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THINKING THROUGH THE BIBLE

BY

REV. JOHN McNICOL, D.D.

Volume III
THE NEW TESTAMENT
MATTHEW TO ACTS

Revised

This volume is the first of two on the New Testament. Here the lines of the Old Testament revelation, which were traced through Volumes I and II, are seen to converge in the Gospels upon the Central Figure of the whole Bible, and then to spread out in the Acts into world-wide Christianity.

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BY

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VOLUME III

THE NEW TESTAMENT

MATTHEW TO ACTS

SECOND EDITION

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To My Wife
LOUISA BURPE MCNICOL
"The College Mother"

PREFACE

THE purpose of this work was stated in the Preface to the first volume. It will be well to explain that purpose again. It is implied in the title given to the whole series: "Thinking Through the Bible". By the term "the Bible" is meant the Book through which God speaks, not the "documents" or the "sources" from which the writers may have drawn their material. The spiritual world in the Bible, the world from which God speaks, is not discovered by a critical search for the sources behind the Scriptures, but by patient and reverent meditation upon the contents of the Bible itself.

The Old and New Testament Scriptures, in the form in which they have come down through the ages and have made their impact upon the world, have always been recognized by the Church of Christ as the Word of the living God. The most significant thing about the Bible lies in this fact, and the most important thing in the study of the Bible is the search for the mind of God in that Word. Even if the original sources behind the Scriptures could be discovered, the mind of God would not be found in them.

There is a legitimate critical approach to the Bible which prepares the way for this study. Its work is to lead the student through the outer courts of the temple and introduce him to the inner sanc-

tuary where real Bible study begins. What is known as the "modern" critical approach seeks to do something quite different. It comes with a philosophic theory and a linguistic hypothesis, and attempts to reconstruct the temple upon what it assumes to be its original lines. In doing this it pays the Bible a unique and significant tribute. No other ancient book, no other religious canon, has ever received the same kind of attention from critical scholarship.

But after nearly a century of learned labour, this attempt to reconstruct the Scriptures has proved inconclusive and unconvincing. The scholars themselves do not agree. The Christian Church as a whole, with a sound instinct, declines to use the Bible on the new lines. The Word of God still lies on the pulpits of Christendom in its old form. It still goes marching abroad throughout the world on its own feet. Subjective criticism fails to explain the mind of God. The "problems" with which it deals only touch the fringe of the objective revelation which the Scriptures contain. The thing that lives in the Bible eludes scientific search. Other methods of approach and other attitudes of mind are required to find it.

One result, however, has been left—a tendency to drop the historical perspective out of the Bible and to regard it merely as a source-book for Christian doctrines. This introduces an element of weakness into the whole Christian system. Christianity begins with the New Testament; but when the historical perspective is lost and the New Testament is divorced from the Old, then Christianity is deprived of the momentum that gave it purpose and direction.

True Christianity is essentially the religion of redemption; and it is the story of the beginnings of the human race as described in the Old Testament that provides the necessary ground and reason for its message of redemption. Most of the ideas connected with the redemption explained in the New Testament get their real significance from the Old Testament system of worship and from the preaching of the Old Testament prophets. Without this background the Christian faith is left hanging in the air.

That God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, is the message of the New Testament. That He was in history beforehand preparing the way for Christ, is the meaning of the Old Testament. This has been the belief of the historic Church from the beginning. In this light the essential unity of the Bible stands out, the supernatural element in the Scriptures is explained, and the difficulties raised by subjective criticism fade away. The temple of God's Word is seen to rise up as the work of the Holy Spirit through the ages, guiding the writers to begin with, and afterwards presiding over the Church as she gathered the Scriptures together into her sacred Canon.

This is the belief held by the author, and this is his method of approach. The longer he has used this approach in teaching the Bible, and the more widely he has observed its results, the more profoundly he believes in its truth. In the present volume, which deals with the Gospels and the Acts, he continues this method of "thinking through the Bible" by carrying the lines of the Old Testament revelation into the New Testament. He finds them converging, in

the Gospels, upon the central Figure of the whole Book, the Redeemer of mankind. And then he sees them beginning to spread out, in the Acts, into world-wide Christianity.

March, 1948.

J. McN.

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INTRODUCTORY

I

THE AGE BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

THE New Testament is separated from the Old Testament by a great historic gap. Four hundred years lie between Malachi and Matthew. During that long period many changes took place among the Jews in Palestine, and the whole background of Biblical history was altered. When we enter the New Testament we are in an altogether different world.

For two centuries after the return from Babylon in 537 B.C. the Jews were under the dominion of Persia. The story of that return and of the establishment of the little Hebrew colony in Jerusalem, is told in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. The Temple was rebuilt and dedicated, and the Covenant of the Law was restored. Then Old Testament history comes to an end, but a hundred years of Persian supremacy still remained.

It was then that the power of the high priests began to rise, for the Persians left the ruling authority in Judah and Jerusalem for the most part in their hands. Under them the Sanhedrin came into existence as the Jewish national council, and over it the high priest of the time presided. The synagogue, which probably originated in the Exile, now became an important religious institution. Its main purpose was to provide for the reading of the Law

in every Jewish community and for giving instruction in the Law to all classes of the people. The new zeal for the Law and the increased attention devoted to it, gave a new importance to the Scribes as the teachers of the Law; and they rose to a place of prominence in the nation above that of the priests. As their power grew and as more authority was given to them, they loaded the Law with tradition, and thus legalism entered into the religion which Moses had established in Israel.

After the fall of Persia in 331 B.C. the Jews were under Greek rulers for more than a century and a half. For a considerable part of that period they were exposed to the devastating effects of war, as the rival kingdoms of Egypt and Syria contended for the possession of Palestine. It is these two powers that are meant by "the king of the south" and "the king of the north" in the prophecy of Dan. 11, which describes the age of trouble through which the Jews were to pass before the Messiah should come.

When the war ended with the supremacy of Syria, the Jews were subjected to the cruel and malicious persecution of King Antiochus Epiphanes, who sought to blot out the Hebrew religion. During his time many Jews apostatized, some under the pressure of the persecution, but more under the subtle and alluring influence of the cultured Greek paganism that was spreading over Palestine. Then came the revolt of the Maccabees and their heroic exploits, which resulted in 165 B.C. in the triumphant deliverance of Jerusalem and the cleansing and rededication of the Temple.

For a hundred years after that event, the Jews enjoyed comparative independence under a line of

rulers sprung from the Maccabean family, who held the office of the high priest. This was the flourishing period of Jewish history in the age between the Testaments. The territory occupied by them was extended northward till it comprised the three political divisions of the land existing in the time of Christ—Judea, Samaria, and Galilee.

The two chief Jewish sects of the New Testament age, the Pharisees and the Sadducees, who appear in the Gospel story as the most bitter foes of our Lord, arose during this period. The Pharisees were the party of the Scribes. The two names are often linked together in the Gospel narratives. Their aim was the complete and exact fulfilment of the Law as interpreted and built up by the Scribes. They did not represent any special religious tendency, but simply stood for a strict and mechanical legalism, for the letter of the Law without any thought of its spirit.

While the Pharisees were the popular party, the Sadducees were the party of the aristocracy. They were not numerous, but they were influential. They usually held the highest offices, and especially that of the high priest. Their spirit was not religious but distinctly secular, and their interests were political. They were materialists, men of this present world alone; and they gave themselves to the enjoyment of the general culture of the age without any belief in an after-life.

Jewish independence came to an end with the Roman conquest of Palestine in 63 B.C. This took place in a time of internal intrigue and revolution, which continued for some years afterwards. Out of the strife and confusion of the period the Edomite Herod, wrongly called the Great, finally succeeded

in gaining the throne with the favour and help of Rome. During his long reign, which continued from 37 to 4 B.C., he sought to please the Romans and also to win the favour of the Jews. He adorned the land with magnificent buildings and new cities built on the Roman model. His crowning achievement in behalf of the Jews was the rebuilding and beautifying of the Temple. This work was begun in the year 20 B.C. and was still going on during the Lord's public ministry (John 2:20). With all this, Herod was a jealous and cruel tyrant, and the slaughter of the babes of Bethlehem was but one of his characteristic crimes.

At his death his kingdom was divided among three of his sons. After a reign of nine years, Archelaus (Matt. 2:22) was deposed for misgovernment, and a Roman governor was appointed over Idumea, Judea, and Samaria. Herod Antipas ruled over Galilee and the district beyond Jordan called Perea, and Philip over the district to the north and east of the Sea of Galilee. It was thus the land was governed during the public ministry of Jesus (Luke 3:1).

Although the Messianic transactions which brought the Old Testament stage of Divine revelation to its fulfilment were accomplished among the Jews in Palestine, it was the Jews of the Dispersion who laid the ground for the universal character of the New Testament age and for the entrance of the Gospel into the Gentile world. The centre of gravity in that world had moved, during the age between the Testaments, from Babylon in the east to Rome in the west. The Persian Empire had given way to the Grecian, and the Grecian in turn to the Roman. The background of the New Testament is the Roman

Empire and the Mediterranean world. Throughout the whole of that world outside Palestine, the Jews of the Dispersion were scattered. They were more numerous and more prosperous than the Jews of the home-land. They were to be found in every city of any size, and even the smallest Jewish community had its own synagogue for the reading of the Law and the Prophets.

The Greek language, which had become universal and was now the common medium of intercourse among the nations, was spoken by the Jews in the Gentile world. They used the Greek version of the Old Testament in their synagogues. This translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, commonly known as the Septuagint, had been made at Alexandria during the third and second centuries B.C. Although intended specially for the Jews of the Dispersion, it was used largely by the Jews in Palestine as well. The writers of the New Testament quote from it more frequently than from the original Hebrew. The widespread use of this version of the Old Testament providentially helped to prepare the way for the New Testament Scriptures, which were given to the world in Greek.

II

THE MAKING OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

THE books which make up the New Testament were written during the last half of the first century. The need for a collection of apostolic writings was not felt during the earliest years of the Church. The Scriptures of the Old Testament were in the hands of the Christians, and these, together with the oral teaching of the Apostles, supplied their spiritual wants.

As the Gospel spread into distant regions and Christian communities multiplied, the need for written records soon became evident. The churches could not all have a personal visit from one of the Apostles of the Lord. The Apostles themselves were passing away. It was then that there began to be circulated among the churches, and added to the sacred books of the Old Covenant, the writings of the Apostles of the New Covenant.

The first desire would naturally be to have an authentic record of the Gospel story. Numerous narratives of the ministry of Christ were drawn up (Luke 1:1-4). But only those that had been written by the hand, or under the sanction, of members of the apostolic band were accepted by the Church as authoritative. No other Gospel records have come down to us from the age of the Apostles. We have no information about Jesus Christ from any source

besides that which has been preserved in our four canonical Gospels. It would also be felt that there should be a record of the fulfilment of the Lord's last commission to the Apostles. Hence an authentic account has been preserved of the origin and growth of the Christian Church. The Book of Acts, too, is the only record of its kind that has been handed down from the apostolic age.

It would be necessary also to preserve the teaching which the Apostles gave to the Church as it grew. It was recognized that they had been endowed with Divine inspiration and that their teaching had Divine authority. The Lord had promised that the Holy Spirit should teach them all things, bring His own teaching to their remembrance, and guide them into all the truth (John 14:26; 16:13).

The Apostles employed letters as a means of instructing the various churches that came into existence as the Gospel spread from place to place. The Apostle Peter, writing toward the end of his life, refers to Paul's epistles as already well known, and classes them with the writings of the Old Testament Canon under the title of Scriptures (2 Pet. 3:16). By so doing he acknowledges them to have the same inspired authority. As time went on the Christian communities began to collect the letters left by the Apostles and use them in their church services along with the Old Testament Scriptures.

The collection of the New Testament books was not made all at once. The number of canonical books in the possession of different churches would necessarily vary for some considerable time. Churches situated near the place where a particular book was first published would obtain copies earlier than churches more remote. Efforts would be made to

secure copies of the Gospels and the larger and more important Epistles, while there would not be so strong a desire to obtain copies of the smaller Epistles. These would not be spoken about so much and would not be so generally known. And thus it happened that, although the New Testament was all written before the end of the first century, yet nearly two more centuries passed before all the churches everywhere came to recognize the full canonical authority of all the twenty-seven books.

This unanimity of the Church at large regarding the New Testament was not due to the decision of any Church council. No human authority was used in the settlement of the Canon. It was due entirely to the providence of God, who presided by His Spirit over the recording and the preservation of His Word.

The several books carried full authority from the time they were published, before they were collected into a single volume. Their authority rested solely upon their apostolic source or their apostolic character. It was this alone that gave them a right to a place in the sacred Canon. This was understood throughout the Church from the beginning. It was the spiritual instinct of the Christian communities in general that fixed the New Testament Canon. They recognized the unique quality of inspiration in these writings. The Spirit in the heart of the Church bore witness to the voice of the Spirit in the books that make up the New Testament.

THE NEW TESTAMENT

THE GOSPELS

THE FOUR GOSPELS

THESE four books are properly not four different gospels, but four accounts of the one Gospel. In the New Testament the word "gospel" always means the message of "good news" that Jesus and the Apostles proclaimed. After the apostolic age the name came to be applied to the written records of the story of Jesus.

The purpose of the Gospels is not to give a complete account of His life, for the largest part of it is passed over in silence in each of them. They are not biographies in the modern sense. They are concerned only with Christ's redemptive work. They record just so much of His works and words as is necessary to set Him forth as the Saviour of the world.

While this purpose is manifested in all the Gospels, there is a marked difference between the first three and the fourth in the way it is carried out. The first three give the same general account of the ministry of Jesus; they describe it from the same point of view. For this reason they are known as "the Synoptic Gospels", from a Greek word meaning "seeing together". The fourth takes a different point of view and gives an entirely different account.

The difference is seen in two respects. The first three Gospels confine their narrative almost entirely to Jesus' ministry in Galilee, while the fourth Gospel confines its narrative mainly to His ministry in

Judea and Jerusalem. The first three Gospels deal chiefly with the outward aspect of the Lord's ministry. They record its events and incidents, and contain accounts of His miracles, parables, and discourses. The fourth Gospel, on the other hand, is occupied almost altogether with the inward aspect of His ministry. It sets forth the heavenly glory of His person and the spiritual nature of His work. One of the early Church Fathers (Clement of Alexandria) characterized it as "a spiritual Gospel", saying that John wrote it to supplement the others, in which "the body of the Gospel", as he called it, had been sufficiently set forth.

The four books were written by the men whose names they bear. This has been the belief of the Church throughout all the centuries. Matthew and John were Apostles of the Lord. The other two Evangelists were associated with Apostles. Mark was the companion of Peter, and probably his convert—his "son" in the faith (1 Pet. 5:13). Luke was Paul's fellow-labourer and close companion to the end of his life (2 Tim. 4:11). All the four Gospels, therefore, come from the apostolic circle and thus bear apostolic sanction.

The first three Gospels are so much alike and have so much in common that they seem to be dependent either upon one another or all upon some common source. This has given rise to what is known as "the Synoptic Problem". As a solution for it, nearly every conceivable way in which these books could be related to one another has been proposed. Various attempts have also been made to find some original source for them all. According to the latest theory, the primitive tradition lies behind Mark's Gospel, which preserves it in the earliest

form, and the other two Gospels, while making use of Mark, show the influence of other forms of the tradition. But no theory based on subjective grounds alone, although supported by learning and philosophy, has ever lasted long or aroused more than academic interest in the Church. The piety, common sense, and spiritual instinct of Christians in general have always had their part to play in a just and true appreciation of these early Christian records. The universal Church continues to accept all the Gospels at their face value.

The first "Gospel" was the preaching of the Apostles. It was an oral message, not a written record. The Apostles were all witnesses of the whole ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 1:21-22). The oral Gospel, as proclaimed by the different Apostles, would follow the same general plan. It would cover the main facts of the ministry, and would come to a head in the crowning facts of the Cross and the Resurrection. It would tend to take a fixed and settled form, and this is no doubt represented in the general form of the Synoptic Gospels. The step from that oral Gospel to the written Gospels was easy and natural. The specific forms which these Gospels take are easily explained by the individual character and purpose of the writers, and by the different classes of readers for whom they were originally intended.

When each of these four books is examined as a whole, it is found to be characterized by one leading theme. All the four themes are related to the Old Testament preparation for the Redeemer. The prophecies that pointed forward to Him represented Him in diverse aspects and bestowed upon Him diverse titles. He was to come both as a King and

as a Servant; He was to be both human and divine.

The four Gospels correspond with these four prophetic portraits of the Messiah. In Matthew Jesus appears as the King, come to introduce the Kingdom of Heaven and to reign. In Mark He is the Servant of the Lord, fulfilling man's neglected duty and accomplishing the will of God. In Luke we see Him as the Son of Man, incorporated with the human race and living a true and perfect human life. In John we behold Him as the Son of God, none other than Jehovah Himself, come to visit and redeem His people and bring them into fellowship with Himself. In this respect, the messages of the four Gospels may be summed up in the following words from four Old Testament passages: "Behold, thy King" (Zech. 9:9); "Behold, my Servant" (Isa. 42:1); "Behold, the Man" (Zech. 6:12); and "Behold, your God" (Isa. 40:9). In each case the reference pointed to the Redeemer who was to come.

This does not mean that the four writers deliberately chose to picture these four aspects of the Redeemer when they set out each upon his own task. We are not to suppose that they were conscious of distinct and separate purposes. They had all one common purpose, although writing spontaneously and independently. Their purpose was to tell the story of Jesus under the urge of the Divine Spirit, as each one knew it, with the material each had at his disposal. But each of them was peculiarly fitted to bring out that particular aspect of the person and work of Christ which his own Gospel sets forth.

The Apostle who had been called from an official position in an earthly kingdom (Matt. 9:9) thought in terms of the Kingdom of Heaven and presents Jesus in His kingly relations. The man who had

been a servant of Apostles (Acts 13:5) presents Jesus as the Servant of God. It was "the beloved physician" (Col. 4:14), whose calling gave him a sympathetic understanding of the nature and needs of men, who portrays the Son of Man. And it was "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (John 13:23; 21:20), the one member of the Twelve that truly understood the inner nature of the Master, who has left us a portrait of the Son of God.

The particular class of readers for whom each Evangelist wrote also had its bearing upon the special character of his book. The traditions of the early Church have something to say about the readers as well as about the writers, and in every case there is a correspondence with the particular characteristic of the writer's Gospel.

Matthew's Gospel was originally written in Aramaic, the Hebrew spoken in Palestine, and was evidently intended for the Jews. Mark wrote his Gospel at the request of the church in Rome for circulation in Italy. It was peculiarly adapted for the energetic and practical Romans. Luke addresses his Gospel to a man of culture with a Greek name (1:3). He obviously wrote it for the Greeks of the Gentile world, who were characterized by wide human interests. Last of all, John wrote his Gospel at the urgent request of the Christians of Asia, who were troubled by spreading heresies regarding the person of the Lord. These four classes of readers—Jews, Romans, Greeks, and Christians—are representative of the whole human race.

All this goes to show how the Spirit of God, in presiding over the development of the Christian Church and the progress of Divine truth, so ordered it that in these four independent apostolic records

we are given a complete portrait of the Saviour of the world, and we are also shown that He is able to meet the needs of all classes of men. This could not have been done in any single book; and thus we see the reason why there are four Gospels in the New Testament.

It is not known, and it cannot be determined, at what exact dates the various Gospels were written. They would not be written before the need of permanent and authentic records began to be felt, which would probably be about the middle of the century. The Synoptic Gospels belong to the period before the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple (A.D. 70), for their three accounts of the Lord's Olivet prophecy (Matt. 24, Mark 13, Luke 21) bear evidence that the event had not yet taken place. Their dates probably lie between the years 55 and 65. The fourth Gospel was written many years later, probably between 80 and 90, for it manifestly presupposes an acquaintance with the other Gospels on the part of its readers.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

THE first Gospel has never been ascribed to anyone but the Apostle whose name it bears. The earliest testimony about it says that Matthew composed it first in the vernacular Hebrew, evidently intending it for the Jewish Christians in Palestine. The earliest writers who refer to it also regard the present Greek text as an authentic translation or a true representative of the original Hebrew Gospel, but they are silent as to how it was made, whether by Matthew himself or by another writer of apostolic authority.

Matthew was a publican, a collector of taxes, when he received his call to follow Jesus (Matt. 9:9). Mark and Luke call him Levi (Mark 2:14; Luke 5:27-28). He may have had the two names before, or he may have assumed the new name, which means "gift of God", to mark his change of life. His prompt response to his call marks him as a man of decision. He showed his courage, too, by inviting the companions of his former life to a feast, that they might see and hear his Master (Matt. 9:10-13; Mark 2:15-17; Luke 5:29-32). He was chosen by Jesus from among His disciples as one of the twelve Apostles (Matt. 10:3; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:15). Mark and Luke place his name before that of his companion Thomas. Matthew shows his humility by reversing the order and adding to his own name the opprobrious title that marked his former life.

The key-note of the Gospel is struck in the opening verse. Its theme is the promised Messiah, and so it properly stands at the beginning of the New Testament Canon. Jesus Christ is presented as "the son of David, the son of Abraham", fulfilling the two great covenant promises of the Old Testament that had a Messianic import. One of these was the promise to David that in his seed an everlasting kingdom should be established (2 Sam. 7:13). The other was the promise to Abraham that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed (Gen. 22:18). The promise regarding the son of David had in view the Kingdom of God. The promise regarding the son of Abraham had in view the redemption of the world. Matthew shows that both of these promises have their fulfilment in Jesus Christ. He is the true son of David and King of Israel, and the true son of Abraham and Saviour of the world.

This theme is manifest in the structure of the book. After an introductory section dealing with the Messiah's preparation (1:1-4:16), the rest of the Gospel is composed of two sections dealing with His ministry, each beginning with the same expression: "From that time began Jesus . . ." (4:17; 16:21). These words introduce a new note into the narrative in each case, a note which characterizes the section that follows. In the one case Jesus began to proclaim the message of the Kingdom of Heaven; in the other case He began to announce His approaching death and resurrection. On the basis of this threefold division we get the following working analysis of the book:

- I. The Preparation of the Messiah—Chs. 1-4
(Jesus Christ, Son of David and Son of Abraham, being manifested to Israel and prepared for His ministry)
 1. His Coming into the World (Chs. 1-2)
 2. His Equipment for His Task (3:1-4:11)
 3. His Entrance upon His Work (4:12-25)
- II. The Ministry of the Kingdom—Chs. 5-16
(Jesus Christ, Son of David, making proclamation of the Kingdom of Heaven to Israel)
 1. The Principles of the Kingdom (Chs. 5-7)
 2. The Works of the Kingdom (Chs. 8-9)
 3. The Messengers of the Kingdom (Ch. 10)
 4. The Opposition to the Kingdom
(Chs. 11-12)
 5. The Mysteries of the Kingdom (Ch. 13)
 6. The Rejection of the Kingdom
(Chs. 14-16)
- III. The Ministry of the Cross—Chs. 17-28
(Jesus Christ, Son of Abraham, making propitiation for the sin of the world)
 1. The Preparation for the Cross
(Chs. 17-18)
 2. The Approach to the Cross (Chs. 19-20)
 3. The Final Testimony to Israel
(Chs. 21-23)
 4. The Final Prophecy to the Disciples
(Chs. 24-25)
 5. The Suffering of the Cross (Chs. 26-27)
 6. The Victory of the Crucified (Ch. 28)

Behind this progressive plan Matthew followed a topical method in arranging his material. The teachings of Christ are grouped in five extended addresses,

which are marked by similar expressions such as, "When Jesus had finished these words" (7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1). In each case the address seems to be composed of teachings given by the Lord on the same topic at different times in His ministry. The whole narrative of the Gospel might be built around these five addresses. They are as follows: the sermon on the mount (chs. 5-7), the charge to the Twelve (ch. 10), the parables of the Kingdom (ch. 13), instructions for discipleship (ch. 18), and the Olivet prophecy (chs. 24-25).

THE COMING OF THE MESSIAH

(Chs. 1-2)

The Gospel begins with an account of the way Jesus Christ came into the world. This account links Him with the Old Testament dispensation, and shows how Messianic prophecy began to be fulfilled in Him. The opening words recall the statement with which the fifth chapter of Genesis begins: "This is the book of the generations of Adam". They are probably the heading of the genealogy, but they might be taken as a title for the whole Gospel. These two expressions are unique in Scripture: they occur nowhere else in the same form. The one begins the story of man fallen, after an introductory account of his creation and fall; and that is continued throughout the whole Old Testament. The other introduces the story of man redeemed; and that is the theme of the whole New Testament.

1. The Genealogy (1:1-17). It is arranged in three stages, marking three great epochs in the preparation of Israel for the promised Messiah. Several generations are omitted in the list of names,

and the thrice repeated "fourteen generations" (v. 17), summing up the whole period, is probably used as a symbolical number, intended to show that Christ appeared "when the fulness of the time came" (Gal. 4:4).

The genealogy is traced through Solomon and the kings of Judah, and thus gives the royal line of David. It leads to "Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ" (v. 16). Four women are named in the list besides Mary, two of whom were Gentiles and three were women of ill fame, thus marking the identification of Jesus with sinful humanity, both Jew and Gentile. The line becomes poorer and more obscure as it approaches the time of Christ. The Redeemer came "as a root out of a dry ground" (Isa. 53:2).

2. The Birth (1:18-25). This passage is significant as showing both the divine and the human origin of Jesus—begotten by the Holy Spirit, and born of the Virgin Mary. It shows also that Jesus came as David's heir; for Joseph, who would be regarded as His father in the eyes of the law, was a son of David. The two names given to the coming Messiah—Jesus (Saviour) and Immanuel (God with us)—indicate the fundamental purpose of His mission in the world (Luke 19:10), and the essential nature of His presence among men (2 Cor. 5:19).

3. The Infancy (Ch. 2). Two events recorded in this chapter show how diversely the Saviour's arrival was received by different classes. Thus was foreshadowed the world's subsequent treatment of Christianity.

(1) The homage of the wise men (vs. 1-12). They came from lands east of Palestine, and repre-

sented the seeking souls of the Gentile world. The religious leaders of the Jews, who were able to answer Herod's question from their own Scriptures, were so indifferent that they made no attempt to follow up the enquiry of the wise men.

(2) The enmity of Herod (vs. 13-23). He represented the hatred and hostility of the godless world. Through him Satan attempted to frustrate the purpose of God in sending the Redeemer (Rev. 12:1-5). His slaughter of the babes of Bethlehem revealed his jealous and cruel character, and was an ominous sign of the persecution Christianity was to receive in the world.

Matthew finds two features in the infancy of Jesus to be of Messianic significance. The fact that the young child was taken down to Egypt identified Him with the people of God who were redeemed out of Egypt: "Out of Egypt did I call my son" (v. 15; Hos. 11:1). The fact that He was brought up in Nazareth fulfilled the prophetic descriptions of the Messiah as being despised among men: Matthew sums these up in the expression, "He should be called a Nazarene" (v. 23; cf. John 1:46; 7:52).

One of the principal features of this Gospel is prominent in these first two chapters. Matthew calls attention again and again to the fulfilment of prophecy in the life of Jesus. Compare 1:23 and Isa. 7:14; 2:6 and Micah 5:2; 2:15 and Hosea 11:1; 2:18 and Jer. 31:15. This linking of events in the life of Christ with the Old Testament preparation for the Messiah continues throughout the Gospel. The expressions, "it is written" and "that it might be fulfilled", occur very often. It has fifty-three quotations from the Old Testament, almost as many as all the other Gospels combined. They

cover the whole of the Lord's life, and refer to a great variety of incidents.

HIS EQUIPMENT FOR HIS TASK

(3:1 — 4:11)

Between chs. 2 and 3 lies a gap of thirty years. The preaching of John the Baptist was the signal for the manifestation of the Messiah and His appearance to Israel (John 1:31). Leaving the obscurity of Nazareth, Jesus went down to John at the Jordan, and was baptised of him and anointed by the Spirit for His Messianic task. Then followed His temptation and conflict with Satan. On the imprisonment of John, Jesus went back into Galilee and began His public ministry there, with Capernaum as His headquarters.

1. The Herald (3:1-12). John's preaching had two notes. It was intended to turn the hearts of the people back to God ("repent ye"), and to prepare them for the new order that was coming ("the kingdom of heaven is at hand"). He was the herald who, according to the prophet Isaiah, was to prepare the way for the Messiah (Isa. 40:3). John introduced the rite of baptism for those who repented, as a preparation for and a sign of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which, he declared, would be the result of the Messiah's work (v. 11).

All the Gospels note this relation of John's baptism with water to the subsequent baptism of the Holy Spirit (Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33). It was based upon promises in the Prophets (Isa. 44:3; Ezek. 36:25-27), and looked forward to the pouring out of the Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 1:5). John required proofs of repentance from those who

came to him for baptism, and refused to baptize the Pharisees and Sadducees, whom he denounced instead as the "offspring of vipers".

2. The Baptism (3:13-17). This was Jesus' formal entrance upon His Messianic office. In this rite, He (1) dedicated Himself to the task of accomplishing redemption by identifying Himself with those whom He came to redeem, and also (2) yielded Himself to God to receive the anointing of the Holy Spirit to equip Him for His task. This is the significance of His reply when John expressed reluctance to baptize Him: "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness". The emphasis falls on the word "thus" because of its position in the sentence. It refers to the anointing of the Spirit, which was the reality behind the symbolical rite to which Jesus was submitting Himself.

Jesus meant that He was undertaking to accomplish man's neglected duty—"to fulfil all righteousness"—by the power of the Holy Spirit which He was now to receive, and not by the power of His own divine nature. By doing so He became the true representative of His people. His baptism was followed at once by the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Him from the opened heavens, and by the voice of the Father approving and accepting the self-dedication of the Son.

3. The Temptation (4:1-11). The knowledge of this mysterious experience must have been derived from Jesus Himself, for He was alone in the wilderness. It took place immediately after he had received the anointing of the Holy Spirit, and was the first outcome of that experience. It was an attack on the attitude of complete surrender to the will of

God which He had taken at His baptism. It was a subtle attempt on the part of the devil to introduce the element of self-will into the work of the Messiah. The shadow of that supernatural personality who is the fountain of evil, and who brought the human race under the bondage of sin, now falls across the life of our Lord. His suggestions were temptations, not to have Jesus abandon the Messianic task, but to have Him do it in the wrong way—to approach it from the standpoint of His own will, not the will of God.

The tempter's attacks on the Lord were made on three sides: (1) On the ground of His humanity—a suggestion to satisfy the natural instinct of hunger in a supernatural way. (2) On the ground of His deity—a suggestion to prove His relationship to God by acting on His own impulse. (3) On the ground of His Messiahship—an offer to surrender the kingdoms of the world to Christ on Satan's own terms. In every case Jesus refused to have the question referred to Himself, and fell back on the revealed will of God. On all three occasions He quoted from the Mosaic book of Deuteronomy (8:3; 6:16; 6:13). He overcame the tempter, not by His own divine power, but by taking the word of God for His guide as the true representative of man.

It does not follow, because the temptations are described separately, that they took place separately. They may have been presented to the mind of Jesus simultaneously. Luke gives them in a different order (4:1-12). The picturesque form in which they are described was chosen by the Lord as the best means of conveying to the minds of His disciples the essential facts of an experience that was utterly beyond the reach of human understanding.

HIS ENTRANCE UPON HIS WORK

(4:12-25)

After His baptism and temptation, Jesus began His official work by presenting Himself as the Messiah in Jerusalem, the religious capital of the nation and the headquarters of the religious authorities; and He carried on a ministry for some time in the province of Judea. John's Gospel records this part of the Lord's life, but all the Synoptics pass it over. He received no recognition from the leaders of the nation. On the imprisonment of John the Baptist, He changed the place and the mode of His work. He withdrew into Galilee, and made Capernaum His headquarters for a ministry among the common people in that province (vs. 12-13).

Matthew finds in this another fulfilment of prophecy (vs. 14-16; Isa. 9:1-2). That region was the first to suffer from the foreign invasions of Isaiah's day, which came into Palestine from the north. It was also to be the first to see the "great light" of the Messianic day. This prophecy was now being fulfilled in the ministry that Jesus was carrying on in Galilee and in the Gospel that He was preaching to the poor and suffering people there.

In the statement, "from that time began Jesus to preach" (v. 17), the Apostle marks the beginning of the Galilean ministry of the Messiah and indicates its nature. Jesus took up the same message that John had been preaching, and began to announce that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand. This Kingdom was the new spiritual and heavenly order which He was to bring into being by His redemptive work. It had been foretold by the Old

Testament prophets. It was now "at hand": it was only a few short years away.

Jesus had first to lay the foundation of the Kingdom by accomplishing His Messianic task. When He returned to Heaven, the Kingdom would then be opened to men by the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. It was called "the kingdom of heaven" because it was to be administered from the heavenly side: it would be the rule of Heaven on earth. It is the essential spiritual reality behind the whole Christian system. Jesus Christ came to establish an order of things in which the will of God would be done on earth by the power of the Spirit sent down from Heaven.

The narrative goes on to record the call of the first disciples—two pairs of brothers—from their fishing nets to become fishers of men (vs. 18-22). Then it describes the general character of the Galilean ministry (vs. 23-25). Jesus carried it on by touring the country, teaching in the synagogues, preaching the good news of the Kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness. His fame spread far and wide. His miracles of healing caused great popular excitement. His fame spread beyond the limits of Palestine, and throngs gathered to Him from all quarters.

THE PRINCIPLES OF THE KINGDOM (Chs. 5-7)

In carrying on His official work as the Messiah, Jesus not only made public proclamations of the nearness of the Kingdom He had come to establish; He went on to make a formal statement of its nature, explaining its laws and principles. This He

did in an address to the disciples in the presence of the multitudes, which is usually called the Sermon on the Mount because of the place where it was delivered (5:1-2). Jesus no doubt repeated the teaching of this sermon again and again, and it is probable that Matthew has gathered into these three chapters the substance of addresses given at different times on the same theme.

1. The Members of the Kingdom Described (5:3-16). These verses describe the kind of life that was to be lived by the citizens of the Kingdom when it should come into being (Phil. 3:20). It is the ideal life of the Christian dispensation, which Christ has made possible for His disciples by His redemptive work (Rom. 8:3-4).

(1) Their blessed character (vs. 3-9). These seven beatitudes describe the blessed life. They are not given as a code of laws to be obeyed, but as a group of qualities which make the perfect moral character. They describe the character of Jesus Himself, wrought out first in His own earthly life, and then transmitted to His disciples by the Holy Spirit. They correspond with the fruit of the Spirit described in Gal. 5:22-23. The peculiar quality of this character is self-effacement, as indicated by the first beatitude—the elimination of the element introduced into human nature by the fall of Adam. The kingdoms of the world are founded on self-will and maintained by self-assertion. The Kingdom of Heaven is founded on the will of God, and it belongs to those who follow the way of self-denial.

The first four beatitudes represent the disciples of Jesus as conscious of their need of salvation; the last three represent them as having found salvation

and realizing it. The blessedness promised in each case is not so much an arbitrary reward as the necessary and essential result of the state of heart described.

(2) Their experience in the world (vs. 10-12). This is a double beatitude based on the fact that the righteousness which Jesus was to introduce by His Messianic work would be alien to the spirit of the world. The citizens of the Kingdom would meet with hatred and hostility, but there should be great blessedness in that experience, and they should have a great reward in Heaven.

(3) Their influence in the world (vs. 13-16). This is described as two-fold. It would be like salt, arresting the progress of corruption and decay; and for this reason they must not lose their savour. It would be like light, diffusing the knowledge of the Light of the world (John 8:12). For this reason they must live among men in such a way as to show by the light of their lives what true life is (Phil. 2:14-16).

2. The New Kingdom and the Old Order (5:17-48). Jesus now goes on to explain how the new order which He was to introduce was related to the Old Testament dispensation. He came not to abrogate the Law and destroy its authority, but "to magnify the law, and make it honourable" (Isa. 42:21).

(1) The Old Testament Law confirmed (vs. 17-20). Jesus fulfilled the Law in two ways: (a) by living a life in which all its requirements were perfectly and completely obeyed, and (b) by bringing out and revealing the inner spiritual meaning of the Law. He required a righteousness that was not

merely outward and mechanical like that of the Scribes and Pharisees, but was inward and spiritual.

(2) The Old Testament Law deepened and expanded (vs. 21-32). Jesus now applies the principle stated in v. 20 to two of the ten commandments of the Law, the sixth and the seventh. He demands a fulfilment of the Law in the thoughts and intents of the heart. When He declared, "Ye have heard . . . but I say unto you", He was not placing His own authority above the Law, but claiming the right to explain its true meaning, which the traditionalists had misunderstood.

In dealing with the sixth commandment, Jesus adds a sort of parenthesis on the duty of hastening to remove any uncharitable relation in which we may stand to others (vs. 21-26). In dealing with the seventh commandment, He urges those necessary steps of self-discipline which will enable men to avoid sin. Then He goes on to deal with the law of divorce, and proclaims the indissolubility of marriage (vs. 27-32). His legislation on this subject is repeated in 19:3-9, where He declares that in the Mosaic Law divorce was permitted because Israel was not yet ready for the moral standard of the Creator.

(3) New laws given in advance of the old (vs. 33-48). The principle stated in v. 20 is now applied in a new way, showing that it goes far beyond the express commands of the Law. This is illustrated in reference to three of the special regulations of the Old Testament: the law of oaths, which was an application of the third commandment (vs. 33-37); the law of retaliation, which allowed revenge up to a certain point (vs. 38-42); and the

law of love, which had a limitation put upon it (vs. 43-48).

In the first case Jesus points out that God is everywhere, and all words are uttered in His presence; therefore truthfulness is of universal obligation. He would not prohibit oaths in a court of justice, for He Himself consented to be sworn by the high priest at His trial (26:63-64). In the second case, where the law of the Old Covenant put a limitation upon the human instinct of revenge, Jesus eliminates it altogether. He takes away from us the right to administer justice in our own case, and requires us as individuals to follow self-effacement as the law of His Kingdom. We are not to resist legal injustice or resent public claims upon us.

To the law of love in Lev. 19:18 the Scribes had added "and hate thine enemy", as if the one were a legitimate inference from the other. In a sense it seemed to express the attitude of the law. Jesus now teaches the duty of loving one's enemies and desiring their good. It is to be expected of members of Christ's Kingdom that they should be unlike others in doing more than others. "Be ye therefore perfect" (v. 48), perfect in love; the reference is to the preceding verses. To love as God loves is moral perfection. This perfection Christ required of His disciples; and He was to make it possible for them by His Spirit.

3. The Righteousness of the Kingdom (6:1-18). The general principle is stated in v. 1: "Take heed that you do not your righteousness before men". This looks back to the "righteousness" of the Scribes and Pharisees mentioned in 5:20, and refers to acts of a religious character. These should be real and

sincere, and not done for display. The new "righteousness" looks toward God and not toward men.

The principle is then applied to three branches of conduct that were regarded as the chief elements in religion, and might be called exercises of righteousness. It is this aspect of righteousness that Jesus has in mind, and in each case He deals with the motive. Self in all its forms is to be left out of view. Christian righteousness looks for the praise of God, never for the praise of men.

(1) Almsgiving (vs. 2-4)—religious exercise in relation to our fellow men. Jesus is teaching by metaphors. He forbids ostentation in doing good. "They have received their reward": they sought the applause of men, and this is all they have got.

(2) Prayer (vs. 5-15)—religious exercise in relation to God. The characteristics of true prayer are reality (vs. 5-6) and simplicity (vs. 7-8). Then comes a parenthesis in which Jesus gives a model of true prayer, usually called the Lord's Prayer. It consists of an introductory approach to God as Father and three petitions regarding Him (vs. 9-10), followed by four petitions regarding ourselves and a closing doxology (vs. 11-13). He follows it up by reverting to the petition for forgiveness, and stating that a forgiving spirit is an essential element in our experience of the forgiveness of God (vs. 14-15).

(3) Fasting (vs. 16-18) — religious exercise in relation to ourselves. Fasting is the typical example of abstinence from whatever hinders growth in the divine life. The principle stated here applies to all acts of self-denial done for spiritual profit. They have to do with the soul and with God alone.

4. The Members of the Kingdom and the Present World (6:19-34). This section deals with questions that relate to the wealth of this world and the necessities of life. They are not discussed in detail, but Jesus explains the attitude His disciples should take toward them. The general principle is summed up in vs. 33-34: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you". The true attitude is heavenly mindedness regarding wealth and filial trust regarding necessities. The qualities involved are described in the verses that precede:

(1) Unworldliness (vs. 19-21). To lay up treasure in Heaven is to do things that promote the interests of God's Kingdom. The Lord forbids hoarding wealth for its own sake, for the sake of possessing it. To set one's heart on earthly treasure is to risk losing all.

(2) Singleness of purpose (vs. 22-24). This is what gives clearness and force to life. One cannot put God first and also set the heart on the wealth of the world.

(3) Freedom from anxiety (vs. 25-32). God cares for His creatures, how much more for His children. The heavenly Father knows His children's needs.

5. The Members of the Kingdom and their Fellow Men (7:1-12). This section deals with the attitude that disciples should take toward those who are still outside the Kingdom. The general principle is stated in v. 12; it is equivalent to, "love your neighbour as yourself". In the preceding verses this principle is applied in three ways. Jesus emphasizes:

(1) Charity and kindness (vs. 1-5). Avoid fault-

finding and censoriousness. These are marks of self-righteousness and hypocrisy.

(2) Discrimination and caution (v. 6). Do not go to the other extreme, which makes no distinction between the good and the bad.

(3) Prayer for others (vs. 7-11). In a former passage (5:5-15) prayer was regarded as a religious duty: here it is enjoined as a means of helping others (Luke 11:5-13).

6. A Call to Enter the Kingdom (7:13-27). Having shown the true nature of the Kingdom of Heaven, Jesus now gives some closing appeals and warnings about the way to find and enter it.

(1) Enter by the narrow gate (vs. 13-14). This is the gate of a new birth, the birth from above (John 3:3). The narrow way is the way of the Cross (Matt. 16:24; Luke 14:27; Gal. 6:14).

(2) Beware of false teaching (vs. 15-20). This peril is all the greater because it wears a cloak of goodness. False teaching is to be detected by its results, either in the character of the teachers or in the lives of those who follow them.

(3) Beware of false profession (vs. 21-23). Jesus assumes the tone of the judge at this point. He is not only the founder of the Kingdom, but He also judges evil in it and purges evil from it.

(4) Be doers as well as hearers (vs. 24-27). Jesus enforces the message of the Sermon with two very graphic illustrations, which must have left a deep impression on His hearers, for they would well understand them—the house built upon the rock and the house built upon the sand.

The astonishment which His teaching produced

upon the people, and the sense of authority which it carried, are noted by Matthew in the next verses (vs. 28-29). It was all so different from the teaching of the Scribes. They could only pass on their learned traditions about the Law. His teaching illumined the Law with a sense of reality. The divine authority behind the Old Testament Scriptures lived again on the lips of Jesus.

THE WORKS OF THE KINGDOM

(Chs. 8-9)

The principles of the Kingdom of Heaven having been explained, the Gospel goes on to reveal something of its nature and to show that Jesus had power to establish it, by giving an account of some typical miracles. Ten of the twenty miracles recorded by Matthew are grouped in these chapters. They are as follows: Cleansing the leper (8:1-4), healing the centurion's servant (8:5-13), healing Peter's wife's mother and the sick in Capernaum (8:14-17), stilling the storm on the sea (8:23-27), casting out demons from the two Gadarenes (8:28-34), healing the palsied man (9:1-8), healing the woman that touched His garment and raising the ruler's daughter (9:18-26), healing two blind men and a dumb demoniac (9:27-34).

In the midst of this list of miracles occur two incidents. In one case, Jesus warns His followers of the cost of discipleship and reveals His own sense of homelessness in the world (8:18-22). In the other case, Matthew is called and obeys at once (9:9). The feast that follows was given by Matthew himself to his former companions (Luke 5:29). Jesus was present, and that raised questions on the

part of the Pharisees, who criticized the Lord's conduct in associating with sinners, and also on the part of John's disciples, who were puzzled by His neglect of fasting (9:10-17).

The miracles in these chapters were all Messianic signs, or works of salvation, showing that Jesus had power and authority to save men. They manifested His power in all the four realms to which human life is related. The stilling of the storm revealed Him as Lord of the natural world. The cure of the demoniacs showed that His authority reached into the spiritual world. The raising of the dead girl showed that His power extended beyond the grave. The other miracles were all works of healing, and were performed in a variety of ways, showing how thoroughly the Lord knew our physical nature and could meet its needs.

Some of these miracles were performed in such a way as to show that they were inseparably related to His own Person. His touch is mentioned several times (8:3, 15; 9:21, 25, 29). As His words showed that He came from the centre of ultimate truth, so His works showed that He was at the centre and source of ultimate power. They were all complete and thoroughgoing; in no case did the result leave anything unfinished. In some cases they were performed in response to faith (8:10, 13; 9:2, 22, 29). In one case of healing Jesus performed the cure to prove that He had authority to forgive sins (9:6).

THE MESSENGERS OF THE KINGDOM

(Ch. 10)

Jesus now took measures for the wider proclamation of the message of the Kingdom. The occasion

for this new step was the spiritual destitution which He saw among the people as He went about the cities and villages of Galilee (9:35-38). His compassion went out to them, because they were like weary and helpless flocks of sheep that had no shepherd.

The twelve disciples who were chosen as Apostles were given authority to perform the signs and works of the Kingdom. Their names occur in pairs (vs. 1-4), probably indicating how they were sent out "by two and two" (Mark 6:7). There are three other lists of their names (Mark 3:16-19; Luke 6:14-16; and Acts 1:13). When the four lists are compared, it appears that the Twelve were composed of three groups of four each. The order of their names is always different, but each group is always composed of the same names. Simon Peter always stands at the head of the list and Judas at the foot. Philip always heads the second group, and James, the son of Alphæus, the third group. The three groups probably indicate degrees of intimacy with the Lord, the first four enjoying His closest confidence (Mark 13:3).

Their instructions, as recorded in this chapter, fall into three divisions, each closing with an emphatic statement beginning, "Verily I say unto you". These seem to be summaries of instructions given at different times during the ministry of Jesus. Like all the discourses in Matthew's Gospel, this address is marked by dignity, order, and progress.

1. Instruction for their Present Mission (vs. 5-15). During the Lord's earthly ministry the mission of the Apostles was limited to Israel. They were to proclaim the same message as He was

preaching, and perform the same works as He was doing. They were the messengers of Israel's Messiah to the nation, and so they were worthy of the people's support. These instructions, therefore, did not apply to their mission in the Gentile world afterwards. The ultimate judgment of the cities of Israel would be determined by their treatment of the Messiah's messengers.

2. Instruction for their Future Mission (vs. 16-23). This passage applies to the period between the Ascension of Christ in A.D. 30 and the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70; that is, to the generation between the rejection of the Messiah and the judgment upon Israel. The circumstances of the Apostles' ministry are described as very different now. They should be "as sheep in the midst of wolves", hated and persecuted everywhere and by all men. But they should have the support of the Holy Spirit in their witness to their foes. They should not have finished their mission to Israel "till the Son of man be come"; that is, till He should come in judgment on the guilty nation. The conditions described in this passage are all illustrated in the Acts of the Apostles.

3. Instruction for Discipleship in General (vs. 24-42). This deals with Christian life and service in the world during the present age. The general principle means that the disciple should be as his Master, the Christian should be identified with Christ (vs. 24-25). This is stated first, and then its implications are drawn out as follows: freedom from fear, because of the Father's care (vs. 26-31); confessing Christ before men and giving Him supreme affection (vs. 32-37); following Christ by

carrying one's cross (vs. 38-39). This is our Lord's first mention of the Cross, and it implied a prophetic reference to His death, for a cross was carried to die on. Taking one's cross and following after Christ means leading a life of dying to self as He did. The charge to the Twelve then closes with words of encouragement for them in view of the mission on which they were sent (vs. 40-42).

THE OPPOSITION TO THE KINGDOM

(Chs. 11-12)

Christ had explained the nature of His Kingdom, shown His power to establish it, and taken measures to propagate its message. Matthew now goes on to show how this was being received by the nation. In ch. 11 we see how the message about the Kingdom was received by different classes among the people. In ch. 12 we see the bitter and malignant opposition to the King Himself which was growing among their religious leaders.

1. The Varying Reception of the Message (Ch. 11). Four kinds of hearers are represented in this chapter.

(1) John the Baptist represents those who believed Jesus to be the Messiah but were impatient because the Kingdom did not at once appear. John had testified of One coming with a fan in his hand to make a thorough separation between the wheat and the chaff in Israel (3:12). Jesus was not doing this, but was following a very different course. John sent his disciples to ask Him if the promised Messiah was still to come, and Jesus sent them back to tell John what they had seen and heard Jesus doing.

The ministry of Jesus was fulfilling the prophetic account of the Messianic days as described in Isa. 35; and John, the last of the prophets, would understand the significance of this reply (vs. 1-6).

When John's messengers were gone, Jesus spoke to the people about him. He vindicated His sturdy herald from the imputation that his enquiry was due to fickleness of character or to the hardship of his imprisonment (vs. 7-8). Then He pronounced the highest praise upon him. John was more than a prophet: he was the messenger sent of God to prepare the way before the Lord Himself (Mal. 3:1). Thus he was the greatest among mankind up to that time; but the least member of the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than John (vs. 9-11).

In this statement Jesus reveals His standard of greatness: it is nearness of relationship to Himself. John was greater than all the prophets before him, for he not only told of the coming of Christ but actually introduced Him to Israel. But John lived before the Kingdom was inaugurated at Pentecost, and he did not enjoy the close relationship with Christ of those who are born of the Spirit. Jesus went on to say that one of the reactions of John's preaching was such a violent desire for the Kingdom that men of violence sought to establish it by force. The Law and the Prophets were brought to a head in John, and in him was fulfilled the prophecy that Elijah should come (vs. 12-15; Mal. 4: 5-6).

(2) "This generation" was the nation as a whole, especially as represented by its religious leaders. They found fault both with Jesus and with John, because neither conformed to their preconceived ideas (vs. 16-19).

(3) Then Jesus went on to upbraid another class, the impenitent cities of Galilee (vs. 20-24). They were condemned, not for gross wickedness, but for the self-satisfied indifference of their inhabitants to the miracles and teachings of Jesus in their midst. The doom He announced upon them implied His divine authority in judgment.

(4) At this point in the narrative Matthew records the Lord's thanksgiving to God for the faith of His own disciples—the "babes"—who had received with childlike simplicity and understanding the message He had brought from His Father (vs. 25-27). Then follows a gracious invitation from the very heart of the Saviour to all such as belong to this class and feel their need (vs. 28-30).

2. The Bitter Antagonism to the King (Ch. 12). This is manifest in the various accusations that were made against Him. The first had to do with His relation to the Sabbath. The Pharisees charged Him with sanctioning a breach of the Sabbath law on the part of His disciples (vs. 1-8). He defended them by citing examples from the Old Testament to show that ceremonial laws yielded to the higher claims of necessity and mercy (1 Sam. 21:6; Num. 28:9-10; Hosea 6:6). Then He declared, "the Son of man is lord of the sabbath". He was not claiming authority to abolish the Sabbath, but asserting His right as the representative Man to determine how the principle of the Sabbath should be carried out for man's benefit.

A synagogue scene follows in which a man with a withered hand was present (vs. 9-13). On this occasion another collision occurred with the Pharisees over the Sabbath. Jesus first exposed the heart-

less nature of their formalism, and then healed the man. This marks the time when they began to plot for His destruction (v. 14).

Jesus withdrew from there to carry on His healing ministry quietly, fulfilling another prophetic description of the Messiah (vs. 15-21; Isa. 42:1-3). When He healed a blind and dumb demoniac who had been brought to Him, the people in amazement wondered if He could be the Messiah. But the Pharisees explained the miracle by accusing Him of being in league with the prince of the demons (vs. 22-24). This led to a prolonged discourse, in which Jesus refuted the charge by an appeal to common sense, and then gave the true explanation of His cures. Satan would not fight against Satan, as even their own exorcists well knew (vs. 25-27). The power He used was that of the Spirit of God, which showed that the Kingdom of God was come near to them. As the Head of that Kingdom, He had shown Himself stronger than Satan by freeing demoniacs from his power (vs. 28-29).

Jesus went on to point out that there was no place for neutrality in the conflict which He was carrying on with Satan, and to add a solemn warning (vs. 30-32). There is forgiveness for all kinds of sin, even sin against the Son of Man, but not for sin against the Holy Spirit. To attribute the work of the Holy Spirit to demonic power is to put oneself on the side of Satan and out of reach of God's forgiveness for ever. Jesus closed his discourse by appealing to the general experience of mankind, in order to show that His own character was to be known from His conduct and their character from their conduct (vs. 33-37). The distinction between

good men and bad men is made by the kind of words and acts they produce.

The Scribes and Pharisees answered Christ's warning with a request that He should show them a sign, thus ignoring the Messianic character of His whole ministry. He called those who made such a demand "an evil and adulterous generation", because of their unfaithfulness to the marriage covenant that bound the nation to Jehovah; and the only sign that would be given to it was that of the prophet Jonah, which was a sign of His resurrection (vs. 38-40). The impenitence of the unbelieving Jews of that generation, who rejected the teaching of Christ, would be condemned in the coming judgment by the men of Nineveh, who repented at the preaching of Jonah, and by the Queen of Sheba, who came to hear the wisdom of Solomon (vs. 41-42).

Then Jesus likened that generation of Jews to a demoniac who had been cured, but afterwards allowed himself to be possessed by more evil demons. The idolatry of the old days had been given up, but such a spirit of formalism had now taken its place as to make the last state of the nation worse than the first (vs. 43-45).

Just then Jesus was told that His mother and brethren were outside seeking to speak to Him. His reply is not a censure upon them, nor a denial of family ties. He uses their appeal to point out that there are far stronger and closer ties than these. Relationship in the Kingdom is based on the doing of the will of God, and not on any natural kinship (vs. 46-50).

THE MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM

(Ch. 13)

The growing opposition to the message of the Kingdom led Jesus to adopt a new method in proclaiming it. He began to speak in parables (vs. 1-3). The disciples asked Him why He was doing this, and he explained His reason (vs. 10-17). By using parables He would conceal the truth from those unwilling to receive it, and yet reveal it more fully to those who were ready to believe it. He quoted Isaiah (6:9-10) to show that a judicial blindness came upon those that refused to see, and a judicial hardening of heart upon those that would not hear.

The parables put His teaching in a form which attracted attention at the time and was easily remembered afterwards. They were stories or illustrations in which an analogy or similitude was drawn between the natural and the spiritual world. Our Lord did not use fables, nor did He ever invent a story from imaginary material. His parables were always based on the facts of the natural world and the experiences of every-day life. They were used to set forth the facts of the spiritual world and the nature of spiritual life. Earth is full of analogies of Heaven; earthly things are often shadows of heavenly realities. Parabolic teaching was therefore especially fitted to explain the Kingdom of Heaven. It could feed and instruct the Lord's genuine disciples, and sift out those who sought only temporal power and earthly glory and had no sense of the spiritual.

The seven parables in this chapter describe what Jesus called "the mysteries of the kingdom of

heaven" (v. 11). This meant those aspects of it which could be understood only in the light of Divine revelation. These parables are descriptive of the present Christian order introduced by the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost. They set forth the condition of the Kingdom during the New Testament dispensation. The seven parables fall into two groups, spoken under different circumstances.

Four parables were spoken to the people from a boat at the sea-side (v. 2). They contain a view of the Kingdom as seen on its earthward side. They describe Christianity as a visible movement in the world of human affairs.

1. The Sower and the Four Kinds of Soil (vs. 3-9). Jesus explained this parable to the disciples after He told them why He spoke in parables (vs. 18-23). It describes the method by which the Gospel—"the word of the kingdom"—is propagated in the world. Its growth and progress depend upon the kind of reception it gets in the hearts of those who hear it. Four kinds of hearers are depicted in the parable, and then described in the Lord's interpretation of it.

2. The Wheat and the Tares (vs. 24-30). The tares were bearded darnel, a kind of mock wheat, very much like wheat in the earlier stages of its growth, but producing a poisonous fruit. Jesus explained this parable also when asked by the disciples about it (vs. 36-43). It describes the presence of evil in the Kingdom during the present age, and the source from which it comes. The good and the evil, the true and the false, "the children of the kingdom" and "the children of the wicked one",

will develop and mature together until a crisis comes which is represented by the harvest. Their separation is not to be attempted by man, but will be made by the Son of Man through His angelic agents at the end of the age. Angels are everywhere represented as accompanying the Lord at His return (Matt. 16:27; 24:31; 2 Thess. 1:7; Rev. 19:14). Then the wicked will be consigned to their doom, and the righteous will appear in their true glory.

3. The Mustard Seed (vs. 31-32). This parable represents the growth of the Kingdom in its outward aspect as a visible, organized system in the world. It sets forth the contrast between the small and insignificant beginning of Christianity and its vast extent as it spreads and organizes itself throughout the world. It describes the nature and appearance of the visible Church. This parable and the next form a pair, dealing with the progress of the Gospel in human society.

4. The Leaven (v. 33). The significance of leaven when used as a symbol lies in its hidden, penetrating force. It usually represents an evil influence. Here it represents the influence of the Kingdom as a pervading energy working under the surface of human society. Our Lord did not mean to teach by this parable that the world would be converted to Christianity, but that the Gospel would introduce a kind of ferment into the world, which would continue to act and spread till it affected the whole human race. The parable describes the nature of the impact which Christianity makes in its contact with human society.

Having finished these four parables, Jesus left the people and entered the house (vs. 34-36). The

remaining three parables were spoken to the disciples alone. They contain a view of the Kingdom on its Godward side, and deal with the spiritual reality that is the heart of Christianity.

5. The Hid Treasure (v. 44). This represents the new life in the Kingdom of Heaven, or salvation itself, as the greatest wealth or the highest good. A man comes upon it unexpectedly, without searching for it; and in order to secure it he joyfully sacrifices all that he has.

6. The Pearl of Great Price (vs. 45-46). This represents the new life as that which satisfies the deepest desires of the heart and fulfils the highest ideal of the pure and the beautiful. A man finds it after long search; and for it he sacrifices everything he has. These two parables also form a pair; they deal with the effect of the Gospel upon personal and individual life. The idea is not that we purchase salvation, but that we secure it on the surrender of all earthly treasure.

7. The Drag-net (vs. 47-50). The last parable in the list describes the separation of the good from the bad, the true from the false, in the Kingdom. This is to take place at the end of the present age, when the preaching of the Gospel has been accomplished; and it is to be carried out by the angels. It is represented as a deliberate and final act of judgment.

Having finished the seven parables, Jesus addressed a final word to His disciples about this method of teaching. It had instructed them, and they were to use it for the instruction of others. They were to do for the Gospel of the Kingdom what the Scribes were doing for the Law (vs. 51-52).

Then Jesus departed from the Sea of Galilee and visited His own home-city of Nazareth. He came in His public capacity and taught in their synagogue. His townsfolk were astonished at His wisdom and at the report of His mighty acts. But they were offended at all this, because He belonged to one of their own families, and they resented His being different from themselves. Their unbelief prevented the continuation of His ministry among them (vs. 53-58).

THE REJECTION OF THE KINGDOM

(Chs. 14-16)

The death of John the Baptist took place at this time, and it brought about a change in the ministry of Jesus, for the death of John was a fore-warning of His own death. After this He withdrew from time to time from the crowded parts of central Galilee, and took the disciples with Him into outlying districts for greater privacy. His purpose was to instruct them more and more about Himself, and to prepare them for His approaching death. The miracles He performed after this were manifestations of what He was in His own Person rather than evidences of what He was able to do. Formerly He had been revealing His power; now He began to reveal His heavenly character and His real relation to God.

1. The Death of John (14:1-12). John was the herald of Jesus in more than one sense. Events in his life seem to have marked turning points in the life and ministry of Jesus. The first appearance of John led Jesus to leave the privacy of Nazareth and enter on His public ministry to Israel. The im-

prisonment of John led Jesus to leave Judea, where He had been presenting Himself to the leaders of the nation, and enter upon a ministry among the common people in Galilee. And now the death of John was followed by a series of withdrawals from His headquarters in Galilee to more distant parts of the country. In the present passage Matthew narrates the story of John's death at the hands of Herod.

2. The First Withdrawal (14:13-15:20). When Jesus heard of the death of John, He withdrew in a boat to an uninhabited district on the north-eastern side of the Sea of Galilee. The people followed Him in crowds around the shore. Moved with compassion for them, He healed their sick, and then performed one of His most significant miracles. He fed the multitude—five thousand men besides women and children—with five loaves and two fishes (14:13-21). This miracle was an acted parable, setting forth Christ's spiritual relation to Israel. When He saw a movement among them to make Him a king by earthly means (John 6:15), He hurried the disciples back in the boat while He sent the people away, and then went up into the mountain alone to pray (14:22-23).

When the night was far spent He came walking upon the water to the disciples, who were labouring against an adverse wind on their way to the other side. Peter's impulsive attempt to walk out toward Him showed his devotion to Jesus, but exposed his lack of faith (14:24-33). When Jesus came back to the land of Gennesaret, the people came gathering from all around bringing their sick to be healed (14:34-36).

Some Pharisees and Scribes who had come up from Jerusalem asked Him why His disciples did not observe Jewish ceremonial tradition. He replied by pointing out that by adding their tradition to the Law they made void the Word of God (15:1-9). Then He went on to denounce their hypocrisy to the crowd that had gathered, and explained that defilement came from the heart. The Pharisees were blind guides, blind to the spiritual realities (15:10-14). Even the disciples were without spiritual understanding, as Peter's question showed, and Jesus had to give them further instruction about the things that defile men (15: 15-20).

The mass of the Jews, and especially their religious leaders, completely misunderstood the purpose of the ceremonial regulations of the Mosaic Law. These were given as a means of separating Israel from other nations to be a spiritual people prepared for the Messiah. The Jews made the means the end. Even the Apostles shared this misunderstanding, and the serious trouble which arose in the early Church over it shows how firmly it had taken possession of the Jewish mind.

3. The Second Withdrawal (15:21 — 16:12). Jesus now withdrew to the western side of Galilee in the district of Tyre and Sidon. There a Canaanitish woman appealed to Him as "thou son of David" for her demon-possessed daughter. Being a Gentile she had no claim upon Him on that ground; but when she persisted in her appeal without basing it on any claim, willing only to take the crumbs, He answered her request and commended her faith (15:21-28). On his way back toward the Sea of Galilee, he passed through a district where crowds gathered about Him with their sick folk for healing,

who seem to have been mainly Gentiles. This is indicated by the unusual statement that "they glorified the God of Israel" (vs. 29-31). In this place He performed another miracle of feeding the multitude, and thus set forth His spiritual relation to the Gentile world (15:32-39).

When He arrived at the Sea of Galilee again, the Pharisees and Sadducees came asking for a sign from heaven. He condemned them for not knowing the signs of the times, and repeated what He had told them before, that no sign would be given them but the sign of Jonah (16:1-4; cf. 12:38-39). He subsequently warned the disciples to beware of the evil influence of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees, and He had to rebuke them for their spiritual dullness in misunderstanding His warning (16:5-12).

4. The Third Withdrawal (16:13-20). This time Jesus withdrew into the most northern district of Galilee, the parts of Cæsarea Philippi. Here took place Peter's great confession of Christ, His own first announcement of the Cross, and the Transfiguration. Only the first of these events is included in the present passage. It contains two great truths now revealed for the first time:

(1) The nature and office of the Christ (vs. 13-17). The first question which Jesus put to the disciples brought out the fact that popular opinion regarded Him as one of the greatest of men, but fell far short of recognizing His true nature or seeing in Him the Messiah. The second question was intended to bring out what they themselves, who knew Him most intimately, had come to see in Him. Peter, always the spokesman of the Apostles, replied

immediately: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God". The significance of this confession, which brought great joy to the heart of Jesus as His commendation of Peter shows, lies in not only recognizing in Him the promised Messiah, but also recognizing in the Messiah the Divine nature. Jesus Christ was more than the best and greatest of men; He was God come down among men, God manifest in the flesh.

(2) The nature and office of the Church (vs. 18-20). Jesus followed up His commendation of Peter with a statement based on his confession: "Thou art Peter (a piece of rock) and upon this rock (Himself) will I build my church". Because of Israel's refusal to accept Him as the Messiah, Jesus now undertook to establish a new Israel—"my church"—built upon Himself as the "rock". This title is never used of men in the Old Testament, but always of the Lord God (Deut. 32:4; 2 Sam. 22:32; Isa. 26:4; 44:8; Psa. 62:2; 95:1). The main theme of the whole conversation, introduced by the Lord Himself, is the nature of His own Person: and it breaks the thread of His argument to refer "this rock" to Peter. Jesus would probably accompany His play on words by a gesture, pointing to Peter first and then to Himself.

The "church" is the same as the "congregation" of the Old Testament (Deut. 31:30; 1 Chron. 29:1). The congregation was Israel in its collective capacity gathered around the Temple. The Church was to be the new Israel gathered around Jesus Christ. By "the gates of Hades" Jesus meant the power of death and the grave (Isa. 38:10; Psa. 9:13). The old Israel was confined to this world. The Church of Christ would reach out into the world beyond

death. Its members could not be held within the grave.

To the Church in the person of Peter, Jesus entrusted the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, that is, the right and privilege of opening the Kingdom to men by the preaching of the Gospel. Peter was the first to use the keys when He preached the Gospel at Pentecost. "Binding" and "loosing" were Rabbinical terms for forbidding and allowing, and they implied the right of spiritual discipline. The Lord conferred this upon Peter as the representative of the Church. It was given afterwards to all the disciples (Matt. 18:18; John 20:23).

5. The Announcement of the Cross (16:21-28). The phrase, "from that time", marks a new stage in the ministry of Jesus (cf. 4:17). He now began to tell His disciples of His approaching suffering and death and resurrection. Israel's rejection of the Kingdom would culminate in the Cross. It was by this road the King was to attain His Kingdom, for the Cross carried with it the Resurrection (v. 21). He repeated the prediction of His death several times after this, and on each occasion He foretold His resurrection as well. This announcement was made first only after Peter's confession had shown that the disciples were coming to understand the secret of His own Person, for only in the light of that could they understand the significance of His death. Even yet they did not understand, and Peter's protest was met at once by the Lord's sharp rebuke (vs. 22-23). He saw in it another attempt of Satan to divert Him from His path by the offer that he had made to Him in the wilderness (4:8-10).

In immediate connection with this first announce-

ment of His own sufferings, Jesus pointed out the path for His disciples to take in following Him, and then went on to foretell His own coming in glory (vs. 24-28). The members of the Church, those who would follow Him henceforth during the days of His rejection, must do so by the way of the Cross; and the way of the Cross is the way to glory.

THE PREPARATION FOR THE CROSS

(Chs. 17-18)

The Transfiguration marked the highest point in the life of Jesus. It was the culmination of His sinless and perfect humanity. He might have entered Heaven by that way at this point in His life, for upon Him death had no claim. It also foreshadowed the glory of His coming Kingdom (2 Pet. 1:16-18). But Jesus deliberately turned back from the open door of Heaven through which He might have left the world, and set His face toward the Cross, in order to accomplish the redemption of the world by giving Himself to death for the sin of the world.

1. The Transfiguration and its Issues (Ch. 17). This event brings us to the crowning act of self-renunciation in Jesus' life of surrender to the Father's will. It is followed in the narrative by incidents illustrating phases of self-denial.

(1) The scene on the mount (vs. 1-8). The Transfiguration of Jesus was not a manifestation of His Divine nature shining through His human nature. It was the manifestation of His human nature, now perfected, in its true glory. Moses and Elijah were present, not as immaterial spirits, but in bodily form as Jesus was. They were men who

had got beyond the reach of death, Elijah by translation and Moses by resurrection, and were now in glory. (It is implied in Jude 9 that Moses was raised from the dead). They represented the Law and the Prophets; and their presence with Jesus on the mount marked the essential connection of the Saviour with the Old Testament dispensation.

The three men stood there, as it were, in the midst of the heavenly world. Peter's impulsive wish expressed the sense of bliss which the sight gave to the three disciples whom Jesus had taken with Him to see His glory. The voice that came out of the cloud which finally overshadowed the vision expressed the Father's approval of the Son's self-surrender in turning back to the Cross. It had been heard before, when Jesus dedicated Himself at His baptism to fulfil the Father's will as the Messiah (3:17).

(2) The descent from the mount (vs. 9-21). On the way down Jesus again referred to His death and resurrection. In answer to the disciples' enquiry why the Scribes said that Elijah must first come, He explained that the prophecy regarding the coming of Elijah (Mal. 4:5-6) had been fulfilled already in the person of John the Baptist (vs. 9-13). The failure of the other disciples to heal the demoniac boy when Jesus was absent from them, He attributed to the weakness of faith when not supported by prayer and self-denial. Faith is victorious only when accompanied by communion with God and victory over self (vs. 14-21).

(3) The final stay in Galilee (vs. 22-27). During this period He uttered another prediction of His death and resurrection (vs. 22-23). On His return to Capernaum the Temple tax was being collected

(Exod. 30:11-16). As the Son, Jesus claimed to be exempt; but in order to give no offence to others, He provided the tax for Himself and Peter by a coin found in the mouth of a fish that Peter caught by following His instructions (vs. 24-27). It was another example of self-denial: He had declined to assert a right that was His as the Messiah.

2. Further Instructions for Discipleship (Ch. 18). The occasion of this address to the disciples was their question: "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" (v. 1). This very question came from a wrong attitude: they had forgotten His warning about the Cross. Jesus now gave them instructions from the new point of view. He explained the peculiar qualities that should characterize those who take up their cross and follow Him. These may be summed up under three heads.

(1) The spirit of humility and trustfulness (vs. 2-14). Jesus put a child in the midst, and then said to the disciples, "Except ye turn, and become as little children"; that is, except you give up this spirit of self-seeking and ambition, and become humble and trustful like little children. He is the greatest in the Kingdom who thinks least of greatness (vs. 1-4).

Having answered the question asked of Him, Jesus takes up the thought of what the child represents in its trustfulness and simplicity, and identifies Himself with childlike believers, whom He speaks of as "these little ones". To receive such an one in His name, that is, for His sake, is to receive Himself. Then He adds a solemn and awful warning against putting "offences"—temptations or stumbling blocks—in their way (vs. 5-7), and points out the great peril of having any stumbling

blocks in one's own life (vs. 8-9). He goes on to emphasize His warning against despising "one of these little ones", and declares that they are under the special care of heavenly guardians who have access to the Father (Heb. 1:14), and it is not His will that any one of them should go astray like a lost sheep (vs. 10-14).

(2) The spirit of unity and unanimity (vs. 15-20). The principle of spiritual unity is stated in v. 20: Christ Himself is the centre. It is His presence that gives spiritual unity to a company of believers. This principle has different manifestations. Three of them are dealt with in these verses: spiritual discipline (vs. 15-17), spiritual authority (v. 18), and spiritual power (vs. 19-20). Jesus confirmed the right of discipline given to His Church in 16:19. The mind of God is expressed in the judgment of a company of believers who are united to Christ in a spiritual unity, and the prayers of such a company have divine power, for Christ Himself is in their midst.

(3) The spirit of love and forgiveness (vs. 21-35). Forgiveness toward an offending brother should have no limit (vs. 21-22). This was the meaning of Jesus' reply to Peter's question; and He went on to illustrate it by the parable of the unmerciful servant (vs. 23-34). Our sin against God is beyond comparison with the sin of our fellow-men against us. Since God has forgiven us the greater debt, we ought to forgive our brother the lesser debt (Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13). Those who do not show the spirit of forgiveness have not the faith that receives the forgiveness of God (v. 35). He who follows Christ in the way of the Cross will have the spirit of forgiveness in his heart.

THE APPROACH TO THE CROSS

(Chs. 19-20)

Jesus now left Galilee for the last time, and made His way slowly toward Jerusalem through the district on the eastern side of the Jordan, teaching and healing as He went. The progress of His journey is marked at several points in the course of the narrative (19:1-2; 20:17, 29; 21:1). A number of incidents are recorded in these chapters as belonging to this period.

On one occasion the Pharisees came trying Him with a question regarding the Mosaic law of divorce, and He repeated the teaching He had given in the Sermon on the Mount (19:3-9). The fact that the Creator made man both male and female meant that the marriage bond should be inviolable. The Mosaic regulation was a concession to moral weakness in Israel's primitive state. The strictness of this moral standard brought a question from the disciples, and to them Jesus gave a further word of instruction and advice (19:10-12).

At one place Jesus received and blessed little children who were brought to Him, commanding the disciples not to turn them away, but let them come to Him, "for of such is the kingdom of heaven" (19:13-15). Childlikeness, the spirit of humble trust, is the characteristic quality of the members of the Kingdom.

A rich young man came asking Him what good thing He should do to have eternal life, and went away downcast when Jesus put to him the final test of self-denial, which he would not meet. The principle implied in the self-sacrifice that the Lord demanded of him was the duty of the rich to regard

their riches as a trust with which to minister to others (19:16-22). This led Jesus to tell the disciples how hard it is for a rich man, a man who has the roots of his life in this world, to meet the test of self-denial required for entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven, where life belongs to another world (19:23-26).

Then Peter reminded Him that they had met the test, having left all to follow Him, and asked what they should have. Jesus commended their devotion and gave them a promise of abundant reward in His Kingdom (19:27-30). He followed this with the parable of the labourers in the vineyard, in order to warn them against the bargaining spirit (20:1-16). The parable hangs on the closing words of ch. 19, and ends with a similar statement. Rewards will not be of works, but of grace: not according to the length of service or the amount of toil, but according to His own will; and His will is always good and kind and considerate. Therefore the true motive in serving the Master is not that of the hireling, fulfilling a contract, but that which is inspired by *grateful, loving trust*.

As He was getting nearer Jerusalem, Jesus told His disciples for the third time, and more fully than before, of what was to happen there—His betrayal, His condemnation to death by the Jews, His crucifixion by the Gentiles, and His resurrection on the third day afterwards (20:17-19). Then the wife of Zebedee came with an ambitious request on behalf of her two sons, James and John, for the highest places in His Kingdom (20:20-23). The consequent indignation of the other disciples against the two brothers led Jesus to call them all together, and warn them against the worldly desire to rule and

exercise authority. Greatness among them would be reached by the way of service. He Himself came among men not to be served, but to serve, and even "to give His life a ransom for many" (20:24-28).

As they were leaving Jericho on the final stage of the journey, followed by a great company of pilgrims going up to the Passover, Jesus healed two blind men who were sitting by the wayside. When they heard that He was passing, they appealed to Him as "thou son of David", thus implying a belief that He was the Messiah (20:29-34). The whole incident reveals a rising tide of interest on the part of the people in the Messianic claims of Jesus as He kept going on toward Jerusalem.

THE FINAL TESTIMONY TO ISRAEL

(Chs. 21-23)

The time had now come for Jesus to make the final presentation of Himself to the Jewish nation. He made a public entry into Jerusalem in a way that was a manifest claim to be the Messiah. This was followed by several days of teaching in the Temple and controversy with the Jewish leaders. But there was no recognition of His claim on their part. Then came His final denunciation of them.

1. Final Messianic Acts (21:1-22). Three acts are recorded in this passage, in each of which He manifested His Messianic character and claimed Messianic authority.

(1) The royal entrance into Jerusalem (vs. 1-11). Jesus deliberately entered the city in the manner that prophecy had foretold the King should come

(Zech. 9:9). As He did so, He accepted the acclamations of the people who hailed Him as the Messiah.

(2) The cleansing of the Temple (vs. 12-17). He swept away the unholy traffic which was carried on in the outer court for the convenience of the people and the profit of the priests. He followed this up by healing the blind and the lame who came to Him. He welcomed the praises of the children in its courts, and spurned the indignant and jealous protest of the chief priests and scribes.

(3) The curse upon the fruitless fig-tree (vs. 18-22). He pronounced this curse on His way into the city next morning, as a symbolic act of judgment on Israel. The reply which Jesus gave to the question of the disciples implied that He wrought this miracle by faith in answer to prayer.

2. Final Messianic Teaching (21:23—22:14). The religious leaders came to Jesus as He was teaching in the Temple, and demanded to know what authority He had for doing these things. He replied with another question, whether the baptism of John was from Heaven or of men. Their answer exposed their hypocrisy and showed their unfitness to be religious leaders (21:23-27). Jesus then went on to speak three parables against them.

(1) The two sons (21:28-32). This parable brought out the real nature of their sin as disobedience to God, and set their religious profession and spiritual indifference over against the repentance of those who had made no profession before.

(2) The wicked husbandmen (21:33-46). In this story Jesus drew a picture of the persistent disobedience to God of the religious leaders of Israel throughout the history of the nation, leading up to

their rejection of the Messiah Himself. He told the story in such a graphic and impressive way that He drew out from them their own condemnation (v. 41). Then He went on to declare that the Kingdom of God should be taken from them and given to a new Israel, a nation no longer disobedient, but "bringing forth the fruits thereof". This roused their anger, and they would have arrested Him then, but feared the people.

(3) The marriage feast (22:1-14). In this parable Jesus carried His survey of the national disobedience still further. It depicts the rejection of Israel from the privileges of the Kingdom, and the subsequent calling of the Gentiles. In the incident of the man who was discovered without a wedding garment, there is a foreshadowing of the essential nature of salvation as a free gift accepted from God. The garments for the feast were provided by the host for the invited guests. The whole parable is a prophetic picture of the present Christian age.

3. Final Controversy with the Jewish Leaders (22:15-46). The Pharisees now plotted with the other religious parties among the Jews to ensnare Jesus in His teaching, and three questions were put to Him by three different groups. Having answered them all, He put His own question to them, and they could not reply. All His foes were silenced; they had been completely baffled.

(1) A political question about the taxes (vs. 15-22). The Herodians, whom the Pharisees got to put this craftily designed question, seem to have been a small political party who supported the dynasty of Herod and favoured the rule of Rome. The wis-

dom of Christ's answer made them marvel. It is a perfect summary of the duty of a citizen.

(2) A doctrinal question about the resurrection (vs. 23-33). This was raised by the Sadducees, who disbelieved in another world and accepted only the books of Moses. Christ's answer exposed their ignorance even of those Scriptures that they professed to believe. By quoting Exod. 3:6, where God calls Himself the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, after they had all died, Jesus showed that the books of Moses teach a future life.

(3) A moral question about the Law (vs. 34-40). One of the Scribes belonging to the orthodox party of the Pharisees, who magnified the letter and ignored the spirit of the Law, asked Jesus which was the greatest of the commandments of the Law. By quoting Deut. 6:5 and Lev. 19:18, Jesus summed up all the Law and the Prophets in the duty of love to God and love to man.

(4) A Scriptural question about the Messiah (vs. 41-46). It was now the Lord's turn, and the question He put to the Pharisees, "What think ye of the Christ?" brought out the fact that their idea of the promised Messiah was quite inadequate and was due to their ignorance of the Scriptures. They believed that the Messiah was David's son, but they could not explain why David in Psa. 110:1 showed such reverence for him as to speak of him as "my Lord". They were looking only for an earthly monarch, an heir to occupy David's throne and restore his earthly kingdom. They failed to see that the long-promised Messiah of the prophetic Scriptures was of a far higher nature.

In this argument Jesus not only assumed the

Messianic character of Psalm 110, but also declared that David wrote it and did so by inspiration. Subjective literary criticism denies the Davidic authorship, but attempts to justify Jesus on the ground that His reasoning was based on what the Pharisees thought of the psalm. If this were the case, our Lord's words would have no weight for us now, whatever weight they might have had for the Pharisees then.

4. Final Denunciation of the Scribes and Pharisees (Ch. 23). It was useless for Jesus to try any longer to make the leaders of the Jews see His true character. He now uttered a solemn and deliberate address about them to the Jewish people and His own disciples. He recognized their position as religious authorities, but denounced their bad example, and warned His disciples against them (vs. 1-12). Then He pronounced His judgment upon them in a series of seven "woe's" of terrific condemnation (vs. 13-31). Their sin completed the iniquity of their fathers, and the long-withheld judgment of God would now fall upon the guilty nation (vs. 32-36). With a sorrowing cry over the city that had refused to receive Him, He finally left it to its doom (vs. 37-39).

THE FINAL PROPHECY TO THE DISCIPLES

(Chs. 24-25)

As Jesus was leaving the Temple with His disciples for the last time, they drew His attention to the massive structure of its buildings, doubtless with national Jewish pride in their hearts. He then startled them with the declaration that the whole

place was to be completely destroyed. When they arrived on the Mount of Olives they asked Him, "When shall these things be?" and added another question: "What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" (24:1-3). The disciples no doubt thought that such a catastrophe as the destruction of the Temple would mark the end of the world, when His second coming would take place.

His reply is contained in these two chapters, and is of greater length than any other recorded answer to a question addressed to Him. In the course of it He keeps the two events in view. The destruction of the Temple, marking the end of the Jewish age, is in the immediate foreground. His own second coming, marking the end of the Christian era, is in the distant background. Taken as a whole, the address is not so much a program of historic events as a statement of historic principles. The destiny of a nation, like that of the individual, is determined by its relation to Jesus Christ. So also will be the destiny of the world.

1. General Warnings regarding the Christian Age (24:4-14). This passage applies primarily to the period ending with the fall of Jerusalem, but also to the whole age ending with the coming of Christ. It contains warnings about things that might be mistaken for signs of His coming, rather than descriptions of true signs. Jesus begins by telling the disciples not to be led astray by false religious teachers, nor to be troubled when they hear of wars among the nations and calamities in the natural world. These things will mark the age, but will not be signs of the end (vs. 4-8).

The followers of Christ will meet with persecution and trial and hatred in the world (vs. 9-10). False prophets will arise, and there will be a decay of devotion to Christ in the midst of the iniquity of the world. Only those that endure will be saved (vs. 11-13). When the Gospel shall have been preached throughout the world for a witness to all the nations, then the end will come (v. 14). It is probable that this condition was fulfilled in the world of the Roman Empire before the fall of Jerusalem. It awaits fulfilment in the whole world before the end of the Christian age.

2. Special Warnings regarding the Fall of Jerusalem (24:15-28). This passage contains a prophetic warning of the Roman invasion of Palestine, which began in A.D. 66, and resulted four years later in the capture of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple. The phrase, "the abomination of desolation" (v. 15), is a reference to Dan. 9:27. The prophecy was fulfilled when the pagan Roman army invaded the holy land, bringing the desolation of divine judgment upon it. The parenthetic words, "let him that readeth understand", were inserted by the author of the Gospel as a warning to his readers. This shows that the book was written before the event took place.

The Lord goes on to warn His followers to flee from Judea and Jerusalem speedily when they see the Roman army approaching the city (vs. 16-20). This warning was heeded. The Christians escaped from the city before it was completely surrounded, and established themselves at Pella across the Jordan.

A great tribulation would then set in such as had

never happened before and would never happen again (vs. 21-22). This unparalleled affliction is described in Jer. 30:7 as "the time of Jacob's trouble", and in Dan. 12:1 as "a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation". It is the long-foretold judgment that was to fall upon Israel for the national rejection of their Messiah. The tribulation of the Jews is unprecedented, both in the severity of its fall upon the nation at that time, and also in its age-long continuance ever since. It is also unparalleled: it is of such a nature as no other nation has ever suffered. "Except those days had been shortened", the days of the siege of Jerusalem, "no flesh would have been saved": no part of the Jewish nation would have survived. "But for the elect's sake", for the sake of the believing Jews in the nation, "those days shall be shortened". The slaughter of life was tremendous and appalling, but the siege was not prolonged.

Then Jesus uttered a warning against those who give false teaching and raise false hopes about Christ's coming (vs. 23-26). The coming of the Son of Man will not be a secret event; it will be seen and recognized simultaneously everywhere, like a flash of lightning (v. 27). Then comes a final word of doom (v. 28). By "the carcass" in this proverbial expression, Jesus referred to the Judaism of His day. It had lost all spiritual life, and was only a dead body, attracting upon itself the agents of destruction—the false Christs, the false prophets, and the pagan armies of Rome.

3. Special Warnings regarding the Coming of Christ (24:29-51). The prophecy now passes to the end of the Christian age and the coming of the

Son of Man. This is described as happening "immediately after the tribulation of those days": that is, when the tribulation of Israel, which began with the fall of Jerusalem, should be drawing to an end (v. 29). Then a period of trouble for all the world should set in, which Jesus describes in terms taken from the Old Testament predictions of national judgments (Isa. 13:10; 24:23). When this collapse of the present world order takes place, then shall the Son of Man appear in power and glory, gathering His chosen people to Himself (vs. 30-31). He is represented as "coming in the clouds of heaven", that is, from behind the veil of the heavenly world (Acts 1:11). This brings us to the resurrection and the rapture of the saints, which Paul describes as taking place at the second coming of Christ (1 Cor. 15:51-52; 1 Thess. 4:16-17).

The fulfilment of the prophecy was to begin in that very generation. As the budding of the fig-tree indicates the sure approach of summer, so the events of that time would be a sure indication of the coming of the Son of Man (vs. 32-33). "This generation shall not pass away, till all these things be accomplished", or come to be; that is, till their accomplishment should begin (vs. 34-35). The actual time of His coming, however, is known only to God; no visible sign of it is given. It will be sudden and unexpected, like the judgment of the flood in the days of Noah. Human life will be going on in its usual way, and men will be engaged in their ordinary occupations, when the final separation among men is made (vs. 36-41).

Hence the need of watchfulness. This is the attitude the disciples are to take during the whole age (v. 42). The warning is enforced by two illustra-

tions: the householder and the thief (vs. 43-44), and the servant and his master (vs. 45-51).

4. Preparation for the Coming of Christ (25: 1-30). The idea of watching is now taken up and explained in two parables. These illustrate the kind of preparation that is meant by "watching".

(1) The virgins waiting for the bridegroom (vs. 1-13). This parable teaches the lesson of vigilance and patient waiting, and the need of inward preparation. This consists in the possession and cultivation of spiritual life. The ten virgins were all alike in outward profession: they all carried lamps. The two groups differed in the matter of oil, which is the symbol of the Holy Spirit. The wise virgins, who took oil to supply their lamps, represent those whose lives are fed by the inward presence of the Spirit (Rom. 8:9). The lamps of the others went out when the crisis came.

(2) The talents and their use (vs. 14-30). This parable teaches the lesson of diligence and faithful work, and the need of outward preparation. This consists in active service for Christ. The talents are intended to represent spiritual gifts and opportunities for spiritual service. These usually have a special relation to natural endowments (1 Cor. 12: 4-11). The lord of the servants in the parable gave them "his goods", to every one "according to his several ability". They were not given as a personal possession, but as a trust to be used in his interest.

5. The Throne of the Son of Man (25:31-46). This sublime scene is a symbolic representation of the power and glory of the Lord when He comes as the representative Head of the human race. It is not intended to give the program of judgment, but

rather to set forth the nature and principles of judgment. During the present age Jesus is manifested as Saviour: then He will be manifested as King and Judge.

He is represented as sitting on the judgment-seat of the world, attended by hosts of angels, the whole human race before Him awaiting His verdict (vs. 31-33). These tremendous words were uttered by Jesus within three days of the Cross. He went on to explain and illustrate His method of judgment (vs. 34-45). He will act as the representative Man, and proceed on the principle manifested in redemption. Only two classes of men will be recognized. They will be distinguished by one test alone—their attitude toward Himself. In putting this test, He identifies Himself with His disciples. The attitude of men to Him is judged by the way they treat His followers. The separation He makes among men by this test will be final and unalterable—eternal punishment for the one class and eternal life for the other (v. 46).

THE SUFFERING OF THE CROSS

(Chs. 26-27)

We come now to the heart of the Gospel, the climax of revelation, the central act in the work of redemption. The importance of the event is marked by the fulness of detail with which the story is told. The death of Christ was no after-thought on God's part (Act 2:23). The time and the circumstances were ordered by Him without interfering with the free action of Christ's foes or lessening their guilt. This is strikingly illustrated by the fact that the crucifixion took place at the Passover, contrary to

the intention of the Jews (26:5). The great Paschal Lamb was slain at the hour and in the manner appointed, as set forth in the type.

1. The Preparations (26:1-16). All the lines of the narrative now begin to converge toward the Cross. Jesus Himself sought to prepare His disciples for the event, which He had foretold so often and which was now so near (vs. 1-2). The Jewish council of religious rulers plotted in the house of the high priest to capture and kill Him (vs. 3-5). At a supper in the house of Simon the leper in Bethany, Mary (John 12:3), whose name is not given by Matthew, probably because she was still living, poured a flask of precious ointment on His head. He saw in the act, which the disciples thought was a great waste, a preparation for His burial, and gave her His highest commendation (vs. 6-13). Judas Iscariot, one of His own Twelve, went out after this and bargained with the chief priests to betray Him (vs. 14-16).

2. The Last Supper (26:17-35). The disciples prepared the Passover, according to the directions Jesus gave them, in the house of an unnamed follower (vs. 17-19). When He sat down with them, He announced that one of them should betray Him; and in answering the troubled enquiries which this caused, He gave a direct warning to Judas (vs. 20-25). The Passover feast having fulfilled its purpose, Jesus now instituted a new feast for His disciples, embodying the fundamental truth of Christianity as the Passover had embodied that of Judaism (vs. 26-29).

The Lord's Supper was to be a memorial of His death and a sign of the New Covenant foretold in

the Old Testament (Jer. 31:31; Dan. 9:27), which He was now about to seal with His blood, thus securing the final remission of sins. The hymn which they sang at the end of the Supper, before going out to the Mount of Olives (v. 30), was probably part of the Hallel (Psalms 113-118), which the Jews sang in the course of the Passover feast. Then Jesus disclosed the increasing loneliness of His spirit by announcing that they should all desert Him that night, but that He would meet them after His resurrection in Galilee (vs. 31-32). This evoked a boastful profession of loyalty on Peter's part, to which the Lord replied by foretelling that disciple's three-fold denial of his Master (vs. 33-35).

3. Gethsemane (26:36-56). Here took place both the agony and the betrayal. The agony was the final stage of the conflict with Satan which had begun with the temptation in the wilderness. He took the chosen three with Him when He went into the garden to pray, that He might have them near by to watch with Him. He came back again and again, only to find them asleep. They failed Him in His hour of awful loneliness, and He had to tread the winepress alone (vs. 36-44). Jesus prayed first: "If it be possible, let this cup pass away from me"; and then: "If this cannot pass away, except I drink it, thy will be done". It was not the fear of physical pain or the dread of impending death that made Him pray thus, "with strong crying and tears" (Heb. 5:7). It was the mysterious nature of the agony which He could not escape if He would redeem the world. He who knew no sin was being made sin (2 Cor. 5:21). He was now coming to know the cost of giving His life as a ransom (20:28).

The answer to His prayer was not the removal of the cup, but a view of the triumph that lay beyond it (Heb. 12:2). He came out of that hour with the sublime calmness of complete and final surrender to the Father's will (vs. 45-46). This was manifest during the shameful scene that followed, when He was betrayed by Judas into the hands of His foes, and deserted by the rest of His disciples (vs. 47-56). Throughout the whole scene He was master of the situation, and declared that He could call twelve legions of angels to His aid; but He yielded Himself to their will.

4. The Jewish Trial (26:57-75). Jesus was taken to the house of Caiaphas the high priest, where the Jewish Council was gathered. They sought for some ground on which to condemn Him to death by means of false witnesses, but failed (vs. 57-62). At length the high priest challenged Him on oath to declare whether He was the Messiah, the Son of God. He admitted the claim, and added a calm and majestic "Nevertheless I say unto you". In contrast with His present appearance as a prisoner before them, they should see Him some day enthroned in heavenly power and glory. At that they condemned Him at once as worthy of death for blasphemy, and vented their hatred upon Him by insult and buffeting and ridicule (vs. 63-68).

While the trial was going on, Peter, who had followed afar off and slipped into the courtyard of the high priest's house with the crowd (v. 58), was subjected to the taunts of those who stood by, and three times denied his Master, the last time with a storm of oaths and curses. Then he heard the cock

crow, and his repentance when he went out took as vehement a form as his denial (vs. 69-75).

5. The Roman Trial (27:1-31). Having been condemned by the Jewish Council, Jesus was sent early in the morning to the Roman governor for the death sentence, for the Romans reserved that legal right for themselves (vs. 1-2). At this point there is a break in the narrative. Matthew tells of the remorse and suicide of Judas, the sequel of his bargain with the chief priests (vs. 3-5). They used the money he returned to them to buy a burying place for strangers, and Matthew found in this another fulfilment of prophecy (vs. 6-10). The quotation which the text attributes to Jeremiah is taken freely from Zech. 11:12-13. It is arbitrary to attribute this error to a lapse of memory on Matthew's part. It is just as likely to have crept into the first published edition of the Gospel as a copyist's error, and to have persisted in the subsequent editions.

Matthew resumes his narrative of the trial by noting Pilate's surprise when Jesus stood before him. There is an emphasis on "thou" in the governor's question: "Art thou the King of the Jews?" Jesus replied in the affirmative, but gave no answer to the accusations of the Jewish hierarchy (vs. 11-14). The shrewd Roman judge saw through their motive in delivering up Jesus, and knew that He was innocent, but he made a cowardly attempt to escape from his own responsibility. He tried to have the people ask for His release by offering them a choice between Barabbas and Christ (vs. 15-18).

At this point Pilate received a warning message from his wife, who must have heard of Jesus before, while the religious leaders incited the people to ask

for the release of Barabbas (vs. 19-21). When Pilate then asked what he should do with Jesus, they cried out at once for His crucifixion, and became more vehement when Pilate protested that He had done no evil (vs. 22-23). The Roman governor had been deeply impressed by the bearing of Jesus, and was convinced that he should release Him; but fearing to increase the tumult that was rising in the crowd, he made a spectacular display of washing his hands "of the blood of this righteous man", and delivered Him to their will. They accepted the responsibility: "His blood be on us, and on our children". Thus they sealed the national character of the crime (vs. 24-26). Then comes another scene of shame—the mocking insults heaped upon Jesus by the heathen soldiers of the Roman governor (vs. 27-31).

6. The Crucifixion (27:32-44). On the way out to Golgotha, a non-Palestinian Jew was found and pressed into the service of carrying the cross. Matthew notes the fact that Jesus refused to drink the drugged cup, which was usually given to dull the senses of those that were crucified (vs. 32-33). He then describes the scene round the cross: the soldiers casting lots for the garments of Jesus as they sat and watched Him, the special significance of what was written over His head, the robbers crucified on each side, the raillery of the passers-by, and the mockery of the Jewish religious leaders standing near (vs. 34-44). The chief point at which the railing and mocking was directed was His claim to be the Son of God.

7. The Death of Christ (27:45-56). The crucifixion took place at nine o'clock in the morning (Mark 15:25), and at noon a darkness came over

the whole land which lasted till three o'clock. Just about that time Jesus uttered a loud cry of desolation, which came from the profoundest depths of agony and loneliness (vs. 45-46). It is the only utterance from the cross recorded by Matthew and Mark; and both of them give the words in the language that Jesus used before putting them in the language in which they wrote (Mark 15:34). This indicates the unforgettable impression which the cry made upon the memory of the Apostles, while it was strangely misunderstood by others standing by (vs. 47-49). It expresses, in the opening words of Psalm 22, the innermost secret of the Cross, and the real significance of His death.

With another loud cry Jesus "yielded up his spirit" (v. 50). The words describe the voluntary nature of His death. In the midst of that darkness, when He was utterly alone and could not find the face of God, He deliberately gave His life away by an act of His own will. Thus He "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb. 9:26). He was obedient to His Father's will, "even unto death, yea, the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:8). It was the death for the world's sin, and differed from every other death.

The extraordinary events which accompanied the actual death of Christ marked its unique and supernatural character (vs. 51-53). The rending of the veil that hid the Holy-of-holies in the Temple, which would be observed by the priests, many of whom afterwards became believers (Act 6:7), symbolically announced that the sacrificial services of the Mosaic ritual were no longer needed, for redemption had now been accomplished (Heb. 10:19-22). The earthquake which rent the rocks and opened the

tombs marked Nature's sympathy with her suffering Lord.

Another portent occurred which Matthew alone records, the resurrection of some of the saints. Who they were is not stated; but Matthew's language gives the impression that they were disciples who had died before the crucifixion of Jesus, and accompanied Him when He rose again. By appearing to many afterwards they bore witness to the fact that Christ had conquered death and the grave for His people. The centurion in command of the soldiers, who must have witnessed many a crucifixion, was overawed by what happened at the crucifixion of Jesus (v. 54). The women who had followed Jesus from Galilee and ministered unto Him, among whom were Mary Magdalene and two mothers who had sons among the Apostles, stood watching afar off when He died (vs. 55-56).

8. His Burial (27:57-66). Joseph of Arimathea, one of the few rich men among His disciples, asked Pilate for the body of Jesus, and placed it in his own tomb, while Mary Magdalene and another Mary sat near by, reverently watching (vs. 57-61). Next day the Jewish leaders got Pilate's permission, and took special measures to close the tomb and seal it against a possible attempt they thought the disciples might make to steal the body away and declare that He had risen from the dead (vs. 62-66).

THE VICTORY OF THE CRUCIFIED

(Ch. 28)

The Resurrection is not described in any of the Gospels. No one saw Jesus rise from the dead. The

evidence that He had risen was first discovered in the empty tomb. This was accompanied by an angelic announcement of the wondrous fact. Then there followed His own appearances, beginning on the day of the Resurrection and continuing from time to time till the Ascension forty days afterwards (Acts 1:3). The impressions produced upon the disciples, as the news spread and the evidence accumulated, are reflected in the various accounts of the four Evangelists. They are all distinct and independent narratives, differing so much in substance and detail as to show that the writers could not have used one another's accounts. Matthew tells of the visit of the women to the tomb on the Resurrection morning, the bribery of the Roman guard by the Jews, and the Lord's missionary commission to the Apostles.

1. The Women at the Tomb (vs. 1-10). The two women who had watched the burial of Jesus on the evening of the crucifixion waited over the Sabbath, and came back to the sepulchre at dawn on the first day of the week. There they saw something extraordinary. An earthquake occurred, and an angel of glorious aspect rolled away the stone to show the empty tomb, and announced that Jesus had risen. The very words of his message quiver with the joy that thrilled the angelic world over the great event: "Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell his disciples" (vs. 1-7). As they ran to tell the news, Jesus revealed Himself to them, and gave them a message for His disciples—"my brethren"—to meet Him in Galilee (vs. 8-10).

2. The Bribery of the Guard (vs. 11-15). In the meantime some of the Roman soldiers set to guard

the tomb reported to the chief priests what had happened. After consulting together, the Jewish authorities gave a large bribe to the soldiers to circulate the story that the disciples stole the body while they were asleep, and promised to secure them against the danger of getting into trouble with Pilate over the matter. This was the Jewish explanation of the empty tomb. The incident is recorded by Matthew alone.

3. The Apostolic Commission (vs. 16-20). Jesus met His eleven Apostles in Galilee at the place where He had appointed them, and gave them a command to evangelize the world. They were to gather disciples from all nations, and teach them to observe all that He had commanded them. The sign and seal of discipleship was to be baptism into the name of the Trinity. Two great new facts were revealed to them, which were the results of His redemptive work: all authority had been given Him in Heaven and on earth; and His unseen presence would be with them always, even to the end of the Christian age. With these two transcendent truths our Lord buttressed His last command.

* * * *

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IN MATTHEW

The most prominent idea in the Gospel of Matthew is "the kingdom of heaven". The expression is used thirty-three times; the word "kingdom" itself over fifty times. Matthew alone describes the Kingdom in this way. In the other Gospels the expression is always "the kingdom of God", which Matthew uses only four times.

The whole public ministry of Jesus, as shown in

Matthew's narrative, was marked by the preaching of the Kingdom of Heaven. He began with the message of John the Baptist that the Kingdom of Heaven was "at hand" (4:17). When He sent the Twelve forth on their mission, it was to proclaim the same message (10:7). The Kingdom of Heaven was the key-note of the Sermon on the Mount (5:3), and the theme of most of the parables. All but four of the fourteen parables in this Gospel are introduced by the Lord as illustrations of what "the kingdom of heaven is like". The whole of His teaching is summed up under the comprehensive term, "the gospel of the kingdom" (4:23). At the end of His ministry He told the disciples that the work to be accomplished after He had gone was to preach "this gospel of the kingdom" throughout the whole world (24:14).

The Kingdom of Heaven was no new theme. It came out of the Old Testament. Daniel had declared that "the God of heaven" would set up a kingdom which should never be destroyed (Dan. 2:44). The idea goes back to the time of David. God had promised to establish his kingdom forever (2 Sam. 7:13; 1 Chron. 17:14). This promise was developed by prophets and psalmists into the promise of the Messianic Kingdom. They described its glories and privileges, and they represented its blessings as intended not for Israel alone but for the Gentiles as well. All this Old Testament background lay behind the teaching and preaching of Jesus.

The Messianic Kingdom was the true Old Testament hope. But the Jews took it in an earthly and carnal sense, and ignored the spiritual element that was in it. They thought only in terms of this world, and they failed to see that a spiritual order was

foreshadowed by the symbolism of their own system of worship, and that the heart of Messianic prophecy was the redeeming purpose of God. The apocalyptic literature which sprang up in the age between the Testaments suppressed the redemptive element entirely, and turned the national hope into another channel.

Thus it had come to pass that, along with the eager expectation existing among the people in the days of John and Jesus, there was also a complete misunderstanding of the nature of the coming Kingdom. It was conceived as an exalted kingdom of this world and as intended for Israel alone. A "son of David" was to restore David's earthly kingdom, sit on his royal seat in Jerusalem, and exercise dominion over the Gentiles from there.

It was necessary, therefore, that much of the teaching and preaching of Jesus should be directed toward removing this carnal conception from the minds of the people and creating in the minds of the disciples a true idea of the promised Kingdom. The Messianic Kingdom was to be established upon a spiritual basis, not upon a material or earthly basis. The principle of David's throne, which was the doing of the will of God (1 Sam. 15:23; Acts 13:22), was to be made fundamental and eternal. The purpose of the Messiah's coming into the world was to create an order of things in which men would do the will of God spontaneously and habitually.

It was a system of this kind that Jesus had in view in the prayer He taught His disciples: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth" (6:10). These words indicate the nature of the new order as it lay in the mind of the Lord.

When the Kingdom should come into being, the will of God would be done among men as the angels do it in Heaven—not by the compulsion of law and force, but by the glad and free constraint of willing and selfless obedience. In order to make this possible, He had to recreate the nature of man by taking it through the experience of the Cross and the Resurrection in His own Person.

In His teaching and preaching of the Kingdom, Jesus never gave the disciples the idea that He expected them to establish it. It was a supernatural and transcendent order, the founding of which was His work alone. During His earthly ministry it was only "at hand". It was being made ready for men by the Messianic transactions which He had come into the world to accomplish. Men were called to enter the Kingdom; and entering into it would not be an easy thing. It would require a complete revolution of life and the renunciation of this present world (18:3; 19:23-24). The new order was essentially a kingdom "of heaven". Its powers and principles were to have their seat in the heavenly world, and were to operate upon the lives of men in this world from the Godward side of the veil.

The keys of the Kingdom of Heaven were given to Peter (16:19), and he used them at Pentecost. His was the high honour of opening the Kingdom to men by being the first to proclaim the Christian Gospel. The descent of the Spirit from the risen and ascended Lord on that day was the final step in the preparation of the Kingdom of Heaven. Then it was ready for men to enter. Up to that time it had been "at hand". Since that time it has been open to all the world through the Gospel. The King-

dom is the essential reality at the heart of the Christian system. It is the unseen order behind the visible Church, and the ground for its existence in the world. It is the spiritual basis for the new world that is to be ushered in by the Second Coming of Christ.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK

THE Second Gospel has always been ascribed to the writer whose full name was John Mark. He was the son of a certain Mary whose house in Jerusalem was the meeting place of the early Christians (Acts 12:12). His conversion seems to have been due to Peter, who speaks of him as "Mark my son" (1 Peter 5:13). He was related to Barnabas (Col. 4:10), and was chosen by Barnabas and Paul to accompany them as their assistant on their first missionary journey (Acts 12:25; 13:5). Although he lost the favour of Paul by turning back during that journey (Acts 13:13; 15:37-40), yet at a later period in the Apostle's life Mark is named among his friends and fellow-labourers (Philemon 24; 2 Tim. 4:11).

According to the early Church Fathers, Mark wrote the Gospel in Rome. This tradition agrees with the character of the book. It was addressed specially to the Latin element in the world of the time, and its story of the mighty Servant of God was peculiarly fitted to appeal to the energetic and practical Roman temperament.

Ancient testimony declares that Peter's preaching was the basis of Mark's narrative. It seems to have been Peter's intention, when the time of his death drew near, to leave behind him some account of the Gospel history (2 Pet. 1:14-15). This book of Mark's fulfils that purpose, so that it might be called the Gospel according to Peter. Mark gives no

hint of his own authorship, but it is not improbable that in recording the incident of the unnamed young man in 14:51-52 he was referring to himself, for to others it would have appeared insignificant.

This testimony as to the origin of the Second Gospel is supported by the internal evidence of the book. The narrative bears the marks of Peter's recollection of events (1:36; 11:21; 14:72; 16:7). Peter is not put forward as prominently as in the other Gospels (cf. Mark 1:29 with Matt. 8:14 and Luke 4:38; Mark 7:17 with Matt. 15:15; Mark 8:29-30 with Matt. 16:17-19). His failures are sometimes made more conspicuous than those of the other disciples (cf. Mark 14:37 and Matt. 26:40).

The special theme of the Gospel is Jesus Christ as the Servant of God. This is indicated in the way the book opens. It starts with a heading: "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God". And then without any reference to the way He came into the world, the narrative plunges at once into the public ministry of Jesus. It portrays Him in His actual daily life, working among men in the fulness of his energy and self-sacrifice, accomplishing the will of God. The title "Son of God" is used of Jesus Christ in this heading with special reference to the Divine power He manifested in His ministry, rather than the Divine qualities He showed in His character. The Son of God is in view as the Servant of Jehovah, whose figure was foreshadowed in Isaiah (42:1-4; 49:1-6; 52:13-15).

Peter's words to Cornelius in Acts 10:36-38 describing the earthly ministry of Jesus are an epitome of Mark's Gospel. The Lord's own words recorded by Mark in 10:45 also sum up the Gospel: "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to min-

ister, and to give his life a ransom for many". On the basis of the two ideas in this statement, the book may be divided into two parts and outlined as follows:

- I. Jesus Christ as the Servant Working—
 - Chs. 1-9. (An account of the Lord's Ministry in Galilee)
 1. The Beginnings of His Ministry (Ch. 1)
 2. The Beginnings of Opposition (Chs. 2-3)
 3. Parables and Mighty Works (Chs. 4-5)
 4. Increasing Opposition (6:1—7:23)
 5. Retirements in Northern Galilee (7:24—9:50)

- II. Jesus Christ as the Servant Suffering—
 - Chs. 10-16. (An account of the Lord's Passion in Jerusalem)
 1. His Last Journey to Jerusalem (Ch. 10)
 2. His Last Ministry in Jerusalem (Chs. 11-12)
 3. His Last Prophecy to the Disciples (Ch. 13)
 4. His Suffering and Death (Chs. 14-15)
 5. His Resurrection and Ascension (Ch. 16)

Mark seems to have arranged his material in chronological order in narrating the events of the Lord's life. When the three Synoptic Gospels are compared, it is found that Matthew and Luke differ less from Mark than they differ from each other in the order of their narrative. The inference is that Mark's narrative follows most closely the actual sequence of events. When he comes to the last week in Jerusalem, he gives notes of time distinguishing the successive days.

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE MINISTRY

(Ch. 1)

Without any mention of the birth and childhood of Jesus and with only a brief reference to the ministry of John the Baptist, this opening chapter of the Gospel relates some typical acts and events in the early part of the Lord's Galilean ministry.

1. The Preparatory Ministry of John (vs. 1-8). After the opening headline of the Gospel, Mark begins by quoting two passages from the Prophets (Mal. 3:1 and Isa. 40:3), and then goes on to explain how they were fulfilled in the work of John the Baptist. John called the people to repentance in preparing the way of the Lord. He baptized with water, and preached the coming of One mightier than himself who should baptize with the Holy Spirit.

2. The Servant's Preparation (vs. 9-13). This consisted in receiving the Holy Spirit when He was baptized by John (vs. 9-11), and being tempted forty days by Satan in the wilderness (vs. 12-13). Mark records these events very briefly, but he adds graphic touches not found in Matthew. Jesus "saw the heavens rent asunder" when He was baptized. The Spirit "driveth him forth" into the wilderness; and there He was "with the wild beasts" during His temptation.

3. The Call of the First Disciples (vs. 14-20). Mark gives a brief statement of the fact that after John was put in prison Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming that the Kingdom of God was at hand, and calling for repentance because the time for its coming was fulfilled. Then he describes the way that

Jesus called the fishermen disciples from their nets—two pairs of brothers, Peter and Andrew, James and John. They were to follow Him, and He would make them fishers of men.

4. A Sabbath in Capernaum (vs. 21-34). This is the most complete account of a Sabbath day's work in the life of Jesus in all the Gospels. There are three scenes in it. The first is a morning scene in the synagogue, when He addressed the congregation and cured a demoniac who had disturbed the service by crying out against Him. Mark's description of the startling effect upon the people conveys the impression of an eye-witness. They were amazed both at the new tone of authority in Jesus' teaching and at His commanding power over evil spirits (vs. 21-28).

This miracle is typical of our Lord's method of dealing with those that were possessed with demons. The demonism of the Gospels is not to be dismissed as only a form of insanity. It was a real manifestation of evil of a supernatural origin. It has always existed in the heathen world, and it lurks in a deceptive and alluring form behind present-day spiritualism. The demons belonged to the kingdom of Satan, which was especially active when Christ was among men. They recognized in Jesus the Son of God, who had come to break their power and destroy them. He always cast them out at once, addressing the evil spirit as distinct from the man possessed.

The next scene occurred at midday in the home of Simon and Andrew. There Jesus cured Simon's wife's mother of fever when they told Him of her, taking her by the hand and raising her up. The

fever left her so completely, and her strength was restored so fully, that she began to minister to them when she rose (vs. 29-31). The third is an evening scene in the street when the sun was set and the Sabbath was past. Then they brought all the sick folk of the city to Jesus for healing. There was such a throng that Mark says, "All the city was gathered together at the door" (vs. 32-34).

5. A Tour in Galilee (vs. 35-46). In the early morning before daylight, Jesus went out to spend time in prayer in a place of solitude. The disciples followed Him till they found Him. When they told Him how all were seeking Him, He replied that He must fulfil His mission by preaching in other towns also. Accordingly, He took them with Him and visited the synagogues throughout Galilee. Mark adds, "casting out demons", as if that was the most significant feature of his healing ministry and made the deepest impression (vs. 35-39).

In the course of the tour a leper came appealing to Him to be made clean. Jesus cleansed him by His touch and His word: "I will; be thou made clean". This would indicate that Jesus performed His miraculous cures by an act of His will through power that went forth from His own person (cf. 5:30). Although warned to say nothing to anyone about his cure but to go through the necessary ceremony with the priest to have his cleansing certified (Lev. 14:2-7), the man spread the story widely, and such crowds came from every quarter that Jesus had to avoid the cities and keep in the open country where they would have easy access to Him (vs. 40-45).

Two striking features of the ministry of the Servant are brought out in this chapter. (1) His energy

and ceaseless activity as He went about His work. This is marked by the frequent use of the word "straightway", which occurs ten times in the chapter and forty-two times in the book. The A.V. varies the rendering and uses several terms for the same original Greek word. (2) The great popular enthusiasm which His teaching and His miracles evoked. Mark refers to this not only in this chapter (vs. 27-28, 45), but many times afterwards (2:1-2, 12, 13; 3:7-9, 20). There was great excitement wherever Jesus went.

THE BEGINNINGS OF OPPOSITION

(Chs. 2-3)

The thronging multitudes around Jesus are now constantly in view. In the midst of all the excitement and wonder among the people there is beginning to arise a movement of unbelief and antagonism among their religious leaders. This opposition was due to several causes. These are brought out in a number of the incidents recorded in these chapters.

1. His Claim to Forgive Sins (2:1-12). He healed a palsied man in Capernaum, whose friends let him down through the roof in the crowded house, after first announcing that his sins were forgiven. He did this in order to prove that He had this authority, when He perceived that some Scribes sitting there were criticizing Him in their hearts and charging Him with blasphemy. All the others there were amazed at what they saw, and gave God the glory: "We never saw it on this fashion".

2. His Companionship with Sinners (2:13-17). The Pharisees complained about this to His dis-

ciples when they saw the company that He sat with at a meal in the house of Levi, whom He had just called to discipleship from his office as a tax collector. Jesus replied that He came "not to call the righteous, but sinners". It is they that are sick, and not they that are whole, who need the physician.

3. His Neglect of Fasting (2:18-22). On one occasion when John's disciples and the Pharisees were observing a fast, Jesus was asked why His disciples did not fast. He replied by using the figure of "the bridegroom", under which John the Baptist had formerly spoken of Him (John 3:29), and pointing out that in His fellowship there was no need to fast. He spoke of a time when that fellowship would be broken by His removal, and then there would be a reason for such spiritual discipline as fasting signified (vs. 18-20). He added two parabolic sayings, vividly illustrating the fact that He was not adding any new rites or rules to the old system of Judaism, but was introducing something entirely new (vs. 21-22).

4. His Attitude to the Sabbath (2:23-3:6). This had to do specially with the traditional laws that had been added to the Sabbath law. The Pharisees criticized Him for allowing His disciples to pluck and eat ears of wheat as they passed through the grain fields on the Sabbath (2:23-28). He replied by pointing out from the example of David (1 Sam. 21:1-6) that the ceremonial law was subordinate to human needs. Then He added, "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath; so that the Son of man is lord even of the sabbath". He meant that as the representative Man

He had the right to determine how the Sabbath should be used for man's good.

On another Sabbath day, while in the synagogue, they watched Him to see if He would heal a man who was there with a withered hand, intending to accuse Him. This aroused His indignation and grief. He put a question to them which exposed their hypocrisy and hardness of heart; and then He healed the man as he stood before them all. From that day the Pharisees and the Herodians, two mutually hostile parties among the Jews, began to plot together to accomplish His destruction (vs. 1-6).

5. The Choice of the Twelve (3:7-19). The more the religious leaders opposed our Lord, the more the common people flocked to Him. They came from all parts of the land, and even from more distant places, drawn mainly by His fame as a healer. He withdrew to the sea-side and had a little boat wait upon Him there that He might the more easily minister to the crowds of people (vs. 7-12).

At this time He chose the twelve Apostles from among the larger number of His followers, and their names are now given. They are the same as in Matthew's list (10:2-4), but Mark notes that Jesus surnamed James and John Boanerges, "Sons of thunder". Mark's brief account emphasizes the deliberate nature of the Lord's choice—"whom he himself would"—and the twofold purpose of their appointment—(1) for training: "that they might be with him"; and (2) for service: "that he might send them forth to preach" (vs. 13-19).

6. The Anxiety of His Kingsfolk (3:19-21, 31-35). While He was in a house in Capernaum, His mother and brethren came seeking to withdraw Him from

His work, for His zeal made them think He was beside Himself. When He was told about it, Jesus looked round upon His disciples sitting in the crowd about Him, and indicated them as His true kinsfolk. He did not mean by this to break the ties of family relationship, but to show that there was a closer bond than that—the doing of the will of God.

7. The Accusation of His Foes (3:22-30). Some Scribes who had come down from Jerusalem, representing the religious authorities there, charged Him with casting out demons by Satanic power. In replying to this accusation Jesus pointed out the folly of such a charge: it would mean that Satan had risen up against Himself. Then He uttered a solemn warning about the great sin of blaspheming against the Holy Spirit: it can never be forgiven. The Lord's statement about this is more fully given in Matt. 12:25-32. It is explained in the exposition of that passage.

PARABLES AND MIGHTY WORKS

(Chs. 4-5)

These chapters tell of a day of teaching by the sea-side when Jesus began to use parables, and describe four great miracles which He wrought in succession soon afterwards.

1. Teaching in Parables (4:1-34). This passage is parallel with Matt. 13, but contains only two of the parables recorded there, those of the sower and the mustard seed. The Evangelist begins with a renewed description of the scene at the sea-side in the last chapter (3:7-9; 4:1). Then he goes on to record the parable of the sower as spoken to the multitude

(vs. 1-9), and its interpretation as given privately to the disciples (vs. 10-20). The passage that follows (vs. 21-25) contains a group of our Lord's sayings which occur in Matthew scattered in different places. They were probably seed thoughts which He would drop repeatedly.

Then comes the parable of the seed growing secretly, which Mark alone records (vs. 26-29). It is an appendix to the parable of the sower, giving the history of the seed that falls into good soil. It is followed by the parable of the mustard seed (vs. 30-32). There is only one other parable in this Gospel, that of the wicked husbandmen (12:1-9), while it contains eighteen miracles. Mark is concerned with the works of Jesus more than with His words.

2. Four Mighty Works (4:35—5:43). In this section we have an account of four typical miracles wrought one after the other, apparently within the space of a few days. They are described in greater detail and with more graphic touches than in Matthew, where they also occur in the same order. They represent the four classes of mighty works wrought by the Servant of God.

(1) Stilling the storm on the sea (4:35-41). This manifested Christ's power and authority over the forces of nature. Mark connects this miracle with the teaching in parables by telling us that at the end of the same day Jesus said to the disciples, "Let us go over unto the other side". They took Him, "even as He was, in the boat", without making any preparation for the voyage. They were accompanied by other boats, which probably had to put back because of the storm. It must have been unusually severe when the disciples, some of them

fishermen accustomed to the lake, were afraid of perishing.

Jesus had fallen asleep, tired out after the long day's teaching; and He continued to sleep through the storm because of His complete trust in His Father. This is implied in what He said to the disciples when the storm was stilled. His rebuke of the wind showed that He traced all the evils in the natural world, as well as those in the spiritual world, to their source in the will of Satan. The result of His command to the sea was "a great calm". In the hour of her uproar Nature knew the voice of her rightful Lord and returned to her allegiance to Him. Here Jesus appears as the representative Man, to whom was given dominion over the creation (Heb. 2:5-8). The effect upon the disciples was profound. There was something mysterious in their Master, which they had not realized before.

(2) Casting out a host of demons (5:1-20). This miracle manifested His power and authority over the spirit world. It is one of the most circumstantial of all Mark's stories. He tells of only one demoniac, while Matthew spoke of two. This man was no doubt the more conspicuous case. The description of his condition illustrates the utter confusion and misery of man's life under Satan's power, and brings out the double personality of one possessed by an evil spirit. In this case a host of demons had taken possession of one man, and he had become fierce and untamable.

Jesus always treated a demoniac as the victim and thrall of an alien and hostile spirit, whom He addressed as distinct from the man himself and at once commanded to depart from him. Evil spirits recognized and confessed the Divine nature and

origin of Jesus, but He always silenced them, refusing to receive any testimony from such a source. The request of the demons in this case to be allowed to enter the swine only led to their utter discomfiture. The effect upon the ignorant people of the district was one of superstitious terror. They were moved by the loss of the swine rather than by the change in the man, but they did not accuse Jesus of responsibility for their loss. The Lord departed from among them, for no good purpose would have been served by remaining. He left the man behind to be His witness there.

3. Healing the woman who touched His garment (5:21-34). This showed His power in the realm of our physical nature. Mark tells how the poor woman's trouble had only been aggravated and all her means had been exhausted by attempts to have physicians cure her. Then he describes the kind and considerate way in which Jesus led her, fearful and trembling as she was, to come forward and make a voluntary confession when she found herself healed by her touch of His garment in the crowd, and then tenderly sent her away with a word of peace.

(4) Raising the daughter of Jairus (5:35-43). Here we see the Lord's power over death. Mark gives a vivid account of the whole event: the tumult in the house made by the professional mourners, and His rebuke and expulsion of them; the scene within the room where the child lay, when He went in with only her parents and His three chosen disciples; His taking her by the hand, and His word of command, so impressive that it is quoted in the very language Jesus used; the amazement when she rose

up and walked, so great that He had to remind them that she needed something to eat.

INCREASING OPPOSITION

(6:1—7:23)

Two events at this time marked the growing antagonism to Jesus, and foreshadowed His ultimate rejection by the nation—the unbelief He met with in Nazareth and the death of John the Baptist at the hands of Herod. After that a change began to appear in the character of His ministry. He withdrew again and again from the crowded centres to more remote parts.

1. Jesus' Rejection at Nazareth (6:1-6). In the course of one of His tours He visited His own city. The attitude of the people when He taught in the synagogue there was a combination of astonishment and prejudice. They wondered—"Whence hath this man these things?" But they were offended at Him—"Is not this the carpenter?" This attitude of unbelief limited His power to bless: "He could there do no mighty work". Mark adds to what Matthew records in the parallel passage of the First Gospel (13:54-58) that, "he marvelled because of their unbelief".

2. The Mission of the Twelve (6:6-13). They had been chosen already (3:14), and now Jesus for the first time sent them out, while He was Himself engaged in a tour of the villages of Galilee. Mark alone tells us that they were sent forth "by two and two". The instructions he records here are more fully given in Matt. 10:5-15.

3. The Death of John the Baptist (6:14-29). The

fame of Jesus reached Herod and troubled his guilty conscience for his beheading of John the Baptist (vs. 14-16). The story of Herod's crime is told here (vs. 17-29), with more fulness of picturesque detail than in the parallel account in Matthew (14:1-12).

4. The Return of the Twelve and the Feeding of the Multitude (6:30-44). When the Apostles returned from their mission and reported what they had done and what they had taught, Jesus invited them to come "apart into a desert place and rest a while". There were streams of people constantly coming and going, leaving no intervals for refreshment—"no leisure so much as to eat". He took them in a boat across the sea away from the thronging crowds. But the people followed them on foot around the shore, "and outwent them".

When the boat arrived and Jesus saw the great crowd of people awaiting Him, His compassion went out at once toward them, for He saw them as sheep not having a shepherd, and He taught them till the day was far spent (vs. 30-34). Then there followed the feeding of the five thousand (vs. 35-44). Mark adds some picturesque details to Matthew's account (14:13-21). He tells us of the Lord's orderly method of arranging the crowd for the easier distribution of the food. He had them sit down "by companies upon the green grass"; and they sat down "in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties". The original word for "ranks" means literally "flower-beds". Peter remembered the colourful scene that the crowd made as they spread over the grass.

5. Walking on the Water and the Arrival in Gennesaret (6:45-56). That night Jesus spent in prayer on the hill after sending the disciples away

in the boat. In the early morning, while they were struggling against a contrary wind, He came to them walking on the sea. Mark does not tell of Peter's attempt to walk on the water, which Matthew records, but he quotes the words of cheer that Jesus addressed to them all, and tells of their amazement when He entered the boat and the wind ceased. Then He remarks upon their spiritual insensibility in failing to understand the significance of the miracle of the loaves (vs. 45-52).

When they arrived in the land of Gennesaret on the north-west side of the lake and Jesus was recognized, there was great excitement. The people throughout the whole region brought their sick folk into the market-places of the villages He visited, pleading to be allowed to touch only the border of His garment. "And as many as touched him were made whole" (vs. 53-56).

6. Denouncing Ceremonial Tradition (7:1-23). This passage is parallel with Matt. 15:1-20. Mark, however, introduces the question of the Pharisees and Scribes by explaining for his Roman readers the Jewish custom of ceremonial washings (vs. 1-4). The term he uses in the expression, "except they bathe themselves" (A.V. "wash"), is literally "baptize themselves", which implies a ceremonial or religious act, and does not refer to washing for the purpose of cleansing. Some manuscripts read, "except they sprinkle themselves". The rest of the passage (vs. 5-23) is substantially the same as Matthew's.

RETIREMENTS IN NORTHERN GALILEE

(7:24—9:50)

The remainder of Jesus' stay in Galilee was largely

spent in journeys into northern regions for the purpose of retirement. His desire was to get away from the crowded places where He was known, that He might have more private fellowship with His disciples (7:24; 8:27; 9:30). These journeys took Him into districts where the people were mainly Gentile.

1. The First Northern Journey (7:24—8:26). The course of this journey took Him toward the coast into the borders of Tyre and Sidon (7:24), and back by a roundabout route to the region of Decapolis east of the Sea of Galilee (7:31); then across the sea to Dalmanutha, the site of which is unknown (8:10), and afterwards to the northern side of the Sea at Bethsaida (8:13, 22).

The passage is parallel with Matt. 15:21—16:12. Mark tells of the cure of the daughter of the Syro-phenician woman who was a Greek (7:24-30), the feeding of the four thousand (8:1-10), the Pharisees' demand for a sign and the Lord's warning the disciples of the leaven of the Pharisees (8:11-21), all of which is contained in Matthew's account.

Two other miracles occurred during this period which Mark alone records—the healing of a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech (7:31-37), and the giving of sight to a blind man (8:22-26). In each case Jesus took the man apart and dealt with him privately, encouraging his faith by touching the afflicted parts of his body and connecting the cure with His own person. In the second case the cure was gradual. The way He performed these cures seems to indicate that the growing opposition of the religious leaders and the popular attitude of mingled curiosity and unbelief were weighing heav-

ily upon His spirit, and making His work as the Servant more and more difficult.

2. The Second Northern Journey (8:27—9:32). The course of this journey lay through the villages of Cæsarea Philippi, where Peter made his great confession (8:27-30) and Jesus gave the first announcement of His approaching death and resurrection (8:31-38); then into the mountain where the Transfiguration took place and the second reference to His passion (9:1-13), followed by the healing of a demoniac boy at the foot of the mountain (9:14-29); and finally back through Galilee, where He repeated the prediction of His passion (9:30-32).

In the account of Peter's confession, Mark omits Jesus' reply commending Peter and announcing the founding of His Church. In the account of the Transfiguration, after Peter's impulsive request this significant explanation is added: "For he knew not what to answer, for they became sore afraid". In the account of the scene at the foot of the mountain, which is more graphic and detailed than Matthew's, Mark says that "all the multitude, when they saw him, were greatly amazed, and running to him, saluted him". Perhaps traces of the Transfiguration still lingered on His face.

3. The Final Sojourn in Galilee (9:33-50). Jesus returned to Capernaum after His last journey to the north, and these verses record two incidents there which revealed some things in the lives of the disciples inconsistent with His own spirit. In the one case they had been disputing among themselves who was the greatest, and Jesus set a little child in their midst and taught them a lesson in humility (vs. 33-37). In the other case John announced that they

had seen one casting out demons in Christ's name and had forbidden him, because he was not of their group, and Jesus gave them a lesson about intolerance and stumbling blocks (vs. 38-50).

THE LAST JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM

(Ch. 10)

The story of this journey occupies two chapters in Matthew (chs. 19-20), and nearly ten in Luke (9:51—19:28). Although Mark's account is quite brief, it contains some graphic scenes.

Leaving Galilee for the last time, Jesus came into the region beyond Jordan and took up His public ministry again, which was now devoted mainly to teaching (v. 1). Not many miracles are recorded after the Transfiguration. The hostility of the Pharisees followed Him, and they came asking a question about divorce, which He answered by declaring that the Creator intended the marriage bond to be indissoluble by man (vs. 2-12). In relating the incident of the children that were brought to Jesus, Mark tells us that He was indignant with the disciples for rebuking those who brought them, and that He took them in His arms when He blessed them (vs. 13-16).

When the rich young man, who came running to Jesus with the question about eternal life, addressed Him as "Good Teacher", Jesus replied, "Why callest thou me good? None is good save one, even God". He meant that all human goodness is derived from God, which is no less true in the character of the perfect man, Christ Jesus, than in that of others. When the young man could not stand the test that Jesus lovingly gave him, because "he was one that had great possessions", Jesus "looked round about"

and said to His disciples, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God". When they showed their amazement, He repeated, more tenderly, "Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!" (vs. 17-25).

Jesus meant that those who have riches are naturally inclined to trust in riches, and riches belong to the life of this world, and so they are naturally disinclined to seek or appreciate the life of the world to which the Kingdom belongs. When the disciples expressed their great astonishment and asked, "Who then can be saved?" Jesus, "looking upon them", went on to say, "With men it is impossible, but not with God". The repeated reference to the way Jesus looked upon the young man and the disciples during the whole incident reflects the deep impression it had made upon Peter's memory (vs. 26-31).

As Jesus drew nearer to Jerusalem the intensity of His spirit deepened, and the disciples were moved with fear and awe as they followed Him on the road. It was then that He gave them the most circumstantial and detailed prediction of His approaching passion (vs. 32-34). He answered the ambitious request of James and John by telling them that they knew not what they asked (vs. 35-40), and by telling the other ten, who were indignant with their two brethren, that it was not by exercising authority over others but by serving others that greatness among the members of His Kingdom would be reached (vs. 41-44). Then He referred to His own example and uttered one of His great declarations about the significance of His mission in the world (v. 45).

The last incident on the way to Jerusalem was

the healing of blind Bartimæus at Jericho (vs. 46-52). Matthew told of two blind beggars being healed. Mark mentions only one and gives his name, probably because he had become a believer in Jesus and was known to the Christian community. Mark's account of the miracle bears evidence of an eye-witness:—the crowd rebuking the man first for crying out, and, when they saw Jesus stop and take an interest in him, calling to him: "Be of good cheer; rise, he calleth thee"; then the sudden action of the man, casting away his garment, springing up, and coming to Jesus.

THE LAST MINISTRY IN JERUSALEM

(Chs. 11-12)

These chapters run parallel with Matt. 21-23 and record the same series of events. Mark's account of the passion week contains notes of time by which the various days can be distinguished (11:11-12, 19-20; 14:1).

1. A Day of Triumph (11:1-11). In describing the royal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, Mark gives the most circumstantial account of the finding of the colt (vs. 1-7). After telling of the acclamation of the people, who recognized the Messianic character of the event, he sums up the remainder of the day, when the Lord was present in the Temple, in these significant words: "And when he had looked round about upon all things, it being now eventide, he went out unto Bethany with the twelve". The claim, which Jesus had made so publicly and plainly, received no recognition from the religious leaders (vs. 8-11).

2. A Day of Warning (11:12-19). The cursing of the barren fig-tree on the way into the city next morning was an ominous warning of the judgment upon faithless Israel. Mark puts in the explanatory statement: "For it was not the season of figs". The season of figs was about a month later, and the fruit of the fig-tree came along with the leaves and not afterwards. This tree, by its display of leaves, professed to have fruit; and, by bearing leaves so early, boasted that it was ahead of others. Thus it was a fit symbol of both the pride and the barrenness of Israel (vs. 12-14). The cleansing of the Temple of its unholy traffic was another act of Messianic warning, which only made the religious heads still more determined to destroy Him. Mark notes the fact that "every evening he went forth out of the city". Probably He stayed at Bethany during the passion week (vs. 15-19).

3. A Day of Controversy (11:20—12:44). On the way into the city next morning, Peter pointed out the fig-tree already withered away, and Jesus gave the disciples a lesson on praying in faith. Evidently the withering of the fig-tree had followed His curse upon it in answer to a prayer of faith on His own part (11:20-26). When they arrived in the Temple again the religious leaders came asking Jesus by what authority He was doing these things, and He exposed their hypocrisy when they would not answer His question about the authority of John the Baptist (11:27-33). Then He went on to reveal the real nature of their sin and forecast their judgment, by telling the story of the vineyard and the wicked husbandmen. They saw that the parable was directed against themselves, and they would

have seized Him then, but dared not for fear of the people (12:1-12).

After that they made several attempts to ensnare Him with captious questions. The Pharisees and the Herodians, who held opposing views about paying tribute to Rome, tried to get Him to commit Himself to one side or the other, and His answer only roused their wonder: "They marvelled greatly at him" (12:13-17). The Sadducees, who did not believe in a resurrection and accepted only the books of Moses, tried to entangle Him with that doctrine, and He exposed their ignorance of their own Scriptures (12:18-27). One of the Scribes, the teachers of the Law, who was present and heard the Lord answering the others, asked Him what was the first commandment of all. Jesus answered him by summing up all the commandments under love to God and love to one's neighbour. Mark adds that his answer won the praise and commendation of the Scribes (12:28-34).

Jesus followed these questions of His foes with a question of His own, which showed the Scribes' inadequate teaching about the promised Messiah. Mark does not tell of their failure to answer Jesus, but he remarks that "the common people heard him gladly" (12:35-37). Then He pronounced His denunciation upon the Scribes, of which Mark gives only a brief summary (12:38-40). The account of the public ministry of Jesus in this Gospel ends with His commendation of the poor widow whom He saw cast her two mites into the treasury in the Temple (12:41-44).

THE LAST PROPHECY TO THE DISCIPLES

(Ch. 13)

This chapter contains Mark's account of the Olivet prophecy, which is more fully given in Matt. 24. In describing the occasion which called it forth, he tells us that it was the first four disciples—Peter and James and John and Andrew—who asked Jesus the question (vs. 1-4). The Lord's reply as recorded here is substantially the same as that given in Matthew, and it may be analysed in the same way.

1. General Warnings regarding the Christian Age (vs. 5-13). After forecasting its general character, Jesus declared that before it comes to an end, "the gospel must first be preached among all the nations" (v. 10). In describing the persecutions which the disciples would meet with while preaching the Gospel, Mark adds the Lord's promise of the aid they should receive from the Holy Spirit, which Matthew embodied in an earlier address (10:19-22).

2. Special Warnings regarding the Fall of Jerusalem (vs. 14-23). Mark put in the same parenthetical warning for his readers as Matthew did when reporting the Lord's prophecy of the invasion of the land by the pagan Roman armies (v. 14), showing that he too was writing before the event. His account also emphasizes the urgent need for a hasty flight from the city on the part of the Christians (vs. 15-18). He mentions the greatness of the affliction that would fall upon the nation at that time, and adds the warning against those who gave false announcements of the coming of Christ (vs. 19-23).

3. Special Warnings regarding the Coming of Christ (vs. 24-37). This part of the prophecy is

somewhat briefer than the corresponding part in Matthew. It describes the coming of the Son of Man as taking place "after that tribulation", and in the midst of such commotions as indicate the collapse of the whole world system (vs. 24-27). It emphasizes the certainty of the event and the uncertainty of the time (vs. 28-32), and dwells upon the warning to watch (vs. 33-37). Mark does not record the rest of the Lord's address, in which He enforced the warning to watch by the parables of the virgins and the talents, but he closes the prophecy with a repetition of the Lord's warning: "And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch".

THE SUFFERING AND DEATH

(Chs. 14-15)

Mark's account of the last night and the last day of Jesus' earthly life is substantially identical with Matthew's (chs. 26-27). The course of events may be drawn out as follows:

1. The Preparations (14:1-11). These include the plotting of the Jewish leaders (vs. 1-2), the anointing of Jesus at the supper in Bethany (vs. 3-9), and the bargain of Judas Iscariot with the chief priests (vs. 10-11). Although both Matthew and Mark place the supper in Bethany at this point in their narrative, John's Gospel shows (13:1-2) that it took place before the triumphal entry.

2. The Last Supper (14:12-31). Mark gives a more circumstantial account than Matthew of the Lord's instructions for the preparation of the Pass-over. He sent two disciples into the city where they would meet a certain man carrying a pitcher of

water, whom they were to follow and ask for the guest-chamber for the Master and His disciples. He would show them a large upper room furnished and ready, and there they were to make ready the Passover (vs. 12-16). This unnamed man was probably one of the unknown friends of Jesus, who do not appear personally in the Gospel story. The account of what took place there in the evening when Jesus came with the Twelve is the same as in Matthew. It includes the announcement of His betrayal (vs. 17-21), the institution of the Supper (vs. 22-26), and the announcement of His desertion by all of them and His denial by Peter (vs. 27-31).

3. In Gethsemane (14:32-52). Here again the story of the agony in the garden (vs. 32-42) and the betrayal by Judas (vs. 43-50) is substantially the same as Matthew's. The incident related in vs. 51-52 is peculiar to this Gospel, and the young man referred to was probably Mark himself.

4. The Jewish Trial (14:53-72). This account follows the same order as Matthew's. It includes the examination of Jesus before the Council, His silence in answer to the false witnesses, His affirmative answer to the high priest's question asking if He was the Messiah, the Son of God, His condemnation on the ground of that claim, and their shameful treatment of Him afterwards (vs. 53-65). During the course of this trial Peter's denial took place, and the narrative here is marked by Peter's vivid recollection of the event and his feelings at the time (vs. 66-72). Mark gives no account of the suicide of Judas.

5. The Roman Trial (15:1-20). Here we have Jesus brought before Pilate, and the governor's

examination of Jesus and his awed wonder at the prisoner's hearing (vs. 1-5). He saw that Jesus was innocent and had been brought before him because of the envy of the chief priests, and he offered to release Him when the Jewish mob came with their usual request at the Passover time. But the Jews demanded Barabbas instead, and cried out for the crucifixion of Jesus (vs. 6-14). Pilate then made his weak and cowardly submission to the Jews. He had Jesus scourged and delivered over to the mockery of the soldiers before being crucified (vs. 15-20).

6. The Crucifixion (15:21-41). Mark alone tells us that Simon of Cyrene, who was impressed to carry the cross, was "the father of Alexander and Rufus" (v. 21). These two persons must have been well known to his readers, and were probably members of the Roman Church (Rom. 16:13). In describing the scene at Golgotha Mark includes all the incidents related by Matthew:—Jesus' crucifixion between two robbers (vs. 22-28), the railing of the passers by and the mocking of the chief priests and Scribes (vs. 29-32), the three hours' darkness and the cry from the cross, which Mark, like Matthew, gives first in the very words Jesus used (vs. 33-37), the rending of the veil in the Temple, the impression produced upon the Roman centurion by the manner of Jesus' death, and the women from Galilee beholding the scene from afar (vs. 38-41).

7. The Burial (15:42-47). Mark says that Joseph of Arimathea "boldly went in unto Pilate" to ask for the body of Jesus, and that Pilate " marvelled if he were already dead", and sent for the centurion to certify the fact.

THE RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION

(Ch. 16)

Matthew's Gospel closed with the Resurrection and the great commission. Mark's Gospel closes with the Ascension and the carrying out of the great commission. At the end of Matthew we see the risen Lord: at the end of Mark, the ascended Lord.

We are told of the discovery made by the women in the morning that the tomb was empty, and of the message given them by the angel whom they saw sitting inside. Mark reports the angel's message in almost the same words as Matthew, but makes a significant addition. The women were to tell the disciples, "and Peter". Peter would always bear witness to the fact that the Master, whom he had so basely denied, sought him out specially on the very morning of the Resurrection (vs. 1-8).

Then comes a summary of the appearances of the risen Lord on the same day: to Mary Magdalene, to the two on their way to Emmaus, and to the eleven as they sat at meat in the evening (vs. 9-14). The Gospel then records the missionary commission given to the Apostles and the promise of supernatural aid in carrying it out (vs. 15-18), and closes with a brief reference to the Ascension and the subsequent fulfilment of the commission (vs. 19-20).

The last twelve verses (9-20) are separated from the rest of the book in the R.V., because they are not found in the two oldest known Greek manuscripts, and four other manuscripts have a shorter ending. The longer ending, however, is found in the vast majority of Greek manuscripts and in the ancient versions, and appears as the recognized ending in the earliest Christian writings which show the influ-

ence of this Gospel. These verses have been generally accepted as the work of Mark since the second century, and they have come down through the ages as the genuine ending of the Second Gospel. Though their compressed style makes them differ somewhat from the rest of the book, yet they are quite consistent with its general theme. The two closing verses present the most fitting consummation for the Gospel of the Servant of God.

* * * *

THE PERSONAL WAYS OF JESUS

Although Mark's is the shortest of the Gospels, yet it contains more picturesque details than any of the others. Its narrative is the most realistic account we have of the ministry of Jesus. The scenes and incidents it describes are lit up with many vivid and graphic touches. It shows us the living personal ways of the Lord. The story of Jesus in this Gospel is told in such a way that it enables us to see Him and hear Him as if we were present at the time.

We see Him using His hands and touching people when He healed them. He took Peter's wife's mother "by the hand, and raised her up" (1:31). He "stretched forth his hand, and touched" the leper (1:41). Mark shows us every movement in the way Jesus went about opening the ears and loosing the tongue of the deaf and dumb man in Decapolis (7: 33-35), and giving sight to the blind man at Bethsaida (8:23-25). He tells us how tenderly Jesus received the little children that were brought to Him, and how He "took them up in his arms, and blessed them, laying his hands upon them" (9: 36; 10:16).

Mark also depicts the play of feeling on the face of Jesus and tells us how He looked at people. It was the Lord's habit to look round about upon the crowds when He was in the midst of them. We see the indignation and grief with which He "looked round about" on those in the synagogue who did not want the man with his hand withered to be healed on the Sabbath day (3:5). We see the deep affection with which He "looked round about" on His own disciples as they sat in the midst of a crowded house when His mother and His brethren came seeking for Him (3:34). We see the tender and sympathetic interest in His face as He "looked round about" to see the woman who had touched His garment (5:32).

This play of feeling in the "looks" of Jesus is especially manifest in the way Mark tells the story of His interview with the rich young ruler who came seeking eternal life. We see first the earnest, wooing love in His face while "looking" upon the young man, and next the disappointment there when the young man went away and Jesus "looked round about" on His disciples and told them how hard it was for rich men to enter the Kingdom, and then the changed expression on His face when, "looking upon them" again, He told them that all things were possible with God (10:21, 23, 27).

Perhaps the most significant "look" of all was the action which Mark describes as taking place in the Temple after the triumphal entry into Jerusalem: "When he had looked round about upon all things, and now the eventide was come, he went out unto Bethany with the twelve" (11:11). The Messiah

had come to His own, and His own had received Him not (John 1:11).

There was something also in the quality of the Lord's voice which Mark helps us to hear. When he gives us the actual words that Jesus used in calling the dead girl back to life (5:41) and in opening the deaf ears (7:34), before he translates them for his readers, Mark implies that there was something in their very tones that could not be translated. To understand it we should have to hear his voice. Jesus was asserting His authority in the face of an unseen foe, and that gave a peculiar emphasis to the very sounds that came from His lips. Sometimes His words were uttered in tones of disappointment, accompanied with sighs (7:34; 8:12); and that shows how keenly He felt the atmosphere of unbelief in which He had to carry on His ministry.

It is through the voice of Jesus that we get nearest to the innermost secret of the Cross. This lies in the cry that came out of the darkness; "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" It is recorded both in Matthew (27:46) and in Mark (15:34); and each Evangelist gives it first in the actual words that Jesus uttered before rendering them into the language in which he wrote. There must be some reason for this. It was a loud cry, and it penetrated the air. It carried on its very accents and in its every syllable something untranslatable, notes of a mysterious agony and an uttermost loneliness. This could not be separated in the memory of the Apostles from the sounds themselves that fell upon the ear; and when they told the story afterwards, they first passed on with solemn awe the very words they heard before they dared to put them

in any other tongue. Behind that cry was something far beyond physical pain or mental anguish. In its profound depths lay the mystery of the atonement. Thus the voice of Jesus carried out upon the stricken air the suffering heart of the Servant of God and the Saviour of the world, as He "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb. 9:26).

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

THE author of the Third Gospel was Luke, the companion and fellow-labourer of Paul. His name is mentioned only three times in the New Testament (Col. 4:14; Philemon 24; 2 Tim. 4:11), but these passages throw considerable light upon him. He is called a physician, and that implies that he was a man of culture and education. His literary culture appears in the classical preface to the Gospel (1:1-4), in which he follows the manner of Greek historians. Traces of his medical knowledge occur throughout the book (4:23, 38; 5:12; 8:42-43, cf. Mark 5:26; 13:11; 22:43-44). He was probably a Gentile, for Paul does not include him among those "who are of the circumcision" (Col. 4:10-11). He does not include himself among the eye-witnesses when stating his purpose to write a story of the Gospel.

Luke was the author of the Acts as well (Acts 1:1-2), and his companionship with Paul may be traced in the record of the Apostle's missionary labours contained in that book. The preaching of Paul would naturally provide the basis of the Gospel written by Luke. The prominence which Luke gives to the relations of Jesus with all kinds and classes of men, and with people outside Judaism, is closely connected with the universality of the Gospel as preached by the Apostle.

Luke gathered his material both from written

records and from the evidence of eye-witnesses. He claims to have investigated the whole Gospel story, to have "traced the course of all things accurately from the first". He would have abundant opportunity for doing this during his travels with the Apostle, and especially during the two years spent in Palestine when Paul was a prisoner in Cæsarea (Acts 24:27). He may have written the Gospel before the end of that period.

The Gospel is addressed to a Christian named Theophilus, who must have been a man of some prominence, but is otherwise unknown (1:1-4). It is the only personal introduction to any historical book in the Bible except the Acts. Luke aims to set forth the historical foundations of the faith in which Theophilus believes. He writes as a historian, and presents the Saviour in His complete human relations. His book is the Gospel of the Son of Man. Under this general theme it may be divided as follows:

- I. The Advent of the Son of Man—Chs. 1-2
- II. The Manifestation of the Son of Man—
Chs. 3:1—4:13
- III. The Ministry in Galilee—
Chs. 4:14—9:50
- IV. The Journey to Jerusalem—
Chs. 9:51—19:28
- V. The Ministry in Jerusalem—
Chs. 19:29—21:38
- VI. The Departure of the Son of Man—
Chs. 22-24

This Gospel is set in the frame of contemporary history. It begins "in the days of Herod, king of Judea" (1:5). It mentions the imperial decree that

brought Joseph and Mary up from Galilee, so that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, the city of David (2:1). In the course of the story Luke pays careful attention to dates and marks of the time (1:26; 2:21, 42). When he begins the narrative of the public ministry he notes the year of the reigning Cæsar and the age of Jesus, and takes a survey of the civil and religious rulers who were specially concerned with Palestine (3:1-2, 23).

THE ADVENT OF THE SON OF MAN (Chs. 1-2)

Luke begins his Gospel with a simple and modest preface, which tells of the care he took to secure fulness and accuracy for his narrative (1:1-4). The book combines research with inspiration. These two chapters contain the most complete account we have of the facts connected with the Incarnation. Heaven and earth unite to give peculiar beauty to the opening scenes of the Gospel story. Here are visions of angels, hymns of praise, and simple domestic incidents.

1. The Announcement of John (1:5-25). The first scene takes place in the Temple. The centre of the Old Testament worship becomes the cradle of the New Testament order. The course of Abijah to which Zacharias belonged, was one of the twenty-four courses into which the priests were divided in David's time (1 Chron. 24:10). Each course was on duty in the Temple for a week every six months, and incense was offered every morning and evening. The narrative tells us first of the righteous character of Zacharias and Elisabeth (vs. 5-7), and then of the angel's appearance to the priest as he minis-

tered at the altar of incense in the sanctuary (vs. 8-12).

The first words of the angel's message, the words that open the New Testament age, were "Fear not". Then he told Zacharias of the answer to his prayer and the coming birth of a son, whom he should name John, and who should grow up as a Nazirite from his birth and go before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah, to prepare a people for Him (vs. 13-17). The angel's words recall the closing prophecy of Malachi (3:1; 4:5-6), and thus the New Testament begins where the Old Testament ends.

When Zacharias received the message with doubt because of the advanced age of himself and his wife, the angel disclosed his own name and high position, and pronounced a judgment upon the priest for his unbelief. He should be dumb until the angel's word came to pass (vs. 18-20). The narrative then goes on to tell of the fulfilment of both the judgment (vs. 21-22) and the promise (vs. 23-25).

Gabriel and Michael are the only angels given names in Scripture, and these are no doubt intended to symbolize their character and function. Gabriel, "the mighty one of God", is the angel of mercy, announcing and promoting God's redemptive purpose among men. He was sent on two former occasions to Daniel, whose prophetic messages were concerned with the advent of the Messiah (Dan. 8:16; 9:21). Michael, "who is like God", is the angel of judgment, contending with Satan and overthrowing all who dare to oppose God (Dan. 10:13, 21; 12:1; Jude 9; Rev. 12:7).

2. The Announcement of Jesus (1:26-38). From the Temple in Jerusalem the narrative takes us to

the home of a humble Jewish maiden in a Galilean village. The same angel who announced the birth of John was sent to the Virgin Mary to announce a more transcendent birth. He greeted her with such a new kind of salutation that Mary wondered what it meant (vs. 26-29). She should have a son, whom she should name Jesus ("Saviour", Matt. 1:21), and who should be also "the Son of the Most High". He should be given "the throne of his father David", and of his kingdom there should be no end (vs. 30-33). Thus in him would be fulfilled the promise given to David on which the Messianic hope was based (2 Sam. 7:12-13).

Mary's question of the angel does not imply doubt, but simply asks for an explanation. The angel's reply reveals the combined feelings of joyful exaltation and adoring wonder with which he conveyed the explanation to Mary. God was to be the Father of her son (vs. 34-35). Thus the birth of Christ was a new creation of man. The angel went on to encourage Mary by telling her about Elisabeth; and Mary's final words express the humble submission with which she put herself at God's disposal. It was a sublime act of faith and self-sacrifice (vs. 36-38).

3. Mary's Visit to Elisabeth (1:39-56). Elisabeth was Mary's kinswoman (v. 36), but how the two were related is not known. Mary went up to Judea with lively eagerness, and Elisabeth met her with an inspired salutation of intense feeling (vs. 39-45). Mary's song breathes a calm, deep, inward repose, and a sense of profound exaltation (vs. 46-55). It is modelled on Hannah's song (1 Sam. 2: 1-10), and contains several sentences from the Psalms. It shows how familiar she was with the Old Testa-

ment Scriptures. Mary remained with Elisabeth probably until the birth of John (v. 56).

4. The Birth of John (1:57-80). The circumstances attending the birth and naming of the child made a profound impression on the people round about (vs. 57-66). The song of Zacharias is modelled on the prophecies, and is full of the idea of redemption. It shows that the spiritual significance of the Messianic age, which was now being ushered in, was well understood by the devout souls in Israel. He gives thanks for the coming of the Messiah, which implies that he knew of the Incarnation, and for the deliverance which His presence is about to procure for Israel (vs. 67-75). Then he expresses his joy at the part assigned to his own son in this work, and the song overflows with a closing thanksgiving for the Messianic salvation (vs. 76-79). The historical conclusion of the narrative, telling of the growth of John (v. 80), corresponds with the statement in v. 66 that "the hand of the Lord was with him".

5. The Birth of Jesus (2:1-20). The story begins with a historical note (vs. 1-3). The decree of the Roman Emperor brought Joseph and Mary from Nazareth to Bethlehem, their ancestral city; and there, in the most humble and obscure circumstances, the Son of Man was born (vs. 4-7). Heaven's interest in the event was marked by the "good tidings of great joy" which the angel brought to the shepherds in the field, and by the praise of the heavenly host (vs. 8-14). Shepherds from the same pastures where David watched his flock visited the new-born babe, and then spread abroad the angel's message about the child (vs. 15-17).

Thus the Gospel news began among the poor and lowly. Various impressions were produced by what had taken place. Luke implies that there was a great contrast between the momentary and superficial wonder of the people and the profound thoughts and feelings of Mary (vs. 18-20).

6. The Infancy of Jesus (2:21-39). Jesus was circumcised, because it was as a Jew and under the Mosaic covenant that He was to realize the ideal of human life (v. 21; Gal. 4:4). His parents fulfilled all the requirements of the Law (vs. 22-24). The offerings which they brought when presenting the child in the Temple were those that were prescribed only for the very poorest (Lev. 12:8).

The song of Simeon (vs. 25-32) is marked by suppressed rapture and vivid spiritual insight. He represents himself as a watchman now released from duty because the Messianic hope for which he was commanded to wait has appeared. His address to Mary (vs. 33-35) shows that he had some insight into the meaning of the prophecies which foreshadowed the sufferings of the Messiah. Anna the aged prophetess, who was in some respects a contrast to Simeon, confirmed his testimony regarding the child (vs. 36-38). The narrative closes by telling of the return to Nazareth after every prescription of the Law had been fulfilled (v. 39).

These aged saints, Simeon and Anna, represent the devout people in Israel who were not blinded by the false hopes of the carnally minded Jews, but were enlightened by the spiritual significance that lies in Old Testament prophecy. There seems to have been an expectation among them at that

time that the advent of the Messiah was approaching.

7. The Boyhood of Jesus (2:40-52). This is the only passage in all the Gospels that tells anything of the life of Jesus in Nazareth. His growth was that of complete and fully rounded human nature. He grew in body, mind, and spirit — developing through boyhood (v. 40) into manhood (v. 52). When twelve years old, the age at which a young Jew became “a son of the Law” and a member of the congregation of Israel, Jesus was taken up to the Passover in Jerusalem for the first time. The incident related on this occasion reveals the unique and sinless nature of the growing boy (vs. 41-51).

His first recorded words, which were spoken to His parents when they found Him in the Temple after an anxious search, throw a revealing light back over His earliest years, and contain the keynote of His subsequent life (v. 49). There was something about him which He was surprised His parents did not know—“Knew ye not?” It matters little whether the phrase He used is rendered “about my Father’s business” (A.V.) or “in my Father’s house” (R.V.). Its real significance lies in the indefinite character of the original words, “the things of my Father” (R.V. marg.). He had always been occupied with His Father’s affairs and had no interests of His own to engage Him. This is what His parents might have known.

Here is revealed the inner life of a child who had no self-will. The boy Jesus was conscious of never having been anything but right with God and occupied with doing His will. Here was a young human life free from the bias transmitted to mankind by

the Fall. His words do not imply consciousness of a Divine nature, but rather consciousness of an un-fallen human nature. During the eighteen silent years from this point down to His manifestation to Israel, He continued to live this kind of life within the narrow limits of the crowded home in Nazareth. There were at least six other children in the family (Mark 6:3). In Jesus, the nature of man was being made "perfect", by being subjected to all the conditions of man's life in the world (Heb. 2:10).

THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SON OF MAN

(3:1—4:13)

Luke begins his account of the events that led to the public appearance of Jesus with a historical reference to the rulers of the time (3:1-2). He also states that Jesus was "about thirty years of age" when He began His ministry (3:23). As Jesus was born before Herod's death in 4 B.C., this would make A.D. 26 the year of His manifestation to Israel.

1. The Preaching of John the Baptist (3:3-20). Luke points out that John's preaching of repentance was the fulfilment of Isa. 40:3-5, and dwells upon his warning to the crowds who thronged to be baptized of him to bring forth fruits worthy of repentance (vs. 3-9). He corrected their mistaken notions of salvation, and gave practical directions to each class of hearers to forsake their besetting sin and do the duty required by their particular position in the social order (vs. 10-14).

In the midst of the general excitement awakened by his preaching, which made people wonder

whether he were the Messiah, John announced the coming of the Messiah after him. He himself could only baptize with water; but the Messiah should baptize them with the Holy Spirit (vs. 15-18). He himself could only use a symbol; the Messiah would bring in the reality. Luke completes his narrative of the Baptist at this point by telling how his ministry was abruptly terminated by his imprisonment at the hands of Herod (vs. 10-20).

2. The Baptism of Jesus (3:21-22). Luke adds one feature to the scene which is more fully described by Matthew (3:13-17). Jesus was praying at the time, and the Spirit came down upon Him as the answer to His prayer. He was baptized as the Son of Man, surrendering Himself to God as the representative Man, that He might do the will of God in dependence upon the power of the Holy Spirit.

3. The Lineage of Jesus (3:23-38). This differs from the genealogy in Matthew (1:1-17) because it gives the line of Mary instead of the line of Joseph. Luke traces the human ancestry of Jesus back through David and Abraham to Adam, thus showing His connection, not only with Israel, as Matthew does, but with all mankind as well. The two lines differ between David and Joseph. Matthew traces the royal line of David from Solomon down to Joseph, showing Jesus to be the heir of David. Luke traces Mary's ancestry back to Nathan, another son of David (v. 31), showing that Jesus was "of the seed of David according to the flesh" (Rom. 1:3; Rev. 22:16). Mary's name is not mentioned, but Joseph is called the son of Heli (v. 23) as being his son-in-law. Luke ends his genealogy by calling Adam

“the son of God”. In him humanity had its first beginning as the result of a creative act of God. In Jesus Christ humanity had a new beginning by another creative act (1:35).

The names of Shealtiel and Zerubbabel occur in both lists, with Neri as the father of Shealtiel in Luke (v. 27) instead of Jechoniah as in Matthew (v. 12). The explanation seems to be that Jechoniah died childless, leaving no heir of the royal line from Solomon (Jer. 22:30), and that Shealtiel, the son of Neri of the line of Nathan, took his place in the line of inheritance. It is significant that after the Exile the house of Nathan is mentioned for the first time as invested with special pre-eminence (Zech. 12:12).

4. The Temptation of Jesus (4:1-13). The order in which the three special temptations occur here differs from the order in Matthew's account. Luke's order makes the three temptations correspond with the three elements of the world as described in 1 John 2:16—“The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the vain-glory of life”. They are also parallel with the three steps by which Eve yielded to the temptation in Eden: “When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise” (Gen. 3:6).

Thus Luke's account of the temptation of Jesus presents it in the form of Satan's attack on the Second Man. The Head of the new humanity met the tempter on the same ground on which the first man fell, and foiled him at every point by holding to the Word and the will of God. Luke closes his account by telling us that “when the devil had com-

pleted every temptation"—that is, every temptation to which the Lord's human nature was open (Heb. 4:15)—"he departed from him for a season." This is probably an allusion to the final assault in Gethsemane.

THE MINISTRY IN GALILEE

(4:14—9:50)

This Gospel, like the other Synoptics, omits the early ministry of Jesus in Judea, and links the beginning of the Galilean ministry with His baptism and temptation. Luke's account of the Lord's ministry in Galilee begins with Nazareth, His home-town, and ends with the Transfiguration, the consummation of His human life. The whole period is marked by an abundance of miracles. There are fourteen miracles and only two parables in this section of the Gospel. It may be divided into four parts, marked by steps in the calling and training of the disciples.

I. Up to the Call of the First Disciples (4:14-44). Luke brings out the fact that Jesus came from His baptism "full of the Holy Spirit", and proceeded to carry on His work "in the power of the Spirit" (4:1, 14). Special prominence has already been given to the Holy Spirit in the earlier chapters of the Gospel (1:15, 35, 41, 67; 2:25-27).

1. A Visit to Nazareth (vs. 14-30). After a general reference to the fame which resulted from His work in Galilee (vs. 14-15), Luke tells how Jesus was rejected in His own home-town when He visited it. The phrase, "as his custom was", refers to His habit of attending the synagogue during the previ-

ous years of His life. He read from Isa. 61:1-2 and applied the prophecy to Himself and to the Gospel that He was preaching. The people bore witness to the gracious message that came from His lips, but when He referred to Old Testament cases of God's grace being shown to the Gentiles, He aroused their rage. It was this foreshadowing of the universality of the Gospel that led them to reject Him.

2. A Sabbath in Capernaum (vs. 31-44). This passage is parallel with Mark 1:21-39. It includes the casting out of an unclean spirit in the synagogue, the restoration of Peter's wife's mother in his home, the healing of the sick people of the city at sunset, and the departure for a tour in Galilee. Mark tells the story with more fulness and vividness, but Luke adds some touches which reveal the physician. The sickness of Simon's wife's mother was "a great fever". Jesus "stood over" her and "rebuked the fever". In healing the sick who were brought to Him in the evening, Jesus "laid his hands on every one of them".

II. From the Call of the First Disciples to the Choice of the Twelve (5:1—6:11). Up to this time Jesus had been winning adherents by His preaching, but had not formed a band of personal followers. Now He began to attach to Himself regular disciples. During this period His work began to arouse opposition from the religious leaders of Israel.

1. The Call of Simon Peter (5:1-11). This incident is probably the same as that narrated in abridged form in Matt. 4:18-22 and Mark 1:16-20. Luke alone tells of Jesus teaching the people from Simon's boat (vs. 1-3), of the great catch of fishes which resulted from obeying the Lord's command

to put out into the deep and let down their nets (vs. 4-7). This miracle made a profound impression upon Simon Peter, for he had been doubtful of any result after they had fished all night and caught nothing, and he now saw that Jesus was thus rewarding him for the use of the boat. It brought home to him in a new way the contrast between his own sinful self-confidence and the thoughtful kindness of the Lord. He alone was addressed, but all four fishing partners obeyed the call (vs. 8-11).

2. The Ministry of Healing (5:12-26). The cure of the leper occurred during a tour among the cities of Galilee (vs. 12-16). It is recorded more briefly by Matthew (8:1-4), and more fully by Mark (1:40-45); but Luke the physician alone describes the man as "full of leprosy". The healing of the paralytic (vs. 17-26) is also recorded in the other Synoptic Gospels (Matt. 9:2-8; Mark 2:1-12). There were Pharisees and Scribes present on this occasion from all over the land, attracted by the fame of Jesus, and Luke mentions them here for the first time. This miracle marks the point in the Galilean ministry when Jesus began to come into conflict with the religious leaders.

This passage brings out three features that characterized the whole ministry of Jesus Christ. (1) His habit of retiring from the crowds to some quiet spot for prayer in the midst of His busy work: "He withdrew himself in the deserts, and prayed" (v. 16). Luke means that He did this habitually. (2) His dependence upon the power of God: "The power of the Lord was with him to heal" (v. 17). The phrase means that the power of Jehovah was present for Jesus to use in His miracles of healing. (3) His use of the phrase "Son of man" in speaking of

Himself (v. 24). It implies that He regarded Himself as the representative Man. It is Christ's own phrase. None of the Evangelists use it of Him, and no one ever addressed Him by this title. It occurs about eighty times in the four Gospels.

3. Matthew's Discipleship (5:27-39). Levi, better known as Matthew, was called from his toll-booth, and responded immediately (vs. 27-28). The feast which he made in his own house brought his fellow-publicans and Jesus together. The publicans, as tax collectors for a Gentile power, were despised and counted as sinners. In accepting Levi's hospitality Jesus gave another occasion to the religious leaders to find fault with Him. He answered them by explaining the real purpose of His mission in the world (vs. 29-32).

The conversation continued with a question why His disciples did not fast like the disciples of John and the Pharisees. In His reply Jesus gave the first hint about His death and departure (vs. 33-35), and followed it with two parabolic statements illustrating the fact that He was not patching up the old Mosaic order but was introducing an entirely new order (vs. 36-39). The whole passage is parallel with Matt. 9:9-17 and Mark 2:14-22.

4. The Question of the Sabbath (6:1-11). Two incidents brought Jesus into conflict with the religious authorities on the observance of the Sabbath law. He defended His disciples when they were criticized by the Pharisees for rubbing ears of grain to eat as they passed through the fields on the Sabbath (vs. 1-5). He healed a man with a withered hand in the synagogue on the Sabbath, after challenging the Scribes and Pharisees, who were there watching for

an occasion to accuse him, to declare whether it was lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath day (vs. 6-11). This passage is parallel with Matt. 12:1-14 and Mark 2:23—3:6.

III. From the Choice of the Twelve to their First Mission (6:12—8:56). In this section of the Gospel the work of Jesus in Galilee reaches the height of its power and popularity. It begins with the appointment of the Apostles, contains the most important of His Galilean discourses, and records a series of remarkable miracles.

1. The Appointment of the Apostles (6:12-19). Before choosing the Twelve, Jesus went up into the mountain that slopes back from the shore near Capernaum, "and continued all night in prayer to God" (v. 12). When they were appointed next day He named them "Apostles", to distinguish them from the rest of the disciples and to indicate His purpose for them (vs. 13-16). The names are the same as in the lists of Matthew (10:2-4) and Mark (3:16-19), except that "Judas the son of James" is called Thaddæus in the other lists. Then Jesus came down with them to "a level place" on the mountain side, not "the plain" (A.V.). A large group of His disciples and a mixed throng of people from Judea and the sea-coast gathered about Him, and there He performed many miracles among them (vs. 17-19).

2. The Sermon to the Disciples (6:20-49). In the midst of that scene Jesus "lifted up his eyes on his disciples" and delivered the discourse usually called the Sermon on the Mount. It is fully recorded in Matt. 5-7. Parts of it were probably repeated on different occasions. Luke's account begins with the

qualities that characterize members of the Kingdom of God, and the contrast between the happiness of those who possess them and the misery of those who do not (vs. 20-26).

The main part of the discourse deals with the duties of members of the Kingdom (vs. 27-45). Luke omits most of what Matthew reports regarding Christ's relation to the Mosaic Law, which would have little meaning for his Gentile readers. The point he emphasizes is that love is the principle of the Kingdom and the distinguishing quality of its members. Several illustrations are given of the way it is to be manifested. The Sermon closes with a warning of the judgments that await the professed disciples of the Lord (vs. 46-49). A contrast is drawn between the result of following and the consequences of not following His words.

3. Two Works of Power (7:1-17). The healing of the centurion's servant took place when Jesus returned to Capernaum. Luke's story of the miracle is much fuller than the condensed account in Matthew (8:5-13), which represents the centurion as doing himself what Luke says he did through a deputation of Jewish elders (vs. 1-8). This centurion was probably a Roman soldier in the service of Herod. He had been attracted by the worship of the Jews and had built them their synagogue in Capernaum. He had heard of the fame of Jesus, and his experience of the authority possessed by a military commander helped him to believe that the authority Jesus possessed would similarly extend beyond His immediate presence.

The faith of this Gentile surpassed any faith the Jews had shown and made Jesus marvel (vs. 9-10). He marvelled on another occasion, but it was at the

unbelief of the people in His own home-town (Mark 6:6). Luke's account of this miracle is in harmony with his universal outlook. It is also characteristic of him to tell us that the centurion's servant "was dear unto him". All the centurions of the New Testament are mentioned with honour (Matt. 27:54; Acts 10:1; 22:26; 27:43).

The raising of the widow's son at Nain, which is recorded only in Luke, reveals the tender and compassionate quality of Jesus' character and the majestic reach of His authority (vs. 11-17). Nain was about twenty-five miles from Capernaum out on the plain in the southern part of Galilee. The young man was "the only son of his mother, and she was a widow". Her utterly desolate state touched the compassion of Jesus. He stopped the funeral procession, called the young man back to life, and "gave him to his mother".

There was a profound and essential difference between the way that Christ raised the dead and the way that others did—Elijah (1Kings 17:19-22), Elisha (2 Kings 4:32-35), and Peter (Acts 9:39-41). They struggled and sought after a power that was beyond them: He acted with a calmness and majesty all His own, and awoke the dead as easily as one awakens a sleeper. This miracle produced a deep sense of awe, and spread the fame of Jesus still more widely.

4. A Message from John the Baptist (7:18-35). This passage is substantially identical with Matt. 11:1-19. Luke says that it was John's disciples who brought him news of Jesus while in prison, and that John sent two of them to Jesus with his question. Luke reports the answer that Jesus sent back to John (vs. 18-23), and the address that He gave

concerning John to the people afterwards (vs. 24-35). He omits what Matthew says about the Kingdom of Heaven suffering violence, and inserts instead a statement about the different treatment John received from the common people and from the religious leaders.

5. In the House of Simon the Pharisee (7:36-50). This incident belongs to Luke alone. The anointing of Jesus by the sinful woman here is to be distinguished from the anointing by Mary at Bethany. The name of the host in each case is the same (Matt. 26:6; Mark 14:3), but the women are entirely different (vs. 36-38). Jesus answered the unspoken thought of the proud and supercilious Pharisee by telling the story of two debtors and then applying it to his case. His indifference toward his guest and his failure as a host were in sharp contrast with the emotion and the behaviour of the woman (vs. 39-46). The final word which Jesus spoke to her indicates that the love she had shown Him sprang from her faith in Him, and her faith in Him implied that her sins were forgiven (vs. 47-50). The incident shows that Christ looks for love from those who are forgiven.

6. Another Tour in Galilee (8:1-21). Luke describes a feature in our Lord's ministry at this period that is not mentioned elsewhere (vs. 1-3). He and the Twelve formed one travelling company, going from city to city and from village to village with the message of the Kingdom of God; and another company, composed of women of means, arranged for His reception and provided for His support as He went from place to place. This group of women is mentioned again. They followed Him even to the Cross (23:49).

Luke continues this section with the parable of the sower and its interpretation (vs. 4-18), which is recorded more fully in Matt. 13 and Mark 4. Then comes a brief account of the incident that occurred when Jesus' mother and brethren came seeking Him and could not reach Him for the crowd (vs. 19-21), which is recorded also in Matt. 12:46-50 and Mark 3:31-35.

7. A Series of Typical Miracles (8:22-56). All the Synoptic Gospels record these four miracles, and give them in the same order: the stilling of the storm on the sea, the casting out of a legion of demons from the Gadarene, the cure of the woman who touched His garment, and the raising of the daughter of Jairus. Matthew's account is the briefest and most compact (8:23-24; 9:18-26), and Mark's the longest and most detailed (4:35—5:43). Luke's account, though not quite as long as Mark's, is substantially the same. In telling of the raising of the dead girl, Luke adds a characteristic touch: she was "an only daughter, about twelve years of age". These four miracles belong to the four realms in which our Lord wrought His mighty works: the natural world, the spirit world, disease, and death.

IV. From the Mission of the Twelve to the Departure from Galilee (9:1-50). This section brings the Galilean ministry to its consummation. It includes Peter's great confession and the Lord's transfiguration.

1. The Mission of the Twelve (vs. 1-9). The instructions given to the Apostles (vs. 1-5) are recorded more fully in Matt. 10. It was probably the stir caused by the mission of the Twelve throughout Galilee that brought the fame of Jesus to Herod's

ears (vs. 6-9). Luke alone tells us that Herod sought an interview with Him.

2. The Feeding of the Multitude (vs. 10-17). This miracle was wrought after the return of the Apostles. It is the only miracle in the whole ministry of Jesus that is common to the four Gospels. It is found in Matt. 14, Mark 6, and John 6. They all record the special detail of the Lord blessing the five loaves and the two fishes, seeing in this the secret of the power displayed. It marked the climax of the Lord's Galilean ministry. Henceforth attention was diverted more and more to His approaching death, which was to bring His work to a close.

3. Peter's Confession of Christ (vs. 18-27). Luke does not mention the place where this occurred, but he tells us that Jesus was praying in private at the time and that His disciples were with Him. The passage is parallel with Matt. 16:13-28 and Mark 8:27-38. Peter's confession is told as briefly as in Mark, and is followed by the Lord's first prediction of His rejection and death at the hands of the Jewish leaders and His subsequent resurrection (vs. 18-22). Then comes the first reference to His coming in glory, which is connected with a warning to the disciples about taking up their cross and following Him, and not being ashamed of Him (vs. 23-27).

4. The Transfiguration (vs. 28-36). Luke's account of this scene throws further light upon the record in Matt. 17:1-7 and Mark 9:2-8. It was while Jesus was praying that His transfiguration took place. The theme of the conversation with Moses and Elijah was "his decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem". This does not mean His death alone, but His "departure" (marg.)—His way

of going out of the world, including His resurrection and ascension as well as His death. He might have crowned His earthly life as the Son of Man by departing by the way of the Mount of Transfiguration; but He turned back to accomplish the redemption of men by departing by the way of the Cross and the Mount of Olives. This theme would be of peculiar interest to both Moses and Elijah, one of whom had departed by death and resurrection and the other by translation.

5. The Close of the Galilean Ministry (vs. 37-50). Jesus' cure of the demoniac boy at the foot of the mountain next day (vs. 37-43) is contrasted in all three Gospels with the failure of the disciples to cast out the evil spirit. Luke marks the pathos of the scene by including in the father's appeal for the boy his statement, "he is mine only child". He also adds the tender touch that when Jesus healed him, He "gave him back to the father". His account of the Galilean ministry then comes to a close with a few further incidents: another prediction of the Cross (vs. 43-45), an object lesson in humility and a warning against intolerance (vs. 46-50).

THE JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM

(9:51—19:28)

The narrative contained in this section is almost wholly peculiar to the Third Gospel. In Matthew the record is compressed into two chapters (chs. 19-20) and in Mark into one (ch. 10). It is the story of a slow journey lasting many months, during which Jesus was moving steadily on toward Jerusalem for the consummation of His ministry. It is characterized by an abundance of parables. There are sixteen

parables and only five miracles in this part of Luke's Gospel. It may be considered in three divisions, corresponding with three stages of the journey as indicated in the course of the narrative (9:51; 13:22; 17:11; 19:28).

It is possible to regard these stages as separated by different visits to Jerusalem, for John's Gospel shows that Jesus was in the city on two occasions during this period before His final arrival there just before the last Passover. These occasions were the Feast of Tabernacles in the fall (John 7:2, 10, 37) and the Feast of the Dedication in the winter (John 10:22-23).

I. The First Stage of the Journey (9:51—13:21). Luke does not tell us what direction Jesus followed in leaving Galilee, but it may be gathered from the first incident he relates.

1. Rejected in Samaria (9:51-62). Jesus sent messengers into Samaria in advance to prepare for His arrival. One of the villages refused Him hospitality because He was on the way to Jerusalem; and James and John drew a rebuke from the Lord for desiring to call down fire from heaven upon it (vs. 51-56). Turned aside from Samaria, Jesus would cross over to the eastern side of the Jordan and make His way down through Perea. As He went on He showed His knowledge of the hearts of men in dealing with three doubtful disciples (vs. 57-62).

2. The Mission of the Seventy (10:1-24). As Jesus had sent the Twelve into the northern parts of the province, because the labourers were so few and the harvest was so great, so for the same reason He now sends a much larger number of His fol-

lowers into the southern parts (vs. 1-2). The charge He gave them was similar to that given to the Twelve (vs. 3-12). It closes with a denunciation of the impenitent cities in Galilee (vs. 13-16). The number seventy is significant. It probably had some reference to the seventy nations of Gen. 10, which were regarded as making up the whole human race. If Christ's choice of the Twelve was based on the number of the tribes and was particularly related to His mission to Israel, the mission of the seventy was probably intended to foreshadow His relation to the Gentiles.

The joy which these disciples manifested on their return evoked such exultation on His part as is unique in the life of the Saviour (vs. 17-20). His statement, "I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven", meant that Jesus saw in the success of the disciples a symbol and earnest of the complete overthrow of Satan. Then He went on to express His joy that the truths of His new order were being revealed to the simple, and to congratulate His disciples that they had seen them. While doing this, He made one of those sublime assertions of Divine power and authority which flash out again and again from His teaching (vs. 21-24).

3. The Good Samaritan (10:25-42). The occasion of this parable was a practical question put to Jesus by a lawyer which betrayed a false view of eternal life, for it implied that eternal life could be secured by the performance of some one act. Jesus referred him back to the Law, which a lawyer ought to know. The lawyer showed that he rightly understood the Law by quoting the heart of it as summed up in love to God and love to one's neighbour (Deut. 6:5; Lev. 19:18). Jesus approved the answer, and

added, "This do, and thou shalt live", implying by this that life consists in the continuous performance of acts of love. This touched the lawyer's conscience and put him on the defensive, and he asked another question: "And who is my neighbour?" (vs. 25-29).

In reply, Jesus told the story of the good Samaritan, which was probably taken from real life, as He would hardly represent a priest and a Levite as so callous and indifferent if there had been no actual incident to justify Him in doing so. The parable illustrates the true operation of the law of love. Jesus shifted the lawyer's ground from the selfish attitude implied in his question, which sought to limit the meaning of "neighbour", to the attitude of love, by asking, when He had finished the story, "Which of these three proved neighbour?" If a Samaritan could prove himself a true neighbour to a Jew by showing mercy to him, then all men are neighbours (vs. 30-37).

The exquisite picture of Jesus in the home of Martha and Mary, which is preserved by Luke alone, may have been inserted here (vs. 38-42) to supplement the answer that Jesus gave to the lawyer's question about eternal life in the preceding incident. Practical benevolence, such as that of the Samaritan, is not enough. It must be combined with communion with the Lord. This was "the good part" which Mary had chosen.

4. A Lesson on Prayer (11:1-13). On one of the occasions when Jesus had been praying, a request was put to Him by one of the disciples: "Lord, teach us to pray". He gave them as a model what is usually called the Lord's Prayer (vs. 1-4). Matthew reports it in the Sermon on the Mount (6:9-13). Then He proceeded to give them an encouragement

to pray in the parable of the importunate friend (vs. 5-8).

Three persons are to be carefully distinguished: the host—"which of you"—with nothing to supply his guest, his near-by friend who has abundance, and his guest who has come to him, at midnight, needy and hungry. The parable teaches its lesson by contrasting the reluctance of the selfish friend, who has to be roused by continued and importunate asking, with the willingness of the loving and bountiful God. Jesus then adds an exhortation that they should persevere in prayer, and supports it by their own human experience of a father's nature (vs. 9-13). "How much more" will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him. This gift implies all other good gifts.

5. The Blasphemy of the Pharisees (11:14-36). On one occasion when Jesus had cured a dumb demoniac, He was accused of complicity with Beelzebub, and was challenged to perform a sign to clear Himself of the charge (vs. 14-16). He first refuted the charge by an appeal to common sense. Satan would not fight against himself, as even their own exorcists would say (vs. 17-19). Then He gave the true explanation of His cures: the power of God was present with Him, and the Kingdom of God was come among them (vs. 20-23). In contrast with His own cures, He drew a picture of the result when their exorcists cast out an unclean spirit (vs. 24-26). At this point an incident occurred which shows the deep impression produced upon the people by the Lord's words (vs. 27-28).

This was followed by a further discourse, in which Jesus denounced that generation of Israel as "an evil generation" for seeking after a sign, and would

give it no sign but the sign that Jonah was to the people of Nineveh. It should be condemned in the final judgment by the queen who came from afar to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and by the Ninevites who repented at Jonah's preaching (vs. 29-32). It is significant that Jesus took these two instances from among the Gentiles. They should condemn by their example the Jews of that day who had a greater than Solomon and Jonah in their midst. Then He went on to show that those whose spiritual vision had not been darkened by impenitence and indifference had no need of a sign from heaven. Their whole soul was full of the light that was shining all around them. This light was shed by Christ Himself (vs. 33-36).

6. At Dinner in a Pharisee's House (11:37-54). A Pharisee had asked Jesus to dine with him, and was surprised that He did not perform the usual act of ceremonial washing before dinner (vs. 37-38). This led Jesus to pronounce a series of rebukes upon the Pharisees for the hypocrisy and externalism of their religious practices and for their vainglorious spirit (vs. 39-44). A remark interposed by one of the lawyers present led Jesus to include them too in the series of "woe's", and to announce the approaching doom that should fall upon that generation of Jews (vs. 45-52).

The blood of all the prophets, "from the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zechariah", should be required of that generation. The murder of Zechariah is recorded in 2 Chron. 24:20-21, and as this book comes last in the Hebrew Canon, these two murders are the first and the last in the Bible of the Jews. When the Lord left the Pharisee's house a scene of violence occurred (vs. 53-54). This marks

the culminating point of the conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees so far as the Galilean ministry is concerned.

7. A Series of Discourses (12:1—13:9). The commotion drew together an immense crowd, whose sympathies were probably divided. Jesus addressed His next words to His disciples rather than to the multitude. He warned them against hypocrisy, the characteristic spirit and secret sin of the Pharisees, which should ultimately be exposed (12:1-3), and encouraged them with the assurance of God's loving care over them in this world (12:4-7), and with the promise of a recompense of glory with Himself in Heaven, which should be denied to those who denied Him and blasphemed the Holy Spirit (12:8-10). They were not to be anxious before persecuting tribunals, for the Holy Spirit would aid them in their testimony (12:11-12).

A covetous request from a man in the crowd was the occasion of the parable of the rich fool. Jesus declined to interfere in the affairs of civil life, and uttered a warning against coveting this world's goods (12:13-15). He went on to tell the story of the foolish rich man, whose ground was blessed of God, but who left God out of his account and lived for himself alone. He was making provision for the flesh to fulfil the lust thereof when God called him to his account (12:16-20). A man is made rich, not by the possession of this world's wealth, but by the possession of that spiritual wealth that counts with God (12:21).

The address to the people being ended, Jesus once more turned to the disciples. They were not to be anxious, but were to trust in their Father's loving care (12:22-30). They were to seek His Kingdom,

for it was their Father's good pleasure to give them the Kingdom, and they were to have their treasure in Heaven (12:31-34). They were to be always ready, with their loins girded and their lamps burning, like servants watching for their master's return, "for in an hour that ye think not the Son of man cometh" (12:35-40).

At this point, in answer to a question by Peter, Jesus addressed the Apostles in particular, and reminded them of their special responsibility to be faithful and wise stewards during their Master's absence, and warned them against being unprepared for His return (12:41-48). Then He gave voice to the emotion that filled His heart in view of the moral revolution and the family divisions which He was about to cause on the earth (12:49-53).

He addressed the multitude once more, and denounced them for not recognizing the signs of the times. They did not see the significance of what was happening in the world (12:54-59). Then came three warnings of judgment and exhortations to repentance that are found only in Luke. Two of them were based on recent incidents (13:1-5). The third was the parable of the barren fig-tree, in which Jesus pictured the failure of Israel to respond to the patient dealing of God with the nation, and foreshadowed the coming judgment (13:6-9).

8. A Synagogue Scene (13:10-21). This incident is peculiar to Luke and is the last recorded visit of Jesus to a synagogue. The ruler of the synagogue, angry because Jesus had healed the infirm woman on the Sabbath, attacked Him indirectly by turning to the people and charging them not to come for healing on the Sabbath day. Jesus rebuked him for his hypocrisy, and put His adversaries to shame

before the people (vs. 10-17). Seeing how the people rejoiced at the miracles He was working, Jesus repeated the parables of the mustard seed and the leaven describing the effect of the Kingdom of God in the world (vs. 18-21). These two parables occur in the sermon of parables recorded in Matt. 13.

II. The Second Stages of the Journey (13:22—17:10). Jesus continued His journey, proceeding slowly through the country, stopping to teach at every city and village as He went on toward Jerusalem (v. 22).

1. Warnings on the Way (13:23-35). One of these arose out of a question as to the number of the saved. Jesus replied by repeating sayings found in Matt. 7:13 and 8:11-12 and making further statements foreshadowing the calling of the Gentiles (vs. 22-30). Another came out of an attempt by some Pharisees to frighten Jesus with a threat from Herod through whose dominion He was travelling. It failed to disturb Him. The cunning of "that fox" could not turn Him aside from the work given Him to do, and He would go on fulfilling it day by day till He had finished it in Jerusalem (vs. 31-33). This thought drew out a lamentation over the city which had so often refused to receive His ministry. She had rejected the salvation that He offered; and now He could only leave her people to the desolation that was coming. They should not see Him till, in response to the national repentance of Israel, He would come again (vs. 34-35).

2. A Sabbath Meal in a Pharisee's House (14:1-24). Here we are allowed to see something of Jesus' in-door life and familiar table-talk. The scene is peculiar to Luke and is amply described. It

was the Sabbath day, and they had a man with the dropsy there and were watching Jesus to see if He would heal or not. The refusal of the lawyers and Pharisees to answer His question about healing on the Sabbath betrayed their bad faith. After healing the man and sending him away, He exposed their hypocrisy with another question which they could not answer (vs. 1-6).

As the guests sat down, Jesus marked how they took the chief seats for themselves, and He gave them a lesson on humility, clothing it in the form of a recommendation to intelligent self-interest (vs. 7-11). When He observed how the guests belonged to the richer classes, He gave His host a lesson on charity toward the poor and needy, promising him a reward in the resurrection of the just (vs. 12-14).

This reference to the resurrection drew from one of the guests a remark about the blessedness of sharing in the heavenly feast of the Kingdom of God, and Jesus spoke the parable of the great supper to show how little this privilege was appreciated. The man who made the supper had many, but when he sent his servant to tell them that all things were now ready, "they all with one consent began to make excuse" (vs. 15-24). The parable depicts the indifference of the Jews to spiritual things, their rejection of the Gospel, their exclusion from the Kingdom, and the ultimate calling of the Gentiles.

3. The Conditions of Discipleship (14:25-35). As Jesus resumed His journey great crowds followed Him. They were disposed to believe that He was the Messiah, but they misunderstood the nature of the Kingdom and the conditions of discipleship. These Jesus now pointed out. The disciple of Jesus

must bear the cross after Him (vs. 25-27). He must count the cost of following Him to the end (vs. 28-32). He must renounce all that he has for Christ's sake and maintain the spirit of self-sacrifice, so that the salt in his life may not lose its savour or its influence upon others (vs. 33-35).

4. Three Parables of Grace (Ch. 15). These three stories form a connected series, and were spoken in answer to the Pharisees and Scribes who were criticising Jesus for associating with publicans and sinners (vs. 1-2). Their purpose was to show that it was just such as these—the lost and the out-cast—that Jesus came to save. Luke alone has preserved them, and they are especially characteristic of his Gospel. They all illustrate aspects of redemption, and they suggest the work of the three Persons of the Godhead in the salvation of the lost.

The parables of the lost sheep (vs. 3-7) and the lost coin (vs. 8-10) set forth the seeking love of God, depicting the aspect of grace shown in the work of the Son and the work of the Spirit. The parable of the lost son sets forth the pardoning love of God, and depicts the aspect of grace as manifested by the Father. It is in two parts. The first part, which tells the story of the prodigal son (vs. 11-24), reveals the attitude of God's heart toward the world of sinners. The second part, which tells of the elder brother (vs. 25-32), was intended to depict the spirit of the Pharisees and Scribes in their murmuring against Jesus, and to reveal the attitude of God's heart toward them.

The whole chapter is full of singular beauty. The note of joy rings through it. Each of the first two parables ends with a refrain which reflects the joy of Heaven over the salvation of the sinner. The

third parable, which occupies two-thirds of the chapter, seems to rise into poetry as the story approaches its close. Each of its two parts ends with a refrain, which expresses the father's joy over the finding of his lost son, and reflects the Father-heart of God.

5. Two Parables of Warning (Ch. 16). These two parables also are peculiar to Luke. They have to do with the use of the wealth of this world. One was spoken to the disciples and the other to the Pharisees.

In the parable of the prudent steward (vs. 1-8), Jesus drew a lesson for the disciples from the man's prudence and foresight in providing for his future. The steward was not acting dishonestly in cutting down the debts that were owed to his master, for in each case it is implied that he would make up the amount himself. He is called "the unrighteous steward" with reference to the primary charge of wasting his master's goods, not with reference to his dealing with his master's debtors. His lord could not have commended him for a transaction which would have made free with his income. The steward was commended "because he had done wisely": when put out of his former position he used his present wealth to make provision for the future. Jesus was not using a dishonest transaction as an illustration of wisdom. He was describing the kind of wisdom the people of this world show in providing for their earthly future, in order to point a lesson for "the children of light" in providing for their eternal future.

Jesus added some comments to enforce the lesson of the parable (vs. 9-13). He bade the disciples make to themselves friends "by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when it shall fail, they

may receive you into the eternal tabernacles". They were to use earthly wealth, called "the mammon of unrighteousness" because it tends to promote unrighteousness, in helping the poor and needy and serving the Kingdom of God. By so doing they should win friendships that would outlast the wealth of this world and endure into the eternal world. If they were not faithful in the use of earthly riches, they would not be trusted with heavenly riches. "That which is another's", is earthly wealth, which we have only in trust and cannot keep. "That which is your own", is spiritual wealth, which we possess forever.

The Pharisees scoffed at this teaching, and Jesus reminded them that God knew their hearts, and their pride was an abomination in His sight. The old dispensation was being superseded by the Kingdom of God, and the Law on which they trusted was being fulfilled completely in a new spiritual order where moral principles prevail (vs. 14-18). Jesus went on to illustrate these principles by the story of the rich man and Lazarus, in which He pictured the disastrous and eternal consequences that follow the wrong use of earthly riches.

The parable contains two scenes, one on earth and the other in another world, which are set exactly over against each other. In the scene on earth (vs. 19-22), a striking contrast is drawn between the rich man and the beggar, first in life and then in death. Every detail in this picture has its significance in bringing out the selfish neglect of the rich man, who used his wealth for himself alone and got a burial in this world, over against the utter helplessness and misery of the poor man, who had noth-

ing in this world but his faith—his name means “God is my help”—and got a welcome in Heaven.

The other scene is in Hades—not “hell” (A.V.), but the world where all the departed go to await the final judgment, including a place of punishment and a place of bliss. Here the contrast is completely reversed, and between the two men there is a great gulf fixed. Of the two interviews composing the scene, one relates to the rich man’s lot after death (vs. 23-26), and the other to that of his five brethren on earth (vs. 27-31). His own lot is fixed unalterably, and he is suffering from the torture of lustful desires which his life on earth has inflamed and which he cannot satisfy now. His brethren, who refused to hear Moses and the Prophets, would not repent if one rose from the dead. By this conclusion of the parable Jesus once more rebuked the demand of the Pharisees for a sign.

6. Further Teaching for the Disciples (17:1-10). This passage contains four brief sayings addressed to the disciples, which appear to have no connection with the preceding discourses. They deal with the greatness of the sin of causing others to sin (vs. 1-2), the duty of forgiving a sinning brother when he repents (vs. 3-4), the power of even the smallest faith (vs. 5-6), and the fact that obedience and good works imply no merit on our part and give us no claim on God (vs. 7-10). The last saying is based on the system of slavery, and seems to represent the Lord as a slave-master. The illustration, however, was not intended to depict the Lord’s attitude to the disciples, but only to show how they were to regard their service for Him. The other side of their relation to the Lord and His service is brought out in 12:35-37.

III. The Third Stage of the Journey (17:11—19: 28). For the third time Luke tells us that Jesus was moving on toward Jerusalem. This last portion of the journey brings Him to Bethany just before the triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

1. The Ten Lepers (17:11-19). These men, standing off by themselves as Jesus was entering a village, cried out to Him for mercy, and He bade them go to the priests. This implied a promise of cleansing. Their faith was shown in their obedience to His command, and as they went they were cleansed. Christ's miracles of healing were so common that nine of them took their cure as a matter of course without returning to thank Him. The gratitude of the Samaritan won an additional blessing from the Lord. This is another illustration of the universal human outlook of this Gospel.

2. The Coming of the Kingdom (17:20-37). Asked by the Pharisees when the Kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied that it was not coming with any visible demonstration or outward sign that men could observe; "for behold", He went on to say, "the kingdom of God is in the midst of you" (vs. 20-21, marg.). The phrase in the text, "within you", is correct enough as a translation, but does not suit the context, for the Kingdom of God was not in the hearts of the Pharisees. Jesus was referring to Himself and to His own presence in their midst. The powers and principles of the Kingdom were already in action in the kind of life that He was living among them.

Christ then turned to the disciples, and, continuing the subject which the Pharisees had introduced, He told them of the future coming of the Kingdom.

The days would come when they should not have His presence in their midst and should long for His return (v. 22). His Second Coming would not take place secretly, nor locally; it would be like a flash of lightning, seen suddenly and simultaneously everywhere (vs. 23-24). Before that, however, He must suffer and be rejected by the present generation (v. 25).

Men will be living their ordinary lives and giving themselves up to worldly enjoyment, and the revelation of the Son of Man will come upon them suddenly (v. 26-30). Only those will be ready for Him who have not identified their lives with the interests of this world (vs. 31-33). Then the closest relations of this life will be broken, for separations will be made according as one belongs to the Kingdom and another does not (vs. 34-36). The question that the disciples asked at the end assumed what He had just denied, that the revelation of the Son of Man would be local (v. 37). He replied with what was probably a proverb, meaning that when the conditions are fulfilled, then the agents of judgment come.

3. Parables about Prayer (18:1-14). Luke alone records these two parables. The parable of the unrighteous judge and the importunate widow (vs. 1-8), following the preceding discourse on the Lord's Second Coming, teaches the necessity of persevering prayer in view of that event. The alternative is either praying continually or fainting. The argument is this: If an unrighteous judge will give a righteous judgment in the case of a helpless widow in whom he has no interest because of her ceaseless petition, how much more will the righteous and holy God answer the unwearied cry for justice of His chosen people whom He loves. If He does not inter-

pose immediately to deliver them, it is because He is long-suffering to their oppressors. Jesus closed the parable with a warning: "Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find the faith on the earth?" (marg.), that is, the faith of the widow, the faith that persists in prayer.

The parable of the Pharisee and the publican (vs. 9-14) was addressed to some members of the company that was following Jesus who manifested a haughty spirit of self-righteousness. Both men were alike in going up into the Temple to pray, but were quite different in the spirit and purpose of their prayers. The Pharisee, standing proudly in a conspicuous spot, thanked God that he was not like the rest of men, and told Him of his meritorious works. The publican, standing away off by himself, pleaded with humility and contrition for mercy as a sinner. He was the one that went home "justified" (Luke uses Paul's word), with his prayer for pardon answered, and not the self-righteous Pharisee.

4. Incidents in Perea (18:15-34). At this point Luke's narrative joins those of Matthew (19:13) and Mark (10:13). The incidents recorded are: the blessing of the babes brought to Jesus (vs. 15-17), the interview of Jesus with the rich ruler on the question of eternal life (vs. 18-23) and His conversation with the disciples about it afterwards (vs. 24-30), and a final prediction of what was to happen to Him at Jerusalem (vs. 31-34).

5. Jesus at Jericho (18:35—19:28). This was His last stopping place before reaching Bethany. When Luke's account of the miracle at Jericho (18: 35-43) is compared with the accounts in Matthew (20:29-34) and Mark (10:46-52), it appears that

there were two blind men healed. One of them, probably Bartimæus, heard the travelling company entering Jericho as he sat by the wayside, and was told that Jesus was in it; and both of them appealed to Jesus and received their sight as He was leaving Jericho next day. Jesus spent the intervening night at the house of Zacchæus the publican. The story of this man's conversion, which is contained only in Luke, is full of human interest (19:1-10). It tells of the device he adopted as a small man because of his eagerness to see Jesus in the crowd, the call that Jesus addressed to him, and his complete surrender to the conditions of discipleship.

The parable of the pounds was apparently spoken when Jesus was still in Jericho (19:11-28). It is to be distinguished from the parable of the talents, which was addressed to the disciples privately on a different occasion (Matt. 25:14-30). Two reasons are given to explain why Jesus spoke the parable at this time—"because he was nigh to Jerusalem", the city that was to reject Him and whose guilt is depicted in the parable, and because those who accompanied Him "supposed that the kingdom of God was immediately to appear". There was evidently increasing excitement among these pilgrims as they drew nearer Jerusalem. They were expecting that Jesus would set up the Messianic Kingdom there at once. The parable depicts the Lord's departure from the world as necessary in order that His Kingdom should be established, and it goes on to indicate how His disciples were to be occupied in working and waiting for His return.

The phrase used of the nobleman, "to receive for himself a kingdom", was a prophetic announcement of the Lord's enthronement in Heaven in prepar-

ation for the establishment of His Kingdom on earth. It can hardly be an allusion to the mission of Archelaus to Rome after the death of his father Herod (Matt. 2:22), for that took place more than thirty years before. Each of the ten servants was given the same sum. The pound, therefore, must represent what all believers have in common, either the grace of salvation or the Gospel as a trust (1 Thess. 2:4; 1 Tim. 1:11). The parable describes the attitude of the Jews toward their Messianic King—"We will not that this man reign over us" (v. 14). It closes by depicting the punishment that was to come upon them for rejecting Him.

THE MINISTRY IN JERUSALEM

(19:29—21:38)

We have now reached the end of the journey which has brought Jesus step by step nearer Jerusalem. He was accompanied by a multitude of pilgrims who were going up to the Passover. He was about to enter Jerusalem for His final ministry there. At this point Luke rejoins the other Gospels in describing the closing week of the Lord's life. The present section is parallel with Matt. 21—25 and Mark 11—13. Luke omits the supper at Bethany where Mary anointed Jesus, and connects the events that he records immediately with the Temple. His narrative may be taken under three main themes.

1. Entering into the Temple (19:29-48). Jesus now deliberately presented Himself as the Messiah in the nation's capital and in the Temple. He accepted the Messianic salutations of the multitude, and claimed Messianic authority in His Father's

house. All the details of the story emphasize the solemnity which He attached to the event. The sending of the two disciples indicates a deliberate plan on His part. The remark, "whereon no man ever yet sat", is in keeping with the kingly use that was to be made of the animal (vs. 29-36). From the moment Jesus seated Himself upon the colt He became the centre of the homage and enthusiasm of the crowd (vs. 37-40).

His lament over the city (vs. 41-44) is not to be confounded with the lament recorded in 13:34-35. It was uttered on the spot where the road from Bethany, rounding the Mount of Olives, brings the city into view. The incident is related by Luke alone. Jesus entered the Temple as a sovereign, discharged the functions of a judge, and established Himself there as a teacher (vs. 45-48). Luke adds the graphic statement, "the people all hung upon him, listening".

2. Teaching in the Temple (20:1—21:4). As soon as Jesus began teaching in the Temple, the leaders of the nation sought some way to destroy Him. Fear of the people kept them from proceeding against Him openly, and so they first tried to discredit Him in the eyes of the people. As religious authorities they came demanding to know what authority He had, and He met them with a question which exposed their failure as religious leaders (20:1-8). He followed this with the parable of the wicked husbandmen, in which He depicted their sin and forecast the judgment that was coming upon them (20:9-19). Luke, along with Mark, omits both the parable of the two sons, which precedes this one in Matthew, and that of the marriage feast, which follows it.

Then came the questions put to Jesus by the different Jewish sects. Luke says that spies were sent with the question about giving tribute to Cæsar, in an attempt to ensnare Him and hand Him over to the Roman governor. He saw through their purpose, and His answer silenced them before the people and made them marvel (20:20-26). The Sadducees came next with their question about the resurrection. Jesus answered it with an exposition of a verse from Moses in the passage about "the bush" (Exod. 3:6), which won the approval of the Scribes (20:27-40). Then He brought his public teaching to an end, and silenced His adversaries among the Jews, by quoting a passage about the Messiah from the Psalms (110:1) which they could not explain (20:41-44). Finally he denounced the Scribes in the hearing of the people (20:45-47), and commended the poor widow who cast her two mites into the treasury (21:1-4).

3. Foretelling the Destruction of the Temple (21:5-38). Matthew (ch. 24) and Mark (ch. 13) tell us that this prophecy was delivered on the Mount of Olives after Jesus had pronounced His final denunciation of the Jewish leaders and left the Temple for the last time. Luke gives no indication of the time and place, but only tells of the question that called it forth (vs. 5-7). His report of the address has the destruction of Jerusalem chiefly in view. The Second Coming of Christ is treated very briefly, for it had been given fuller treatment in an earlier address called forth by a question of the Pharisees (17:20-37). The question of the disciples, as Luke records it, refers simply to the sign that should announce the coming destruction of the

Temple, which took place in A.D. 70. The Lord's answer may be analysed as follows:

(1) The troubles that would follow the departure of Christ and must not be mistaken for true signs (vs. 8-19). False Christs would come; wars would arise among the nations; and the disciples of Christ would be persecuted—hated of all men for His name's sake.

(2) The destruction of Jerusalem and the true sign that would announce it (vs. 20-24). The disciples were to flee when they saw it, for the long-foretold judgment upon Israel was about to fall, and Jerusalem's age-long desolation at the hands of the Gentiles was about to begin. The words, "these are days of vengeance", correspond with the statement about "great tribulation" in Matthew.

(3) The coming of the Son of Man in power and glory, which would bring their redemption to its consummation (vs. 25-28). This would take place when the "times of the Gentiles" should be fulfilled; that is, when the preaching of the Gospel in the Gentile world should be completed. The sign of this would be distress among the nations and alarming commotions, indicating the collapse of the whole system of human society.

(4) The illustration of the fig-tree and its lesson (vs. 29-36). The destruction of the Temple would take place before that generation passed away. The day of the Son of Man would come upon the world suddenly. Hence the need of increasing watchfulness on the part of Christ's followers.

The chapter closes with a statement of the way that Jesus spent the last days and nights of His public ministry—every day teaching the people in

the Temple, and every night lodging in the Mount of Olives (vs. 37-38).

THE DEPARTURE OF THE SON OF MAN

(Chs. 22-24)

These chapters tell us how Jesus accomplished His departure from the world by the way of the Cross, the Resurrection, and the Ascension. This was the theme of His conversation with Moses and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration (9:31 marg.). These chapters are parallel with Matt. 26—28 and Mark 15—16. Luke gives many details not found in the other Gospels.

1. The Preparations (22:1-13). As the Feast of the Passover drew near the Jewish leaders were plotting how to put Jesus to death without causing a tumult among the people, when Judas Iscariot came to their aid. Yielding to Satanic influence, he offered to betray his Master, made a bargain with them, and then sought to carry it out without the people knowing (vs. 1-6). In the meantime, Jesus sent Peter and John into the city to prepare the Passover when the day came. Luke alone tells us that they were the two disciples chosen for this purpose. They should meet a man carrying a pitcher of water, who would let them have his guest-chamber to prepare the Passover in (vs. 7-13).

2. The Last Supper (22:14-38). At the proper time Jesus sat down with the Apostles, telling them that He had eagerly looked forward to this occasion, and that it was the last time He would eat the Passover with them and drink of the fruit of the vine till the Kingdom of God should come (vs. 14-18).

He was referring symbolically to the consummation of salvation in the future. Then He instituted the service that was to commemorate the sealing of the New Covenant by His death (vs. 19-20). In the course of the supper He announced the presence of the traitor at the table and pronounced his doom (vs. 21-23).

A dispute took place among the disciples as to which of them should be accounted the greatest, and Jesus rebuked them by pointing out that the conditions of greatness in human society did not hold in the society that He was founding. He Himself was among them "as he that serveth". Because of their loyalty to Him in His trials, He would give them high places in His coming Kingdom (vs. 24-30). He warned Simon specially of the peril in which he stood at Satan's hands. He added an encouraging word, but foretold that disciple's threefold denial of his Master (vs. 31-34).

Then Jesus went on to instruct all the disciples to make provision for the new conditions which they were now going to meet in the world. He did not mean that they were to use force, but they took His figurative reference to a sword literally and told Him that they had two swords ready. Saddened by their obtuseness and lack of spiritual insight, He dismissed the subject with a brief and final word: "It is enough". Luke alone mentions this incident (vs. 35-38).

3. In Gethsemane (22:39-53). Luke does not mention the fact that Jesus took the three disciples with Him when He went into the garden to pray. In the story of the agony (vs. 39-46), he alone tells us that an angel from Heaven appeared unto Jesus,

strengthening Him, and that His sweat was like great drops of blood. In the story of the betrayal and arrest (vs. 47-53), Luke alone tells us that Jesus healed the ear of the high priest's servant. The Lord's command, "Suffer ye thus far", was a flash of inherent power and dignity, compelling them to pause till He performed this act of mercy before yielding Himself up to them.

4. The Religious Trial (22:54-71). Jesus was taken first to the high priest's house, where He was mocked and reviled (vs. 54-65). In the course of this scene Peter sat in the midst of a group in the light of a fire in the court, where he was repeatedly challenged and every time denied his Master. Luke tells that when the cock crew, "the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter". At daylight the meeting of the Jewish Council was held (vs. 66-71). Jesus confessed before them that He was the Christ, and went on to declare that they should yet see Him as the Son of Man seated at the right hand of power. Then He confessed that He was the Son of God, and for this claim He was condemned.

5. The Civil Trial (23:1-25). Bringing Jesus before Pilate, the Jews laid a political charge against Him: they accused Him of stirring up sedition and claiming to be a king. In answer to Pilate's question, He confessed Himself to be the King of the Jews. But Pilate told His accusers that he could find no count on which to condemn Him. Then learning that Jesus was from Galilee, he sent Him to Herod who was in Jerusalem at that time (vs. 1-7).

Luke alone tells us of this particular incident in the trial (vs. 8-12). Herod was delighted, because his desire to see Jesus was now fulfilled. But Jesus

answered none of his questions nor the accusations of the chief priests and Scribes who followed Him there. This silence was the Lord's way of showing that He was not on trial before Herod. Then Herod subjected Him to mockery at the hands of his soldiers, and sent Him back to Pilate.

When Jesus appeared before Pilate again (vs. 13-25), the governor called the Jewish authorities and informed them that neither he nor Herod found anything worthy of death in Jesus, and proposed to chastise Him and let Him go. But they demanded the release of Barabbas instead, a rebel and a murderer, and in the face of Pilate's repeated protest they clamoured for the crucifixion of Jesus. At last he yielded to their will, released the murderer, and delivered Jesus over to be crucified.

6. The Crucifixion (23:26-49). On the road to Calvary, besides the impressing of Simon the Cyrenian, an incident occurred which Luke alone records, that of the women following and lamenting Him, whom He warned to weep for themselves and not for Him, because of the days of judgment that were coming (vs. 26-31).

Luke's account of the scene at Calvary contains the following incidents not found in the other Gospels:—The prayer of Jesus when they were nailing Him to the cross: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (vs. 32-38). His word to the penitent thief who appealed to Jesus to remember him when He came into His kingdom: "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise" (vs. 39-43). His loud cry at the moment of His death after the three hours of darkness: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (vs. 44-46). The consternation

and remorse manifested by the crowd that were drawn by curiosity to the sight: "They returned smiting their breasts" (vs. 47-49).

7. The Burial (23:50-56). In telling how Joseph of Arimathea obtained the body of Jesus from Pilate and laid it in a new tomb, Luke informs us that though he was a member of the Jewish Council, he had not voted for the condemnation and crucifixion of Jesus: "he had not consented to their counsel and deed".

8. The Resurrection Morning (24:1-12). In telling how the fact of the Resurrection was discovered, Luke gives substantially the same story as the other Gospels. The women from Galilee came with their spices at early dawn on the first day of the week, and found the stone rolled away and the tomb empty. In the midst of their perplexity, two angels appeared and told them that Christ was risen, and reminded them of His prediction that He should be crucified and rise again the third day (vs. 1-7). The women returned and told the Apostles, who at first would not believe. Peter, however, ran to the tomb to see for himself, and went home wondering at what had happened (vs. 8-12).

9. The Risen Lord (24:13-43). The beautiful story of the manifestation at Emmaus, which was noticed briefly by Mark (16:12-13), is narrated at length by Luke. It occurred in the afternoon of the Resurrection day. Nothing is known of Cleopas. Luke gives his name probably because he got the story directly from him. What the two disciples said to Jesus, when He drew near to them, reflects the perplexity and wonder that had taken possession of

all the disciples because of what was told them by the women (vs. 13-24). As they walked together toward Emmaus, Jesus gave them a talk on the central theme of the Old Testament: "Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself" (vs. 25-27).

The meal He partook with them when they arrived at the village was not the Lord's Supper; but something in His manner of breaking the bread and blessing it opened their eyes to recognize Him. Then He disappeared from their sight without seeming to move—such was the mysterious nature of His risen body—, and they recalled the glow of their hearts while He talked to them on the road. They hurried back at once to Jerusalem to tell the Apostles and other disciples what had happened to them. They found them gathered together and full of joy, reporting that the Lord was risen indeed and had already appeared to Simon Peter (vs. 28-35).

Immediately after the two disciples from Emmaus had related their experience, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of the group and greeted them with a salutation of peace. To calm their fears and prove His identity, He showed them His wounded hands and feet, and then, to put them at their ease, He asked for something to eat (vs. 36-43).

10. The Ascension (24:44-53). Luke follows his narrative of these appearances to the disciples on the day of the Resurrection with a summary of the instructions that Christ gave to the Apostles during the forty days between the Resurrection and the Ascension (vs. 44-49). It contains their missionary commission, and closes with a command to wait

in Jerusalem until they were "clothed with power from on high". Then there comes a brief account of the Ascension, and the Gospel closes with the great joy which that transcendent event produced among them. While waiting for the Holy Spirit, the disciples "were continually in the temple, blessing God" (vs. 50-53).

This passage and Luke's further account in Acts 1:6-12 are the only narratives that describe the Ascension. By the Incarnation, Jesus Christ took our human nature unto Himself. By His righteous life, He perfected it. By the Cross, He sacrificed His perfected humanity that He might share it with us sinners. By the Resurrection, He glorified it that we might share it with Him. By the Ascension, He was seated at the centre of ultimate power, that He might administer the redemption which He had accomplished for us.

* * * *

THE HUMAN LIFE THAT JESUS LIVED

The full-orbed manhood of Jesus stands out upon the story of Luke's Gospel. Here we see Him pass through all the stages of a normal human life. He lies as a babe in the manger, and is presented as an infant in the Temple (2:16, 27). He grows up as a child in the home, and sits as a boy among the teachers (2:40, 46). He develops as a youth in mind and body (2:52), and arrives at mature manhood before entering upon the special work of His life (3:23).

He touched human life on all sides. He entered the domestic life of the people, and moved among all classes of society. We find Him visiting in the home of Martha and Mary (10:38-39), staying over night with Zacchæus the publican (19:5), and din-

ing in the houses of Pharisees (7:36; 11:37; 14:1). The parables of this Gospel reflect the interest that Jesus took in all aspects of human life. Of the nineteen parables in Luke, all but four begin with, "A certain man", or "What Man?" or a similar expression.

Luke makes it clear that the sympathy of Jesus went out especially to the poor, who comprise the vast majority of mankind. The announcement of His mission in His own home-town was made by quoting Isa. 61:1 in these words: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor" (4:18). Luke's version of the Sermon on the Mount, which was addressed to His disciples, begins: "Blessed are ye poor" (6:20). The Lord meant that poverty was a blessing for them, because it helped to preserve their dependence on God and so qualify them for His Kingdom. At the same time His sympathy went out to the rich in another sense, because their wealth ministered to self-dependence and so made it difficult for them to enter His Kingdom (18:24).

Luke's Gospel not only depicts the outward aspect of the Lord's life, but also gives us a glimpse of its inner springs. It was lived in complete dependence upon His Father. His first recorded words (2:49) have been explained in the exposition of the passage as giving the key-note of His whole life on earth. It was set in the frame of the will of God. He was always "in His Father's things". He had no other interests to serve, no self-will to seek. In this attitude of mind lies the secret of His way of life. When all the Gospel narratives are examined in the light of it, we find four main elements in the kind of life that Jesus lived.

1. He made the will of God the purpose of His life. "I am come down from heaven," He declared, "not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me" (John 6:38). This cannot mean, what it would mean in the case of any other man, that the will of Jesus differed from His Father's will, and that he put aside the one and chose to carry out the other. It is the action of His will and not its content that is in view. He willed to have no self-will and no self-interest. He came down from Heaven, He meant, to live a human life, under human conditions and within human limitations, which would be free from the bias of self-will in all other human lives. And at the end of it He was able to say, "I glorified thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which thou hast given me to do" (John 17:4). All through His life His mind moved, with complete freedom of choice and with all the fullness of its human powers, in accordance with the mind of God.

2. He found the will of God in the Scriptures, and not in His own consciousness. He made the Word of God His constant guide. He ordered His life in accordance with a Divine revelation already given to men. He subjected Himself, as man, to all the limitations set by the Creator around human life and conduct. He consented to live under the strict and narrow limits of the Law as it was given to Israel. There is abundant evidence of this in all the Gospel records.

We never find Jesus vindicating Himself on subjective grounds, or defending His conduct by falling back on reasons which He might use but other men could not. He always pointed to the objective revelation of the will of God which was in the hands

of the Jews. When He purged the Temple of its unholy traffic, He did not justify the act on the ground of His Messianic claims, but by a reference to the Word of God (Matt. 21:13). When His disciples were charged with violating the Sabbath law, He defended them on the ground of a principle which He found in the Scriptures (Matt. 12:3). When a practical question of life and conduct was referred to Him, He directed the enquirer to the Word of God—"What is written in the law? How readest thou?" (Luke 10:26). When His enemies came upon Him to entangle Him with a doctrinal question, He put them to silence by exposing their ignorance of the Word of God—"Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures" (Matt. 22:29).

It is obvious, therefore, that Jesus meditated much upon the Old Testament Scriptures. They filled His thoughts, and He found in them the mind and will of His Father. He brought His own mind and will under their authority; and, as He followed their light, the plan of His life unfolded before Him. He rested His soul upon them in the great crises of His life. It was upon the written Word of God He took His stand in meeting the assaults of Satan in the wilderness. And in the awful darkness of the Cross, He sank His soul in the Father's will with a final prayer in the words of Scripture: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Luke 23:46; Psa. 31:5).

3. In carrying out the will of God He depended upon the power of God. He surrendered Himself completely to the Spirit of God. All the Gospels tell us how the Holy Spirit came upon Him at His baptism; but Luke's narrative is especially enlightening in showing us how this experience in-

fluenced His life. He left the Jordan full of the Holy Spirit, "and was led in the Spirit in the wilderness" (4:1). He came back triumphant from the Temptation, and "returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee" (4:14). Speaking in the synagogue of Nazareth, He explained the change that had taken place in His life by reading the passage in Isaiah which begins, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me" (4:18).

After that, with one doubtful exception (10:21), Luke makes no further reference to the Holy Spirit in the life of Jesus. The reason for this silence is not far to seek. After it had been shown how Jesus was filled with the Spirit and entered upon His ministry under the power of the Spirit, and how He was led by the Spirit and was working and teaching in the fulness of the Spirit's power, it was quite unnecessary to dwell any more upon the fact. There was no need of mentioning the Holy Spirit in any particular case when nothing Jesus said or did was of Himself alone.

This feature of the narrative also goes to show that Jesus lived in quite a natural way, and in full accord with the principles of human nature. There was nothing abnormal in His life. He always manifested the presence and power of the Spirit of God according to the laws and within the limits of the nature of man. His life was the natural expression of His own Spirit-filled personality.

4. His dependence on God was maintained by prayer. This was one of the most remarkable features of His ministry. It was the background of all He said and did. It pervades the Gospel narratives like an atmosphere. All the Evangelists refer to the prayer-life of Jesus, but Luke gives it special

emphasis. There are nine instances of prayer in the Lord's life mentioned by him alone (3:21; 5:16; 6:12; 9:18; 11:1; 22:31-32; 22:44; 23:34; 23:46).

The prayer-life of Jesus was different from anything ever seen before. It was not merely an expression of religious life, as in the case of the Old Testament saints. There was a great consciousness of God in the life of Jesus. He hung upon God in prayer, and the power to carry on His ministry as He went along came out of His life of prayer. It made a deep impression on His disciples and on all who came under His influence. They would often see Him withdraw and go away into the wilderness or up on the mountain side to spend time alone in communion with His Father.

He had an access to God which even His disciples did not have. Sometimes He took them with Him when He withdrew for prayer, but even in these cases there are indications in the narrative that His praying was apart from theirs. We are nowhere told that He prayed with them; but instead of that we have such a statement as this: "And it came to pass, as he was praying apart, the disciples were with him" (Luke 9:18). They might be in His presence when He was praying; but He was in the presence of the Father, and they were not.

This, then, was the kind of life that Jesus lived on earth. While it was thoroughly human, it was different from any other life ever seen among men. It was a life on earth ruled from Heaven. Here was human nature with all its springs in God, and with all its activity responding to the will of God. Here we see the will of God functioning perfectly in the nature of man. By living this kind of life Jesus created human nature anew, unbiased by self-will, and inclined to do the will of God.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN

THE authorship of the Fourth Gospel has been hotly contested since the beginning of the last century. Up to that time its apostolic origin was never seriously questioned. The modern attack on the supernatural character of Christianity has persistently concentrated upon this book in an attempt to bring it down to a date long after John's day, and thus break the force of the special witness it bears to the deity of Christ. The most recent theory of subjective criticism attributes the authorship to the writer who calls himself "the elder" in the Second and Third Epistles of John, but regards him as a different person from John the Apostle.

The Gospel was accepted as the Apostle's by the general body of Christians in the last quarter of the second century. The external evidence for an earlier date was weaker than in the case of the Synoptic Gospels until quite recently. A manuscript fragment of the Gospel has come to light which tends to show that the book was in existence before the end of the first century. The internal evidence for its apostolic authorship is very strong, and has always appeared convincing to devout scholarship, which recognizes the spiritual as well as the linguistic qualities of style. It may be summed up as follows:

The narrative is marked by innumerable touches which could come only from an eye-witness of the events recorded. Some of these can be seen, for

example, in such passages as 1:35-42, 7:37-44, and 11:30-44. It also contains minute descriptions of scenes at which only Apostles were present, and shows an intimate acquaintance with the thoughts and feelings of the Apostles (4:27, 33; 16:17; 18:2; 20:19). The author called himself "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (21:20, 24). This could only be one of the inner group of the chosen three—Peter, James, or John. In the context he is distinguished from Peter, and James was put to death before the Gospel was written (Acts 12:2). The author is very careful in mentioning names to make clear whom he means (1:40, 44; 11:16; 14:22; 21:2); but in speaking of the forerunner of Christ, he alone among the Evangelists never uses the epithet, "the Baptist". The writer of this Gospel sees only one John, because he himself is the other.

After the Ascension of the Lord, John was associated with Peter in the leadership of the Church during its early days (Acts 3:1; 4:13, 19; 8:14). His name is not mentioned in New Testament history after the council in Jerusalem, which is to be dated about the middle of the century (Gal. 2:9). According to a unanimous tradition, the Apostle's later life was spent in Ephesus, which became the chief centre of Christianity after the fall of Jerusalem; and he lived there to a great age, dying at the very end of the century.

It is the consistent testimony of early Christian writers that John wrote the Gospel at Ephesus toward the close of his life, when the other Gospels were already well known, at the request of the churches of Asia. They desired to have an authentic record of the oral teaching of the last of the Apos-

ties, because erroneous views of the Person of the Lord were infecting the Church and heretics were attacking His deity. This agrees with the author's own statement of his purpose (20:31). He intended his readers to get a two-fold blessing from his book—a deeper faith in Christ (“that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God”), and a deeper spiritual life (“that believing ye may have life in his name”).

John was especially well qualified for this task. He had a strong and ardent nature (Mark 3:17), and a deep and intense devotion to Christ (Mark 9:38; Luke 9:54), all of which was now mellowed and softened by age. His supreme quality was profound spiritual insight, joined to a heart of great tenderness and affection. During his long life he had pondered over the companionship with Jesus which he and his fellow-disciples had enjoyed, and he had come to see more and more clearly the Divine nature of his Master shining out through that earthly ministry. “We beheld his glory”, he declares, “the glory as of the only begotten from the Father” (1:14). The lapse of time only deepened the wonder he felt at what he had seen manifested in the life of Jesus. This is the impression he gives us by the way he begins his First Epistle (1:1-2). And so it was that the aged Apostle John wrote what was called in the early Church “a spiritual Gospel”.

Its date cannot be fixed exactly, but it must be very close to A.D. 85 on one side or the other. Its special theme is Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and it may be analysed as follows:—

- I. The Manifestation of the Son of God—
Chs. 1—4
 1. The Incarnation of the Son (1:1-18)
 2. The Witness to the Son (1:19—2:12)
 3. The Work of the Son (2:13—4:54)
- II. His Conflict with the Unbelief of the Jews—
Chs. 5—12
 1. The Outbreak of Unbelief (Chs. 5—6)
 2. The Development of Unbelief
(Chs. 7—10)
 3. The Culmination of Unbelief
(Chs. 11-12)
- III. His Revelation to the Faith of the Disciples
—Chs. 13—17
 1. His Last Acts of Love (Ch. 13)
 2. His Farewell Messages (Chs. 14—16)
 3. His High-Priestly Prayer (Ch. 17)
- IV. The Victory of the Son of God—Chs. 18—21
 1. The Final Work of Unbelief
(Chs. 18—19)
 2. The Final Reward of Faith (Chs. 20—21)

The Fourth Gospel assumes that its readers are familiar with the Synoptic Gospels. These dealt with the Galilean ministry alone. John passes over nearly all the events of the Galilean ministry, and draws his material mainly from the Judean ministry, and especially from the Lord's visits to Jerusalem. From the Synoptic Gospels it might be inferred that the whole public ministry of Jesus covered little more than one year. John's Gospel refers to three Passovers before the last one (2:13; 5:1; 6:4), and thus shows us that the ministry of the Lord stretched over three full years. The narrative of the Gospel is set in the frame of these four Passovers.

THE INCARNATION OF THE SON

(1:1-18)

This passage is usually called the Prologue. It forms an introduction to the Gospel, and indicates the special theme and the general plan of the book. But it is an integral part of the narrative also, for it is John's account of the Incarnation. As each Evangelist begins his book in a manner suited to his narrative, so John goes back into eternity. Matthew and Luke describe the coming of Christ from the human side: John describes it from the Divine side. He traces the course of the pre-existence of the Son from the glory He had with the Father "before the world was" (17:5) down into time and the field of human history. With a stately simplicity he introduces the Lord Jesus Christ out of the eternal past.

1. Christ in Eternity (vs. 1-2). The opening phrase carries us back to the first words of Genesis and looks out into the eternity beyond the Creation. Christ was in existence "in the beginning", before time began. He was "with God", in active personal communion with Him. He "was God", sharing in the glory of the very Godhead. The Apostle may have taken his term, "the Word", from the philosophical theory of the Logos which was current in his time, but he got the meaning that he put into it from a far richer and truer philosophy. His background was the Old Testament revelation, and it was there that he found "the Word". With profound spiritual insight John's illumined mind summarizes, in these opening verses of his Gospel, the whole self-revelation of God down through the ages.

The agent of that revelation was the pre-incarnate Son.

2. Christ in Creation (vs. 3-5). These verses describe the relation of the Son of God to the world and the human race before the Incarnation. He was the active agent in the creation of the world (v. 3). It was He that was at work behind the oft-repeated words, "and God said", in the story of Creation. He was the source from which men derived life and light after that (v. 4). It is His voice we hear when Wisdom speaks in the Book of Proverbs: "Jehovah possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. When he established the heavens I was there. Then I was by him as a master workman; I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him, rejoicing in his habitable earth; and my delight was with the sons of men" (Prov. 8:22, 27, 30-31). In the moral darkness that followed the fall of man, He continued to exercise this function, but the darkness caused by sin prevented men seeing the light (v. 5).

3. Christ in History (vs. 6-13). In these verses we are brought to the historic appearance of the Son of God in the Incarnation. They tell of the mission of John the Baptist, who was sent of God to bear witness of the Light that was coming into the world, and to prepare men to believe in Christ as the perfect light for every man (vs. 6-9). Yet Christ met with unbelief when He came; even His own people Israel rejected Him (vs. 10-11). But those who did receive Him were given something entirely new. They became children of God: they received a Divine life by virtue of their faith in Him as the Son of God (vs. 12-13).

Three Christian writers of the second and third centuries, who antedate the earliest existing manuscripts of the Gospel by more than a hundred years, quote the last verse of this passage in the singular, showing that they had a text which read thus: "the name of him who was born (begotten), not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God". This implies the Virgin Birth of Jesus, and leads naturally to the next verse, which gives a specific statement of the Incarnation. It is probable that this represents the original text, and that the plural crept into the manuscript copies afterwards.

4. Christ in the Heart (vs. 14-18). The Apostle now goes on to describe the effect which Christ's presence in the world produced upon the disciples. He explains the result of the Incarnation in their personal experience. They saw in Him the glory of the Father, and the essential features of the character of God (v. 14). From His inexhaustible fulness they all received increasing supplies of grace (v. 16). The testimony of John is introduced again as the final word of prophecy (v. 15), and the Law of Moses is mentioned as the symbolical system that foreshadowed the grace and truth now completely embodied in Jesus Christ (v. 17).

Then the Apostle sums up in one final statement the full significance of the Incarnation (v. 18). God is never seen or heard Himself. Whenever He reveals Himself, or whenever He speaks, it is always the Word that men see or hear. And the Word has become incarnate in Jesus Christ. In describing Him as "the only begotten Son", John was not thinking of eternal generation but of the Virgin

Birth. He was referring back to his former expression, "the only begotten from the Father" (v. 14), which means that the Lord Jesus Christ was the only Being who came into the world by a birth divinely and supernaturally caused, and not by an ordinary natural birth.

The plan of the whole Gospel is epitomized in this introductory section. Christ is presented as the Son of God in those manifestations of His life and work that revealed unbelief or drew out faith. Here we have the manifestation of the Word (vs. 1-4), the unbelief of the Jews (vs. 5-11), and the faith of the disciples (vs. 12-18). These three fundamental ideas are developed together in the course of the Gospel, until they finally culminate in the Cross and the Resurrection, and result in the new life of the Son of God.

THE WITNESS TO THE SON

(1:19—2:12)

This section is the record of a single week—four successive days at the Jordan, and the third day afterwards at Cana. It is the first week in the story of our Lord's earthly ministry, and so is a kind of counterpart of the last week. It contains the witness of John the Baptist, the witness of the first disciples, and the witness of the first miracle, all going to show that Jesus Christ was the Son of God (1:34, 49; 2:11).

1. The Witness of John the Baptist (1:19-34). This was given on two successive days at the place beyond the Jordan where he was baptizing at the time (v. 28).

(1) The first day (vs. 19-28). John gave his first witness in a reply to an official deputation sent by "the Jews" from Jerusalem to interview him. The Apostle uses this term for the religious leaders of the nation, whose headquarters were in Judea, to distinguish them from "the multitude" or the common people, who belonged mainly to Galilee. They had their own pre-conceived Messianic program, and they did not see how John fitted into it. John told them that he was not the Messiah, but was the voice that Isaiah had foretold (40:3) was to prepare the way for the Messiah.

When he was asked what authority he had for baptizing, John did not reply directly. He admitted that he did baptize with water, but went on to say that One who was greater than himself was already in their midst. John implied that his baptizing with water was a preliminary rite in preparation for this other One. But the deputies went away without enquiring who this Person was. Here begins the national unbelief which is seen developing in the rest of the book.

(2) The second day (vs. 29-34). On the next day, as John saw Jesus coming toward him, probably returning from the Temptation, he pointed Him out as the promised Redeemer of the world, and went on to explain how he came to know Him. He had seen the Holy Spirit come down from heaven and abide upon Jesus. He had been informed of God, who had sent him to baptize with water, that this would be the sign by which he should know the Coming One, whom he was to introduce to Israel, and who would baptize with the Holy Spirit.

Three times does the Baptist insist that his bap-

tism was only "with water" (vs. 26, 31, 33). It was the symbol of a baptism "with the Holy Spirit" which he could not administer. Twice John says, "I knew him not" (vs. 31, 33). Even he did not know that Jesus was the Messiah till the promised sign was given. After that he bore witness to the two distinctive truths about Him that were to be embodied in Christianity: Jesus Christ is the world's Sin-bearer (v. 29), and the Son of God (v. 34).

2. The Witness of the First Disciples (1:35-51). Two more days follow; and now the beginnings of faith appear in the spiritual insight of the first disciples.

(1) The first group (vs. 35-42). In the presence of two of his disciples, John pointed Jesus out again as "the lamb of God". They would understand the significance of this term quite well. What the Pass-over lamb only symbolized, that Jesus was in reality. The two disciples "followed Jesus", thus taking the first step of faith; and then they had a day's communion with Him. By "the tenth hour" the Apostle probably meant ten o'clock in the morning, not four o'clock in the afternoon; for an early hour suits best the fulness of the day's events. The official Roman method of reckoning the day started from midnight. The Jewish method, which is used in the Synoptic Gospels, started from sunset. John seems to have followed the practice of noting the hours that was used in the province of Asia in which he was living (4:6; 4:52; 19:14).

That day of fellowship with Jesus convinced the two men that He was indeed the Messiah. This is reflected in the enthusiastic exclamation of Andrew

in fetching Simon Peter. The unnamed disciple was no doubt John himself, who always remains anonymous in this Gospel. The special language that he uses here of Andrew—"He first findeth his own brother Simon"—implies that John himself went off next and found his own brother James. This made four disciples gathered to Jesus that day. He met Simon with a look of special penetration, and gave him a special promise, which received its fulfilment when Peter made his great confession of Jesus Christ as the Son of God (Matt. 16:18).

(2) The second group (vs. 43-51). On the next day Jesus prepared to return to Galilee, and He "findeth Philip" and called him to accompany Him. The first group of disciples had followed Jesus as the crowning of John's work. The finding of Philip was the beginning of His own work. Philip "finding Nathanael", who is to be identified with Bartholomew, whose name is always coupled with Philip's in the Synoptic lists of the Apostles (Matt. 10:3; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:14). In spite of his prejudice against such an obscure village as Nazareth being the home of the Messiah, Nathanael's first interview with Jesus made such an impression upon him that he acknowledged both the Divinity and the Messiahship of the Lord in a transport of homage and adoration. In His reply Jesus for the first time used the expression, "verily, verily", which occurs twenty-five times in this Gospel, and always on the lips of Jesus Himself. He thus expresses some truth in the most emphatic way. Nathanael was to see the communion between earth and Heaven realized in the ministry of "the Son of man".

This phrase is the Lord's own title for Himself. It completes the revelation of His Person which has

been unfolded step by step throughout this chapter. He has been acknowledged as the Lamb of God (vs. 29, 36), as the Son of God (vs. 34, 49), as the Messiah (vs. 41, 45), and as the King of Israel (v. 49). He chooses for Himself the title that sets forth His relation to humanity as a whole and describes Him as the true representative of the race.

Jesus had now six disciples, all of whom had begun to follow Him before He wrought any miracle, primarily because of the testimony of John the Baptist, and finally because of their own personal knowledge of Him. This was the beginning of that individual faith in Him which is developed throughout the Gospel, and which finally created the Christian Church. These disciples went back to their homes and their daily occupations in Galilee. Later on they received their call to a closer relationship with Jesus and to an official position as Apostles. This is the call recorded in the Synoptic Gospels.

3. The Witness of the First Miracle (2:1-12). This domestic scene took place on the third day after Jesus and His disciples left John to return to Galilee. They probably arrived in the midst of the marriage festivities, which were frequently continued for several days. The conversation between Jesus and His mother, and her subsequent words to the servants, do not mean that Mary was looking for a miracle. They rather indicate that she had leaned upon her eldest son for advice and help during all the previous years in the home in Nazareth, and had never found Him to fail. Jesus' reply to Mary did not imply a rebuke, for she did not take it in that way. It was a gentle announcement that

the domestic relation was henceforth to be subordinated to the Messianic mission on which He was entering, even though that mission still awaited the hour of its public manifestation and had not yet moved out of the sphere of family life.

The manner of working the miracle is described with singular reserve. There is nothing in the text to indicate that all the water was turned into wine in the waterpots. The significance of the miracle comes out with greater force if the change was wrought in the water as it was borne in faith to minister to the special need of the moment. John calls it the beginning of "signs" (v. 11), which is always his term for the miracles of Jesus. Its result was to bear witness to the essential character of Christ as the Lord of the old creation and the Author of a new creation. It manifested forth the glory of His nature, and it deepened the faith of the disciples in Him. The statement in v. 12 forms a transition in the narrative. It falls in with what is said in the Synoptics (Matt. 4:13; Luke 4:31) of the Lord's removal from Nazareth to Capernaum at the beginning of the Galilean ministry.

THE WORK OF THE SON

(2:13—4:54)

Having privately gathered a small group of disciples inspired by true faith in Himself, the Lord began His public ministry by manifesting Himself to Israel as the Messiah. He chose the time of the Passover to make His first public appearance in Jerusalem. This feast, which was held in the spring, commemorated the birth of the nation and was attended by great numbers from all Israel. Receiv-

ing no recognition from the religious authorities in the capital, Jesus spent some time after that in Judea. Finding little response there, He travelled north through Samaria, and returned to Galilee. Thus He was manifested in all the main districts of Palestine. The present section describes the various ways in which He revealed Himself, and tells of the different kinds of reception which He met with.

1. In the Temple at Jerusalem (2:13-22). Christ's first public act after John had introduced Him to Israel was a significant sign, which faith should have recognized as a fulfilment of Malachi's prophecy: "The Lord, whom ye seek, will suddenly come to his temple" (3:1). He made a manifest claim to Messianic authority when He cleansed the Temple court of its unholy traffic, which was vitiating the whole atmosphere of His Father's house, but was carried on under the sanction of the religious authorities (vs. 13-16). The Lord's action had a double effect: it deepened the faith of the disciples (vs. 17, 22), but the Jews only found in it an occasion to demand further proof of His authority (vs. 18-21). His reply to them contains the first intimation of His death at their hands and His subsequent resurrection. It implies that the Temple was a symbol of His own Person, as John goes on to point out: "He spake of the temple of his body". The statement of the Jews that the Temple was forty-six years in building refers to its reconstruction, which was begun by Herod in 20 B.C.

The Synoptic Gospels record a similar act of Messianic authority at the close of the ministry (Matt. 21:12-13; Mark 11:15-17; Luke 19:45-46).

But the character of the two acts is distinct, and there is a significant difference in the words that Jesus used in the two cases to justify them. John records the act by which Jesus revealed Himself as the Messiah at the beginning of His ministry, by entering as the Son into the Temple, which He called "my Father's house". The other Gospels record the act by which He came at the close of His ministry, acclaimed as the Messiah by the people, and asserted His royal authority in the Temple, which He declared was intended to be "a house of prayer for all the nations" (Mark 11:17; Isa. 56:7).

2. During the Passover in Jerusalem (2:23-25). The act by which Jesus purified the Temple probably took place on the eve of the Passover, when the Jews removed all leaven from their houses (Exod. 12:15). Having been rejected by the authorities in the Temple, Jesus wrought miracles among the people in the city during the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which was kept for seven days after the actual Passover. But the faith they showed was superficial; it was based upon the miracles alone and lacked personal devotion. The Apostle contrasts the false faith of the people with the perfect insight of Christ, who was never deceived as to inward character and would not commit Himself to them. He then goes on to record an instance of the Lord's dealing with one of their religious leaders, a Pharisee and a member of the Jewish Council, to whom He revealed some of His deepest secrets.

3. The Conversation with Nicodemus (3:1-21). This occupies the same place in John's Gospel as the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew's Gospel. It

has an inaugural character, and gives the key-note to the teaching of Jesus in the rest of the book. Nicodemus had been impressed by Jesus, but as yet regarded Him as only "a teacher come from God". It may have been some timidity that led Nicodemus to come by night, but Jesus treated him as a representative teacher of Israel, who had come as an earnest inquirer for a serious interview which he could not have had by day (vs. 1-2). He appears later in the Gospel as friendly to Jesus and probably a secret disciple (7:50-51; 19:39).

The Kingdom of God was evidently the theme of Jesus' teaching at the time, for He began His reply to Nicodemus with a statement about it (v. 3). This is the only passage in John's Gospel where the Kingdom of God is mentioned. Jesus said that no one could even understand the Kingdom without such a change in his nature as meant being born anew. When Nicodemus expressed his doubt about the possibility of such a thing (v. 4), Jesus described the change as being "born of water and of the Spirit" (v. 5). By these phrases He referred both to the water baptism of John and the spiritual baptism which would be His own work. The one marked the negative side of the change required for entrance into the Kingdom, which was the renunciation of the old life. The other referred to the source of the new life, and marked the positive side of the change described as being born anew.

Then Jesus went on to explain that there are two different spheres of life, two different orders of being—the earthly sphere of the present world order, into which one enters by being born of the flesh, and the spiritual sphere of the Kingdom of God, into which one enters by being born of the

Spirit (vs. 6-7). The Divine Spirit is not subject to earthly laws, but is free to operate as He will (v. 8): "So is every one that is born of the Spirit". Jesus meant that the manifestations of spiritual life in the Kingdom of God are free: "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Cor. 3:17).

Nicodemus wondered how this could be, and Jesus expressed surprise that a teacher of Israel did not understand these things (vs. 9-10). The Old Testament Scriptures should have prepared Nicodemus for the idea of a new birth and a spiritual order of life (Psa. 51:10; Isa. 35:6-7; Jer. 31:33; Ezek. 36:25-27). If the Jews rejected Jesus' teaching when He spoke of things that belong to human experience, how could they receive His teaching when He spoke of things that belong to Heaven, which He alone knew (vs. 11-12). Then He proceeded to state the two great transcendent facts about Himself on which the Kingdom of God was to be based, namely, the Incarnation and the Cross. By the way of the Incarnation the Son of Man descended from Heaven, and by the way of the Cross He would ascend back to Heaven. Those who put their faith in Him would be born into the new order: they would have eternal life (vs. 13-15).

The rest of the passage (vs. 16-21) is the Apostle's comment on the conversation which he has reported. He explains the redemptive nature of the mission of Jesus in the world. Its origin was due to the love of God for the world. It was accomplished by the sacrifice of His only begotten Son. It was designed for the purpose of giving eternal life to all who should believe in the Son, and saving them from the judgment resting upon the world. The

whole passage contains a comprehensive statement of the Gospel.

4. In the Country of Judea (3:22-36). As His Messianic claims received no recognition in Jerusalem, Jesus went out into the country districts of Judea and carried on with His disciples the same kind of ministry as John the Baptist, thus making preparation for a further manifestation of Himself as the Messiah (vs. 22-24). The Apostle's statement that "John was not yet cast into prison" implies that his readers were familiar with the Synoptic Gospels, which alone tell of the imprisonment of John. It also indicates that the Lord's Galilean ministry had not yet begun (Matt. 4:12; Mark 1:14).

In the eyes of some, Jesus now appeared to be a rival of the Baptist, and this gave John an occasion for further testimony to Jesus as the Christ (vs. 25-30). In the statement, "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom", John referred to the figure constantly used in the Old Testament to describe the relation between Jehovah and Israel. "The bride" was the Messianic community, the spiritual remnant of Israel, whom John as "the friend of the bridegroom" had been calling out and getting ready for the Messiah. The same figure is used in the New Testament to describe the relation between Christ and the Church (Eph. 5:25-27; Rev. 19:7; 21:9). The ministry of John the Baptist in preparing the Bride was nearly ended, and his joy was now fulfilled in seeing Christ gathering around Him disciples, who were the beginnings of a new Israel and would form His Church. John's last words, "He must increase but I must decrease", mark his true

greatness, the greatness of humility, and fitly close his active ministry.

The rest of the passage (vs. 31-36) contains the reflections of the apostolic writer on the testimony of the Baptist to the superiority of Jesus, as he looks back over the intervening years. Having come from Heaven, the Son is above all other teachers, who have only an earthly origin. He speaks of heavenly things with the authority of an eye-witness, and yet His testimony is rejected. He alone has the complete and absolute revelation of God, for God has given Him the Spirit without measure and has put all power and authority into His hand. The ground of all this is the Father's love for the Son. On their relation to the Son hangs the eternal destiny of men.

5. In the District of Samaria (4:1-42). The growing popularity of Jesus in Judea aroused the jealousy of the Pharisees; and He decided to withdraw into Galilee, where His popularity would excite less hostility on their part. He took the direct road which passed through Samaria (vs. 1-4). The passage goes on to record His conversation with a sinful Samaritan woman at Jacob's well. He had stopped there to rest in the evening, after a long day's journey, while the disciples were gone to the village to buy food (vs. 5-6).

Beginning with a simple and natural request for a drink of water, Jesus led the woman step by step to ask for the water of eternal life (vs. 7-15). "Living water" means water issuing from a spring or fountain, in contrast with water standing in a well or cistern. It was therefore an appropriate figure for Jesus to use in setting forth the spiritual blessing which He was able to give. But the woman was

not ready for that gift yet—not until her conscience was probed and her sin confessed (vs. 16-18).

At this point she diverted the conversation to the standing controversy between Jews and Samaritans about worship. Jesus declared that the knowledge of God and the way of salvation came through the Jews, and then went on to reveal to her the sublime truth of the reality of God as Spirit, and the spiritual nature of true worship (vs. 19-24). When He said "the hour cometh, and now is", He was referring to the purpose of His own mission in the world; and this led Him to answer the woman's expression of faith and hope in the coming of the Messiah by revealing Himself: "I that speak unto thee am he" (vs. 25-26).

During the conversation the woman became more and more respectful toward the Jewish stranger, showing how Jesus was impressing her. She addressed Him first with a curt question, but after that she began with "Sir" (vs. 11, 15, 19). She came to recognize Him as a prophet, and finally learned that He was the Messiah.

The conversation had immediate results. When the disciples came back, they wondered at finding their Master talking with a woman, but reverently refrained from speaking to Him about it. The woman in her joy and excitement, forgetting all about her waterpot, ran off to tell the people in the village of the profound impression made upon her by "a man who told me all things that ever I did", raising the question that it might be the Christ. They came out at once to see Him (vs. 27-30). In the meantime Jesus told the disciples, who were puzzled because they had left Him tired and hungry and now found Him refreshed, that in their absence

He had been engaged in His Father's work, and that had revived Him. Then He pointed to the crowd of approaching Samaritans as the harvest now ready for them (vs. 31-38).

Jesus remained two more days among the Samaritans at their request, and the impression made by the woman's testimony was confirmed by their personal intercourse with Him (vs. 39-42). It resulted in a strong expression of faith in Him as "indeed the Saviour of the world", although He had performed no miracle among them.

6. In Galilee Again (4:43-54). When Jesus was welcomed by the Galileans, He pointed out that the apparent failure of His ministry in Judea, where the Messiah should have been received, illustrated the common proverb that a prophet has no honour in his own country (vs. 43-45). But the faith of the Galileans was mixed with carnal elements. They believed because of the miracles which they had seen Him do in Jerusalem at the feast.

This attitude is illustrated by the story of the healing of the nobleman's son at Capernaum when Jesus was at Cana about twenty miles away (vs. 46-54). The father had come to fetch Jesus down before his child should die. But Jesus, to test his faith without showing him a miracle, sent him back with the word alone: "Go thy way; thy son liveth". On the way home his servants met him with the news that his son was restored; and he learned that the fever had left the boy at the very hour Jesus had spoken. As a result, the faith of the nobleman was confirmed, and his whole household believed.

THE OUTBREAK OF UNBELIEF

(Chs. 5-6)

Up to this point Jesus had been manifesting Himself to representative sections of the Jewish nation in different parts of the land—in Jerusalem, in Judea, in Samaria, and in Galilee. True faith had been found in a few cases, but the general attitude was one of unbelief and indifference, or of merely outward admiration. The situation now took a more definite character. Unbelief began to show itself in open hostility, and the conflict began which resulted at last in His death. These two chapters contain the story of two miracles and their immediate consequences, showing how unbelief broke out first in Jerusalem (ch. 5) and afterwards in Galilee (ch. 6). Each miracle was followed by a prolonged discussion in which Jesus explained its spiritual significance. In Jerusalem He revealed His relation to God, and in Galilee His relation to men.

I. Unbelief in Jerusalem (Ch. 5). The feast which Jesus went up to attend (v. 1) was probably the Passover, which was the first important feast to be held after He returned to Galilee. Jesus had passed through Samaria in January (4:35), and the Passover was held in April. It was the feast most largely attended by the Jews in Palestine.

1. The Miracle at the Pool (vs. 2-9). The healing of the man at the pool of Bethesda, who had been impotent for thirty-eight years, was wrought by Jesus spontaneously, after asking him if he would like to be healed, and it occurred on the Sabbath day. The statement in v. 4 was added by some copyist to explain the popular belief about the inter-

mittent character of the spring. It does not belong to the original text of the Gospel, and is omitted by the R.V.

2. The Accusation of the Jews (vs. 10-18). When the Jews found the man carrying his bed on the Sabbath day and learned that Jesus had healed him, they took an attitude of settled hostility toward Him, because His acts of mercy were offences against their traditional interpretation of the Law (vs. 10-16). Jesus met the charge of breaking the Sabbath with a statement which meant that He was carrying on His Father's work, and His Father was working "even until now". He meant that God was working during the present Sabbath of rest since the Creation. The Jews rightly saw in these words that Jesus claimed equality with God, and that made them still more determined on His death (vs. 17-18).

3. The Defence of Jesus (vs. 19-29). Jesus answered the charge of the Jews by explaining His essential relation to the Father in a profound and closely reasoned discourse. Three times He repeated the phrase, "Verily, verily, I say unto you" (vs. 19, 24, 25), thus showing the solemn importance of the declaration He was making, and marking three stages in the progress of His thought.

(1) In vs. 19-23 He declared that, as the Son, He was one with the Father in everything. In no case did He act of Himself, but only for the Father (v. 19). Because of His love for the Son, the Father took Him into all His counsels for the world, and would give Him greater works to do than these miracles of healing (v. 20), even the resurrection and the judgment of mankind (vs. 21-22), that

through honour given to the Son men might honour the Father (v. 23).

(2) These "greater works" of giving life and executing judgment are now taken up and defined more exactly, and it is shown how they are carried out by the Son. In v. 24 Jesus explains that it is by faith in Him that men receive life and escape judgment. When they accept His message and believe that He came from God, they pass out of death into life at once, and will not come into judgment.

(3) In vs. 25-27 the "greater works" are described as they apply to the present age, the hour that "now is". Through the preaching of the Gospel of Christ, spiritual resurrection and moral judgment take place. In vs. 28-29 the future age is in view, the hour that "cometh". At His Second Advent these "greater works" will issue in the physical resurrection and the universal judgment of mankind.

4. The Witness of Jesus (vs. 30-40). He would not bear witness of Himself, but appealed to the witness of God alone. John the Baptist bore witness to Him, and He might appeal to that, because of the interest they showed in his ministry (vs. 30-35). But Jesus had greater witness than that of John, a witness which was threefold:

(1) His miracles, which the Father had given Him to do (v. 36). These proved that the Father had sent Him.

(2) The voice of the Father, uttered at His baptism (v. 37). This proclaimed Him to be the Son of God.

(3) The Word of God (vs. 38-40). The Jews searched the Scriptures in the outward letter, think-

ing to get eternal life in that way. They failed to find the inward spiritual witness which the Scriptures bore regarding Him, and so they refused to come to Him that they might have life. This passage shows that Jesus saw Himself reflected in the mirror of the Old Testament Scriptures.

5. The Rejection of the Witness (vs. 41-47). The Lord went on to show that the Jews' want of faith in Him was due to their want of love for God. They had no welcome for Him who came in His Father's name and sought no glory from men, because they sought glory from one another and not the glory that comes from God. They would prefer a Messiah who came in his own name and sought self-glory. It was not He but Moses that would accuse them, for they had misunderstood Moses when Moses wrote of Him. Having rejected the teaching of Moses, they could not accept His teaching.

II. Unbelief in Galilee (Ch. 6). After narrating the incidents that brought out the unbelief of the Jews in Jerusalem, John goes on to tell how unbelief broke out in Galilee also. The crisis of the Galilean ministry took place in connection with the feeding of the five thousand. In the discourse at Jerusalem Jesus declared Himself to be the Giver of life because of His special relation to God. In the discourse that followed the miracle in Galilee, He declared Himself to be the Support of life because of His special relation to men.

1. The Feeding of the Multitude (vs. 1-13). Nearly a year of the Galilean ministry lies between chs. 5 and 6, for when this miracle took place another Passover was approaching (vs. 1-4). It is

the only miracle recorded in all four Gospels. It appears from John's account that a conversation took place early in the day, when Jesus saw the great crowd gathering (vs. 5-9). He had already decided what to do, but He suggested to Philip the problem of feeding the multitude as a test for the disciples. Philip made a rough calculation of what it would cost at the least, and Andrew discovered a lad with five barley loaves and two fishes, which was all the food he could find among the people. The rest of John's narrative (vs. 10-13) goes on with the story where the Synoptic accounts begin, and tells of what Jesus did at the end of the day, when the disciples came to Him with their problem still unsolved and could only suggest that He send the multitude away to buy themselves food (Matt. 14:13-21; Mark 6:30-44; Luke 9:10-17).

2. The Effect upon the People (vs. 14-21). The carnal element in the faith of the Galileans was manifested in the movement which the miracle started among them, to make Jesus a king by force. He withdrew into the mountain to be alone, while the disciples set out across the sea in the boat. During the night He joined them by walking over the water. The full story of the night's events is contained in Matthew's account (14:22-33).

3. The Discourse on the Bread of Life (vs. 22-59). Next morning the people who had been fed with the loaves and fishes and had remained all night on the other side of the sea, not finding Jesus there, came across to Capernaum seeking for Him (vs. 22-24). In order to correct their mistaken expectation of an earthly kingdom and to remove the carnal element in their attitude toward Him, Jesus gave a

long discourse in the synagogue (v. 59) explaining the spiritual significance of the miracle wrought among them. It is composed of three parts, each introduced by some question or expression of feeling on the part of the people (vs. 25, 41, 52).

(1) The first part contains answers to four successive questions or requests which they put to Him. Instead of seeking from Him material food for the body that perishes, they should be working for the food that nourishes eternal life, and He would give them that (vs. 25-27). The way to work for it, the work that God requires of them, is to believe in Him whom God has sent (vs. 28-29). The manna which was given to their fathers in the wilderness was only a type of the true Bread of God. This Bread comes down out of Heaven and gives life to the world (vs. 30-33).

Then at their request, "Lord, evermore give us this bread", Jesus presented Himself plainly as that Bread: "I am the bread of life". He satisfies the hunger and thirst of all who come to Him and believe in Him. He receives all who come to Him, and will not cast them out (vs. 34-37). Their rejection of Him does not alter the Divine purpose: all that the Father has given Him shall come to Him and believe in Him, and every one who believes in Him shall attain to eternal life, and He will raise him up at the last day (vs. 38-40).

(2) The second part of the discourse follows the murmuring among the Jews at the claim of Jesus to have come from Heaven, when they knew who his parents were (vs. 41-42). Jesus replied that a spiritual influence coming from God was needed to understand His true nature and His special relation

to the Father, and this had been promised in the Prophets (vs. 43-46; Isa. 54:13). Again He declared Himself to be the Bread of life, the living Bread which came down from Heaven, and the source of eternal life for men. The Bread which He would give for the life of the world was His own flesh, by which He meant His whole human nature (vs. 47-51).

(3) The third part follows the question, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" (v. 52). In using that form of expression Jesus was alluding to the Passover feast. Now He goes on to enlarge upon its symbolism in order to show how to appropriate what He gives: "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, ye have not life in yourselves". His "flesh" means His human nature as living for us. His "blood" means His human nature as dying for us. To eat His flesh and drink His blood is to accept for oneself the virtue of His life and His death. "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me, and I in him". This means that the believer's life is rooted in, and nourished by, the life of Christ (vs. 53-56).

It is thus, Jesus points out, that the believer shares the life of God Himself. The Divine life is put within our reach by being incarnate in the Son of Man. The Father gives Himself to the Son, and the Son gives Himself to us. By feeding on Christ we live through the very life of God, as Jesus did (vs. 57-58). Here we have the secret of eternal life and the mystery of salvation. Three times in the course of these discourses does Jesus say, "I will raise him up at the last day" (vs. 40, 44, 54), showing that spiritual feeding on Christ as the Bread of life carries with it ultimately the resurrection of

the body and the full restoration of the whole personality.

4. The Sifting of the Disciples (vs. 60-71). The result of the whole discourse was to test the faith of the disciples. Some of them were offended because Jesus spoke of His sacrifice and death, and so He gave them a hint of the Ascension. They should then understand that the life-giving principle is the Spirit and not the flesh (vs. 60-63). It was by means of the Spirit given at Pentecost that the promises of these discourses were to be realized. But Jesus knew that many of them did not believe Him, and He gave them a warning about it (vs. 64-65). Many disciples at this point turned back and ceased to follow Him. The Twelve remained, and Peter uttered a warm and earnest expression of faith on their behalf. Jesus then warned them of the traitor in their midst. Perhaps the defection of Judas began at this time (vs. 66-71).

THE DEVELOPMENT OF UNBELIEF

(Chs. 7-10)

These chapters contain the account of a long controversy with the Jews at Jerusalem, in which the national unbelief was more fully revealed. It took place during visits which Jesus made to the city at two of the annual feasts in the last year of His ministry. These were the Feast of Tabernacles in the early fall and the Feast of the Dedication in the winter.

I. At the Feast of Tabernacles (Chs. 7-8). This feast lasted for seven days, and commemorated the life of the Israelites in the wilderness. Between

chs. 6 and 7 is a gap of about six months, occupied by the closing part of the Galilean ministry referred to in 7:1.

1. Before the Feast (7:1-13). These verses give a lively picture of the situation in which Jesus stood at the time. His brethren, who were not yet convinced by His Messianic claims, urged Him to make some decisive manifestation of His power publicly in Jerusalem. He replied that His hour had not yet come, meaning the hour of His final public manifestation as the Messiah. He remained in Galilee for a few days after they went up, and then He went up privately (vs. 1-10). He had by this time become an object of national interest, and His absence from the feast at the beginning gave rise to speculation about Him. The people who gathered at Jerusalem were divided between faith and unbelief. But the enmity of the religious leaders toward Him suppressed all open discussion of His claims (vs. 11-13).

2. During the Feast (7:14-36). In the midst of the feast Jesus appeared publicly in the Temple and began to teach. He defended His teaching as coming from God who sent Him, and declared that anyone willing to do God's will would know whether His teaching came from God or from Himself. Thus He laid down the principle that the test of truth is moral, not intellectual (vs. 14-18). He also defended His conduct in healing on the Sabbath day as consistent with the Law. The accusation of breaking the Sabbath had been hanging over Him ever since His former visit to Jerusalem (ch. 5). He was not indifferent to it, and He wished to deprive unbelief of all excuse in this respect. They

should "judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment", that is, according to the spirit of the Law (vs. 19-24).

As the discussion about Him went on among the people, He made an explicit declaration of His Divine origin publicly in the Temple (vs. 25-29). The effect of this was to confirm the Jewish leaders in their hostile purpose and to increase the faith of many of the people. Fearing a movement among them in favour of Jesus, the chief priests and Pharisees sent police officers to arrest Him (vs. 30-32). Then He announced that He would be with them only a little while longer before going back to Him that sent Him. He implied that they should make haste to believe in Him, for after that they would seek Him in the time of their distress and would not be able to find Him. They treated the Lord's warning with contempt: "What does this man mean? After being rejected by us, the Jews, will He go and teach the heathen Gentiles?" (vs. 33-36).

3. On the Last Day of the Feast (7:37-52). This was the eighth day, which was kept as a Sabbath after the special ceremonies of the feast were over (Lev. 23:36; Num. 29:35; Neh. 8:18). One of these ceremonies commemorated the miraculous stream of water that issued from the smitten rock in the wilderness (Exod. 17:5-6). Each day, at the time of the morning sacrifice, a priest brought water from the pool of Siloam in a golden pitcher and poured it out beside the altar amid great rejoicing on the part of the people, while the Levites sang, "With joy shall we draw water from the wells of salvation" (Isa. 12:3).

On the last day, instead of this ceremony, there seems to have been a solemn pause in the usual place. At that moment Jesus stood forth and cried out: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink". This was a manifest claim to be the true fountain of life, of which that rite was but a type and symbol (vs. 37-38). The phrase, "as the scripture hath said", combines the gist of many prophecies (Isa. 58:11; Jer. 31:12; Ezek. 47:1-12; Joel 3:18; Zech. 14:8). John adds his own comment to explain that this promise was to be fulfilled through the Holy Spirit, who would come only after Jesus Christ was glorified (v. 39).

The impression made upon the hearers is then described. The twofold development of faith and unbelief went on. Some were favourably disposed and inclined to believe that Jesus was the Messiah. Others were skeptical, and some were even so hostile that they would have seized Him if they dared (vs. 40-44). The officers sent to arrest Him came back to the chief priests and the Pharisees, and reported that they could not take Him, because they were overawed by His words: "Never man so spake". The answer they got discloses the self-complacent pride of the Pharisees and their contemptuous scorn of the common people. They evaded the point raised by Nicodemus, who played an honourable part on this occasion, and flew off into personalities (vs. 45-52).

4. An Episode (8:1-11). This passage, including v. 53 of the preceding chapter, is enclosed in brackets in the R.V., because it does not belong to John's Gospel. It breaks the course of the narrative by separating two closely connected sayings of

Christ (7:37 and 8:12). It has no place in the earliest manuscripts, or the earliest versions. It seems to embody, however, a genuine portion of the Gospel history, narrating an incident that occurred during one of the Lord's visits to Jerusalem, but its origin is unknown. Its special importance lies in recording the only occasion in which Jesus dealt with a specific sin. He did so by referring to the inward spring of sinful action, and by bringing the case before a more searching tribunal than that of the Law. He admitted the legality of the procedure required by the Mosaic code, but made its application a moral question for those who administered the law.

5. After the Feast (8:12-59). The controversy continued after the feast had closed, and Jesus went on making further revelations of His Messianic character. The discourses in this section bring out several special truths about Him.

(1) Christ is the light of the world (vs. 12-20). During the Feast of Tabernacles two great golden lamps, erected beforehand in the Temple, were lit every evening amid dancing and rejoicing. This was to commemorate the fiery pillar which led the Israelites in the wilderness and gave them light by night. These lights were in the women's court, which contained the treasury (v. 20), and it was there, where the absence of the lights would be most marked, that Jesus claimed to be the fulfilment of that type also, probably at the very time when the lamps were being removed: "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life". The Pharisees challenged His witness of Himself, and

showed themselves spiritually incapable of recognizing His heavenly origin. Christ's clear consciousness of His essential oneness with God is very manifest in this passage. It is in virtue of this that He is the light of the world.

(2) Christ is the object of faith (vs. 21-30). Asserting again His heavenly origin, Jesus gave the Jews a solemn warning of the consequences of not believing in Him. Only faith in Him could bridge the gulf between the world above, to which He belonged, and this world beneath, to which they belonged. He stated the content of faith in the pregnant phrase, "I am he" (vs. 24, 28; cf. 13:19), which implies His Deity (Deut. 32:39; Isa. 41:4; 43:10). When He spoke of His unbroken communion with the Father and His constant obedience to Him, some of the Jews were inclined to believe in His claims.

(3) Christ is the source of truth (vs. 31-47). This conversation was carried on with those that were disposed to believe in Him, but retained their own mistaken views, and did not see that the Messiah was the fulfilment of the Jewish dispensation. Their Messianic hope was deliverance from the Roman yoke, but He offered a spiritual freedom, deliverance from sin. They boasted of freedom as children of Abraham, but He affirmed that true freedom consisted in salvation from the bondage of sin. If the Jews were children of God they would recognize the Son of God. They had no love for God, and therefore no understanding of the teaching of Jesus. If they were true children of Abraham they would show it in their conduct, whereas their hostility to Him, who is the truth, showed them to be spiritually children of the devil, in whom there is no truth.

(4) Christ is the giver of life (vs. 48-59). A new turn is given to the argument here as the Jews proceeded to heap insults upon Jesus. He met these with a simple denial. They were of but little importance to Him, for He left the care of His own honour with God. Then He made a solemn declaration, promising that if any man kept His word he should never see death (v. 51). The Jews saw that this involved a claim to be the conqueror of death, and to be greater than their father Abraham and the prophets, all of whom were dead. In answer to their angry resentment, Jesus declared that Abraham had looked forward with joy to the day of Christ (he had caught a glimpse of it through his faith in offering up Isaac), and that before Abraham was born He Himself was in existence. Here again He used the pregnant words, "I am". On hearing this the Jews attempted to stone Him, and He slipped out of their sight and left the Temple.

II. At the Feast of the Dedication (Chs. 9—10). The occasion of the incidents and discourses in these chapters is stated in 10:22. This feast commemorated the purification of the Temple in the time of the Maccabees, after it had been profaned by Antiochus Epiphanes. It was held in the middle of December, about three months after Tabernacles. It was known also as the Feast of the Lights, because of the brilliant illumination with which it was celebrated.

1. The Cure of the Man Born Blind (9:1-12). Of the six miracles of giving sight to the blind recorded in the Gospels, this is the only case described as blindness from birth. When they saw the sufferer, the disciples raised the old question of the connec-

tion between sin and suffering. Jesus replied that this was not an occasion for speculation, but an opportunity for doing the work of God while time for doing it was given (vs. 1-4). The Lord's statement in v. 5 may have been an allusion to the kindling of the lights at the feast, or a suggestion of the nature of the miracle He was about to perform.

By putting clay on the man's eyes and sending him to wash in the pool of Siloam, Jesus meant to connect the cure with Himself, and to declare Himself the reality of which the waters of Siloam were a type (Isa. 8:6). This is confirmed by the Evangelist's explanation of the word. Jesus often referred to Himself as "sent" of God (vs. 6-7). The rest of the narrative is a vivid description of the surprise among the neighbours when they saw the change in the man's face made by the new light in his eyes (vs. 8-12). It bears witness to the reality of the miracle, and then to the way it was wrought by the "man that is called Jesus".

2. The Investigation of the Case (9:13-41). The genuine nature of the miracle was questioned by the Pharisees because it was wrought on the Sabbath. The narrative here presents a typical example of the simultaneous growth of faith and unbelief. On the one side the Pharisees grew more determined and violent. On the other side the man grew more confident, gained an ever enlarging conception of Jesus, and finally confessed Him to be the Son of God (v. 38). John traces the investigation step by step.

(1) The first examination of the man (vs. 13-17). The Pharisees were divided, some of them holding to their preconceived opinion, others recognizing

the significance of the miracle. The man affirmed his belief that Jesus was a prophet.

(2) The examination of the parents (vs. 18-23). This established the fact that their son was born blind. But they shrank from incurring the displeasure of the rulers by confessing that Christ had healed him. The cowardice of the parents was a prelude to that of the whole people.

(3) The second examination of the man (vs. 24-34). This brought the case to a decisive issue. Over against their subjective theory, he placed the objective fact: "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see". And then he met their inability to explain that with the irony of his common sense. They covered their confusion by reviling him, and in their pride of office they expelled him from their presence and excommunicated him.

(4) The moral issues (vs. 35-41). These were twofold: In the case of the man, who acknowledged his ignorance—Jesus gave him a further revelation of Himself as the Son of God, and received his sincere worship. In the case of the Pharisees, who deluded themselves with the idea that they had the light — their religious pride increased their blindness and deepened their sin.

3. The Call of the True Shepherd (10:1-21). The Pharisees had shown themselves to be false shepherds by the way they dealt with the man born blind whom Jesus had cured. Contrasting Himself with them, Jesus now claimed to be the true Shepherd and explained how He dealt with the sheep. He was preparing to call out His own sheep from the nation, which was rejecting Him, and form of them a new Israel, a new society of the redeemed.

(1) The figure of the sheepfold (vs. 1-6). A sheepfold was an enclosure in which several flocks of sheep were gathered for safe-keeping during the night under the care of a porter. In the morning the porter opened the door of the sheepfold for each shepherd as he came to call out his own sheep. The sheepfold represented the nation itself, which contained the flock of the Lord, the true Shepherd of Israel (Psa. 79:13; Ezek. 34). The door stood for the Messianic office, the divinely appointed way of entering, the way by which the Shepherd was to come for His sheep. The porter was John the Baptist, who introduced the Messianic Shepherd into the fold. The thief and the robber were the Pharisees, who had usurped the religious leadership in Israel and were false shepherds. By this "parable" (v. 6) Jesus described the way He was going to call out the true flock of the Lord and begin the formation of His Church.

There is a remarkable analogy between the situation in which Jesus uttered these words and the picture of the Messianic shepherd drawn in Zech. 11. Having vainly endeavoured to gather Israel, He renounced the hope of saving the nation, and left to the Pharisees the flock as a whole, which was being led by them to the slaughter (Luke 19:41-44). He confined Himself to leading out from this flock the few poor sheep who, like the blind man, believed in Him. It is in such spiritual analogies as this that the organic unity of the Old and New Testaments is brought out in this Gospel.

(2) The door of the sheep (vs. 7-10). In this figure Jesus described the true nature of the Messianic office which he had come to fulfil. Its purpose was to provide salvation in all the fulness of

its meaning. The three main elements of Christian life—safety, liberty, and sustenance—are described in the experience of the man who enters by the door: "He shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture". This is explained as having life, and having it abundantly.

(3) The shepherd of the sheep (vs. 11-21). Jesus drew out the contrast between the Pharisees and Himself in describing the difference between the hireling shepherd and the Good Shepherd. The hireling cares not for the sheep and thinks only of his own interest (vs. 11-13). As the Good Shepherd, Jesus knows His own sheep thoroughly. There is the same mutual tenderness of love and trust between Him and them as between Himself and the Father. He will lay down His life for them. The mention of His sacrificial death carries His thought to the "other sheep" of the Gentile fold, who will hear His voice in the Gospel call and be gathered into one flock with the sheep from the fold of Israel (vs. 14-16).

Returning to the thought of His sacrificial death, Jesus explains its essential nature. It was to be voluntary in the absolute sense of the term. Being without sin, Jesus was not obliged to die; He consented to die and to rise again. By an act of His own will He would lay down His life. By an act of His own will He would take it again, that He might continue to be the Shepherd of the sheep (vs. 17-18). These words perplexed the Jews, and caused further discussion and division among them (vs. 19-21).

4. Christ's Oneness with the Father (10:22-42). The Feast of the Dedication was the last national festival that Jesus attended before the final Pass-

over. It lasted for eight days, and in the course of it He made an explicit declaration of His Deity. This came in the reply that He gave to the rulers when they challenged Him to tell them plainly if He was the Messiah (vs. 22-24). He had given proof of His Messiahship in the works that He was doing. These works revealed His special relation to the Father, but they had not the faith to recognize this. He was not the kind of Messiah they desired, and they were not of His sheep (vs. 25-26). His work as Messiah was to call out the sheep that His Father had given Him and give them eternal life. They were eternally secure, and no one could snatch them out of His hand. He was carrying on God's work of redemption, and in this there was essential oneness between Himself and the Father (vs. 27-30).

At this point, notwithstanding the many good works that He had shown them from the Father, they threatened to stone Him for blasphemy, for making Himself God (vs. 31-33). Jesus defended Himself by pointing out that in the Old Testament Scriptures the rulers of Israel are called "gods" (Psa. 82:6), as being the representatives of the Most High in an office of Divine appointment. Therefore they ought not to charge Him with blasphemy for calling Himself the Son of God when He was set apart to the Messianic office and sent into the world on the mission of redemption (vs. 34-36). And again He appealed to His works as the final proof of the inner fellowship between Himself and the Father (vs. 37-38). The Lord's argument in this passage implies that the revelation of God in the Old Testament dispensation was ever moving forward to the final revelation in the Incarnation.

The Jews made another attempt to arrest Him,

as they had done several times before (7:30, 32, 44). But He passed from their midst, and retired from Jerusalem to the district beyond Jordan where John had been baptizing. There the testimony of His own works, combined with the testimony of the Baptist, although not accepted in Judea, led many to believe in Him (vs. 39-42).

THE CULMINATION OF UNBELIEF

(Chs. 11—12)

The unbelief of the Jews came to a head immediately after the raising of Lazarus. It was when they learned of this miracle that the Jewish high court deliberately resolved to put Jesus to death.

1. The Raising of Lazarus (Ch. 11). This was the last and greatest of the seven miracles of Christ which John relates. Taken as a whole they form a significant series of "signs". The other six are: turning water into wine (2:1-11), healing the nobleman's son (4:46-52), healing the impotent man (5:1-9), feeding the multitude (6:1-13), walking on the sea (6:15-21), and giving sight to the man born blind (9:1-7). The story of the raising of Lazarus is told with the evident feeling of one who not only was present at the time, but also had personal knowledge of all the circumstances.

(1) The prelude to the miracle (vs. 1-16). Mary and Martha are introduced as already well known to the readers of the Gospel (vs. 1-2). The episode Luke related about them (10:38-42) had made their names familiar to the Christian communities. The message which the sisters sent to Jesus is marked by delicacy and fine feeling. They urged no plea,

but simply sent the word, "he whom thou lovest is sick". Here is revealed one of the unrecorded friendships of Jesus. He received the news of the sickness of Lazarus as an occasion for promoting the glory of God (vs. 3-4). This was always His supreme aim. His delay in waiting two days was due to His love for the family. He would bring a great blessing to them all by what He intended to do after Lazarus died (vs. 5-6).

The conversation that took place between Jesus and the disciples when He proposed to go into Judea again brings out vividly the imminent danger there. The disciples were well aware of the settled purpose of the Jews to kill Him (vs. 7-8). But Jesus knew that His "day" was not yet over; and as long as that lasted there was no need for fear or undue haste (vs. 9-10). The Lord's saying here is the counterpart of the one in 9:4, that work could not be done in the night. There is also a mystical meaning behind the words of Jesus. Literally they mean that so long as a man walks in the light of day he is safe, but the night is the time of danger. Mystically they mean that he who walks in the light that Jesus gives does not walk in spiritual darkness or spiritual danger.

Then Jesus told them that Lazarus was dead, using the metaphor of sleep at first, which He had to explain to them afterwards. He was going in order to awake him out of sleep, and He called them to go with Him, that their faith might be strengthened by seeing the evidence of His power over death (vs. 11-15). The final remark of Thomas, who usually saw the worst side of things, brings out the peril again, but also reveals the devotion of the disciples to their Master (v. 16).

(2) The scene in the village (vs. 17-35). The situation in Bethany when Jesus arrived is described (vs. 17-19). Lazarus had been in the tomb four days, and many sympathizing friends from Jerusalem were there with the sisters. Martha went out in her restless grief and met Jesus with an expression of mingled complaint and confidence. He replied by bringing her thoughts back to Himself as the source of all life: "I am the resurrection and the life"; and He evoked a confession of faith on her part (vs. 20-27). Mary waited in her submissive sorrow till she was called, and then fell at His feet in worship. Jesus did not address her, for she did not need His teaching; but He manifested the feelings that were in His heart (vs. 28-35). "He groaned in the spirit"—showing indignation in the presence of Satan's temporary triumph. And "Jesus wept"—showing sympathy in the presence of the sorrow of His friends.

(3) The scene at the tomb (vs. 36-44). The strong emotions of Jesus were manifest again as He approached the tomb, which was outside the village. Martha's sisterly feeling shrank from the thought of exposing her brother's decaying body, and Jesus reminded her that she was to see the power of God triumphant over death and corruption (vs. 36-40). The prayer of Jesus reveals the complete understanding that existed between Himself and the Father, and shows that the miracle was to be wrought in answer to an unrecorded prayer (vs. 41-42). Then was heard the commanding call of Jesus spoken into the mouth of the opened cave: "Lazarus, come forth". When he did come forth, "bound hand and foot with grave-clothes", Jesus

had to tell the awe-struck crowd to "loose him, and let him go" (vs. 43-44).

(4) The issues of the miracle (vs. 45-57). This miracle was a final and decisive test of faith and unbelief for those who witnessed it (vs. 45-46). The Jews on the one hand and the Lord on the other prepare themselves for the end. The Council, acting now under the influence of the Sadducean hierarchy, decide that Jesus must be put to death. John notes that the words of Caiaphas, the representative head of the nation at that time, were an unconscious prophecy, and had a deeper significance than he intended (vs. 47-53). The Lord then withdrew from "among the Jews", and waited "with the disciples" in a place of retirement for the approaching Passover (v. 54). Then the Evangelist gives a vivid picture of groups of people, who came up from the country to prepare themselves beforehand for the Passover, discussing the question of Jesus as they stood about in the Temple courts (vs. 55-57). All this serves to emphasize the tenseness of the situation in Jerusalem.

2. The Supper at Bethany (12:1-11). Jesus had joined the caravan of pilgrims from Galilee which had come up through Perea. He stopped at Bethany, and there the people gave Him a banquet in grateful recognition of the great miracle that he had wrought in their midst. Matthew and Mark say that it was held in the house of Simon the leper. In their Gospels the event is recorded, without any mark of time, in connection with the treachery of Judas (Matt. 26:6-16; Mark 14:3-11). John singles out the traitor as the one who instigated the criticism of Mary's act, and tells us of his secret sin

while acting as treasurer of the apostolic band. It is only in this Gospel that Mary is named as the woman who anointed Jesus. By the time it was written the mention of the names would no longer embarrass the members of the family. John's account brings out the profound adoration that inspired Mary's self-sacrificing action. She not only anointed the head of Jesus, as the Synoptic accounts say, but His feet as well. John also adds a feature that lingered in his memory: "The house was filled with the odour of the ointment" (vs. 1-8).

The news of Jesus' arrival at Bethany soon spread to Jerusalem, and many of the people went out to the village to see Him and Lazarus. The priestly party, in their jealousy of Jesus and in their antipathy to the idea of a resurrection (Acts 5:17; 23:8), considered putting Lazarus to death as well as Jesus (vs. 9-11).

3. 'The Entry into Jerusalem (12:12-19). John gives more explicit details of this event than the Synoptists. The whole scene was one of tumultuous excitement. Jesus yielded to the enthusiasm of the people, who seem to have been animated by a feeling of heavenly joy. The disciples did not understand the significance of the event till the Ascension had shown them the spiritual nature of the Lord's sovereignty. In connection with the enthusiasm of the people, John mentions the chagrin of the Pharisees, who felt as if their power was slipping from their grasp.

4. The Request of the Greeks (12:20-36). These Greeks represented the Gentile world outside Judaism. They were probably "proselytes of the gate", the term applied to those who worshipped with the

Jews but did not become followers of Judaism. They sought a personal interview with Jesus (vs. 20-22). The incident doubtless took place in the precincts of the Temple. They had probably been present when Jesus cleansed the court of the Gentiles, and had heard Him say, "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations" (Mark 11:17). This approach of theirs at the close of His ministry, like the homage of the wise men at His birth, was an earnest of the allegiance He was to get in the Gentile world. His reply was addressed to the two disciples who brought their request, but we are not told that the Greeks were present.

Jesus first told them that the hour was come when He was to be glorified as the Son of man (cf. 7:30; 8:20). Then He stated the great law of His Kingdom, the principle of the Cross, by which He was to attain His glory, and by which His followers were to share it with Him (vs. 23-26). This contemplation of the path of suffering which lay before Him brought the old temptation of the wilderness upon His soul again, offering the sovereignty of the world by another road.

His next words may be read as follows: "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? (Shall I say) Father, save me from this hour?" His answer came at once: "But for this cause came I unto this hour"; and, with a renewed consecration of Himself to the will of God, He prayed, "Father, glorify thy name". Then the voice of the Father came from heaven for the third time, expressing approval of His Son: "I have both glorified it"—in the Lord's ministry to Israel, now drawing to a close—, "and will glorify it again"—in the com-

ing ministry of the Holy Spirit in the Gentile world (vs. 27-28).

The people around heard only a sound, but some of them recognized its supernatural origin. Jesus declared that it came on their account, to impress them with the solemn importance of the judgment that was now coming upon the world. In the Cross the moral condition of the human race was to be exposed. By the Cross the power of Satan over the world was to be broken: "Now shall the prince of this world be cast out". These words should be read in the light of Col. 2:14-15 and Rev. 12:7-12. Through the Cross He would ascend to the Throne and from there His power would be extended by the Holy Spirit over all mankind (vs. 29-33).

The people were perplexed, because their idea of the Messiah as a permanent king on the earth did not agree with His idea of the Son of Man being lifted up into another world. Jesus did not reply directly to their question, but uttered a final warning that they should walk in the light of His teaching while He was yet with them lest darkness should overtake them (vs. 34-36).

5. The Jews' Rejection of Jesus (12:37-50). In this passage the Evangelist first comments upon the rejection of Jesus by the Jews and explains its cause (vs. 37-43). It was due to the judicial blindness and hardness of heart, foretold by Isaiah (53:1; 6:10), which their own unbelief had brought upon them. In the statement of v. 41 John identifies the vision of Jehovah which Isaiah saw in the Temple (6:1) with the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, and implies that in rejecting Him the Jews had rejected Jehovah. Among some of the rulers

there had been an intellectual conviction, but fear of losing their position and their prestige kept them from making a public confession. Then John gives a general summary of the teaching of Jesus in the Lord's own words, to explain the truth which the Jews had rejected (vs. 44-50).

THE LORD'S LAST ACTS OF LOVE

(Ch. 13)

From the dark picture of Jewish unbelief, we turn to the Lord's last ministry of love to the disciples. His public ministry to Israel was ended, and His "hour" had come. He now poured forth His love to them: "Having loved his own that were in the world, he loved them unto the end" (v. 1). This verse introduces the whole section (chs. 13-17), which contains the revelation that Jesus gave to the faith of the disciples before going back to the Father. As He loved His disciples and had shown them His love before, so now when He was about to pass through His suffering, He carried His love to the last. Under the shadow of His own death, His whole thought was fixed upon them alone.

1. Washing their Feet (vs. 2-20). This was an acted parable. It was probably occasioned by the dispute which Luke records (22:24-27). Jesus wished to root out of their hearts the last remnants of the pride and ambition that still corrupted the faith of His Apostles. He was also aware of the treachery of one of them. And so He gave them this example of true greatness in His Kingdom. Because of the glory into which He was going, He humbled Himself to perform the office of the lowest.

John describes the scene with the vividness of

personal reminiscence, as if he were beholding it at the moment (vs. 2-5). Peter's impulsive remonstrance when Jesus came to him was characteristic. But Jesus corrected His disciple's false humility by explaining that what He was doing had a spiritual significance, which he should understand hereafter (vs. 6-11). When Jesus had finished and sat down again, He told them what He meant by His action. He had given them an example of the spirit in which they should act toward one another. It was a symbol of the humble service of mutual helpfulness which their Master required of them (vs. 12-17). Then He gave them the first hint that one of them had turned against Him (vs. 18-20).

2. Dismissing Judas (vs. 21-30). Jesus was "troubled in the spirit": His feelings were under restraint while Judas was present. John describes this act of Jesus in greater detail and with more feeling than any of the other Evangelists. The giving of the sop, which was a mark of honour to a guest, was the Lord's last attempt to turn Judas from his treachery; but it only confirmed the traitor in his purpose, Judas must have concealed his methods and plans with great skill, for even at this last moment none of his fellow-disciples had any suspicion of his design. John adds significantly that when Judas went out, "it was night".

3. Warning Peter (vs. 31-38). Jesus' feeling of relief is manifest in the first words He spoke after the traitor's departure. He began to pour out the fulness of His heart and prepare the disciples for the separation that was coming: "Now is the Son of man glorified". The deed that Judas went out to do meant for Him the Cross; but beyond the Cross

was His glorification as the Son of Man (vs. 31-32). This involved His separation from them, and He now tenderly prepared them for that, and gave them a commandment to love one another with the love that He had for them. Thus they should show the world that they were His disciples (vs. 33-35). Peter would not accept the thought of separation from the Master, and protested his own willingness to die for Him. Jesus checked this boastful and self-confident enthusiasm by warning Peter that he would utter a three-fold denial of his Master that night (vs. 36-38).

THE LORD'S FAREWELL MESSAGES (Chs. 14—16)

These chapters contain the last discourses of Jesus. They are farewell messages to His disciples. They follow naturally the announcement of His departure at the close of the preceding chapter. They may be taken in four parts: comfort in view of His departure (ch. 14), their new life after His departure (ch. 15), the mission of the Holy Spirit in His place (16:1-15), and His last farewell (16: 16-33).

1. Comfort in View of His Departure (Ch. 14). This chapter is made up largely of answers to questions asked by individual disciples. It begins by carrying on the reply to Peter's question (13:36), "Lord, whither goest thou?" and continues by replying to the questions of Thomas (v. 5), Philip (v. 8), and the other Judas (v.22). The main thought throughout is, "Let not your heart be troubled" (vs. 1, 27). In the course of the chapter He gives them seven grounds for comfort.

(1) He was going to prepare a place for them (vs. 1-4). By His Father's house He meant the unseen spiritual world of Heaven. This was the antitype of the Temple, to which He had formerly applied the name (2:16). There was room enough there for them all, but it would not be ready for them until He went back with His redeeming work on earth accomplished.

(2) He Himself is the way to the Father (vs. 5-7). It was characteristic of Thomas to see difficulties and to want his doubts removed before taking the step of faith. Jesus tells him that one finds access to the Father's house by coming to the Father, and that one comes to the Father only by coming to Jesus Himself: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life". He is the only "way" by which one can pass into the heavenly world of the Father's presence, because He is the revelation of ultimate "truth", and the source of eternal "life". That the disciples did not know what Jesus meant by going to the Father, was because they had not yet learned to know the Son.

(3) He Himself is the revelation of the Father (vs. 8-11). Philip's request surprised and disappointed Jesus. It seemed to imply a failure on the Master's part to make Himself known to the disciples. There is a pathetic note in His personal appeal to Philip. He points out to him the signs by which he should have recognized the presence of God in the Person of his Master—His words and His works. These were the proofs of His union with the Father. That union had a two-fold aspect: "I am in the Father"—His words showed that He was in the closest communion with the Father; "and the

Father in me"—His works showed how the Father wrought in Him.

(4) The disciples were to continue His work (vs. 12-14). "The works that I do shall he do also"—the physical miracles which the Apostles wrought in the early days of the Church. "Greater works than these shall he do"—the spiritual miracles which are wrought by the Church through the preaching of the Gospel. The phrase, "in my name", occurs here for the first time, and is used again and again in these chapters (14:26; 15:16; 16:23-26). It means "as my representative", and implies the spiritual union of believers with Christ.

(5) He would send the Holy Spirit to take His place (vs. 15-21). The word rendered "Comforter" means one called to the side of another to help him. The Holy Spirit was to come and continue Jesus' work for the disciples. He is called "the Spirit of truth", because He would make the truth that Jesus taught a reality for them. The world could not receive Him, for it had no vision or knowledge of spiritual things. But the disciples would recognize Him, because He would remain with them and dwell in their hearts (vs. 15-17). As a result, they should not be left alone, for Christ Himself would be present with them and become a living reality to them. "In that day"—the age beginning with Pentecost—they should realize the fact of the Lord's union with the Father and their own union with the Lord (vs. 18-20). Then Jesus put in other words the stages of the experience that He had been describing (v. 21).

(6) The Holy Spirit would explain and complete His teaching (vs. 22-26). The question of Judas

shows that the disciples expected a public manifestation of the Lord's Messianic glory. Jesus did not answer the question directly, but repeated what He had just said about an inward and spiritual manifestation (vs. 22-24), and then went on to tell them that the Comforter would complete the teaching He had given them and explain all things to them. The Father would send Him as Christ's representative — "in my name". As the purpose of Christ's mission was to reveal the Father, so the purpose of the mission of the Holy Spirit is to reveal Christ (vs. 25-26).

(7) He leaves the disciples His legacy of peace (vs. 27-31). His peace means the peace that He had during His earthly life through His fellowship with the Father, peace that had its springs in the world to which He was going and not in this world. He would have them rejoice, too, in His departure, because He was going to the Father in order to share His power and glory, and so be able to complete His work for them.

Here the discourse is broken by the thought of the conflict at hand, and Jesus goes on to say, "The prince of the world cometh: and he hath nothing in me". This means that there was no sin in Him, and therefore Satan could not inflict death upon Him. But Jesus proceeds to offer Himself willingly, that He might carry out the Father's commandment and fulfil the mission of redemption on which He was sent into the world. The last verse may be read as follows: "But, that the world may know that I love the Father, and that, as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do, arise, let us go hence". Thus He summons the Apostles to rise from

the table and go out with Him, as He proceeds towards the Cross.

It is not at all likely that chs. 15 and 16 were spoken on the streets of the city, or even on the road down to Gethsemane outside the walls. It is more probable that on the way to Gethsemane they entered the courts of the Temple. That was the most suitable place for the rest of the discourse and for the last prayer.

2. The New Life of the Disciples (Ch. 15). The Lord went on to give instructions regarding the new life the disciples would live after He was gone. The new situation in which they would be placed is described from three points of view: their relation to Christ (vs. 1-11), their relation to one another (vs. 12-17), and their relation to the world (vs. 18-27).

(1) Union with Christ (vs. 1-11). This is set forth under the similitude of the vine. It may have been suggested by the great golden vine which, Josephus tells us, adorned the gates of the Temple. The vine is one of the symbols of Israel in the Old Testament, and appears there in various relations. (Psa. 80:8; Isa. 5:1; Jer. 2:21). The use of the metaphor here to illustrate the spiritual union between Christ and His believing followers signifies the formation of a new people of God in place of the old Israel. The vine comprises both trunk and branches in one living organism, and manifests its life in the fruit borne by the branches (vs. 1-2). So Christ and His disciples form one body of life.

The one purpose of the vine is to bear fruit. The word is repeated again and again. By fruit Jesus meant spiritual life, the manifestation of His life in

the lives of the disciples, what Paul calls the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). The law of life for the branches, and the one condition of fruitfulness, is to abide in the vine (vs. 3-4). The disciple must set his life in Christ, and let Christ live in him. The word "abide" occurs ten times in this passage. This is the way to maintain union with Christ. The results of union, and the consequences of loss of union, are set forth in a sharp contrast (vs. 5-6). The blessings of union are power in prayer (v. 7), abundant fruit (v. 8), continual experience of the love of Christ (vs. 9-10), and fulness of joy (v. 11).

(2) Love for one another (vs. 12-17). This passage begins and ends with the Lord's commandment that His disciples should love one another. Their love should be after the pattern of His love for them. The greatness of His love is shown in laying down His life for them (v. 13). Because of it He exalted them from being servants to be His friends, and had chosen them to be His representatives in the world.

(3) Hatred from the world (vs. 18-27). In contrast with the love which the disciples were to have for one another, the Lord now tells them of the hatred they would receive from men in general (vs. 18-19). By their union with Christ, they belonged to a different kind of world, the unseen and eternal realm of the Spirit. They were to expect persecution from the world because of the world's hatred of Christ (vs. 20-25). But when the Holy Spirit should come from the Father to be His supreme witness, then they too were to bear witness to the fellowship that they had with Him from the first (vs. 26-27).

3. The Mission of the Holy Spirit (16:1-15). Having referred to the coming of the Holy Spirit, whom He was to send from the Father, Jesus now goes on to explain more fully the nature of the Spirit's work. It was necessary for Him to depart from the world, that His work might be carried to completion by the Holy Spirit. There was something for the Spirit to do for the disciples which Jesus could not do by Himself.

(1) The coming of the Spirit (vs. 1-7). Jesus had said these things to prepare the disciples for the persecution that awaited them after His departure (vs. 1-3). He had not told them of these things before, but reserved them for the eve of His departure (vs. 4-6). It was better for them that He should depart and go to the Father, for the Spirit could not come until He had gone (7:39). After that He would send Him to them.

(2) The Spirit's relation to the world (vs. 8-11). His work would be to convict the world in respect of sin and of righteousness and of judgment. This would be the result of the preaching of the Gospel. "Of sin, because they believe not in me"; that is, the sin of rejecting the Saviour. The result of Peter's preaching at Pentecost is the best illustration of this (Acts 2:37). "Of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye behold me no more"; that is, the righteousness wrought out by Jesus Christ on earth and confirmed by His ascension into Heaven. This is the "righteousness of God" now revealed in the Gospel (Rom. 1:17). "Of judgment, because the prince of this world hath been judged"; that is, the judgment executed upon the Cross. In that transaction Satan's case against the children of God was met and settled by Christ

Jesus in taking upon Himself the Divine judgment for human sin (John 5:24; 12:31; Rom. 8:33-34; Col. 2:14-15; 1 John 2:1-2).

(3) The Spirit's relation to the disciples (vs. 12-15). As the Spirit of truth, He would carry forward the work which Christ had begun for the disciples, by guiding them into the truth which they could not understand until after His redemptive work had been fully accomplished. The Holy Spirit would glorify Christ by making Him known in the fulness of His revelation of the Father.

4. The Last Farewell (16:16-33). Jesus now returns to the thought with which He began—His approaching departure. "A little while, and ye behold me no more"—the interval between the present moment and His death. "And again a little while, and ye shall see me"—the interval between the Cross and Pentecost. After that they should have a spiritual vision of His glory with the Father (v. 16). Some of the disciples were perplexed by these words, and Jesus proceeded to explain what He meant (vs. 17-19).

After the first "little while" they should be overwhelmed with great sorrow, but after the second "little while" their sorrow should be turned into the greatest joy. This joy could not be taken from them, because it would be the realization of His spiritual presence with them (vs. 20-22). This fulness of joy would be due to the new illumination which the Holy Spirit would give them, and to the new relationship which they should have with the Father, giving them the privilege of praying to Him in Christ's name (vs. 23-24).

In this teaching of His, Jesus had to use figures and parables, because He could not yet speak plainly.

After Pentecost the Spirit would give them direct knowledge of the Father and His love (vs. 25-27). In v. 28 Jesus summed up His whole redemptive work in four steps: "I came out from the Father (emptying Himself according to Phil. 2:6-7), and am come into the world (the Incarnation): again, I leave the world (the Cross), and go unto the Father (the Ascension)". This drew out from the disciples a confession of their faith in Him (vs. 29-30), to which He replied with a warning of what was to happen that night (vs. 31-32). Then He gave them a final word of assurance and triumph: "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." In the world they should have tribulation, but in Him they should have peace (v. 33).

THE LORD'S HIGH-PRIESTLY PRAYER

(Ch. 17)

This is properly "the Lord's prayer", the prayer that He used Himself, as distinguished from the prayer that He taught His disciples to use. It was probably uttered while they were still in the Temple. Nowhere could our High Priest more fitly offer Himself and His followers to the Father than in the place in which God had chosen to set His name. Having received from them an emphatic expression of their faith (16:30), Jesus saw that His work in training and instructing them was finished. Nothing was left now but the supreme act of sacrifice for which He had come into the world. His "hour" had come, and He committed Himself and His disciples to the Father's love and care. The main thought of the prayer is the glory of the Father as revealed in the work of the Son. This is developed in three parts:

1. Prayer for Himself (vs. 1-5). Jesus prays that He may be glorified; that is, that His real nature may be fully manifested. And this in two respects. (1) "Glorify thy Son" (v. 1). This refers to His humanity. It is a petition for the manifestation of His incarnate glory in victory over death through His resurrection and ascension. (2) "Glorify thou me with thine own self" (v. 5). This refers to His Deity. It is a petition for the restoration of the former glory of equality and fellowship with God which He had before the Incarnation (Phil. 2:6; 1 John 1:1-2). Christ's motive in seeking His own glory was that He might glorify the Father by giving eternal life to men, and so make the Father more fully known (vs. 2-3). The ground of His petition was His having glorified the Father by His earthly life of perfect obedience (v. 4).

2. Prayer for His Disciples (vs. 6-19). Jesus now prays for the Apostles, whom He is about to leave, and who are to continue His work in the world. The relation in which they stand both to Himself and to the world pervades this part of the prayer, and is the ground upon which its special petitions are based. The disciples were given to Him out of the world (vs. 6-10). They have been kept by Him from the world (vs. 11-15). They are sent by Him into the world (vs. 16-19). By "the world" Jesus means mankind in general as separated from God and alien to Him.

The Lord makes two special petitions for the disciples. (1) That they should be kept: "Holy Father, keep them in thy name which thou hast given me". "I pray . . . that thou shouldst keep them from the evil one" (vs. 11, 15). Jesus asks

that their preservation in the world and their deliverance from the evil in it may be maintained through the revelation of the Father which He has given them. The Scripture to which he refers as fulfilled (v. 12) is probably Isa. 43:13 rather than Psa. 41:9. (2) That they should be sanctified: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (v. 17). He asks that they may be consecrated and set apart for their mission in the world by the whole system of spiritual truth into which they have been introduced. As He has represented the Father in the world, so they are to remain in the world and represent Christ.

3. Prayer for all Believers (vs. 20-26). Jesus next goes on to pray for the whole Church, for all who should believe in Him through the Gospel proclaimed by the Apostles. This part of the prayer contains two main petitions.

(1) For the unity of the Church (vs. 20-23). This is put in different ways: "that they may all be one"; "that they also may be in us"; "that they may be perfected into one". It is a prayer that the spiritual unity which has its ground in the unity of the Father and the Son may be realized in the Church. The Father lives in the Son and the Son lives in the Father and thus they are one in will and purpose. Jesus prays that this oneness of fellowship and love may be manifested in the life of the Church. This spiritual unity would exhibit such a quality, and would be so different from any earthly unity, that it should convince the world that He from whom it proceeds came from God. Jesus looked forward to this unity as the crowning evidence of His Divine mission.

(2) For the glorification of the Church (vs. 24-26). The final glory of the Christian consists in being with Christ and beholding His glory. His supreme glory, according to His own explanation, consists in the Father's love for Him. The phrase, "before the foundation of the world", gives us a glimpse of the profound depths of His own eternal pre-existence, and of the love that existed in the heart of the Godhead then. The emotion of Jesus seems to deepen as He comes to the end of His prayer, and as He thinks of His mission being consummated in having that same love shared by His disciples.

THE FINAL WORK OF UNBELIEF

(Chs. 18-19)

Jewish unbelief reached its final form and showed its true nature in the condemnation and crucifixion of the Son of God. This Gospel does not contain a complete story of the sufferings of Jesus. The Evangelist had the earlier Gospels constantly in mind, and evidently endeavoured simply to fill up the vacancies left in their narratives, so as to present the facts, which were now well known, in their true light. Three ideas are prominent in John's narrative: the voluntary nature of Christ's sufferings (18:4, 8, 11, 36; 19:28-30), the fulfilment of a divine plan in them (18:4, 9, 11; 19:11, 24, 28), and the majesty of the Son of God shining through them (18:6, 20-23, 36-37; 19:11, 26-27).

1. The Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus (18:1-11). John omits the agony in the garden, but gives vivid details of the rest of the scene when Judas and his band arrived. He tells us that "Jesus oft-times re-

sorted thither" (vs. 1-2). Jesus "went forth" to meet them, probably going out to the gate of the garden to deliver Himself up and provide for the safety of the disciples. The moral majesty of His bearing had a startling effect upon the soldiers (vs. 3-9). The incident of Peter and Malchus is recorded by all the Evangelists, but John alone mentions their names, for he was writing so long after the event that there was no longer any need for reticence (vs. 10-11). The rebuke that Jesus addressed to Peter, which is more fully given in Matthew (26:52-54), shows how completely He was master of the situation, and also how completely He was surrendered to His Father's will. The cup had not been taken away and was now willingly accepted. The answer to His prayer in the agony is revealed in His calm self-composure through the rest of the scene in the garden, as well as through the scenes that now follow.

2. The Jewish Trial (18:12-27). John alone tells of the preliminary examination before Annas, the aged high priest (vs. 12-14). In the course of it Jesus declared that He had spoken publicly to the world and His teaching contained no secret mystery. There is no account of the trial which took place afterwards before the Council under Caiaphas (vs. 19-24). The story of Peter's threefold denial, which is recorded in all the Gospels, is told by John in a more circumstantial way than by any of the other Evangelists (vs. 15-18, 24-27). His account has the unmistakable marks of an eye-witness. John was evidently present throughout all the trial, both before the Jewish court and before Pilate. He is doubtless "the other disciple" mentioned in v. 16.

3. The Roman Trial (18:28—19:16). This part of the trial of Jesus is most fully recorded by John. He begins by telling us that the Jews would not enter the Roman judgment-hall, for that would mean ceremonial defilement and prevent their eating the Passover; and so Pilate went out to them. They began by asking him to confirm their sentence of death against Jesus without examination, and this Pilate refused to do (18:28-32). Then they brought a political accusation against Jesus—He made Himself a king. Taking Jesus into his judgment-hall, Pilate asked, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" Before answering, Jesus asked in what sense he put the question, whether in a political sense or otherwise; and then He took the opportunity of testifying to His kingship before Pilate, but showed how different His Kingdom was from the kingdoms of this world. Its sway depended not upon military power, but on the revelation of the truth (18:33-37). Pilate treated this reference to truth with supercilious disdain. Then he went out to the Jews and told them that he found Jesus innocent and made an attempt to have them approve of His release. But they chose Barabbas instead of Jesus (18:38-40).

Pilate made a further attempt to release Jesus by appealing to the pity of the crowd. He had Him scourged and brought before them with the crown of thorns and the purple robe which the soldiers had put upon Him, and again declared Him innocent, exclaiming, with a mixture of respect and sarcasm, "Behold, the man!" But the chief priests and officers of the Jews anticipated any possible expression of pity by loud cries for His crucifixion. Pilate, for

the third time, declared Him innocent, and ironically referred the whole case back to them (19:1-6).

Then the Jews advanced a new charge—"He made himself the Son of God". At this Pilate became alarmed, for he had already recognized something mysterious in the strange prisoner before him. He entered the judgment-hall again and questioned Jesus. Although his haughty Roman pride was offended by the Lord's silence at the first question, he was awed by the majesty of His answer to the second question (19:7-11). When Pilate made another attempt to release Jesus, the Jews threatened to charge him with disloyalty to Cæsar; and this brought him at last to a cowardly submission to their demand. At the same time he treated them with savage irony. He brought Jesus forth to them, saying, "Behold, your King!" They responded, not only by the rejection of their Messiah, but also by the repudiation of their Messianic hope: "Away with him, away with him, crucify him! . . . We have no king but Cæsar" (19:12-16).

4. The Crucifixion (19:17-30). John does not give a full account of the crucifixion of Jesus, but he adds some details to those recorded by the Synoptists so as to supplement and complete their narratives. He tells us that Pilate refused the request of the chief priests to change the superscription which he had put over the cross (vs. 17-22), that the soldiers cast lots for the seamless coat among the garments of Jesus (vs. 23-24), that Jesus' mother was among the women standing by the cross and that Jesus committed her to John's own care (vs. 25-27).

John makes no reference either to the darkness or

to the cry of anguish which Matthew and Mark record. He adds, however, two of the Lord's words from the cross which were uttered after that cry (vs. 28-30). Jesus expressed His sense of physical suffering in exclaiming, "I thirst". This word was spoken only when He knew that His task was finished and prophecy was fulfilled. The word, "It is finished", was a cry of triumph, corresponding with the last word that He had spoken to the disciples in His farewell message (16:33). The actual death is described as the voluntary surrender of His life—"He bowed his head, and gave up his spirit". Thus John marks the unique manner of the Lord's death.

5. The Burial (19:31-52). John alone records the incident of the soldier's spear-thrust, and the peculiar phenomenon that resulted from it: "there came out blood and water". He evidently regarded it as significant of something, and therefore bore his witness to it. It has been held to mean that the physical cause of the Christ's death was a rupture of the heart. It is more probable that in John's thought it was connected somehow with the Resurrection. It marked the exceptional nature of a body which had never been tainted by sin, and was not subject to corruption, and which, from the moment of death, underwent the beginnings of that change that issued in the Resurrection (vs. 31-37).

All the Gospels record the request of Joseph for the body of Jesus. John alone tells of the part that Nicodemus had in the burial, who brought a hundred pounds of spices to put in the grave-clothes. These two members of the Jewish aristocracy had been secret disciples of Jesus. His death evoked a courage in them which had been latent during His

lifetime. John notes the fact that the tomb where Jesus was laid was in a garden close to the spot where the cross stood (vs. 38-42).

THE FINAL REWARD OF FAITH

(Chs. 20—21)

These closing chapters of the Gospel explain the triumphant fact of the Resurrection, and reveal the new life of the Son of God as the source of eternal life for all who believe on Him. John writes from his own experience, and narrates those incidents that led the faith of the disciples to triumph over sorrow and fear and doubt. His record is a revelation of spiritual truth through outward fact.

1. The Empty Tomb (20:1-10): We are first told how he attained to faith in the Resurrection. He came to realize its transcendent nature by seeing how the grave-clothes were left lying in the empty tomb. The part of Mary Magdalene is only that of the messenger who brought the news that the body was gone and called the two disciples to the sepulchre (vs. 1-2). When Peter and John arrived at the tomb and entered it, they saw something that struck them with amazement. It was not merely the disappearance of the body; it was the way the grave-clothes were left. The linen cloths were lying exactly as they had been wrapped around the body, and the head cloth lay a short distance away, just where the head had rested.

Nothing had been disturbed, and yet the body was gone. It had passed through those grave-clothes without moving them. John records what he observed, and then adds simply, but with great significance, "he saw, and believed" (vs. 3-8). The true

nature of the event had broken in upon him. He now began to understand what the Lord meant by saying that He must rise again from the dead. All that was Jesus of Nazareth had passed into another plane of being. His body had been spiritualized, and it now transcended the physical world. Peter and John then "went away again unto their own home", to think of the wonder of it, and to recall to their remembrance what the Lord had said about His rising again from the dead (vs. 9-10).

2. The Appearance to Mary Magdalene (20:11-18). After being the messenger to the two chief Apostles, Mary Magdalene was to become the herald of the risen Lord. He made His first appearance to the humble disciple whose personal love for Him kept her lingering at the tomb (vs. 11-15). When He uttered her name, she knew Him by the tone of His voice, and she wheeled about with an exclamation of surprise and rapture. The Lord's warning, "Touch me not", implies that Mary was about to express her devotion by clasping His feet on the ground of the old human relation and with a desire to retain His presence.

Jesus proceeded to explain that the time to enjoy full communion with Him would not come till He had ascended to the Father, and bade her go and tell the disciples that He was on His way to that Ascension (vs. 16-18). The Lord's use of the expression, "my brethren", would emphasize the unity that was to exist between Him and them in their new life; while the expressions, "my Father and your Father", and "my God and your God", would remind them of the essential difference between His own unique relation to God as the Son and their relation to God as believers in the Son.

3. The First Appearance to the Apostles (20:19-23). This is the same appearance as that recorded in Luke 24:36-49, which took place on the evening of the Resurrection day. Two other manifestations of the risen Lord had already taken place that day, the appearances to Peter and to the two disciples at Emmaus; but this was the first appearance to the apostolic group. The Lord greeted them with a salutation of peace, and then showed them His wounds in order to assure them that it was Himself. John reflects the feelings of one who was present, when he adds, "the disciples therefore were glad when they saw the Lord" (v. 19-20).

With another benediction of peace, Jesus announced that He was sending them to continue the mission on which the Father had sent Him—to bring to the world salvation from sin. By the symbolic action of breathing on them when He said, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit", He indicated that the promised Spirit would come to them as the gift of life from His own glorified Person. There may be an allusion here also to the origin of life at the creation of Adam, when the Lord God "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life" (Gen. 2:7). The risen Jesus now stands forth as the Creator of a new humanity, the Author of the new spiritual creation.

4. The Second Appearance to the Apostles (20:24-31). Thomas was not present at the first appearance, and he would not believe that his fellow-disciples had seen the Lord without tangible evidence (vs. 24-25). The Apostles spent the whole Passover week in Jerusalem, and on the first day of the following week they were gathered again in the same place and under the same circumstances; and

this time Thomas was present. Again the Lord stood in their midst and greeted them with the same salutation (v. 26). Then He spoke to Thomas directly, and offered him the tangible evidence he had demanded. Thomas did not need it. He recognized the real nature of his Master at once, and broke out in a sublime and rapturous confession of faith: "My Lord and my God" (vs. 27-28). The record of this confession forms the appropriate close of John's narrative. The words which the Lord addressed to Thomas after it show that He accepted the declaration of His Deity as the true confession of faith (v. 29). This accounts for the two closing verses of the chapter, in which John states the purpose of the narrative that he has written (vs. 30-31).

5. The New Work of the Apostles (21:1-14). This chapter forms an appendix to the Gospel, which was added after it had been brought to a formal close but before it was put into public circulation. It contains the story of another appearance of the risen Lord, in which He deals first with the Apostles as a group and then with two of them individually

The Apostles seem to have returned to their ordinary work in Galilee while waiting for further instructions about their future. Seven of them are here engaged in fishing (vs. 1-3). There are several significant differences between the miraculous catch of fishes recorded here and that which took place when they were called to discipleship at the beginning of the Galilean ministry (Luke 5:1-11). On the earlier occasion Jesus was in the boat with the disciples, and the miracle was symbolical of their work during His earthly ministry when He was still in their midst. On the present occasion He

directed them from the shore, and the miracle symbolized their work after His departure into Heaven (vs. 4-8). It depicts the work of the Church during the present Christian age. When their fishing was done and they had gathered in all the fish, He invited them to a meal which He had prepared on the shore and served them Himself. But the human intimacy and simple familiarity of their former intercourse was gone. There was a mysterious change in Him which inspired a reverential awe and claimed their silent adoration (vs. 9-14).

In the course of the story the characteristic qualities of Peter and John stand out again. John, keen of insight, is the first to see that the stranger on the shore is the Lord. Peter, prompt of action, is the first to make his way toward Him. The rest of the chapter deals with the Lord's relation to these two individual Apostles, who have now come to be the leading members of the group.

6. The Special Work of Peter and John (21:15-25). This passage first tells how Peter was restored to his place in the Apostolic band and to leadership among them (vs. 15-19). The three questions which the Lord put to him could not but recall his three-fold denial, and were doubtless intended to give him a full opportunity to withdraw it. Peter had been forgiven when the Lord appeared to him privately on the day of the Resurrection (Luke 24:34; 1 Cor. 15:5). That interview was too sacred to be narrated, but its result required to be manifested to the other disciples. The words, "more than these", in the Lord's first question referred to Peter's claim to possess greater devotion than the rest of the disciples (13:37; Matt. 26:33). In asking, "Lovest

thou me?" Jesus laid the basis of Christian life and service in personal devotion to Himself, not in intellectual belief.

In his answers, Peter used a different word for "love" from that which Jesus used. He would not lay claim to the higher love which the Lord's word implied, but only to the personal affection and devotion of which he was sure. In His third question Jesus took up Peter's own word; and Peter was grieved because the Lord seemed thereby to call in question even that personal attachment which His disciple had claimed. Peter was then thoroughly humbled, and threw himself entirely upon the Lord's complete and perfect knowledge of his heart. Having restored to Peter his apostleship in a threefold charge, the Lord went on to tell him what the end of his ministry would be. His love and devotion would be proved and sealed by martyrdom. Then the bold declaration of His devoted Apostle (13:37) would receive a literal fulfilment.

The incident that follows, when Peter asked what John should do, reveals the special attachment that existed between these two Apostles (vs. 20-23). The fact that John was following when Jesus and Peter turned aside showed that he too sought to know the Lord's will about his future. The answer Jesus gave implied that John should not die by martyrdom like Peter, but that he should live on far beyond the rest of the Apostles. It had other implications also, which John himself does not claim to understand; but it did not mean that he should not die at all, as some in the Church had inferred. Jesus had simply said, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" John leaves the Lord's meaning to be explained in the course of Christian his-

tory. Its supreme significance lies in Jesus making His own Second Coming the final hope of the Church and the final end of its work on earth.

* * * *

THE DIVINE GLORY OF THE LORD JESUS

While the Synoptic Gospels answer the question, "What are the facts on which faith rests?" the Fourth Gospel answers the question, "What is the meaning of those facts?" Its key-words are "witness", which occurs in one form or another about forty times, and "believe", which occurs nearly one hundred times. It bears "witness" to the fact that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, so that men may "believe" in Him and have eternal life. The Divine glory of His Person, which appears occasionally in the Synoptic Gospels, shines all through John's Gospel. It is manifested in several special ways.

1. Jesus Christ is represented as the reality of which the Mosaic system was only the shadow. This is what John means when he declares that "the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ" (1:17). He carries out this idea in his narrative by setting the whole life and ministry of the Lord upon the background of the Old Testament dispensation. There are numerous allusions and references to Old Testament types and symbols. In many cases Jesus claimed to be the fulfilment of these Himself. In the course of the Gospel He is seen to be foreshadowed by the symbolism of the following types: the tabernacle (1:14, literally, "tabernacled among us"), the Passover lamb (1:29, 36), the ladder of Jacob's dream (1:51), the Temple (2:19-21), the brazen serpent (3:

14-15), the manna (6:22), the water from the rock (7:37), the pillar of fire (8:12), and the waters of Siloam (9:7).

2. A tone of sublime self-assertion marks the discourses of Jesus in this Gospel. This is revealed especially in the way He used the expression, "I am". Our translators have supplied the word "he" after it in several cases, but it is not in the original: "except ye believe that I am" (8:24); "then shall ye know that I am" (8:28); "that ye may believe that I am" (13:19). The word "Messiah" might be supplied as a predicate; but, standing alone as they do, the words mean that Christ was speaking out of the very being of God (Exod. 3:13-14). This is more clearly seen in the statement, "Before Abraham was, I am" (8:58).

On seven occasions Christ Himself added a predicate to the words; and when these are taken as a whole they reveal the wealth provided for human need in His own Divine Person: "I am the bread of life" (6:35); "I am the light of the world" (8:12); "I am the door" (10:9); "I am the good Shepherd" (10:14); "I am the resurrection and the life" (11:25); "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" (14:6); and "I am the true vine" (15:1).

3. Jesus was conscious of an eternal pre-existence. The memory of a pre-incarnate state pervades the language of the Lord in this Gospel. This is manifested in His repeated statement that He came from Heaven on a mission from the Father (6:38; 8:29, 42). The word "sent" was often on His lips. Again and again He declared that the Father had sent Him (5:36-37; 7:28-29; 8:18; 10:36; 16:27-28; 17:25). He spoke of the heavenly world with the confidence of one who was familiar with it. "I know

whence I came", He declared, "and whither I go" (8:14). "Ye are from beneath; I am from above; ye are of this world; I am not of this world" (8:23). His knowledge of heavenly things was such as to give Him ample authority to tell men about them (3:12).

This consciousness of an eternal pre-existence comes out most clearly at the end of the Lord's ministry, when He was facing the Cross. It is the ground of His assurance to the disciples in the upper room: "In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you" (14:2). It is manifested most fully in the opening sentences of His high-priestly prayer (17:1-5). He began with a petition that He might be glorified: "Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that the Son may glorify thee". This was a request that He might be carried through the supreme sacrifice of His humiliation into the triumph of the Resurrection and the Ascension. He went on to sum up His life-work, the mission on which He had been sent, in these words: "I glorified thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which thou hast given me to do". And then He repeated His petition in this form: "And now, Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was". There was a glory lying behind Him in the eternal past, as well as the glory into which He was going in the eternal future.

4. Christ's superhuman claims reveal the transcendent nature of His Person. No sin could be found in His life (8:46; 14:30). He possessed a unique oneness with God (10:30; 14:9). He had power to give eternal life (10:28; 17:3), and authority to judge the world (5:22, 27). The most significant

of all His supernatural claims, in view of His redemptive mission in the world, was the assertion He made about the absolute control He had over His own life: "No one taketh it away from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again" (10:18).

This is the only explanation that can account for the mystery of the Cross. When the four Gospel records of the event are read with attentive care, when the unbroken objective calmness of all the narratives is considered, when every circumstance in the story is given its due place in the scene which the mind contemplates, then there comes in upon the soul an irresistible impression of mystery unfathomable. Something happened there that was wholly new and strange.

The death of Jesus was the only death of its kind that the human race has ever seen. It was a voluntary sacrifice in the absolute sense of the term. He was not overcome of death. He gave His life, by a deliberate act of His own free will, "a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:28; Mark 10:45). By consenting to share the death of men, although under no obligation to die, He bore the sin of men, although Himself without sin. In the mysterious depths of that voluntary sacrifice of His there is something which, while it perpetually baffles the human intellect, brings a strange and ineffable peace to the human heart. By the grace of God Christ tasted death for every man, and "through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish unto God" (Heb. 2:9; 9:14).

THE NEW TESTAMENT

THE ACTS



THE APOSTOLIC AGE

THE Acts of the Apostles is the one historical book in the New Testament. It covers only thirty years of the apostolic age (A.D. 30-60), but in that time the Church had been established in the world and Christianity had entered the field of human history as the universal religion of redemption.

The age of the Apostles extended to the end of the century, when John, the last remaining member of the Twelve, passed away. Its culminating point, however, was reached in the year 70, when the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple at the hands of the Romans brought the Mosaic system to an end and set Christianity completely free from Judaism. That event marked the final separation of the Old Testament dispensation of the Law from the New Testament dispensation of the Gospel. After that Christianity went on its way in the world as a new religious movement, and the Church took its own place among men as a new spiritual fellowship.

In the light of the Book of Acts, several stages can be distinguished in the historical progress of Christianity and the growth of the Church through the Apostolic Age.

The first stage takes us from the birth of Christianity at Pentecost to the martyrdom of Stephen in the year 33 or 34 (Acts 1-7). This was the period of Christian beginnings and of the primitive Church.

Christianity did not begin as a new religion. The first Christians were Jews, and they continued to attend the Temple services and perform the rites and duties of Judaism. They differed from the rest of the Jews only in believing in Jesus as Messiah and Saviour, and in maintaining a special fellowship of their own. They were not conscious of having changed their own religion for another, but they were profoundly conscious of a new experience. They "were being saved" (2:47, marg.). They had entered into "the life"; they had found "the way" (5:20; 9:2; 22:4).

These early Christians had no thought of breaking with Judaism, but Judaism cast them out. The condemnation and stoning of Stephen by the Jewish Council confirmed and sealed the national rejection of Christ, which had taken place three or four years before. This event marked the end of the "seventy weeks" which Daniel had been told still remained for his people until the Messianic redemption should be accomplished and God's purpose with Israel should be finished (Dan. 9:24-27). As Christ had come to be the fulfilment of the Law, so Christianity arose as the fulfilment of Judaism. But Judaism refused to recognize it as such. Having repudiated the redeemed remnant in its midst and cast it out, nothing remained for the nation now but the judgment foretold by the Lord, which fell a generation later.

The next stage in the progress of Christianity takes us about ten years farther on, when another attack on the Church took place (Acts 8-12). The persecution that began with the stoning of Stephen drove many of the members of the Church from Jerusalem, and so scattered the seeds of Christianity abroad. Christian churches sprang up in many parts

of Palestine, and even beyond its borders. God-fearing Gentiles as well as Jews were being converted. When the Gospel reached Antioch and was preached there, many pagan Greeks accepted the message of salvation through Christ. This resulted in a church being established in that great Gentile city, which was so manifestly "Christian" in its character, as distinct from Jewish, that the name came to be identified with the followers of the new faith.

In the meantime Saul of Tarsus had been converted, and the Jewish churches in Palestine were enjoying a respite from persecution, and were growing steadily. The Apostles had not yet left Jerusalem. They seem to have remained there for some years after Pentecost, in order to maintain oversight over the Church as a whole. By this time James, the Lord's brother, had become the pastor of the mother-church in the city. He continued to preside over it long after the Apostles departed. He was held in high esteem by the Jews, and was called by them "the just". His Epistle is the earliest book of the New Testament, and was probably written about the middle of the century.

During this period changes took place in the government of the land. Pilate was removed from Judea in A. D. 36, and Herod Antipas from Galilee in the following year. In the year 41 the former dominions of Herod the Great were united under the rule of his grandson, Herod Agrippa I, who was given the title of king. This meant the restoration of the Jewish kingdom under the Herodian dynasty. As his grandfather had struck at the infant Christ, so this Herod struck at the Apostles of Christ. At the time of the Passover in the year 44, he had James the son of Zebedee beheaded. His attempt

on Peter's life was frustrated by the Apostle's miraculous deliverance from prison. Herod's sudden death, which occurred soon afterwards and was regarded by the Church as a judgment of God, brought to an end the short-lived attempt to restore the Jewish kingdom in Palestine. After that the land was put under the direct rule of Roman governors, whose headquarters were in Cæsarea.

In the next stage of the Church's progress an important forward step was taken—the extension of Christianity into the Gentile world and the admission of Gentiles into the fellowship of the Church on the same terms as Jews. This period takes us to the first Christian council, which was held in Jerusalem in A.D. 50 (Acts 13-15). Paul and Barnabas had been sent out from Antioch on the first evangelizing mission into the heathen world, and they had founded a number of churches in the southern districts of the province of Galatia in Asia Minor. It was to these churches that Paul wrote, not many years afterwards, what is known as the Epistle to the Galatians.

On the return of the missionaries to Antioch, they were challenged by some Jewish Christians from the parent Church for preaching the Gospel freely to uncircumcised Gentiles; and the question was raised whether men could be saved without coming through the gateway of the Mosaic Law. The matter was referred to the Apostles and elders in Jerusalem. The decision, which was reached unanimously and was regarded as the mind of the Holy Spirit, vindicated Paul and Barnabas. The ceremonial law was to have no place in the Christian Church. The Gospel was to be equally free to Jews and Gentiles.

This important decision opened the way for the next stage in the progress of the Gospel—the planting of Christianity in the great cities of the Roman Empire. This was mainly the work of Paul, and it occupied most of the next ten years of his life. He travelled about among Greeks and Romans as one familiar with their world, for he had known the pagan mind and heart from his earliest days. This period saw those churches founded with which his Epistles have made us familiar. It takes us to the Apostle's arrival as a prisoner in Rome in A.D. 60 (Acts 16-28).

In the early years of this decade Paul carried the Gospel into Europe, and planted Christianity in the provinces of Greece. He founded the churches in Philippi and Thessalonica, preached in Athens, and spent a considerable time in Corinth, establishing the church in that great commercial city. While there he wrote the two Epistles to the Thessalonians. His next evangelizing mission was devoted mainly to Ephesus, where he spent another prolonged period. Christianity was firmly established in that great centre of pagan worship, and from there the Gospel spread far and wide. It was then that "the seven churches of Asia" (Rev. 1:11), and also the church at Colossæ, had their beginning.

After leaving Ephesus Paul visited Greece again, and spent three months at Corinth in the winter of 56-57. There he wrote the Epistle to the Romans. He had written the two Epistles to the Corinthians shortly before that, the First from Ephesus, and the Second while travelling through Macedonia towards Corinth. Then he journeyed back through Macedonia and went on to Jerusalem, bringing a contribution which he had collected from the churches of the

Gentiles as a thank-offering for what they owed to the parent church in Judea. The Apostle intended this to be a means of binding the Jews and the Gentiles in the Church more closely together. We are not told how this gift was received. Paul's purpose was frustrated by what happened when he arrived in Jerusalem.

There were many in the church there at that time who were zealous for the Law and did not accept the liberty of the Gospel for which Paul stood. Taking the advice of James and the elders, he attempted to conciliate this group by undertaking the cost of ceremonially purifying four Jews who were under a vow. But his presence in the Temple led to a riot on the part of the fanatical Jewish mob. As a result Paul was arrested by the commander of the Roman garrison and sent down to the governor at Cæsarea.

The fact that the Apostle was kept a prisoner there for two years without having his case settled, and finally had to exercise his right as a Roman citizen and appeal to Cæsar, is evidence of the laxity and corruption of the Roman rule in Palestine at that time. This appeal led to Paul's being sent to Rome, where he remained in captivity for another two years (A.D. 60-62). During that time he wrote the Epistles to the Ephesians, the Philippians, the Colossians, and Philemon.

New Testament history ends at this point, and for the rest of the apostolic age we have to depend on tradition. It was the general belief of the early Church that Paul was released from Rome in the year 62 and resumed his evangelizing work in the Mediterranean world. In the course of the next few years he visited the churches in the east, and then

went as far west as Spain. To this period belong two of the Pastoral Epistles—First Timothy and Titus. In the meantime the first Roman persecution of Christianity, the most terrible the Church had yet suffered anywhere, broke out in the imperial capital under Nero. Before it was ended Paul was arrested and brought to Rome a second time. From his prison there he wrote his Second Epistle to Timothy, and soon afterwards suffered martyrdom, probably in A.D. 66 or 67.

During the same period the Christians in Palestine were also passing through severe trial. The early years of the decade before the fall of Jerusalem were full of unrest and disorder. During one of the tumults in the Temple, James was stoned to death for bearing witness to Jesus as the Christ. In the year 66 the Jews rebelled against Rome, and the war began which resulted four years afterwards in the destruction of the Temple and the dissolution of the Jewish national order. Just before the final siege of the city, the Christians fled to Pella beyond the Jordan; and there the Jewish church maintained its headquarters for several years. Some time during this decade the Epistle to the Hebrews was written, and also the Epistles of Peter and Jude.

Peter had been entrusted with the work of evangelizing the Jews outside Palestine. We have no account of the way he fulfilled this mission. There is reason to believe that he made an evangelizing tour through Asia Minor (1 Pet. 1:1). Some suppose that he went as far east as Babylon (1 Pet. 5:13), but the reference in this verse may be to the capital of the Empire. There is no historical evidence that he was ever Bishop of Rome or had

anything directly to do with the church there. It is not unlikely, however, that the tradition is true which says that he, as well as Paul, was put to death there during the Neronian persecution.

The Apostle John probably remained in Jerusalem, or in Judea, as long as Mary the mother of Jesus was living, fulfilling the charge that the Lord had committed to him. After the fall of the city he seems to have settled in Ephesus, which then became the main centre of the Christian Church. There he wrote the Gospel and his three Epistles. There is a tradition that he was banished to the island of Patmos during the persecution of Domitian's reign in the last decade of the century, and that out of that exile came the Book of Revelation.

There is no authentic information about the labours of the rest of the Apostles. Oral traditions about them floated among the later Christian communities, but none of these is trustworthy. The silence of Scripture regarding their work is significant. One fact is clear, that the movement of Christianity was westward, following the track of the Apostle Paul, and that all the vital interests of the Church centred in the work of that one man. Rome was the point of departure for the subsequent spread of the Gospel. So far as New Testament history is concerned, the apostolic age properly ends with Paul in Rome.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

THE Book of Acts was evidently intended to be a companion to the Third Gospel. Written by the same author and addressed to the same person (Luke 1:1-3; Acts 1:1-2), it continues the same story. The Gospel is described as a narrative of what Jesus "began both to do and to teach" up to the time of His ascension. The Acts is a narrative of what He continued to do and to teach after His ascension, through the Holy Spirit who was sent to take His place in fulfilment of His promise (John 14:16-18).

The book closes with Paul's two years' imprisonment in Rome. Probably it was written at that time or soon afterwards, and there was no more to tell. In the meantime the author's purpose had been accomplished, which was to write an account of the spread of the Gospel and the establishment of the Church in the world. The Apostle of the Gentiles had arrived at last at the world's capital, and was teaching the new faith there (28:30-31). The narrative covers a period of about thirty years.

The Book of Acts occupies an important place in the New Testament. It provides the link between the Gospels and the Epistles. It rests on the facts of the Gospel history, especially the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and it assumes that these facts are well known. It tells how the promises recorded in the Gospels, which the Lord gave to the disciples regarding their future work, were ful-

filled. These promises pointed forward to the founding of the Church (Matt. 16:18-19), the coming of the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:49; John 16:7), and the participation of the Gentiles in the blessings of the Gospel (Matt. 28:19-20; Luke 24:46-47). This book narrates the events which brought all these results about.

The Acts also prepares us for the Epistles. It introduces the Apostle Paul, who wrote most of the Epistles, and whom the Gospels never mention. This book relates what we need to know about his conversion and his missionary labours. It also gives an account of the origin of most of the churches to which Epistles are addressed. These Epistles reveal a condition of things in which the separation between Jews and Gentiles, which prevailed throughout the Old Testament and was continued through the Gospels, has disappeared altogether. The Acts shows how this change came about.

The title of the book occurs in various forms in the earliest manuscripts. It was probably added by a later hand than the writer's. Luke himself may have issued it without a title, as a natural sequel to his "former treatise". The word "Acts" was used in the first and second centuries for what we now call "memoirs" or "biographies"; and that simple title seems to have been the first one prefixed to Luke's second book. Afterwards it was enlarged in one way and another until the present title, "Acts of the Apostles", became fixed. This title does not accurately describe the contents; for the book does not record the acts of all the Apostles, and it contains extended notices of men, like Stephen and Philip, who were not Apostles. Taken in a limited sense, however, it may be understood as referring

to the particular Apostles by whom the Church was established in the world. The chief agents in this work were Peter and Paul, and the narrative is occupied mostly with the acts of these two Apostles.

The book falls accordingly into two main parts. The first part (Chs. 1—12) deals with the establishment of the Church among the Jews in Palestine, which was largely the work of Peter. The second part (Chs. 13—28) deals with the establishment of the Church among the Gentiles beyond Palestine, which was almost entirely the work of Paul. Thus we get the following working outline of the Book of Acts:

- I. The Church Among the Jews—Chs. 1-12
 1. The Founding of the Church (Chs. 1-2)
 2. The Growth of the Church (Chs. 3-5)
 3. The Beginning of Church Organization (Chs. 6-7)
 4. The Spread of the Gospel in Palestine (Chs. 8-9)
 5. The Extension of the Gospel to the Gentiles (Chs. 10-12)
- II. The Church Among the Gentiles—Chs. 13-28
 1. The First Gentile Mission (Chs. 13-14)
 2. The First Christian Council (Ch. 15)
 3. Paul's European Mission (Chs. 16-18)
 4. Paul's Ephesian Mission (Chs. 19-20)
 5. His Arrest in Jerusalem (Chs. 21-23)
 6. His Imprisonment in Cæsarea (Chs. 24-26)
 7. His Journey to Rome (Chs. 27-28)

THE FOUNDING OF THE CHURCH

(Chs. 1—2)

The story of Acts begins with the two great supernatural events which gave birth to Christianity and brought the Church into being — the ascension of Jesus Christ into Heaven and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit from Heaven. By His ascension the risen Lord took His place in the heavenly world as the Head of the Church (Eph. 1:20-23), and by the descent of the Spirit upon them the disciples were united with Him into one spiritual body (1 Cor. 12:13). A new corporate community was thus created, based upon a new spiritual order and manifesting a new kind of fellowship. This new community was the Church of Jesus Christ.

1. The Ascent of the Lord (Ch. 1). During the forty days between the Resurrection and the Ascension, Jesus gave His disciples convincing evidence of His own new life: "He showed himself alive". He also instructed them regarding the nature of the new spiritual order into which they were about to enter through the baptism of the Holy Spirit — "the things concerning the kingdom of God" (vs. 1-5).

In answer to a question about the future of the Kingdom, He warned them to leave that in the Father's hands. They should be equipped by the Holy Spirit with power for their own special work, which was to be His witnesses and spread His Gospel from Jerusalem throughout the whole world (vs. 6-8). The question asked by the disciples never comes up again in the New Testament. Pentecost gave them new light about the Kingdom and a new

point of view. It removed from their minds the last lingering elements of their former carnal conceptions.

Jesus was taken up and disappeared from their sight behind the veil of a cloud. As they stood gazing upward, "two men stood by them in white apparel" and told them that He had been received from earth into Heaven, and that He should return in the same manner as they had seen Him go (vs. 9-11). That is, as He had disappeared into the unseen so He would reappear out of the unseen. It is not said that these men were angels. They may have been Moses and Elijah, who had been with Jesus on the Mount of the Transfiguration.

What the Apostles beheld on the Mount of Olives was the earthly side of a transcendent event. On the heavenly side of the cloud there took place the exaltation and enthronement of the Saviour of the world. This is mentioned several times in the Epistles. God "raised him from the dead, and made him to sit at his right hand in the heavenly places" (Eph. 1:20). "God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name" (Phil. 2:9). "When he had made purification of sins, he sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Heb. 1:3).

It is described most fully in the sublime symbolism of the Book of Revelation. In the midst of the Throne in Heaven John saw "a Lamb standing as though it had been slain" (Rev. 5:6). It was the Saviour of men, just come from His sacrifice on the cross, taking His place at the centre of power in the unseen world, there to exercise all authority in Heaven and on earth (Matt. 28:18), and there

to reign, till He has put all His enemies under His feet (1 Cor. 15:25).

After the Ascension the Apostles and disciples in Jerusalem, numbering about a hundred and twenty, among whom were Mary the mother of Jesus and His brethren, waited in prayer for the coming of the Holy Spirit (vs. 12-14). This is the last mention of the mother of Jesus in the New Testament. His brethren had evidently come to believe in Him after the Resurrection. One of the Lord's appearances was made to His brother James (1 Cor. 15:7). During this time, under Peter's direction, they chose one of themselves to take the place of Judas in the apostolic band as a witness of the resurrection of the Lord, which was the primary function of an Apostle (1 Cor. 9:1). The Apostles used their own judgment as far as they could in first selecting two; and then they prayerfully left the final decision to God by means of the lot (vs. 15-20). This is the last use of the lot in Scripture history. Matthias is not mentioned again in the New Testament.

2. **The Descent of the Spirit (Ch. 2).** This event took place on the morning of the Day of Pentecost, ten days after the Ascension, so called because it was the "fiftieth" day after the offering of the first fruits during the Passover season (Lev. 23:15-16). In the Old Testament it was called the Feast of Weeks (2 Chron. 8:13). Of the three great feasts of the Jewish year, it was that which attracted the largest number of pilgrims from distant lands. The disciples "were all together in one place" (v. 1). This must have been in one of the courts of the Temple, for there all devout Jews would be gathered for the special services of the day. There, too,

the disciples had been meeting for praise and prayer every day since the Ascension (Luke 24: 52-53). It was the time of the morning sacrifice, "the third hour of the day" (v. 15).

Thus the Temple became the birthplace of the Church. The building of the spiritual House began on the site of the material house, which was its type and symbol. All that pertained to the old dispensation centred in the Temple; and it was fitting that the new dispensation should start there and spread out from there into all the world. This was the significance of Ezekiel's symbolic vision of the river flowing out from within the temple (47:1-5), and the fulfilment of Joel's prophecy of the fountain coming forth from the house of the Lord (3:18).

The signs accompanying the event gave some indication of its transcendent nature (vs. 2-3). The sound of wind and the appearance of fire meant that the power and presence of God were there. The fact that "it sat upon each of them" marked the fulfilment of the Lord's promise about the Spirit: "He shall be in you" (John 14:17).

The "other tongues" with which the disciples spoke were not other languages than their own, but new powers of utterance due to the new experience of the Spirit coming into their hearts (v. 4). He had put a new song in their mouths (Psa. 40:3). It was the ecstatic utterance of rapturous devotion, which could be translated spontaneously into the various languages of mankind, thus overcoming the old confusion of tongues. Amazement took possession of the Jewish worshippers, who had come from all parts of the Roman world to attend the feast and were thronging the Temple courts (vs. 5-12).

Some of them began to mock, and this gave Peter the occasion for addressing them (vs. 13-14).

He began with a brief defence of the disciples, explaining the sudden change that had come over them and the nature of the event that had happened. It was the fulfilment of the prophecy of Joel, that a time should come when God would pour out His Spirit upon mankind, and bring in a new age in which whosoever should call upon the name of the Lord should be saved (vs. 15-21; Joel 2:28-32). Peter then went on to preach the Gospel to the Jews, telling them that salvation had been secured by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

His argument was as follows: Jesus of Nazareth was proved to be the Messiah by His miraculous ministry (v. 22), by His resurrection from the dead after they had crucified Him (vs. 23-24), by David's prophetic anticipation of the resurrection of Christ as the fulfilment of God's promise to him regarding his throne (vs. 25-31; Psa. 16:8-11), by the Apostles' personal witness (v. 32), and by the pouring out of the Holy Spirit from His exalted place at the right hand of God in Heaven, the signs of which they themselves now see and hear, an event which David also foretold (vs. 33-35; Psa. 110:1). Peter then stated the conclusion from all this evidence: "God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified" (v. 36).

This produced conviction among his hearers, who began to enquire what they should do. Peter urged them to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins and they should receive new life through the Holy Spirit. As a result, about three thousand were added to the company of the disciples that day (vs. 37-41). Thus the first Christian church was formed.

The new converts continued under the instruction of the Apostles. They manifested a new kind of corporate life, a fellowship that was marked by a spirit of unity and love, and an atmosphere of joy and gladness and praise (vs. 42-47). "Fear came upon every soul": there was a sense of awe, because of the presence of the supernatural. The believers "had all things common", because their hearts were flooded with a new love for one another, the love of Christ Himself. Christ was present again in their midst, and His Spirit pervaded their lives. It was the fulfilment of His own farewell promise (John 14:18; 16:16, 22).

THE GROWTH OF THE CHURCH (Chs. 3—5)

These chapters tell how the new community developed, how it met opposition from without, and how sin within was dealt with. The Church grew steadily in numbers (2:41; 4:4; 5:14; 6:7), and in spiritual power (4:31, 33; 5:12-13).

1. Apostolic Witness in the Temple (Ch. 3). One afternoon, as Peter and John were going up into the Temple at the hour of prayer, they healed a lame man lying at the gate which led into its courts, Peter invoking over him "the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth" (vs. 1-10). The scene is described with great vividness—the manner of the cure, the change in the man, and the effect upon the people. They came running together in the colonnade called Solomon's porch, greatly amazed at the manifest miracle. Peter then began to address them, and declared that the man had been healed by faith in the name of Jesus Christ, the Prince of life, whom they

had killed and God had raised from the dead (vs. 11-16).

He went on to say that they and their rulers had done this in ignorance, and that God had thereby fulfilled the prophecies about the sufferings of the Messiah. He appealed to them to repent, that their sins might be blotted out and seasons of spiritual refreshing come, and that God might send their Messiah, "whom the heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things" (vs. 17-21). Here we have an indication of the Apostolic outlook upon the future. The return of Christ in power and glory awaited the repentance and conversion of His own people Israel. Peter went on to show that Moses and all the prophets had spoken of these days, and that the blessing promised through the seed of Abraham to all the nations of the earth was being fulfilled in this Saviour from sin whom God had sent first to them (vs. 22-26).

2. Apostolic Witness in the Council (4:1-22). As Peter and John were speaking to the people, the Temple authorities, who belonged to the Sadducean party, had them arrested and put in prison over night (vs. 1-4). When they appeared next morning before the Council, which was the same group of rulers that had condemned Jesus, Peter told them what he had told the Jewish people in the Temple. The impotent man had been healed "in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead". Then he went on to declare that there was no salvation in any other name (vs. 5-12).

The unaffected but confident bearing of the two unlearned men, who reflected the spirit of their

Master, impressed the rulers with wonder. They were unable to deny the notable and manifest miracle, yet they sought how to stop the spread of the new teaching (vs. 13-17). They warned the two Apostles "not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus", that is, not to make the name of Jesus the basis of their teaching or to refer to it as the source of their power. But Peter and John replied: "We cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard". The Council then threatened them and let them go, for they dared go no farther in their opposition at this time because of the feeling among the people, who were praising God for the miracle of healing wrought on a man lame from his birth and more than forty years old (vs. 18-22).

3. The Fellowship of the Church (4:23-37). When the Apostles returned to the company of the disciples and reported what had happened in the Council, there was a united expression of praise and prayer, and a fresh manifestation of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in their midst (vs. 23-31). The new spirit created at Pentecost was deepened. The Apostles continued their witness of the Resurrection with great power. Great grace was upon the whole body of believers. There was no self-interest among them. They had all things common, sharing their own possessions with others who were in need, because of the love that prevailed among them (vs. 32-35). A notable example of this spirit of self-sacrifice was shown by Barnabas, a Levite of Cyprus (vs. 36-37).

4. The First Sin in the Church (5:1-16). The sin of Ananias and Sapphira was due to spiritual pride. They were envious of the reputation of Barn-

abas for self-sacrifice. But their own spirit was that of self-interest, and it led them to an act of deception which the two of them deliberately planned. This was the first case of sin in the Church, and it was punished by a signal act of God's displeasure, which followed Peter's exposure of the deceit as lying unto God. This produced a sense of awe, for it manifested the peculiarly sacred character of the new community: the Lord was in its midst (vs. 1-11).

After this the spirit of unity and power was manifestly deepened. The Church had its public meeting-place in Solomon's porch, and the number of believers greatly increased. Signs and wonders were wrought among the people by the Apostles. Peter became the centre of an extended ministry of healing, sick people being brought in from round about Jerusalem (vs. 12-16).

5. The Persecution of the Apostles (5:17-42). The high priest, and the party of the Sadducees to which he belonged, who were troubled by the preaching of the Resurrection and had formerly caused the arrest of Peter and John, now took similar action against all the Apostles (vs. 17-18). It was the first occasion of an official persecution, and God interposed with a miraculous sign confirming the teaching of the Apostles. They were brought out of prison by an angel during the night, and sent to speak to the people in the Temple "all the words of this Life" (vs. 19-21).

The frequency of angelic activity in the early days of the Church is remarkable. The word "angel" occurs twenty times in Acts, and six distinct works of angels are recorded (5:19; 8:26; 10:3; 12:7, 23;

27:23). When the rulers met in the morning to try the prisoners, they were perplexed when they heard of their strange disappearance. But they made no attempt to enquire into it, thus ignoring the divine sign that had been given them (vs. 21-24). When the Apostles were found teaching in the Temple, and were brought before the Council and charged with disobedience for teaching in the name of Jesus, Peter replied for them all: "We must obey God rather than men" (vs. 25-29).

This principle was followed by all the leaders of Christianity in the New Testament. But while refusing to obey any command of men contrary to the will of God, they submitted quietly and without murmuring to any penalty the law of the land might lay upon them. Peter continued his address to the Council by giving the same witness about the essential facts of the Gospel as he had given on the former occasion. "And we are his witnesses of these things", he declared, "and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God hath given to them that obey him" (vs. 30-32). Peter meant that the Holy Spirit, as the secret of the new life and power of believers in Christ, thus bore witness to His resurrection and His exaltation into Heaven.

Their foes in the Council were enraged; but they were sobered by the warning and the wise advice spoken by the eminent Pharisee Gamaliel, the teacher of Paul (Acts 22:3), and the most famous Jewish scholar of the time. Let them refrain from these men, he said, and leave them alone; for if their work was of men it would be overthrown of itself, and if of God they could not overthrow it. He spoke of two leaders of insurgent bands, each of whom had pretended to be the Messiah, and both of

whom had perished (vs. 33-39). The Council agreed with his advice; but before letting the Apostles go, they beat them and charged them not to speak "in the name of Jesus". The Apostles departed with the joyful assurance of the Lord's favour, and continued to preach Jesus as the Messiah, both publicly in the Temple and privately in the homes of believers (vs. 40-42).

THE BEGINNING OF CHURCH ORGANIZATION (Chs. 6—7)

These chapters tell how the first office-bearers came to be appointed, and how one of them carried on an evangelizing ministry among the foreign-born Jews in Jerusalem and became the first Christian martyr.

1. The Appointment of the Seven (6:1-7). The Church had proved itself able to meet and overcome opposition that came from without. Now it showed itself able to meet difficulty that sprang up within. Some trouble had arisen because of its growing numbers. The Grecians (Greek-speaking Jews who had been born outside Palestine) complained that the poor families among them were being neglected by the Hebrews (Hebrew-speaking Jews who had been born in Palestine) in the daily ministrations of help. The very nature of the trouble is evidence of the poverty of the early Christians, and it raised the question of the temporal side of the Church's work. In order to deal with it, the Apostles had new officers chosen from among its members. They are not called "deacons", although the subsequent office of deacon had similar func-

tions, and are only once referred to afterwards (21:8).

The plan adopted was based on the organization of the synagogue. The new officers were to "serve tables", that is, preside over the distribution of alms and care for the physical needs of the congregation. The Apostles themselves would continue to carry on the spiritual functions of prayer and the ministry of the Word (vs. 1-4). The Seven were chosen by the members of the Church, and were solemnly ordained by the Apostles. They seem to have been taken from among the Grecian Jews, for all the names are Greek (vs. 5-6). Only Stephen and Philip are mentioned again, but what is said of them shows that these men did more than merely "serve tables".

In the meantime the Church went on growing rapidly in numbers. Many of the priests became believers. Their special familiarity with the sacrificial system of worship in the Temple would enable devout men among them to recognize the spiritual fulfilment of the Law in the new faith (v. 7).

2. The Ministry of Stephen (6:8-15). The narrative now takes up the story of Stephen, who was conspicuous among the Seven for his personal qualities and spiritual gifts, and for the miraculous signs that attended his work among the people. He is the first case of one not an Apostle working miracles. He carried on a witness in the synagogues of the Grecian Jews with great wisdom and spiritual power (vs. 8-10). There are probably three synagogues referred to here: that of the Libertines or "Freedmen", most of whom were descended from Jewish slaves taken to Rome by Pompey a hundred years before; that of the Cyrenians and Alexan-

drians, Jews from North Africa; that of them of Cilicia and Asia, two Roman provinces in Asia Minor. Saul of Tarsus no doubt belonged to the last of these synagogues.

Stephen's opponents were unable to withstand his reasoning. They stirred up opposition to him on a false charge of disloyalty to the Law of Moses. They had him arrested and brought before the Council, setting up false witnesses against him. Something of Stephen's message is reflected in the charge laid against him. He was teaching that the Mosaic system of symbolical worship was now fulfilled in Jesus Christ. He seems to have understood clearly the spiritual nature of the new dispensation, and this gave occasion to his foes to charge him with saying that Jesus would destroy the Temple and change the customs of Moses (vs. 11-15).

3. Stephen's Martyrdom (Ch. 7). Stephen's address before the Council is given at length, because it marked a crisis in the history of Israel. The rulers who had rejected Jesus were now given another opportunity to consider the evidence for His Messiahship. But they rejected Him again. This event brought to an end the "seventy weeks" of the Messianic prophecy in Daniel 9:24-27, and sealed the nation's doom. It ultimately led to the extension of the Gospel to the Gentiles.

Saul the Pharisee was present at the trial of Stephen, and "was consenting unto his death" (8:1). He approved of it, though he did not take part in the stoning. But he had seen Stephen's face (6:15) and his steadfast upward gaze (7:55); and he heard his prayer for his murderers as he died (7:60). He would be impressed with the argument

of Stephen's address, and doubts would arise in his heart and mind about his own position. He kept kicking against these pricks of conscience until the Lord finally arrested him on the Damascus road (26:14).

In his address Stephen reviewed the history of God's dealings with Israel from Abraham down through the patriarchal age (vs. 1-16) and the Mosaic period (vs. 17-43), and on to the time of Solomon (vs. 44-50). His purpose was to show that the Mosaic system of the Law was only preparatory for something higher that was to come. The tabernacle in the wilderness and the temple of Solomon were but types of a spiritual and heavenly order. At this point, probably because of the deepening hostility he saw in the Council, Stephen denounced his hearers for resisting the Holy Spirit as their fathers did. Their fathers killed the prophets; they themselves had slain the Righteous One. They had failed to keep the Law (vs. 51-53).

His words roused his hearers to fury. Gazing upward with steadfast face, he declared that He saw Heaven opened and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God. Refusing to listen, they rushed upon him, cast him out of the city and stoned him, while Saul kept the garments of the official witnesses (Deut. 17:7). In his death Stephen showed the very spirit of his Master. His prayers under the stoning echo two of the Lord's prayers on the cross: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit", and "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge". The whole passage bears the marks of Paul's vivid memory of the scene (vs. 54-60).

THE SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL IN PALESTINE

(Chs. 8—9)

The narrative now goes on to tell how the persecution which began with Stephen's death was the means of scattering the Church from Jerusalem and spreading the Gospel into Samaria and throughout Palestine.

1. The Church Established in Samaria (8:1-25). With the stoning of Stephen a bitter persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, which scattered its members throughout Judea and Samaria. In this Saul was the most active agent. Wherever the disciples went they preached the Gospel (vs. 1-4). Philip, one of the Seven, proclaimed it in the city of Samaria, and carried on a ministry of healing among the people there which brought joy to the city. Among those that were baptized was Simon the sorcerer (vs. 5-13).

When the Apostles in Jerusalem heard that the Samaritans had received the Gospel, they sent Peter and John to visit them. When these Apostles prayed for them and laid their hands upon them, some of the outward manifestations of Pentecost were repeated. Thus the faith of the Samaritans was confirmed and the Church was established among them (vs. 14-17). Peter, however, had to expose and rebuke the false and carnal faith of Simon before he and John returned to Jerusalem (vs. 18-25).

2. The Further Work of Philip (8:26-40). Another illustration of the way the Gospel was spreading is contained in the beautiful story of Philip's interview with the Ethiopian eunuch on the desert road to Gaza. Philip had been sent down there by

an angel of the Lord, and he met a high official of the queen of Ethiopia, who had been worshipping in Jerusalem and was on his way back toward Egypt. The incident shows how the early believers saw Christ in the Old Testament Scriptures. Philip continued to evangelize the coast district of Palestine from there up to Cæsarea, where he seems to have settled afterwards (21:8).

3. The Conversion of Saul of Tarsus (9:1-30). In the midst of his persecution of the disciples of Christ, the chief persecutor himself was converted to Christianity by a supernatural intervention of the Lord Himself. The importance of this event is shown by its being recorded three times in the book—not only here in the course of the author's narrative, but also in two of Paul's speeches (chs. 22 and 26).

Saul secured a commission from the high priest to go to Damascus and arrest any that were of "the Way" (vs. 1-2). This was the primitive description of the Christian faith (19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22). As he was nearing the city he was smitten to the earth by a heavenly light which blinded him, and he heard the voice of Jesus speaking directly to him: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" "Who art thou, Lord?" he asked; and the reply came: "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest". He was led into the city and remained for three days without sight under the overpowering effect of the vision, neither eating nor drinking (vs. 3-9). Then a disciple of Damascus, named Ananias but otherwise unknown, was used of the Lord to lead him into the light and receive him into the Church (vs. 10-19).

Saul began at once to preach in the synagogues of Damascus, to the amazement of all who heard him, proclaiming Jesus to be the Son of God and proving Him to be the Messiah. A plot of the Jews against his life was discovered, and the disciples helped him to escape from the city (vs. 20-25; 2 Cor. 11:32-33). When he came to Jerusalem the disciples there were afraid of him at first; but Barnabas introduced him to the Apostles, and told them of the manner of his conversion, which had taken place three years before (Gal. 1:18). He carried on his testimony among the Grecian Jews of the city till his life was in danger again. Then the brethren took him down to Cæsarea and sent him on to Tarsus (vs. 26-30).

4. Peter's Work in Judea (9:31-43). In the meantime the persecution of the Christians seems to have subsided when no longer led by Saul, and the Church throughout Palestine was enjoying a time of peace and growth (v. 31). Peter made a tour of visitation among the believers in the maritime district of Judea. In the course of it he healed Aeneas of the palsy at Lydda (vs. 32-35), and raised Dorcas to life at Joppa (vs. 36-43). These miracles resulted in many turning to the Lord throughout the region. The story of Dorcas, with its vivid details, illustrates the place and influence of women in the early Church. It also reveals Luke's sympathy for womanhood, and especially for widows. This is manifested both in his Gospel and in the Acts.

THE EXTENSION OF THE GOSPEL TO THE GENTILES
(Chs. 10—12)

While Peter was at Joppa, another important step was taken in the development of the Church, which resulted in the reception of the first Gentile convert. The story shows how the Divine initiative prepared for it on both sides—in the heart of the devout Gentile and in the mind of the Jewish Apostle. The brethren in Jerusalem approved of Peter's action when he reported the matter to them, and the narrative goes on to tell of the way that the Gospel was preached in Antioch to Gentiles outside the limits of Judaism, and how a Christian church was established in that great Greek city.

1. The Conversion of Cornelius (Ch. 10). Cornelius was an army officer in the Roman headquarters at Cæsarea, who had learned to believe in God and worship Him. He was a representative of those God-fearing Gentiles who were attracted by the worship of the Jewish synagogue, but did not become proselytes and submit to the ceremonial law. He received an angelic message which commended his devout life and instructed him to send to Joppa for Simon Peter (vs. 1-8). In the meantime Peter was being prepared on his part by a vision that he saw in a trance while at prayer on the house-top, which showed him that the ceremonial distinction between the clean and the unclean was now abolished (vs. 9-16). While he was wondering what the vision might mean, the messengers of Cornelius arrived. Peter received them, and next day went with them (vs. 17-23).

When Peter arrived in Cæsarea, he found Cornelius waiting for him, with a company of his rela-

tives and friends whom he had gathered in his house. Peter told them why he had come, and Cornelius told him why he had sent for him (vs. 24-33). Peter then began to address them. He saw now that "God is no respecter of persons"; that is, He has no longer a chosen people whom He favours more than others: "but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him" (vs. 34-35). Peter did not mean that such a man was thereby saved, but that he was in an acceptable state for receiving the Gospel. Hitherto it was thought that the Gospel of Christ was only for the Jews; now Peter had come to see that it was for devout and God-fearing Gentiles as well. This is not the whole truth, of course, but Peter was dealing only with the case before him.

He then went on to proclaim the story of Jesus Christ, dwelling on His miraculous ministry, His crucifixion, and His resurrection. He closed by declaring that He "is ordained of God to be the Judge of the living and the dead", and that "everyone that believeth in him shall receive remission of sins" (vs. 36-43). While Peter was yet speaking the Holy Spirit fell upon the assembled company, with manifestations similar to those of Pentecost. Peter and the Jewish disciples whom he had brought with him from Joppa saw that God had poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit on Gentile believers just as He had done on Jewish believers; and at Peter's suggestion they were baptized, and thus received into the Christian Church (vs. 44-48).

2. Peter's Report of the Case (11:1-18). When Peter returned to Jerusalem he was challenged by believing Jews of the legalist type for his fellow-

ship with "men uncircumcised" (vs. 1-3). He then proceeded to give a full report of the matter to the Apostles and the members of the church (vs. 4-14). After relating all the circumstances that led him to the house of Cornelius, he said that when he began to speak "the Holy Spirit fell on them, even as on us at the beginning"; and he went on to declare that since God had given the same gift to Gentiles as to Jews when they believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was he, that he could withstand God? His hearers were silenced, and praised God for granting salvation to the Gentiles (vs. 15-18).

3. The Church Established in Antioch (11:19-30). This passage takes up the story of the spread of the Gospel begun in 8:4, and carries it beyond Palestine. The disciples who had been scattered into countries outside Palestine during the persecution proclaimed the Gospel wherever they went, but only to Jews. But some of those who came to Antioch preached to pagan Greeks as well, with the result that great numbers of them believed and turned to the Lord (vs. 19-21).

When the church in Jerusalem heard of it they sent Barnabas, a man of wide sympathies, on a tour of visitation as far as Antioch. When he came and found a genuine work of grace going on he was glad, and encouraged the new believers in their devotion to the Lord. He fetched Saul from Tarsus to help in the work; and the two men remained with the church in Antioch for a year. It was there that the name "Christians" was first used to distinguish the disciples. Given as a nick-name to begin with, it was gradually adopted as a title of honour (vs. 22-26).

During a famine in the reign of Claudius, which occurred in A.D. 45-46, and of which they had been warned beforehand by prophets from Jerusalem, the disciples in Antioch sent help of their own accord to their afflicted brethren in Judea, and thus proved that the Gentile church in Antioch possessed the same spirit of unselfish love that was first manifested in the Jewish church in Jerusalem. This help was taken to the elders in Judea by Barnabas and Saul (vs. 27-30).

4. The Persecution of the Church in Jerusalem (Ch. 12). Hitherto persecution had come from the religious leaders of Israel. The persecution by Herod Agrippa I, who was king of all Palestine from A.D. 41 to 44, was the first that came from the civil authorities. It was directed against the Christian leaders, and occurred at the time of the Passover. The Apostle James was put to death, the first of the Twelve to be martyred. When Herod found it pleased the Jews, he proceeded against Peter also (vs. 1-4).

In answer to the earnest prayers of the church, Peter was delivered from prison during the night by an angel of the Lord (vs. 5-11). He made his way to the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark, where many were praying. He told them of his miraculous deliverance, and asked them to report the matter to James the Lord's brother, who by this time seems to have become the chief pastor of the church.

The whole incident gives an interesting and illuminating glimpse of early church life in Jerusalem (vs. 12-19). Soon afterwards Herod met his death at Cæsarea, smitten by the hand of God for accept-

ing divine acclaim from the people at a state function (vs. 20-23). In spite of all opposition the Gospel continued to spread and the Church to grow. Meanwhile Barnabas and Saul returned to Antioch from their mission in Jerusalem, taking with them John Mark (vs. 24-25).

THE FIRST GENTILE MISSION

(Chs. 13—14)

The narrative now turns to the church at Antioch in order to take up the story of the evangelization of the Gentile world, which was carried on from that centre. This theme occupies the rest of the book. Barnabas and Saul were sent out on the first missionary enterprise of the Christian Church. These chapters contain the story of their mission.

1. The Origin of the Mission (13:1-4). It was undertaken under the leadership of the Holy Spirit exercised through the corporate fellowship of a group of preachers and teachers in the church at Antioch. As they waited on the Lord with fasting and prayer, seeking His mind on the subject of evangelizing, the Holy Spirit led them to a unanimous conviction that Barnabas and Saul should be set apart for this work. Accordingly, with further prayer and fasting, these two men were solemnly dedicated by the church. Assured of the leading of the Holy Spirit in their mission, they went down to the port of Antioch and sailed for Cyprus, taking John Mark as their assistant.

2. The Gospel in Cyprus (13:5-12). The plan followed by the missionaries was to preach first in the synagogues of the Jews. They went through

the island in this way to Paphos, the seat of the Roman governor. Here occurred their first conflict with the demonic power of the heathen world. They met it in the person of a renegade Jew who was practising sorcery. He opposed the missionaries in the presence of the Roman governor Sergius Paulus, who had sent for them to hear their message. Paul now came to the front as the real leader of the party, and he is called by the new name from this point onward. He at once denounced the false prophet and called down a divine judgment of temporary blindness upon him. All this resulted in the conversion of the governor to the faith.

3. In Antioch of Pisidia (13:13-52). When Paul and Barnabas crossed to the mainland of Asia Minor, John Mark left them and went home to Jerusalem. The reason is not stated, but it was evidently not to Mark's credit (15:38). The two missionaries went up into the highlands of the interior as far as Antioch, a city of Pisidia, which was a district in the southern part of the Roman province of Galatia. As their custom was, they attended the Jewish synagogue on the Sabbath day, and the rulers of the synagogue gave the visiting Jews an opportunity to speak to the people (vs. 13-15).

The address which Paul gave on this occasion is reported at length. He traced the dealings of God with Israel from their deliverance out of Egypt to the reign of David (vs. 16-22). Then he declared that of David's seed God had raised up a Saviour in the person of Jesus, whose coming John the Baptist had proclaimed beforehand (vs. 23-25). The Apostle went on to appeal to his Jewish hearers and the

God-fearing Gentiles among them. The rulers in Jerusalem, in their ignorance of the prophecies, had fulfilled them by condemning Him. Without finding any ground for putting Him to death, they asked Pilate to crucify Him. When He was laid in the tomb, God raised Him up from the dead, and He was seen for many days by His Galilean followers, who were now His witnesses (vs. 26-31).

Paul then proceeded to enlarge upon the fact that Jesus was raised from the dead never to die again, quoting several Old Testament passages to confirm this. On the ground of this fact he proclaimed the Gospel—through this Jesus, forgiveness of sins, and such justification as the Law of Moses could not give, may be had by all who believe (vs. 32-39). He closed with a warning from the Prophets about the peril of despising the work of God (vs. 40-41).

This address made a deep impression, and the people besought Paul and Barnabas to repeat the message on the next Sabbath. Some of them, both Jews and proselytes, showed signs of faith, and the missionaries urged them "to continue in the grace of God" (vs. 42-43).

On the next Sabbath a great throng gathered to hear them, and this roused the prejudice of the Jews, who now proceeded to oppose the Gospel. Paul and Barnabas then deliberately pronounced the divine judgment. It was necessary to proclaim the Word of God to the Jews first, but they had refused it and thus showed themselves unworthy of it. The missionaries would now turn to the Gentiles and offer it to them, for it was God's purpose, as revealed in Isa. 49:6, that this salvation should be for all the world. The Gentiles then heard the news with gladness. "As many as were ordained to eternal life

believed"; that is, as many as were disposed for it and fell in with the divine order regarding it. The reference is not to a decree of God ordaining the result, but to the preparation of heart in those that believed (vs. 44-48).

The Gospel began to spread throughout the whole region. But the Jews stirred up a persecution against Paul and Barnabas through the influential Gentile women who attended the synagogue and the leading men of the city, and had them driven out. They departed for Iconium, about eighty miles to the south-east, leaving behind a group of disciples rejoicing in their new life, with the presence of the Holy Spirit in their midst (vs. 49-52).

4. Evangelizing South Galatia (14:1-20). The experience of Antioch was repeated in Iconium. The missionaries preached in the synagogue, with the result that many Jews and Greeks believed; but the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles against them. Paul and Barnabas remained there a considerable time, their preaching being accompanied by miraculous signs confirming the truth of the Gospel (vs. 1-3). The city was divided over them; and finally, when they were about to be mobbed, they went on into Lycaonia, another district of South Galatia, which contained the cities of Lystra and Derbe; and they proceeded to evangelize that region (vs. 4-7).

At Lystra Paul healed a man who had been a cripple from his birth; and the pagan people, taking the two Apostles for gods come down to earth in the form of men, got ready to offer sacrifice to them (vs. 8-13). The names of the deities which the people applied to Barnabas and Paul throw light on

the personal appearance of the two men, for Jupiter was supposed to have a sedate and imposing appearance as the father of the gods, while Mercury was the active messenger of the gods and spoke for them.

When the missionaries became aware of it, they rushed in among the people with their garments rent in grief and dismay, and declared themselves to be only men. They turned the pagan people from their purpose by telling them of "a living God", who created the world, and who left the nations to walk in their own ways but showed His goodness in providing food for them (vs. 14-18). But the Jews from Antioch and Iconium succeeded in turning the friendliness of the heathen people into hostility. Paul was stoned and dragged out of the city, and left for dead. But he rose up and next day went with Barnabas on to Derbe (vs. 19-20).

5. The Return Journey (14:21-28). Although Derbe was within easy reach of Tarsus, Paul's old home, yet the Apostles turned back when they had established a church there, and re-visited their converts in the other cities where they had been, confirming the faith of the disciples, telling them that "through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God", and appointing elders in each church (vs. 21-24). They went back by sea to Antioch, to the church that had sent them out, without visiting Cyprus again. When they arrived they gave a report of their mission, telling what God had wrought through them, and showing how He had made salvation by faith free to the Gentiles. After that they remained some little time with the church in Antioch (vs. 25-28).

This account of the first Gentile mission, which probably covered about two years, showed the methods that Paul followed in his evangelization of the Gentile world. He aimed at the cities and large centres of population along the main highways. He offered the Gospel first to the Jews in the synagogues, proving from their own Scriptures that Jesus was the promised Messiah. But everywhere the Jews as a people showed the same implacable hostility when they found the Gentiles sharing the Gospel. While some accepted it, the mass of the Jews refused it, and stirred up a bitter persecution against the missionaries. The heathen were usually friendly, and their friendship was turned into hostility only through Jewish instigation. The missionaries organized their converts into churches under the care of elders, and left them to evangelize their own districts. The churches were expected to be indigenous and self-supporting.

THE FIRST CHRISTIAN COUNCIL

(Ch. 15)

There was a party in the church at Jerusalem, composed mainly of converts from the Pharisees, who did not agree with the free offer of the Gospel to the Gentiles. Some of them came down to Antioch and opposed the methods of Paul and Barnabas. This was the occasion of the first Christian council, the story of which is recorded in this chapter.

1. The Question at Issue (vs. 1-5). The Judaizers taught that salvation was limited to those who conformed to the ceremonial law, and that Gentiles should be circumcised before they could be saved.

This opposition to Paul and Barnabas, who stood for the liberty of the Gospel and salvation by faith in Christ alone, caused great dissension in the church at Antioch. The question was referred to the Apostles and elders in Jerusalem, and a deputation was sent up with Paul and Barnabas to confer with them about it. On their way the two missionaries told the story of the conversion of the Gentiles to the churches in the districts through which they passed. When they arrived in Jerusalem they told the story to the whole church there.

2. The Question Considered (vs. 6-21). When the Apostles and elders met to consider the matter, all the facts regarding it were first related. Peter told how God had chosen him as the first to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles, and had confirmed their faith by giving them the Holy Spirit, making no distinction between Gentile and Jewish believers; and he added an appeal to put no additional burden on the disciples (vs. 6-11). Paul and Barnabas then rehearsed the story of what God had wrought through them among the Gentiles (v. 12). Finally James, who seems to have presided over the council, summed up the case, stating that the preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles, which God had used Simon Peter to begin, was in accordance with His purpose as declared in the Prophets.

In support of this James quoted Amos 9:11-12, where the Lord's promise to restore the broken down house of David, which was fulfilled in the birth of Jesus Christ in the family of David, is followed by its purpose: "that the residue of men may seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called" (vs. 13-18). A Saviour was to be raised

up in the house of David for all men, the Gentiles as well as the Jews. James' quotation is a free rendering of the original passage. The phrase, "after these things", does not mean, after the Gospel has been preached to the Gentiles. It is James' paraphrase of Amos' phrase, "in that day", and refers to the day of the Messiah, the age of salvation. He then gave his judgment, that they should not impose the ceremonial law upon Gentile believers, but enjoin them to abstain from the sins and pollutions of their former heathenism and from eating things that would offend their Jewish brethren (vs. 19-21).

3. The Question Settled (vs. 22-34). It was decided to send a chosen deputation back with Paul and Barnabas, with a letter of greeting to the Gentile brethren containing the judgment of the council. The letter shows that the judgment was reached by arriving at unanimity, and not by the vote of a majority. It was therefore regarded as the mind of the Holy Spirit: "It seemed good to us, having come to one accord" (v. 25); "it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us" (v. 28). The letter was received with joy in the church of Antioch; and the deputies from Jerusalem, Judas and Silas, being prophets themselves, gave messages of comfort and exhortation.

4. Preparing for Another Mission (vs. 35-41). After teaching and preaching for some time in Antioch, Paul suggested to Barnabas that they revisit the churches which they had founded on their former mission. Barnabas wished to take John Mark, but Paul thought it unwise to take one who had failed them before. The contention between the

two men resulted in their separation. But it was over-ruled, so that two missions went out instead of one. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus. Paul chose Silas and set out, with the prayers of the church, on his second missionary journey. Here we see the very strength of Barnabas' character becoming a source of weakness when not balanced by good judgment. Paul was the wiser leader when the interests of the Church as a whole were involved, and apparently the church in Antioch sided with him. Later on Paul and Barnabas were reconciled, and Mark was restored to Paul's full confidence (Col. 4: 10; Philemon 24; 2 Tim. 4:11).

PAUL'S EUROPEAN MISSION (Chs. 16—18)

The Church had now been established and its character determined. Jews and Gentiles had been brought into one body, united by the common possession of the Holy Spirit. It only remained to tell how this body spread abroad. It came to its full strength, not among the Jews in Jerusalem, but among the Gentiles in Antioch. Peter has been mentioned for the last time, and the Jewish church now recedes out of view. Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles, occupies the whole field from this time on. The story of his second missionary journey in these chapters tells how he carried the Gospel into Europe, and shows how the Church went on advancing in triumphant conflict with heathenism.

1. Revisiting the Churches in Galatia (16:1-10). Paul and his companion travelled from Antioch through Syria and Cilicia into southern Galatia, revisiting the churches on their way, confirming them

in the faith, and delivering the decrees of the council of Jerusalem. At Lystra Paul chose young Timothy to be his companion and fellow-worker. He was the son of a Jewish mother and a Gentile father, and was held in high regard by the churches of the district (vs. 1-5). He had been converted during Paul's first missionary journey, for the Apostle calls him his "true child in the faith" (1 Tim. 1:2), and he had been brought up in a pious family (2 Tim. 1:5). The story of the journey through Asia Minor to Troas shows that Paul recognized and followed the guidance of the Holy Spirit, though we are not told how this was manifested to him (vs. 6-8). At Troas he had the vision that led the missionary party to cross over into Europe (vs. 9-10).

At this point the writer begins to use the first personal pronoun. He drops it when the missionaries leave Philippi (17:1), and continues in the third person till Paul arrives at Philippi again on the return journey of his third mission several years later (20:5). Then he resumes the first person and continues it to the end of the book. This may mean that Luke joined Paul first at Troas on the present mission, remained with the new church at Philippi till the Apostle returned to visit it on his next mission, and then joined Paul again and became his constant companion afterwards. It is just as likely, however, that Luke was with Paul from the very beginning as his medical attendant and was an eyewitness of all his missionary work, and that, while usually writing with a detached attitude, he shows his sympathetic reaction at points of crisis and special importance in the story by re-calling his own participation in what he is recording.

2. Founding the Church in Philippi (16:11-40). The city of Philippi was "a colony" of Rome; that is, it was governed by Roman law on the plan of Rome itself. It had no synagogue, but there was a "place of prayer" outside the city where Jews and God-fearing Gentiles worshipped on the Sabbath day. The missionaries went and spoke to the women that were gathered there (vs. 11-13). As a result Lydia, a devout proselyte, who was an agent for the purple goods of Thyatira, was led into the light of the Gospel as Paul explained it, and she and her household were baptized. It is evidence of her conversion that she constrained Paul and his company to accept her hospitality and make her house their headquarters. She was evidently a woman of means with a home of considerable size (vs. 11-15).

Paul cured a demonized girl one day (vs. 16-18); and her masters, who could make no more gain out of her, dragged Paul and Silas before the magistrates and charged them with disturbing the city. The missionaries were beaten, cast into prison, and put in the stocks (vs. 19-24). There they were praying and praising God at midnight, when an earthquake opened the prison doors and released the prisoners. Seeing this the jailer was about to kill himself, when Paul intervened, calling out that all the prisoners were still there (vs. 25-28).

Then his attitude toward Paul and Silas completely changed. He took them into his house and asked how to be saved. The result was that he and his household were baptized. The fruits of his conversion were manifest in his act of kindness to the missionaries (vs. 29-34). The next day, when the magistrates sent officers to have the missionaries released, Paul told them that their punishment had

been illegal because they were Roman citizens, and required the magistrates to set right the wrong by coming themselves to release them. This sobered the Roman magistrates, who, fearing the consequences to themselves, came and besought them to leave the city (vs. 35-40).

3. In Thessalonica and Berea (17:1-15). Passing through the smaller towns, Paul and Silas went on to the large city of Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. There Paul preached Christ on three successive Sabbath days, following his usual method of showing from the Old Testament Scriptures that Jesus was the promised Messiah. Some Jews believed and threw in their lot with Paul and Silas; and so did a large number of the God-fearing Greeks and a considerable number of the chief women (vs. 1-4).

But the Jews stirred up a riot by inciting some of the rabble of the city to attack the home of Jason, where the missionaries were staying. When they could not find them, they dragged Jason himself before the rulers of the city, crying out that he had received into his house "these that have turned the world upside down", and who, they insinuated, were preaching treason. The rulers evidently did not find the missionaries guilty, but they took security from Jason for the good conduct of his guests (vs. 5-9).

The brethren at once sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea. There they found the Jews "more noble than those in Thessalonica", for they received the word with a ready mind and tested its truth by the Scriptures. The result was that many of the Jews believed, and also many Greeks of high standing, both men and women (vs. 10-12). But

the Jews showed their persistent hostility as a people to the Gospel by coming from Thessaonica and stirring up trouble. Then the brethren sent Paul away while Silas and Timothy remained. The Apostle was taken to Athens, and from there he sent back word for Silas and Timothy to join him with all speed (vs. 13-15).

4. Preaching in Athens (17:16-34). While Paul waited in Athens his spirit was stirred by the sight of the idols that filled the city. He reasoned in the synagogue on the Sabbath days and in the market place on other days, preaching Jesus and the Resurrection. Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers, the prevailing schools of the time, came across him and brought him to Mars' Hill, the meeting-place of the Areopagus or court of Athens, to hear what this novel teaching of his meant (vs. 16-21).

Paul began by addressing the Athenians in the style of their own orators: "Ye men of Athens". He noticed as he passed through their city that they were "very religious": they had so many objects of worship. Among these he found one altar erected "To an unknown god". It was the God whom they worshipped without knowing Him that he would set forth unto them (vs. 22-23). Then he went on to sketch natural theology for his cultured audience. The Creator of the world dwells not in temples made by man and needs not the service of man, for He Himself is the source of all life. He made all nations of one race, and set them in their appointed times and places, that they might seek after Him and find Him, though He is not far from us. "In him we live, and move", declared Paul, "and have our being";

and he quoted similar words from two of their own poets (vs. 24-28).

Therefore we ought not to think that the Godhead is like anything that can be made by the art or device of man. He has overlooked this ignorance in the past, but now He calls men everywhere to repent, for He has appointed a day when He will judge the world by a Man whom He has raised from the dead (vs. 29-31). When Paul spoke of the resurrection of the dead, some of his hearers mocked; but others expressed a wish to hear him again. Apparently no church was formed in Athens, but Paul's work was not fruitless, for he left a few believers there, one of whom was a member of the Areopagus (vs. 32-34).

5. Establishing the Church in Corinth (18:1-17). When Paul came to Corinth, he worked at his trade as a tentmaker in the house of Aquila and Priscilla, who had recently come from Rome because the Emperor had banished the Jews from the capital. Every Sabbath day he bore witness to Christ in the synagogue (vs. 1-4). When Silas and Timothy joined him, he became still more zealous in his testimony to the Jews. When they opposed him and railed at the Gospel, he delivered himself of his responsibility for them and turned to the Gentiles, teaching in the home of a certain Titus Justus close to the synagogue (vs. 5-7). Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed and many of the Corinthians besides. Paul was encouraged by a vision of the Lord in the night, and remained a year and a half among them (vs. 8-11).

When Gallio was made governor of Achaia (A.D. 52), the Jews of Corinth brought Paul before him

on the charge of teaching an illegal religion. Paul was about to answer, but Gallio dismissed the charge as not being a criminal matter, and drove the Jews from his judgment-seat. The mob of the city then turned against the Jews, and attacked Sosthenes, who had succeeded Crispus as the ruler of the synagogue. Gallio took no notice of the affair, showing that he thought the Jews were getting what they deserved (vs. 12-17).

6. Subsequent Events (18:18-28). Paul remained in Corinth for some time after this, and then set sail for Syria on his return journey. Priscilla and Aquila went with him as far as Ephesus. There he spoke to the Jews in the synagogue, and when asked to remain longer, he promised to return if it were God's will (vs. 18-21). Landing at Cæsarea, he went up to greet the church in Jerusalem, and then went on to Antioch. There he remained for some time before setting out on another journey (vs. 22-23).

In the meantime an Alexandrian Jew named Apollos, a man of culture, well versed in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. He had a zealous spirit and began to speak in the synagogue, teaching about Jesus, but knowing only John's baptism of repentance. Priscilla and Aquila taught him more fully, telling him, no doubt, of the exaltation of Jesus as the Christ and the subsequent coming of the Holy Spirit. When Apollos went over to Achaia, the brethren commended him to the disciples there. He greatly helped the church in Corinth by publicly proving to the Jews from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ (vs. 24-28).

PAUL'S EPHESIAN MISSION
(Chs. 19—20)

The headquarters of Paul's work during what is usually called his third missionary journey were at Ephesus. The church was established in that city, and the whole surrounding country, the Roman province of Asia, was evangelized during his three years' stay there. After that he made a short visit to Greece, and then set his face toward Jerusalem.

1. Establishing the Church in Ephesus (Ch. 19). Paul reached Ephesus, in fulfilment of his promise to return, by going overland and visiting the churches on the way (18:20-23). He found some twelve disciples there who had received only John's baptism of repentance, and had not heard of the Pentecostal gift of the Holy Spirit. They had probably been influenced by the teaching of Apollos before Apollos himself was led into the light. Paul instructed them more fully, and they were baptized "into the name of the Lord Jesus", having now come to believe in Jesus as Lord (vs. 1-7). The representative nature of what happened on this occasion is seen in its similarity to the case of the Samaritans (8:15-17).

Paul taught in the synagogue for three months, and then the usual Jewish opposition to "the Way" forced him to leave it. After that he taught daily for two years in the school of Tyrannus, one of the public halls used by teachers of philosophy. From this centre he carried on a ministry of healing as well as teaching, and the Gospel spread throughout the whole province of Asia (vs. 8-12). The discomfiture of the Jewish exorcists, who tried to imitate Paul in casting out demons, became widely known

and produced a feeling of awe regarding the name of the Lord Jesus. Many who practised magical arts burned their books in a great public bonfire. "So mightily grew the word of the Lord and prevailed" (vs. 13-20). The price of the books would be nearly ten thousand dollars in our money.

Paul now made some far-reaching plans. He intended to visit the churches that he had founded in Europe, and he sent two of his companions ahead of him. He would then go to Jerusalem, and afterwards carry out his desire to see Rome (vs. 21-22). His purpose in the meantime was to gather a contribution from the Gentile Christians for the relief of the poor in the mother-church. This would be a manifest demonstration of the spirit of love which bound all Christians, both Jews and Gentiles, into one body.

About that time a riot occurred in Ephesus, stirred up by the silversmiths under Demetrius, whose business of making silver shrines of Diana, the goddess of the Ephesians, was being affected by the spread of the Gospel (vs. 23-28). The people of the city seized two of Paul's companions and rushed into the theatre. Paul would have gone in to speak to them, but was dissuaded by the disciples and by his friends among the Roman officials. The story is told with great vividness. We are shown the characteristic behaviour of the many-headed mob, moved by passion and prejudice, and the wisdom and tactfulness of the town-clerk in appeasing the multitude and finally dismissing the assembly (vs. 29-41). This incident illustrates the fact that the Roman officials were usually friendly to Paul. They did not oppose the Gospel in its early days. Opposition came first from the Jews.

2. Visiting Greece Again (20:1-16). This riot hastened Paul's departure from Ephesus. He went through Macedonia, visiting the churches there, and then spent three months in Corinth. A Jewish plot caused him to change his plan for sailing to Syria, and he returned through Macedonia (vs. 1-3). The men that are mentioned as Paul's travelling companions from the various churches were deputies appointed in connection with the collection that was being made for the church in Jerusalem. This is inferred from Paul's letters to the Corinthians, the first of which was written before Paul left Ephesus and the second from some place in Macedonia on his way to Corinth (1 Cor. 16:1-4; 2 Cor. 9:1-2). The Passover was already past when he sailed from Philippi for Troas (vs. 4-6). Luke resumes the first personal pronoun at this point and continues it to the end of the book.

While at Troas, where he stayed a week, Paul spoke to the disciples and observed the Lord's Supper with them at a gathering which lasted all through the night. During the meeting he raised to life a young man who had fallen down from a window. The story gives us a glimpse of the fellowship of a Christian group in a heathen town (vs. 7-12). Then the party took a coasting vessel down past Ephesus to Miletus, for Paul was hastening to reach Jerusalem by the day of Pentecost (vs. 13-16).

3. Addressing the Elders of Ephesus (20:17-38). Having sent for them to come down to Miletus, he gave them a farewell address of great earnestness and tenderness. He reminded them of his ministry among them in proclaiming the Gospel to Jew

and Gentile alike (vs. 17-21). He was now going to Jerusalem in the face of tribulation that awaited him, intent on finishing the ministry which he had received from the Lord, and they should see his face no more (vs. 22-25). He appealed to them to care for the flock over which the Holy Spirit had made them overseers, and warned them against false teachers, who, he declared, should arise among them after he was gone. He reminded them that for three years he had watched over every one with anxious care night and day (vs. 26-31).

Then the Apostle solemnly commended them to God and the word of His grace, which could "build them up and give them an inheritance among all them that are sanctified". He had not laboured for any remuneration, but had supported himself and his fellow-workers, thus giving them an example of helping the weak (vs. 32-35). The whole address breathes the fine Christian spirit of the Apostle—his earnestness and zeal, his courage and patience, his humility and self-sacrifice. The closing scene reveals the deep affection that existed between Paul and his converts (vs. 36-38).

THE ARREST IN JERUSALEM

(Chs. 21—23)

Paul's purpose in going to Jerusalem was to present the gifts of the Gentile Christians to the Jewish Christians there as a token of their love, and thus help to bind the whole Church together in unity. Luke amplifies his narrative from this point onward, showing his sense of the importance of what he is recording. The work of Paul was approaching a crisis.

1. **Journeying to Jerusalem (21:1-16).** Paul and his company continued their journey by sea to Tyre. Every stop on the way is carefully noted (vs. 1-3). At Tyre they found a group of Christians and remained with them several days. They urged Paul, through the Spirit, not to go to Jerusalem, and bade him a tender farewell when the ship continued its voyage (vs. 4-6). At Ptolemais, the modern Acre, they greeted the brethren, and stayed with them one day before going on by land to Cæsarea, where they abode for several days with Philip the evangelist and his four daughters (vs. 7-9).

While they were there, a prophet came from Judea and foretold that Paul would be arrested by the Jews in Jerusalem and delivered to the Gentiles. His friends besought him not to go up, but he refused to yield to their entreaties, and they submitted to God's will in the matter (vs. 10-14). Some of the disciples of Cæsarea accompanied Paul and his party to Jerusalem (vs. 15-16).

Every step of the journey from Macedonia is minutely traced in the narrative. The affectionate interest of the Christian community in the Apostle is manifested in every place. The warnings he received through the Spirit about what would happen to him in Jerusalem gave him an opportunity to turn aside from his course if he wished. The way in which the whole story is told goes to show that Paul had counted the cost.

2. **Arrested in the Temple (21:17-40).** Paul and his company were received gladly by the church in Jerusalem; and the Apostle reported to James and the elders what God had wrought among the Gentiles. They praised God when they heard of it, and

then they made a proposal to Paul intended to meet the prejudice of the Jewish believers who still clung to the Law and had heard false reports about him (vs. 17-22). They suggested that he associate himself with four men who were under a Nazirite vow, and undertake the expense of the sacrifices necessary in their case, in order to show publicly that he himself observed the Mosaic Law. To this Paul consented, and he showed himself in the Temple for the purpose (vs. 23-26).

The seven days required for the purification were almost ended, when some Jews from the province of Asia saw Paul in the Temple and raised a cry that he had defiled the holy place by bringing Greeks into it. They had seen an Ephesian with him in the city before that. This roused the Jewish mob to fury, and they dragged Paul out of the Temple precincts and were about to kill him, when the captain of the Roman garrison heard of it (vs. 27-31). Hurrying down with his soldiers from the fort which overlooked the Temple courts, he took Paul out of the hands of the Jews, had him bound with chains, and ordered him to be brought into the fort, while the violent crowd surged after him, crying out for his death (vs. 32-36).

Paul asked for a word with the captain, who was surprised to find that he could speak Greek and was not the notorious Egyptian rebel that he thought he was. Paul declared that he was a Jew of Tarsus, "a citizen of no mean city", and asked permission to speak to the people. When leave was given, he stood on the steps of the fort, and with his characteristic gesture began to speak to them in Hebrew (vs. 37-40).

3. Addressing the Jewish People (Ch. 22). When the crowd heard him speaking in their own tongue, they sobered into silence and listened quietly (vs. 1-2). He told them of his strict Jewish up-bringing and his zeal for the Law, and of his persecution of the Christians (vs. 3-5). Then he described how he saw a vision of the Lord Jesus at Damascus and was converted to the Christian faith (vs. 6-16). When he returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the Temple, the Lord appeared to him in a trance and told him to depart quickly out of the city, for they would not receive his testimony there, and added, "I will send thee forth far hence unto the Gentiles" (vs. 17-21).

As soon as Paul uttered that hated word, the fury of the Jewish mob broke out again. The captain had him brought into the fort, and was about to have him examined by scourging to know the cause of such an outcry against him, when Paul quietly asked the officer in charge of the soldiers if it were lawful to scourge a Roman citizen (vs. 22-25). The officer warned the captain, and an immediate change took place in his attitude towards his prisoner, especially when he found that Paul had inherited his Roman citizenship (vs. 26-29).

4. Before the Jewish Council (23:1-11). Next day the Roman captain summoned the Jewish Council to meet and brought his prisoner before them (22:30). Paul began courteously, but was interrupted by the high priest commanding him to be smitten on the mouth. Probably he had been roused to fury by Paul's first statement, which described a life that was very different from his own. Paul rebuked him at once for his violation of the law as a

judge, and then apologized for not having shown sufficient reverence to the office of the high priest (vs. 1-5). Though spoken with indignation, the Apostle's words were a prophecy, fulfilled some years later in the assassination of Ananias.

When Paul saw that the Council was composed of the two rival parties of Pharisees and Sadducees, he raised a division between them by declaring he was a Pharisee, and that the case against him turned on the question of the resurrection of the dead. The dissension became so great that the Roman soldiers had to rescue Paul from the Jewish Council (vs. 6-10). That night Paul received a message of assurance from the Lord: as he had borne witness at Jerusalem, so he should bear witness also at Rome (v. 11).

5. Taken to Cæsarea (23:12-35). The bitter and implacable nature of Jewish hostility to Paul is shown in the plot to kill him, made next day by a band of more than forty fanatical Jews, with the connivance of the religious leaders (vs. 12-15). Paul's nephew heard of the conspiracy, and came and told him of it. Paul had one of the officers take the young man to the chief captain and disclose to him the nature of the conspiracy (vs. 16-22). The Roman official immediately made arrangements to send Paul to Cæsarea before morning, under a strong guard of soldiers and horsemen, with a letter to Felix the Roman governor describing his case (vs. 23-30). They took him by night as far as Antipatris, more than half way. From there the footmen returned, while the horsemen went on with Paul to Cæsarea and presented him to the governor. Felix questioned Paul, and promised to hear his case when his accusers were come (vs. 31-35).

THE IMPRISONMENT IN CAESAREA

(Chs. 24—26)

This section covers a period of two years, in which there is little advance. It serves, however, to show how incurable was the hatred of the Jews for the Gospel, and how Paul was finally taken to Rome.

1. Paul and Felix (Ch. 24). Five days after Paul's arrival, the high priest and elders came down with a lawyer to plead their case before the governor. Tertullus the lawyer began by flattering Felix, and went on to accuse Paul of stirring up insurrection among the Jews of the world as a ring-leader of the sect of the Nazarenes, and of attempting to profane the Temple (vs. 1-9). When Tertullus had finished his charge, Felix gave a sign to Paul to speak.

The dignified courtesy with which the Apostle began his address is in contrast with the hypocritical flattery of Tertullus (vs. 10-11). He denied the charge of stirring up a crowd anywhere, but confessed himself a Christian, serving the God of his fathers, believing the Law and the Prophets, and looking forward, as his accusers themselves did, to the resurrection, and exercising himself in this faith with a good conscience toward God and man (vs. 12-16). He came bringing alms to his people, and they found him presenting offerings of purification in the Temple with no crowd or tumult. The Jews from Asia, who caused his arrest in the Temple, ought to have been here if they had anything against him. Let these elders say what wrong-doing was found in him before the Council, except that he stood up for the resurrection of the dead (vs. 17-21).

Seeing that no case had been made against Paul, Felix deferred judgment until Lysias the chief captain should come down. While Paul was kept a prisoner, he was given a certain amount of freedom, and his friends were allowed to minister to him (vs. 22-23). Felix, who had a Jewish wife, Drusilla, whom he had recently induced to desert her former husband, sent for Paul again and again to hear about the faith in Jesus Christ. His conscience was deeply moved by the Apostle; but he hoped for a bribe from him, and kept him a prisoner for two years, till he was succeeded in the office of governor by Festus (vs. 22-27).

2. Paul and Festus (Ch. 25). When in Jerusalem, Festus foiled a plot which the Jewish leaders had laid to kill Paul, by declining their request to have him brought to Jerusalem for trial (vs. 1-5). But when Paul was being tried before him in Cæsaræa, he sought to gain favour with the Jews by asking Paul if he was willing to be tried before him in Jerusalem (vs. 6-9). Then the Apostle, protesting his innocence of the charges against him, used his privilege as a Roman citizen and appealed to Cæsar's tribunal at Rome (vs. 10-12).

Soon afterwards King Agrippa, a son of Herod Agrippa I (12:1), and the last of the Herods, who reigned over a small state in north-east Palestine, came to pay his respects to Festus with his wife Bernice, who was a sister of Drusilla. The Roman governor laid Paul's case before the Jewish king (vs. 13-16). He told him that the Jews wanted Paul condemned, and yet brought no charge of wrongdoing against him, but only some question of their religion, "and of one Jesus, who was dead, whom

Paul affirmed to be alive". He himself was perplexed about these things, and Paul had appealed to Cæsar (vs. 17-21). Agrippa expressed a desire to hear Paul himself; and next day Festus had Paul brought in before a public gathering of high officials and notable citizens, where Agrippa and Bernice were present with great pomp. He then explained the case to Agrippa before them all (vs. 22-27).

3. Paul and Agrippa (Ch. 26). When invited by Agrippa to speak, Paul began his address with his characteristic gesture and his usual courteous approach (vs. 1-3). His manner of life from his youth as a Pharisee was known to all the Jews. He stood there accused by the Jews because of his hope of the promise of God, the hope of all the tribes of Israel, the resurrection of the dead (vs. 4-8). Then he told of his persecution of the followers of Jesus of Nazareth, and of the transcendent light that shone about him at midday on the way to Damascus (vs. 9-13). Jesus whom he had been persecuting called him to be His witness, and sent him to turn men to God that they might receive remission of sins through faith in Him (vs. 14-18). He was not disobedient to the heavenly vision; but, beginning in Damascus, he declared to Jews and to Gentiles that they should repent and turn to God. For this reason the Jews sought to kill him. With the help of God he had continued to that day proclaiming only what Moses and the Prophets had foretold, that through the suffering and resurrection of the Messiah light should be proclaimed both to the Jews and to the Gentiles (vs. 19-23).

This is one of the noblest and most dignified of Paul's defenses. It is marked by courtesy without

flattery and directness without rudeness. The Apostle addressed himself personally to Agrippa again and again. He revealed the central principle of his life to be obedience to the light and truth as he saw it (vs. 9, 19); and he brought his defense to a head as usual in a statement of the Gospel message.

Paul's words produced a deep impression on both Festus and Agrippa. Festus thought him mad; Agrippa tried to turn him aside with levity. Paul replied to both men with dignity and deep earnestness (vs. 24-29). When they withdrew and conferred together, Agrippa bore witness to Paul's innocence by remarking that he might have been set at liberty if he had not appealed to Cæsar (vs. 30-32).

THE JOURNEY TO ROME

(Chs. 27—28)

Because of his appeal as a Roman citizen from the Jews to the Emperor's tribunal, Paul must be sent to Rome. These chapters describe in graphic and minute detail the course of the long and perilous journey, and the arrival at last in Rome. In the person of the great Apostle, God's mercy was forsaking His ancient people who had rejected it, and was turning to the Gentile world. The Gospel which went out first from Jerusalem was to continue henceforth from Rome.

1. The Sea Voyage (27:1-26). Paul with some other prisoners was put in charge of a centurion, who first took a vessel sailing to the coast of Asia Minor, and then a ship of Alexandria sailing for Italy. They encountered bad weather off the coast

of Crete (vs. 1-8). Paul warned against proceeding further because of the lateness of the season, but the centurion, although he had treated Paul kindly, did not take his advice. They tried to reach a better harbour farther on (vs. 9-13). Very soon the ship was caught in a tempest, and had to give way and be driven before it. The story of the storm, which lasted fourteen days, is told with great vividness. It brings out the influence exerted upon the ship's company by the strong faith of the man of God (vs. 14-26).

2. The Shipwreck (27:27-44). Paul's influence continued to keep up the confidence of the ship's company through his steadfast faith in God. The centurion's respect and concern for Paul are also apparent in the story. The number of persons in the ship shows that it must have been a vessel of very large size (v. 37).

3. The Stay on Malta (28:1-10). The story emphasizes the natural kindness of the pagan inhabitants, and the courteous hospitality of Publius, the head man of the island (vs. 1-7). Paul healed the father of Publius of a fever by praying and laying his hands on him, and this resulted in many others coming to be cured and showing kindness to Paul and his companions (vs. 8-10).

4. From Malta to Rome (28:11-16). After three months on the island, they set sail on another ship of Alexandria, stopped at Syracuse and Rhegium, and finally landed at Puteoli, where they stayed seven days with the Christians whom they found there. The narrative shows how the interest deepened as the party approached the great capital of

the Empire. Every day is accounted for. As they drew near Rome, a group of Christians came out from the city to meet Paul on the Appian Way, and when he saw them, he "thanked God, and took courage". Having arrived in Rome, Paul was allowed to dwell in his own lodging with a soldier to guard him.

5. Paul in Rome (28:17-31). Three days after his arrival, the Apostle called together the principal Jews and reported his case to them. They were impressed by him and wished to get a full statement of his views, for everywhere the Christian sect was spoken against (vs. 17-22). On an appointed day, a large and representative group of the Jewish community came to him. He spent the whole day explaining the Gospel, showing that Jesus Christ was the fulfilment of the Law and the Prophets. But they disagreed among themselves, their general attitude being one of disbelief. Paul gave them a final warning, and declared that "this salvation of God" would be offered to the Gentiles, and they would hear (vs. 23-29).

The importance of this conference with the leaders of the Jewish community in Rome consists in its being the occasion of the rejection of the Messiah by the most representative Jews of the Dispersion. The Acts closes with the same judgment on Jewish unbelief as was pronounced in the Gospels (vs. 25-27; John 12:37-40). Paul remained for two years in Rome before his case was decided, preaching the Kingdom of God and proclaiming the Gospel of Christ without hindrance, to all who came to him (vs. 30-31).

Although the book seems to close abruptly, yet there is a tone of finality in the closing words. Luke uses the full title of the Saviour in his last sentence for the first and only time. He seems to realize that the theme of his whole narrative has come to its climax. Everywhere the Jews have been offered God's salvation first, and everywhere they have refused it. Israel is now to be definitely set aside, and henceforth the Church is to bear its own witness to the Kingdom of God and to the Lord Jesus Christ.

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THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH IN ACTS

The essential reality of Christianity as a new creation is seen in the nature of the Church as depicted in the Books of Acts. The Christian Church was not formed by the disciples of Jesus agreeing to unite in a voluntary association. It was brought into being by an act of God. Several marks of its Divine origin and nature are brought out in the narrative of the book.

The Holy Spirit had come to reside in its midst. When the Spirit was poured out upon the disciples on the Day of Pentecost, it was not simply a larger outpouring of an old blessing. What happened was something entirely new. It is true that the event was brought about by the same Divine Spirit who had been moving on the hearts of men in the old dispensation. But since then a new instrument had been prepared for Him to use—the perfect manhood of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit came now as the Spirit of the glorified Son of Man, in whose soul He had been residing and in whose life He had been living. He came to establish living and abiding rela-

tions between the disciples on earth and their risen Lord in Heaven. The Church was formed as the body of Christ (Eph. 1:24; 1 Cor. 12:27). It was the continuation, as it were, of the Incarnation.

The subsequent experiences of the disciples showed that an entirely new set of spiritual forces had come into operation. These were the powers of the Kingdom of Heaven. The new spiritual order, which was only "at hand" before, was now ready for men to enter. Those who believed had entered it at Pentecost by a new birth from above. A transcendent change had taken place in them. They found their lives charged with a sense of the spiritual presence of the Lord. He was among them again; and he was also in them. His life had become the spirit of their lives. The Holy Spirit had brought them a new kind of life, the eternal life whose quality is love, the life of Jesus Christ Himself.

There was also a new atmosphere about them, the atmosphere of the other world into which their Master had gone. They looked upon this present world from a new point of view. They belonged to a new order of being, whose seat and centre were in Heaven, and whose living springs were there in the glorified Person of their Lord. The new fellowship which they enjoyed on earth was due to their being now members of the Kingdom of Heaven.

The first effect produced upon the community around them was one of surprise and awe—"fear came upon every soul" (2:49). It was recognized that strange new powers, which were not of this world, were at work in the lives of the disciples of Christ and their first converts. The first Christian Church bore manifest marks of an immediate super-

natural origin. It had sprung into being by a demonstration of the power of God.

As the community became more accustomed to the presence of the Church in its midst, and more familiar with its characteristics, this first sense of awe passed away; and it was not long before a spirit of enmity took its place. The world came to recognize that the Church was something alien to it. As the gospel spread throughout the world, the Apostles taught their converts to expect opposition and persecution: "Through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God" (14:22). The Church and the world were two radically hostile systems.

The Christians in the Acts of the Apostles manifested a freedom of access to God that was not realized in Old Testament days. After Pentecost prayer assumed a new importance, as though it had entered a new field. There are some thirty different references to prayer in the Acts. When persecution threatened the Church, the disciples turned to God as naturally as children in trouble turn to a father (4:24). Prayer had become a real approach to God and real communion with Him.

It was not so in former days. Prayer in the Old Testament, though always a true expression of religious feeling, was associated with the local manifestation of God's presence in the tabernacle or the Temple. In those days God was not so near. His people could enter only into His antechamber. The congregation of Israel stood in the outer courts. But now the disciples of Christ found the inner sanctuary wide open. They realized at once that they had access to the presence-chamber of God through their crucified and risen Head. They had "boldness to enter into the holy place by the blood of Jesus" (Heb.

10:19). Thus it was that prayer became spontaneously, without the imposition of any new command, the true expression of the life of the Church and the real source of its power.

The Church had no outward organization to begin with. It was simply a new fellowship of a heavenly character. But it had power within itself to develop its own organization and to be self-propagating. The Holy Spirit residing in its midst was the secret of its corporate life. The presence of the Spirit was always recognized in the life of the Church (4:31; 5:3, 32; 9:31; 13:52). The mind of the Spirit was sought in its councils (15:28), the leadership of the Spirit in its work and activity (13:2-4; 16:6-7), and the supervision of the Spirit in the appointment of its pastors and elders (20:28). There are between fifty and sixty references to the Holy Spirit in the course of the narrative. The Third Person of the Trinity was now in the world, and was operating among men through the Church of Christ.

Herein consists the essential reality of Christianity and the fundamental difference between Israel and the Church. Israel was organized as a nation belonging to the order of the present world. It was developed under a system of law and worship imposed from without by the hand of man. The Church began as a new creation, existing in the midst of the present world, but belonging to the order of the spiritual world. It was to be organized and developed by an entirely new principle of life, which came from Heaven and was implanted within. It was to become "a habitation of God in the Spirit" (Eph. 2:22).

THE GOSPEL THE APOSTLES PREACHED

The original Christian Gospel, the message by which Christianity was established in the world, is found in the addresses of the Apostles in the Book of Acts. The Apostles of Christ did not set out to impose their Master's teaching upon the world; nor did they present Jesus as an example for other men to follow. Their message was of a nature altogether different. They were not propagating new ideas: they were proclaiming new facts. God had done something new: He had provided a Saviour for men. Through the death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, something transcendent had been accomplished, which removed the guilt of human sin and made a new kind of life possible to all men everywhere. The original Gospel was the witness the Apostles bore to this Divine event.

The first Gospel preacher was the Apostle Peter, and the first Christian sermon was delivered to the Jewish people on the Day of Pentecost (ch. 2). It proclaimed and proved the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus, whom they had crucified; and then it came to head in Peter's reply to the question of the convicted Jews: "Brethren, what shall we do?" (vs. 37-38). This reply may be summed up in two words: "Repent and surrender"—repent and turn from your old manner of life, and surrender in faith and trust to the crucified and living Christ. As a result, they should receive remission of sins and a new life should be given to them by the Holy Spirit.

Some days later Peter preached another sermon to the Jewish people (ch. 3). His theme was substantially the same as on the Day of Pentecost, the great Messianic transactions of the Cross and the

Resurrection. He dwelt more fully on the preparatory unfolding of God's redemptive purpose in the Old Testament; but he closed with the same appeal to repent and turn to Christ as the Saviour from sin (v. 26).

On two occasions Peter appeared before the Jewish Council, and each time he proclaimed the Gospel to the rulers in the same terms as he had proclaimed it to the people (4:10-12; 5:30-31). In both cases his theme was salvation from sin, and in each case this salvation was presented as the gift of God on no other ground than the death and exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Later on in the story of Acts, Peter was called to go to Cæsarea and preach the Gospel to Gentiles (ch. 10). His message was still the same. It was not a teacher, or an example, that Peter presented to Cornelius and his household, but a living Saviour, who had been dead but was now alive for evermore. He closed his address with the same appeal that he had made to the Jews (vs. 40-43).

We have no record of the preaching of any other member of the original Twelve; but as Peter was always their spokesman, there can be no doubt that his preaching represents the preaching of them all. They had but one message to give to the world, and it was entirely concerned with the redemption that Christ had accomplished. It is true that the Apostles instructed their converts in the teaching of Jesus (2:42), but there is no indication anywhere in the New Testament that they ever made any attempt to spread His teaching among the people of the world or propagate it outside the fellowship of the Church. Their one aim was to bring men and women to repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Apostle Paul presented the Gospel in the Gentile world in exactly the same way as Peter had presented it in Jerusalem. The most complete record that we have of any of his addresses is the sermon he delivered in the synagogue in Antioch of Pisidia (ch. 13). As he was speaking mainly to Jews on that occasion, he naturally made his approach through the Old Testament. He passed over entirely the teaching ministry of Jesus and brought his message to a head in the facts of His death and resurrection. Then he concluded by placing the Gospel message of salvation on the ground of these facts (vs. 38-39). When the Jews in that city rejected the Gospel, Paul turned to the Gentiles; and the record implies that there was no change in his message. It was "the word of God" which the Jews had refused that the Gentiles heard with gladness (v. 48).

Paul had obviously the same message for the Gentiles as he had for the Jews. His method of approach differed, of course, for the Gentiles had not the Law and knew not the Old Testament. But Paul could find a point of contact anywhere in the Gentile world. His superior education and intellectual training gave him an approach to Greek audiences which was beyond the original Apostles of the Lord. But his message was in no essential part different from theirs. It was not something Jesus had taught, but something He had done. Even in Athens, the centre of philosophical teaching, where he might have been expected to say something about what Jesus taught, Paul did not even refer to the fact that He had been a teacher at all. After bringing the one true God who created the world before his cultured audience, his address

moved straight forward to an appeal for repentance on the ground of the resurrection of Jesus (17:30-31).

The Gospel which the Apostles preached was something entirely new. It was unlike anything that the world had ever heard before. It was not another religion or another philosophy. Its supreme and unique aspect was its saving power. The Book of Acts reveals a conviction of the universal need of salvation underlying all the apostolic preaching. Peter's exhortation to the Jews on the Day of Pentecost was, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation" (2:40). To their rulers he declared that "neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved" (4:12). Cornelius sent for Peter to hear words whereby, he had been told, "thou shalt be saved, thou and all thy house" (11:14). Paul characterized his message to the Jews in Antioch of Pisidia as, "the word of this salvation" (13:26); and the appeal of the jailor in Philippi, which Paul was able to meet at once with the Gospel message, was, "What must I do to be saved?" (16:30).

These incidents also show that a sense of the need of salvation existed in the hearts of men as their reason for receiving the Gospel which the Apostles preached. When the depths of any human life are probed there is always found a restless sense of something wrong, a haunting sense of something missing. This is the evidence that the soul of man has lost the way to God, and that salvation is the one fundamental need of the whole human race. This need the Apostles met by going out into the lost world of their day and preaching salvation

by faith—the gift of Divine grace and not the attainment of human effort.

This message surprised the world; it was so radically different from the salvation proposed by the religions of the world and the philosophies of men. It was folly to the Greeks, and an offence to the Jews. But it was this unique feature of the Gospel that gave Christianity the headway it got in the world in that day. It could not have been devised or invented by man, and it was one of the most conclusive proofs of the reality of the Gospel message and the Divine origin of the Christian faith.

