, and payment be made. The servant therefore falling down, prostrated himself at his feet and entreated him. "Only give me time,' he said, 'and I will pay you the whole.'

"Whereupon his master, touched with compassion, set him free and forgave him the debt. But no sooner had that servant gone out, than he met with one of his fellow servants who owed him 100 shillings; and seizing him by the throat and nearly strangling him he exclaimed, "'Pay me all you owe.'

"His fellow servant therefore fell at his feet and entreated him, "'Only give me time,' he said, 'and I will pay you.'

"He would not, however, but went and threw him into prison until he should pay what was due. His fellow servants, therefore, seeing what had happened, were exceedingly angry; and they came and told their master without reserve all that had happened. At once his master called him and said, "'Wicked servant, I forgave you all that debt, because you entreated me: ought not you also to have had pity on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?'

"So his master, greatly incensed, handed him over to the jailers until he should pay all he owed him.

"In the same way my Heavenly Father will deal with you, if you do not all of you forgive one another from your hearts." (285)

Jesus taught that one should forgive because one has been forgiven; love because first loved by God; gratitude is the spur to love, perhaps the very key to love.

Now one of the Pharisees repeatedly invited Him to a meal at his house; so He entered the house and reclined at the table. And there was a woman in the town who was a notorious sinner. Having learnt that Jesus was at table in the Pharisee's house she brought a flask of perfume, and, standing behind close to His feet, weeping, began to wet His feet with her tears; and with her hair she wiped the tears away again, while she lovingly kissed His feet and poured the perfume over them. Noticing this, the Pharisee, His host, said to himself, "This man, if he were really a Prophet, would know who and what sort of person this woman is who is touching him—and would know that she is an immoral woman."

In answer to his thoughts Jesus said to him, "Simon, I have a word to say to you." "Rabbi, say on," he replied.

"There were once two men in debt to one money-lender," said Jesus; "one owed him five hundred shillings and the other fifty. But neither of them could pay anything; so he freely forgave them both. Tell me, then, which of them will love him most?"

"I suppose," replied Simon, "the one to whom he forgave most." "You have judged rightly," Jesus rejoined. Then turning towards the woman He said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house: you gave me no water for my feet; but she has made my feet wet with her tears, and then wiped the tears away with her hair. No kiss did you give me; but she from the moment I came in has not left off tenderly kissing my feet. No oil did you pour even on my head; but she has poured perfume upon my feet. This is the reason why I tell you that her sins, her many sins, are forgiven—because she has loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little."

And He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

Then the other guests began to say to themselves, "Who can this man be who even forgives sins?" But He said to the woman, "Your faith has cured you: go, and be at peace." (286)

How surprised Jesus was on one occasion when so many showed no gratitude.

As they pursued their journey to Jerusalem, He passed through Samaria and Galilee. And as He entered a certain village, ten men met Him who were lepers and stood at a distance. In loud voices they cried out, "Jesus, Rabbi, take pity on us." Perceiving this, He said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the Priests." And while on their way to do this they were made clean.

One of them, seeing that he was cured, came back, adoring and praising God in a loud voice, and he threw himself at the feet of Jesus,

thanking Him. He was a Samaritan.

"Were not all ten made clean?" Jesus asked; "but where are the nine? Have none been found to come back and give glory to God except this foreigner?" And He said to him, "Rise and go: your faith has cured you." (287)

The mention of the word 'Samaritan' in this last section brings us to another aspect of true love. Love is always without partiality toward race or background; love must be all-inclusive. The Samaritans were hated by the Jews, who looked down upon them. Historically, the Samaritans were the remnants of the captivity of Israel, who claimed to be as true descendants of Abraham as the Jews themselves. But the Jews considered them to be of mixed blood, and refused to let them share in the rebuilding of the temple after the exile. So the Samaritans had built their own temple on Gerizim, and using the five books of Moses, the Law, they set up an independent worship of God, though in essentials there was little to distinguish them from the Jews. So by Jesus' time there had been centuries of mutual hatred and bloodshed. But Jesus' attitude towards them was not that of his countrymen. This can be seen from the account of Jesus' conversation with a Samaritan woman (section 226). And the person he chose to give an example of practical kindness was a travelling Samaritan who helped the man who had been mugged, in contrast with two Jewish religious officials who avoided any contact (section 112). He also tells the disciples to go - after Judea - to preach in Samaria next (Acts 1:8). The record of the Acts of the Apostles shows how slowly and painfully the lesson was learnt by the early Church that God's love included all peoples.

Finally the real test of love is not merely what is done, but the cost of doing it.

Having taken a seat opposite the Treasury, He observed how the people were dropping money into the Treasury, and that many of the wealthy threw in large sums. But there came one poor widow and dropped in two farthings, equal in value to a halfpenny. So He called His disciples to Him and said, "In solemn truth I tell you that this widow, poor as she is, has thrown in more than all the other contributors to the Treasury; for they have all contributed out of what they could well spare, but she out of her need has thrown in all she possessed—all she had to live on." (288)

CHAPTER NINETEEN

To the Close of the Age

As we saw in the last chapter, the underlying motive for Christian behaviour is gratitude for all that God has done. But there is another element that is bound to influence the behaviour of a Christian, and that is the teaching of Jesus that one day everyone will be called to render an account of their life. As the time drew close for Jesus to leave his followers physically, he told of a man who left his servants and when he returned asked them to render an account of what they had been entrusted with.

"Why, it is like a man who, when going on his travels, called his bondservants and entrusted his property to their care. To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one—to each according to his individual capacity; and then started from home. Without delay the one who had received the five talents went and employed them in business, and gained five more. In the same way he who had the two gained two more. But the man who had received the one went and dug a hole and buried his master's money.

"After a long lapse of time the master of those servants returned, and had a reckoning with them. The one who had received the five talents came and brought five more, and said, "Sir, it was five talents that you entrusted to me: see, I have gained five more.'

"'You have done well, good and trustworthy servant,' replied his master; 'you have been trustworthy in the management of a little, I will put you in charge of much: share your master's joy.'

"The second, who had received the two talents, came and said, "'Sir, it was two talents you entrusted to me: see, I have gained two more.'

"'Good and trustworthy servant, you have done well,' his master replied; 'you have been trustworthy in the management of a little, I will put you in charge of much: share your master's joy.'

"But, next, the man who had the one talent in his keeping came and said, "'Sir, I knew you to be a severe man, reaping where you had not sown and garnering what you had not winnowed. So being afraid I went and buried your talent in the ground: there you have what belongs to you.'

"'You wicked and slothful servant,' replied his master, 'did you know that I reap where I have not sown, and garner what I have not winnowed? Your duty then was to deposit my money in some bank, and so when I came I should have got back my property with interest. So take away the talent from him, and give it to the man who has the ten.' (For to every one who has, more shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him who has nothing, even what he has shall be taken away.) 'But as for this worthless servant, put him out into the darkness outside: there will be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth.' (289)

Luke records a very similar parable with exactly the same meaning.

As they were listening to His words, He went on to teach them by a parable, because He was near to Jerusalem and they supposed that the Kingdom of God was going to appear immediately. So He said to them, "A man of noble family travelled to a distant country to obtain the rank of king, and to return. And he called ten of his servants and gave each of them a pound, instructing them to trade with the money during his absence.

"Now his countrymen hated him, and sent a deputation after him to say, 'We are not willing that he should become our king.' And upon his return, after he had obtained the sovereignty, he ordered those servants to whom he had given the money to be summoned before him, that he might learn their success in trading.

"So the first came and said, "'Sir, your pound has produced ten pounds more.' "'Well done, good servant,' he replied; 'because you have been faithful in a very small matter, be in authority over ten towns.'

"The second came, and said, "'Your pound, Sir, has produced five pounds.' "So he said to this one also, "'And you, be the governor of five towns.'

"The next came. "'Sir,' he said, 'here is your pound, which I have kept wrapt up in a cloth. For I was afraid of you, because you are a severe man: you take up what you did not lay down, and you reap what you did not sow.'

"'By your own words,' he replied, 'I will judge you, you bad servant. You knew me to be a severe man, taking up what I did not lay down, and reaping what I did not sow: why then did you not put my money into a bank, that when I came I might have received it back with interest?

"And he said to those who stood by, "'Take the pound from him and give it to him who has the ten pounds.' ("They said to him, "'Sir, he already has ten pounds.')

"'I tell you that to every one who has anything, more shall be given; and from him who has not anything, even what he has shall be taken away. But as for those enemies of mine who were unwilling that I should become their king, bring them here, and cut them to pieces in my presence.'" (290)

Another, and more difficult, parable on the same theme is that of the unjust steward.

He said also to His disciples: "There was a rich man who had a steward, about whom a report was brought to him, that he was wasting his property. He called him and said, "'What is this I hear about you? Render an account of your stewardship, for I cannot let you hold it any longer.'

"Then the steward said within himself, "'What am I to do? For my master is taking away the stewardship from me. I am not strong enough for field labour: to beg, I should be ashamed. I see what to do, in order that when I am discharged from the stewardship they may give me a home in their own houses.' "So he called all his master's debtors, one by one, and asked the first, 'How much are you in debt to my master?' "'A hundred firkins of oil,' he replied. "'Here is your account,' said the steward: 'sit down quickly and change it into fifty firkins.' "To a second he said, "'And how much do you owe?' "'A hundred quarters of wheat,' was the answer. "'Here is your account,' said he: 'change it into eighty quarters.'

"And the master praised the dishonest steward for his shrewdness; for, in relation to their own contemporaries, the men of this age are shrewder than the sons of Light.

"But I charge you, so to use the wealth which is ever tempting to dishonesty as to win friends who, when it fails, shall welcome you to the tents that never perish. The man who is honest in a very small matter is honest in a great one also; and he who is dishonest in a very small matter is dishonest in a great one also. If therefore you have not proved yourselves faithful in dealing with the wealth that is tainted with fraud, who will entrust to you the true good? And if you have not been faithful in dealing with that which is not your own, who will give you that which is your own? (291)

Jesus is not advocating dishonesty, of course, but saying that a Christian should be no less anxious to make the best of any situation (in spiritual matters) than the worldly person is, when

faced with the prospect of giving an account of his activities.

Jesus knew that he was soon to be physically parted from his followers, and he emphasized that this should make no difference to those who would follow him. They must always be ready for his return

"Then will the Kingdom of the Heavens be found to be like ten bridesmaids who took their torches and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were wise. For the foolish, when they took their torches, did not provide themselves with oil; but the wise, besides their torches, took oil in their flasks.

The bridegroom was a long time in coming, so that meanwhile they all became drowsy and fell asleep. But at midnight there is a loud cry, "The bridegroom! Go out and meet him!"

"Then all those bridesmaids roused themselves and trimmed their torches. "Give us some of your oil," said the foolish ones to the wise, 'for our torches are going out.' "But perhaps," replied the wise, 'there will not be enough for all of us. Go to the shops rather, and buy some for yourselves.' "So they went to buy. But meanwhile the bridegroom came; those bridesmaids who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet; and the door was shut.

"Afterwards the other bridesmaids came and cried, "Sir, Sir, open the door to us.' "In solemn truth I tell you," he replied, 'I do not know you.' "Keep awake therefore; for you know neither the day nor the hour. (292)

The most detailed teaching about his return and the close of the age comes when Jesus foretells the destruction of the temple (which actually happened forty years later in A.D. 70).

Jesus had left the Temple and was going on His way, when His disciples came and called His attention to the Temple buildings. "You see all these?" He replied; "in solemn truth I tell you that there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be pulled down." (293)

The disciples assume that this unbelievable event would herald the close of the age, and ask Jesus to tell them more about it.

Afterwards He was on the Mount of Olives and was seated there when the disciples came to Him, apart from the others, and said, "Tell us when this will be; and what will be the sign of your Coming and of the Close of the Age?" (294)

Jesus first answers their question about his return.

"See to it," He replied, "that you are not misled; for many will come assuming my name and professing, 'I am He,' or saying, 'The time is close at hand.' Do not go and follow them. But when you hear of wars and turmoils, be not afraid; for these things must happen first, but the end does not come immediately." Then He said to them, "Nation will rise in arms against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be great earthquakes, and in places famines and pestilence; and there will be terrible sights and wonderful tokens from Heaven.

"But before all these things happen they will lay hands on you and persecute you. They will deliver you up to synagogues and to prison, and you will be brought before kings and governors for my sake. In the end all this will be evidence of your fidelity. "Make up your minds, however, not to prepare a defence beforehand, for I will give you utterance and wisdom which none of your opponents will be able to withstand or reply to. You will be betrayed even by parents, brothers, relatives, friends; and some of you they will put to death. You will be the objects of universal hatred because you are called by my name; and

yet not a hair of your heads shall perish. By your patient endurance you will purchase your lives. (295)

Then he predicts the destruction of the temple of Jerusalem.

"But when you see Jerusalem with armies encamping round her on every side, then be certain that her overthrow is close at hand. Then let those who shall be in Judaea escape to the hills; let those who are in the city leave it, and those who are in the country not enter in. For those are the days of vengeance and of fulfilling all that is written. "Alas for the women who at that time are with child or who have infants; for there will be great distress in the land, and anger towards this People. They will fall by the sword, or be carried off into slavery among all the Gentiles. And Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles, till the appointed times of the Gentiles have expired. (296)

These words were remembered forty years later by the Christians in Jerusalem, who fled in time to avoid the wholesale massacre that engulfed the inhabitants of the city.

Jesus goes on to speak about his return, warning them not to be misled about it, for when he does return there will be no mistaking it.

"There will be signs in sun, moon, and stars; and on earth anguish among the nations in their bewilderment at the roaring of the sea and its billows; while men's hearts are fainting for fear, and for anxious expectation of what is coming on the world. For the forces which control the heavens will be disordered and disturbed. And then will they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with great power and glory. But when all this is beginning to take place, grieve no longer. Lift up your heads, because your deliverance is drawing near."

And He spoke a parable to them. "See," He said, "the fig-tree and all

the trees. As soon as they have shot out their leaves, you know at a glance that summer is now near.

So also, when you see these things happening, you may be sure that the Kingdom of God is near. I tell you in solemn truth that the present generation will certainly not pass away without all these things having first taken place. Earth and sky will pass away, but it is certain that my words will not pass away.

"But take heed to yourselves, lest your souls be weighed down with self-indulgence and drunkenness or the anxieties of this life, and that day come upon you, suddenly, like a falling trap; for it will come on all dwellers on the face of the whole earth. But beware of slumbering; and every moment pray that you may be fully strengthened to escape from all these coming evils, and to take your stand in the presence of the Son of Man." (297)

Before he left them physically, Jesus gave his disciples, and all who followed them, their commission to carry out until his return.

As for the eleven disciples, they proceeded into Galilee, to the hill where Jesus had arranged to meet them. There they saw Him and prostrated themselves before Him. Yet some doubted. Jesus however came near and said to them, "All power in Heaven and over the earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations; baptize them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; and teach them to obey every command which I have given you. And remember, I am with you always, day by day, until the Close of the Age." (298)

But before they begin upon this task they are told to wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit upon them.

And remember that I am about to send out my Father's promised gift to rest upon you. But, as for you, wait patiently in the city until you are

clothed with power from on high." (299)

Jesus had already told them about the Holy Spirit. At the Last Supper he emphasized that though he was soon to be parted from them in body he would be present with them in spirit, and through the Spirit would guide and direct them.

In most solemn truth I tell you that he who trusts in me—the things which I do he shall do also; and greater things than these he shall do, because I am going to the Father. And whatever any of you ask in my name, I will do, in order that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you make any request of me in my name, I will do it.

"If you love me, you will obey my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate to be for ever with you—the Spirit of truth. That Spirit the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him. You know Him, because He remains by your side and is in you.

I will not leave you bereaved: I am coming to you. Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me: because I live, you also shall live. At that time you will know that I am in my Father, and that you are in me, and that I am in you. He who has my commandments and obeys them—he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and will clearly reveal myself to him." Judas (not the Iscariot) asked, "Master, how is it that you will reveal yourself clearly to us and not to the world?"

"If any one loves me," replied Jesus, "he will obey my teaching; and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. He who has no love for me does not obey my teaching; and yet the teaching to which you are listening is not mine, but is the teaching of the Father who sent me.

"All this I have spoken to you while still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send at my request, will teach you everything, and will bring to your memories all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you: my own peace I give to you. It is not as the world gives its greetings that I give you peace. Let not your hearts be troubled or dismayed.

"You heard me say to you, 'I am going away, and yet I am coming to you.' If you loved me, you would have rejoiced because I am going to the Father; for the Father is greater than I am. I have now told you before it comes to pass, that when it has come to pass you may believe. In future I shall not talk much with you, for the Prince of this world is coming. And yet in me he has nothing; but it is in order that the world may know that I love the Father, and that it is in obedience to the command which the Father gave me that I thus act. Rise, let us be going." (300)

It is not you who chose me, but it is I who chose you and appointed you that you might go and be fruitful and that your fruit might remain; so that whatever petition you present to the Father in my name He may give you. "Thus I command you to love one another. If the world hates you, remember that it has first had me as the fixed object of its hatred. If you belonged to the world, the world would love its own property. But because you do not belong to the world, and I have chosen you out of the world—for that reason the world hates you. Bear in mind what I said to you, 'A servant is not superior to his master.' If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you: if they have obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. But they will inflict all this suffering upon you on account of your bearing my name—because they do not know Him who sent me.

"If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have had no sin; but as the case stands they are without excuse for their sin. He who hates me hates my Father also. If I had not done among them, as I have, such miracles as no one else ever did, they would have had no sin; but they have in fact seen and also hated both me and my Father.

But this has been so, in order that the saying may be fulfilled which stands written in their Law, 'They have hated me without any reason.'

"When the Advocate is come whom I will send to you from the Father's presence—the Spirit of Truth who comes forth from the Father's presence—He will be a witness concerning me. And you also are witnesses, because you have been with me from the first.

"These things I have spoken to you in order to clear stumbling-blocks out of your path. You will be excluded from the synagogues; nay more, the time is coming when any one who has murdered one of you will suppose he is offering service to God. And they will do these things because they have failed to recognize the Father and to discover who I am. But I have spoken these things to you in order that when the time for their accomplishment comes you may remember them, and may recollect that I told you. I did not, however, tell you all this at first, because I was still with you. But now I am returning to Him who sent me; and not one of you asks me where I am going. But grief has filled your hearts because I have said all this to you.

"Yet it is the truth that I am telling you—it is to your advantage that I go away. For unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. And He, when He comes, will convict the world in respect of sin, of righteousness, and of judgement; — of sin, because they do not believe in me; of righteousness, because I am going to the Father, and you will no longer see me; of judgement, because the Prince of this world is under sentence.

"I have much more to say to you, but you are unable at present to bear the burden of it. But when He has come—the Spirit of Truth—He will guide you into all the truth. For He will not speak as Himself originating what He says, but all that He hears He will speak, and He will make known the future to you. He will glorify me, because He will take of what is mine and will make it known to you. Everything that the Father has is mine; that is why I said that the Spirit of Truth takes of what is mine and will make it known to you. (301)

The disciples were puzzled by all this and crestfallen at the prospect of being parted from him. But Jesus encouraged them by saying that when it had all come to pass they would understand and rejoice.

"A little while and you see me no more, and again a little while and you shall see me."

Some of His disciples therefore said to one another, "What does this mean which He is telling us, 'A little while and you do not see me, and again a little while and you shall see me,' and 'Because I am going to the Father'?" So they asked one another repeatedly, "What can that 'little while' mean which He speaks of? We do not understand His words."

Jesus perceived that they wanted to ask Him, and He said, "Is this what you are questioning one another about—my saying, 'A little while and you do not see me, and again a little while and you shall see me'? In most solemn truth I tell you that you will weep aloud and lament, but the world will be glad. You will mourn, but your grief will be turned into gladness. A woman, when she is in labour, has sorrow, because her time has come. But when she has given birth to the babe, she no longer remembers the pain, because of her joy at a child being born into the world. So you also now have sorrow; but I shall see you again, and your hearts will be glad, and your gladness no one will take away from you. You will put no questions to me then. "In most solemn truth I tell you that whatever you ask the Father for in my name He will give you. As yet you have not asked for anything in my name: ask, and you shall receive, that your hearts may be filled with gladness.

"All this I have spoken to you in veiled language. The time is coming when I shall no longer speak to you in veiled language, but will tell you about the Father in plain words. At that time you will make your requests in my name; and I do not promise to ask the Father on your behalf, for the Father Himself holds you dear, because you have held

me dear and have believed that I came from the Father's presence. I came from the Father and have come into the world. Again I am leaving the world and am going to the Father."

"Ah, now you are using plain language," said His disciples, "and are uttering no figure of speech! Now we know that you have all knowledge, and do not need to be pressed with questions. Through this we believe that you came from God."

"Do you at last believe?" replied Jesus. "Remember that the time is coming, nay, has already come, for you all to be dispersed each to his own home and to leave me alone. And yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me. "I have spoken all this to you in order that in me you may have peace. In the world you have affliction. But keep up your courage: I have won the victory over the world." (302)

Then Jesus prayed for them and for those who would follow them in believing in him.

When Jesus had thus spoken, He raised his eyes towards Heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Thy Son that the Son may glorify Thee; even as Thou hast given Him authority over all mankind, so that on all whom Thou hast given Him He may bestow the Life of the Ages. And in this consists the Life of the Ages—in knowing Thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent. I have glorified Thee on earth, having done perfectly the work which by Thine appointment has been mine to do. And now, Father, do Thou glorify me in Thine own presence, with the glory that I had in Thy presence before the world existed.

"I have revealed Thy perfections to the men whom Thou gavest me out of the world. Thine they were, and Thou gavest them to me, and they have obeyed Thy message. Now they know that whatever Thou hast given me is from Thee. For the truths which Thou didst teach me I have taught them. And they have received them, and have known for

certain that I came out from Thy presence, and have believed that Thou didst send me.

"I am making request for them: for the world I do not make any request, but for those whom Thou hast given me. Because they are Thine, and everything that is mine is Thine, and everything that is Thine is mine; and I am crowned with glory in them. I am now no longer in the world, but they are in the world and I am coming to Thee. "Holy Father, keep them true to Thy name—the name which Thou hast given me to bear—that they may be one, even as we are. While I was with them, I kept them true to Thy name—the name Thou hast given me to bear—and I kept watch over them, and not one of them is lost but only he who is doomed to destruction—that the Scripture may be fulfilled.

"But now I am coming to Thee, and I speak these words while I am in the world, in order that they may have my gladness within them filling their hearts. I have given them Thy Message, and the world has hated them, because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. I do not ask that Thou wilt remove them out of the world, but that Thou wilt protect them from the Evil one. They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. Make them holy in the truth: Thy Message is truth. Just as Thou didst send me into the world, I also have sent them; and on their behalf I consecrate myself, in order that they may become perfectly consecrated in truth.

"Nor is it for them alone that I make request. It is also for those who trust in me through their teaching; that they may all be one, even as Thou art in me, O Father, and I am in Thee; that they also may be in us; that the world may believe that Thou didst send me. And the glory which Thou hast given me I have given them, that they may be one, just as we are one: I in them and Thou in me; that they may stand perfected in one; that the world may come to understand that Thou didst send me and hast loved them with the same love as that with which Thou hast loved me.

"Father, those whom Thou hast given me—I desire that where I am they also may be with me, that they may see the glory—my glory—my gift from Thee, which Thou hast given me because Thou didst love me before the creation of the world. And, righteous Father, though the world has failed to recognize Thee, I have known Thee, and these have perceived that Thou didst send me. And I have made known Thy name to them and will make it known, that the love with which Thou hast loved me may be in them, and that I may be in them." (303)

After the resurrection Jesus appeared to the disciples often enough for them to realize that he had indeed risen to a new and wonderful life. But the time must come when he departs from them physically, and he met them for one final appearance at Bethany. Here he made it clear to them by the manner of his departure that they could never expect to see him again. Luke records this event as the opening of his second book, the sequel to the gospel he wrote.

My former narrative, Theophilus, dealt with all that Jesus did and taught as a beginning, down to the day on which, after giving instruction through the Holy Spirit to the Apostles whom He had chosen, He was taken up to Heaven. He had also, after He suffered, shown Himself alive to them with many sure proofs, appearing to them at intervals during forty days, and speaking of the Kingdom of God. And while in their company He charged them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for the Father's promised gift. "This you have heard of," He said, "from me. For John indeed baptized with water, but before many days have passed you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

Once when they were with Him, they asked Him, "Master, is this the time at which you are about to restore the kingdom of Israel?" "It is not for you," He replied, "to know times or epochs which the Father has reserved within His own authority; and yet you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judaea and Samaria and to the

remotest parts of the earth." When He had said this, and while they were looking at Him, He was carried up, and a cloud closing beneath Him hid Him from their sight. But, while they stood intently gazing into the sky as He went, suddenly there were two men in white garments standing by them, who said, "Galilaeans, why stand looking into the sky? This same Jesus who has been taken up from you into Heaven will come in just the same way as you have seen Him going into Heaven."

Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mountain called the Oliveyard, which is near Jerusalem, about a mile off. (Acts 1:1-12)

Was this actually the final appearance? Paul believed that it was the risen Jesus who appeared to him as he journeyed to Damascus, and in the in last book of the New Testament, John records a vision of the risen Jesus. Among the many things that Jesus said to John in this vision, we find these words of Jesus that remind us that Jesus has never stopped appealing to people to 'let him in.'

I am now standing at the door and am knocking. If any one listens to My voice and opens the door, I will go in to be with him and will feast with him, and he shall feast with Me. (Revelation 3:20)

Postscript

There were also a great number of other signs which Jesus performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these have been recorded in order that you may believe that He is the Christ, the Son of God, and that, through believing, you may have Life through His name. (304)

Appendix

Each section is listed numerically and the passage from the gospels which is quoted is given first; any parallel passages are mentioned in brackets after it. If it is part of a passage which appears elsewhere in full, this is stated and the complete section should be referred to for parallels.

1. Mk. 1. 14-15 (Mt. 4. 12-17; Lk. 4. 14-15)
2. Mk. 10. 15 (part of 276)
3. Lk. 12. 32 (part of 116)
4. Mt. 5. 20 (part of 200)
5. Mt. 7. 21 (part of 221)
6. Lk. 1. 5-25
7. Mt. 11. 13-14 (part of 21)
8. Mt. 17. 10-13 (Mk. 9. 11-13)
9. Jn. 1. 19-28
10. Lk. 1. 57-66
11. Lk. 1. 67-80
12. Mt. 3. 1-12 (Mk. 1. 1-8)
13. Lk. 3. 1-17 (Mk. 1. 1-8)
14. Mt. 14. 5 (part of 17)
15. Mk. 11. 32 (part of 131)
16. Lk. 3. 18-20
17. Mt. 14. 1-12 (Mk. 6. 14-29; Lk. 9. 7-9)
18. Mt. 3. 13-17 (Mk. 1. 9-11; Lk. 3. 21-22)
19. Jn. 1. 29-34
20. Jn. 5. 35

21. Mt. 11. 7-19 (Lk. 7. 24-35, 16. 16)
22. Mk. 2. 15-17 (Mt. 9. 10-13; Lk. 5. 29-32)
23. Jn. 1. 35-39
24. Jn. 1. 40-42
25. Jn. 1. 43-51
26. Mt. 10. 2-4 (Mk. 3. 16-19; Lk. 6. 12-16, 8. 1-3)
27. Mk. 1. 16-20 (Mt. 4. 18-22)
28. Lk. 5. 1-11
29. Mt. 9. 9 (Mk. 2. 13-14; Lk. 5. 27-28)
30. Jn. 14. 9 (part of 230)
31. Mk. 4. 13 (part of 83)
32. Mt. 8. 23-27 (Mk. 4. 35-41; Lk. 8. 22-25)
33. Mt. 17. 14-21 (Mk. 9. 14-29; Lk. 9. 37-43)
34. Lk. 24. 44-49 (part of 196)
35. Jn. 14. 26 (part of 300)
36. Jn. 16. 13 (part of 301)
37. Lk. 9. 44-45 (Mt. 17. 22-23; Mk. 9. 30-32)
38. Jn. 15. 27 (part of 301)
39. Lk. 22. 28-30
40. Mk. 1. 21-22 (Lk. 4. 31-32)
41. Mk. 1. 23-27 (Lk. 4. 33-36)
42. Mk. 1. 34 (Mt. 8. 16-17; Lk. 4. 40-41)
43. Mk. 1. 29-33 (Mt. 8. 14-15; Lk. 4. 38-39)
44. Mk. 1. 40-45 (Mt. 8. 1-4; Lk. 5. 12-16)
45. Mk. 1. 28 (Mt. 4. 23-25; Lk. 4. 37)
46. Mk. 1. 35-39 (Lk. 4. 42-44)
47. Mt. 4. 1-11 (Mk. 1. 12-13; Lk. 4. 1-13)
48. Jn. 2. 23-25
49. Mk. 2. 1-12 (Mt. 9. 1-8; Lk. 5. 17-26)
50. Mk. 3. 7-12 (Mt. 12. 15-21; Lk. 6. 17-19)
51. Mk. 6. 53-56 (Mt. 14. 34-36)
52. Mk. 7. 31-37 (Mt. 15. 29-31)

53. Mk. 8. 22-26
54. Jn. 8. 12
55. Mt. 12. 22-29 (part of 71)
56. Mt. 11. 1-6 (Lk. 7. 18-23)
57. Mk. 5. 1-20 (Mt. 8. 28-34; Lk. 8. 26-39)
58. Mt. 15. 21-28 (Mk. 7. 24-30)
59. Mk. 5. 21-43 (Mt. 9. 18-26; Lk. 8. 40-56)
60. Lk. 7. 11-17
61. Jn. 11. 1-44
62. Mk. 4. 35-41 (Mt. 8. 23-27; Lk. 8. 22-25)
63. Mk. 6. 30-44 (Mt. 9. 35-36, 14. 13-21; Lk. 9. 10-17; Jn. 6. 1-14)
64. Mt. 14. 22-33 (Mk. 6. 45-52; Jn. 6. 15-21)
65. Mk. 8. 1-10 (Mt. 15. 32-39)
66. Mk. 11. 12-14, 20-26 (Mt. 21. 18-22; Lk. 17. 5-6)
67. Mk. 2. 18-22 (Mt. 9. 14-17; Lk. 5. 33-38)
68. Mk. 2. 23-28 (Mt. 12. 1-8; Lk. 6. 1-5)
69. Mk. 3. 1-5 (Mt. 12. 9-13; Lk. 6. 6-10)
70. Mt. 3. 6 (Mt. 12. 14; Lk. 6. 11)
71. Mt. 12. 22-37 (Mk. 3. 20-30; Lk. 11. 14-23, 12. 10)
72. Mt. 15. 1-20 (Mk. 7. 1-23)
73. Mt. 16. 1-12 (Mk. 8. 11-21)
74. Lk. 13. 10-17
75. Lk. 14. 1-6
76. Mk. 10. 1-12 (Mt. 19. 1-12)
77. Lk. 18. 9-14
78. Mt. 23. 1-36 (Mk. 12. 38-40; Lk. 11. 37-54, 14. 7-11, 16. 14-15, 20-45-47)
79. Mt. 26. 3-4 (part of 133)
80. Mt. 11. 2-3 (part of 56)
81. Lk. 4. 16-30 (Mt. 13. 53-58; Mk. 6. 1-6)
82. Mt. 13. 1-9 (Mk. 4. 1-9; Lk. 8. 4-8)
83. Mt. 13. 18-23 (Mk. 4. 13-20; Lk. 8. 11-15)

84. Mt. 13. 24-30
85. Mt. 13. 36-43
86. Mt. 13. 31-33 (Mk. 4. 30-32; Lk. 13. 18-21)
87. Mt. 13. 44-46
88. Mk. 4. 26-29
89. Mt. 13. 47-50
90. Lk. 17. 20-21
91. Mt. 10. 1 (Mk. 3. 13-15, 6. 7; Lk. 9. 1)
92. Mt. 10. 5-8 (Lk. 9. 2)
93. Mt. 10. 9-10 (Mk. 6. 8-9; Lk. 9. 3)
94. Mt. 10. 11-15 (Mk. 6. 10-13; Lk. 9. 4-6)
95. Mt. 10. 16-42 (Lk. 12. 4-7, 11-12)
96. Mt. 16. 13-20 (Mk. 8. 27-30; Lk. 9. 18-21)
97. Mt. 16. 21 (Mk. 8. 31; Lk. 9. 22)
98. Mk. 10. 45
99. Mt. 16. 22-23 (Mk. 8. 32-33) 2
100. Mt. 16. 24-28 (Mk. 8. 34-9. 1; Lk. 9. 23-27)
101. Mk. 9. 2-8 (Mt. 17. 1-8; Lk. 9. 28-36)
102. Mk. 9. 9-10 (Mt. 17. 9)
103. Mk. 9. 30-32 (Mt. 17. 22-27; Lk. 9. 44-45)
104. Mk. 10. 32-34 (Mt. 20. 17-19; Lk. 18. 31-34)
105. Lk. 9. 51-56
106. Lk. 9. 46-48 (Mt. 18. 1-4; Mk. 9. 33-37)
107. Lk. 9. 49-50 (Mk. 9. 38-41)
108. Lk. 9. 57-58 (Mt. 8. 18-20)
109. Lk. 9. 59-60 (Mt. 8. 21-22)
110. Lk. 9. 61-62
111. Lk. 10. 1-20 (Mt. 9. 37-38, 11. 20-24)
112. Lk. 10. 25-37
113. Lk. 10. 38-42
114. Lk. 12. 1-3
115. Lk. 12. 4-12 (part of 95)

116. Lk. 12. 13-34
117. Lk. 12. 35-48 (Mt. 24. 42-51)
118. Lk. 12. 49-53 (Mt. 10. 34-36)
119. Lk. 13. 1-5
120. Lk. 13. 6-9
121. Lk. 13. 22-30
122. Lk. 13. 31-35 (Mt. 23. 37-39)
123. Lk. 14. 15-24 (Mt. 22. 1-14)
124. Lk. 14. 25-35 (Mt. 10. 37-39)
125. Lk. 17. 7-10
126. Lk. 18. 18-30 (Mt. 19. 16-30; Mk. 10. 17-31)
127. Mt. 21. 1-11 (Mk. 11. 1-11; Lk. 19. 28-36)
128. Lk. 19. 41-44
129. Lk. 19. 37-40 (Mt. 21. 14-17)
130. Mk. 11. 15-19 (Mt. 21. 12-13; Lk. 19. 45-48)
131. Mt. 21. 23-46 (Mk. 11. 27-12. 12; Lk. 20. 1-19)
132. Mt. 22. 15-46 (Mk. 12. 13-37; Lk. 20. 20-44)
133. Mt. 26. 3-5 (Mk. 14. 1-2; Lk. 22. 1-2)
134. Mt. 26. 14-16 (Mk. 14. 10-11; Lk. 22. 3-6)
135. Mt. 26. 1-2
136. Mt. 26. 6-13 (Mk. 14. 3-9; Lk. 7. 36-50)
137. Mk. 14. 12-16 (Mt. 26. 17-19; Lk. 22. 7-13)
138. Mt. 26. 20-25 (Mk. 14. 17-21; Lk. 22. 14-23; }%. 13. 21-22)
139. Jn. 13. 23-30
140. Mt. 26. 26-29 (Mk. 14. 22-25; Lk. 22. 17-19)
141. Lk. 22. 24-27
142. Jn. 13. 1-20
143. Lk. 22. 31-34 (Mt. 26. 30-34; Mk. 14. 26-30)
144. Mk. 14. 31 (Mt. 26. 35)
145. Lk. 22. 35-38
146. Mt. 26. 36-46 (Mk. 14. 32-42; Lk. 22. 39-46)
147. Lk. 22. 43-44

148. Mt. 26. 47-50 (Mk. 14. 43-46; Lk. 22. 47-48 ; Jn. 18. 1-9)
149. Mt. 26. 51-56 (Mk. 14. 47-52; Lk. 22. 49-53 ; Jn. 18. 10-11)
150. Jn. 18. 12-14
151. Jn. 18. 19-24
152. Mk. 14. 53-54 (Mt. 26. 57-58)
153. Mk. 14. 55-59 (Mt. 26. 59-61; Lk. 22. 66)
154. Mk. 14. 60-61 (Mt. 26. 62-63; Lk. 22. 67)
155. Mk. 14. 62-64 (Mt. 26. 64-66; Lk. 22. 68-71)
156. Mk. 14. 65 (Mt. 26. 67-68; Lk. 22. 63-65)
157. Mk. 14. 66-72 (Mt. 26. 69-75; Lk. 22. 54-62 ; Jn. 18. 15-18, 25-27)
158. Mt. 27. 3-10
159. Lk. 23. 1-2 (Mt. 27. 1-2; Mk. 15. 1; Jn. 18. 28-32)
160. Lk. 23. 3-4 (Mt. 27. 11-14; Mk. 15. 2-5)
161. Lk. 23. 5-12
162. Jn. 18. 33-38
163. Mt. 27. 15-18 (Mk. 15. 6-10; Lk. 23. 13-16; Jn. 18. 39)
164. Mt. 27. 19-23 (Mk. 15. 11-14; Lk. 23. 18-23; Jn. 18. 40)
165. Jn. 19. 1-5 (Mt. 27. 26)
166. Jn. 19. 6-7
167. Jn. 19. 8-16 (Mk. 15. 15; Lk. 23. 24-25)
168. Mt. 27. 24-25
169. Mt. 27. 27-30 (Mk. 15. 16-20; Jn. 19. 17-18)
170. Lk. 23. 26-32 (Mt. 27. 31-33; Mk. 15. 21-22)
171. Mt. 27. 34 (Mk. 15. 23)
172. Jn. 19. 23-24 (Mt. 27. 35-36; Mk. 15. 24; Lk. 23. 33-34)
173. Lk. 23. 34
174. Jn. 19. 19-22 (Mt. 27. 37; Mk. 15. 25-26; Lk. 23. 38)
175. Mt. 27. 39-44 (Mk. 15. 29-32; Lk. 23. 35)
176. Lk. 23. 36-37
177. Lk. 23. 39-43 (Mt. 27. 38; Mk. 15. 27-28)
178. Jn. 19. 25-27 (Mt. 27. 55-56)

- 179. Mk. 15. 33 (Mt. 27. 45; Lk. 23. 44)
- 180. Mk. 15. 34 (Mt. 27. 46)
- 181. Mt. 27. 47-49 (Mk. 15. 35-36)
- 182. Jn. 19. 28-29
- 183. Jn. 19. 30
- 184. Lk. 23. 46 (Mt. 27. 50; Mk. 15. 37)
- 185. Mt. 27. 51-54 (Mk. 15. 38-39; Lk. 23. 45, 47-49)
- 186. Jn. 19. 31-37 (Mt. 27. 57-59; Mk. 15. 42—45; Lk. 23. 50-53)
- 187. Jn. 19. 38-42 (Mk. 15. 46-47; Lk. 23. 54-56)
- 188. Mt. 27. 60-61 (Mk. 15. 40-41)
- 189. Mt. 27. 62-66
- 190. Mk. 16. 1-3 (Mt. 28. 1; Lk. 24. 1; }n. 20. 1-2)
- 191. Mt. 28. 2-8 (Mk. 16. 4-8; Lk. 24. 2-11)
- 192. Jn. 20. 3-10 (Lk. 24. 12)
- 193. Jn. 20. 11-18 (Mt. 28. 9-10; Mk. 16. 9-11)
- 194. Mt. 28. 11-15
- 195. Lk. 24. 13-35 (Mk. 16. 12-13)
- 196. Lk. 24. 36-49 (Mk. 16. 14—20; j'tz. 20. 19-23)
- 197. Jn. 20. 24-29
- 198. Jn. 21. 1-23
- 199. Mt. 5. 1-2
- 200. Mt. 5. 17-20 (Lk. 16. 17)
- 201. Mt. 5. 21-26 (Lk. 12. 57-59)
- 202. Mt. 5. 27-32 (Lk. 16. 18)
- 203. Mt. 5. 33-37
- 204. Mt. 5. 38-42 (Lk. 6. 29-30)
- 205. Mt. 5. 43-48 (Lk. 6. 27-28, 32-36)
- 206. Mt. 5. 3-12 (Lk. 6. 20-23)
- 207. Lk. 6. 24-26
- 208. Mt. 5. 13-16 (Mk. 9. 49-50; Lk. 14. 34-35)
- 209. Mt. 6. 1-4
- 210. Mt. 6. 16-18

- 211. Mt. 6. 5-6
- 212. Mt. 6. 7-15 (Lk. 11. 1-4)
- 213. Mt. 6. 19-24 (Lk. 11. 33-36, 16. 13)
- 214. Mt. 6. 25-34
- 215. Mt. 7. 1-5 (Lk. 6. 37-42)
- 216. Mt. 7. 6
- 217. Mt. 7. 7-11 (Lk. 11. 9-13)
- 218. Mt. 7. 12 (Lk. 6. 31)
- 219. Mt. 7. 13-14 (Lk. 13. 22-25)
- 220. Mt. 7. 15-20 (Lk. 6. 43-45)
- 221. Mt. 7. 21-23 (Lk. 13. 26-30)
- 222. Mt. 7. 24-27 (Lk. 6. 46-49)
- 223. Mt. 7. 28-29
- 224. Jn. 18. 36 (part of 162)
- 225. Mk. 10. 45
- 226. Jn. 4. 1-42
- 227. Lk. 10. 21-22 (Mt. 11. 25-27)
- 228. Jn. 5. 1-18
- 229. Jn. 8. 52-59
- 230. Jn. 14. 1-11
- 231. Jn. 1. 1-18
- 232. Mt. 1. 1-17
- 233. Lk. 3. 23-38
- 234. Lk. 1. 26-56
- 235. Mt. 1. 18-25
- 236. Lk. 2. 1-40
- 237. Mt. 2. 1-23
- 238. Lk. 2. 41-52
- 239. Jn. 2. 1-11
- 240. Mt. 12. 38-42 (Lk. 11. 29-32)
- 241. Mt. 16. 1-4
- 242. Lk. 12. 54-56

- 243. Mt. 13- 34-35 (Mk. 4. 33-34)
- 244. Mt. 13. 10 (Mk. 4. 10)
- 245. Mk. 4. 21-25 (Lk. 8. 16-18)
- 246. Mt. 13. 11-17 (Mk. 4. 11-12; Lk. 8. 9-10, 10. 23-24)
- 247. Mt. 13. 51-52
- 248. Lk. 15. 1-32 (Mt. 18. 12-14)
- 249. Jn. 3. 13-17
- 250. Jn. 12. 20-36
- 251. Jn. 3. 18-21
- 252. Lk. 14. 15-24 (Mt. 22. 1-14)
- 253. Lk. 16. 19-31
- 254. Lk. 17. 22-37
- 255. Mt. 20. 1-16 1
- 256. Jn. 14. 6
- 257. Mt. 11. 28-30
- 258. Jn. 6. 22-69
- 259. Jn. 10. 1-18
- 260. Jn. 11. 25-26 (part of 61)
- 261. Jn. 1. 11-12 (part of 231)
- 262. Jn. 3. 1-8
- 263. Jn. 3. 9-12
- 264. Jn. 15. 1-11
- 265. Mt. 13. 58 (part of 81)
- 266. Mt. 8. 5-13 (Lk. 7. 1-10)
- 267. Mt. 9. 27-31
- 268. Mk. 10. 46-52 (Mt. 20. 29-34; Lk. 18. 35-43)
- 269. Lk. 11. 5-8
- 270. Lk. 18. 1-8
- 271. Jn. 13. 31-35
- 272. Jn. 15. 12-17
- 273. Mt. 7. 12 (Lk. 6. 31)
- 274. Mt. 25. 31-46

- 275. Lk. 14. 12-14
- 276. Mt. 19. 13-15 (Mk. 10. 13-16; Lk. 18. 15-17)
- 277. Mt. 18. 5-10 (Mk. 9. 42-48; Lk. 17. 1-2)
- 278. Lk. 14. 7-11
- 279. Mt. 20. 20-28 (Mk. 10. 35-44)
- 280. Jn. 13. 3-17 (part of 142)
- 281. Lk. 19. 1-10
- 282. Lk. 11. 27-28
- 283. Mt. 12. 46-50 (Mk. 3. 31-35; Lk. 8. 19-21)
- 284. Mt. 12. 43-45 (Lk. 11. 24-26)
- 285. Mt. 18. 15-35 (Lk. 17. 3-4)
- 286. Lk. 7. 36-50
- 287. Lk. 17. 11-19
- 288. Mk. 12. 41-44 (Lk. 21. 1-4) .
- 289. Mt. 25. 14-30
- 290. Lk. 19. 11-27
- 291. Lk. 16. 1-12
- 292. Mt. 25. 1-13
- 293. Mt. 24. 1-2 (Mk. 13. 1-2; Lk. 21. 5-6)
- 294. Mt. 24. 3 (Mk. 13. 3-4; Lk. 21. 7)
- 295. Lk. 21. 8-19 (Mt. 24. 4-14; Mk. 13. 5-13)
- 296. Lk. 21. 20-24 (Mt. 24. 15-20; Mk. 13. 14-18)
- 297. Lk. 21. 25-36 (Mt. 24. 21-41; Mk. 13. 19-37)
- 298. Mt. 28. 16-20
- 299. Lk. 24. 49 (part of 196)
- 300. Jn. 14. 12-31
- 301. Jn. 15. 18-16. 15
- 302. Jn. 16. 16-33
- 303. Jn. 17. 1-26
- 304. Jn. 20. 30-31