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### Jesus Training for His Disciplines for Their Work

Harry DeQuinecy Smith

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JESUS' TRAINING OF HIS DISCIPLES  
FOR THEIR WORK

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Harry DeQuincey Smith, Jr.

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Paul M. B. Tucker

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## JESUS' TRAINING OF THE DISCIPLES FOR THEIR WORK

(Outline)

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## FOREWORD

The training of disciples was an important matter for our Lord when He was on this earth. George Duncan correctly observes:

Jesus as we see Him in the Gospels is more than a public preacher and teacher. An essential and significant element in His ministry is the calling and training of disciples.<sup>1</sup>

Jesus, of course, does resemble the Jewish rabbis in gathering a number of disciples around Him, discussing "questions of the hour," and teaching in the synagogue, says Duncan, however, "His message was not just a preparation for the Rule of God, but a proclamation of its advent." His aim was the "winning for Himself of a holy People." This was "part of the purpose of God from the foundation of the world." Jesus trained His disciples for this task. He trained them "not to proclaim the nearness of a coming Kingdom for which men must prepare, but to manifest the Rule of God as operative in human lives here and now." It is true that Jesus spoke to and taught many disciples in addition to the Twelve. "But His aim of winning for God a righteous People demands in the course of time that He should trust less to extensive than to intensive methods."<sup>2</sup>

Another writer, A. B. Bruce, expresses the opinion that when Jesus in His High-priestly prayer says, "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word,"<sup>3</sup> He indicates that the training He

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1. George S. Duncan, Jesus Son of Man, p. 209.

2. Ibid., pp. 209, 212, 213, 225.

3. John 17:6.

gave these men was the most important part of His earthly ministry. Since this was His object, Jesus had begun very early in His ministry to gather disciples. In order to give a true picture to posterity, they had to be eyewitnesses from the very beginning. "The mirrors must be finely polished that are designed to reflect the image of Christ!"<sup>4</sup>

Augustus Neander agrees that Jesus was greatly concerned with the training of the twelve disciples. He writes:

Since . . . Christ intended to leave no such fixed rule of doctrine for all ages, written by himself, it was the more necessary for him to select organs capable of transmitting to posterity a correct image of himself and his teaching.<sup>5</sup>

Neander also observes that these men must be capable of propagating "a true image of his person, his manifestation, his Spirit, and his truth." Of course all believers possess the Spirit and can "act as organs of the Holy Spirit testifying within them of the Redeemer" but the Twelve "could . . . testify of what they had seen and heard. This personal testimony of eye-witnesses is expressly distinguished by Christ (John, xv., 27) from the objective testimony of the Holy Spirit . . . ."<sup>6</sup>

Otto Schreiber feels that from the call to the close of His ministry, Jesus' labor was more a mission to His disciples than to His fellow-countrymen; the only known interruption of their training was the mission of the Twelve. Schreiber echoes Neander's sentiments when he avers of the disciples, "They were constantly being brought face to face in words and deeds with the great task of the Kingdom of God and its King."<sup>7</sup>

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4. Alexander Balmain Bruce, The Training of the Twelve, pp. 12, 13.

5. Augustus Neander, The Life of Christ, p. 101.

6. Ibid., pp. 101, 116, 117.

7. Otto L. Schreiber, The Lives of the Twelve Apostles of Jesus the Christ, pp. 45, 46.

Heinrich Ewald suggests that "the Community of his Friends," namely the twelve disciples, was to Jesus during the last year and a half of His ministry, "the main object of his earthly labours."<sup>8</sup> Ewald shows a keen insight into the Savior's concern for the training of these chosen men. He writes:

The Twelve were selected from the larger circle of disciples, and were intended to be received as no other disciples permanently into the nearest and closest intimacy with Jesus. It was to them he meant to communicate his whole spirit and cause it to flow forth upon them in its purest measure, as far as a living teacher is capable of doing this in the case of his closest disciples and friends. His purpose was to make the whole deep insight and calm assurance no less than the entire elevation of the invincible ardour and enthusiasm of his spirit the possession of these men; and the unwearied activity of his healing love he designed should become the sweet and blessed habit of their lives. And inasmuch as all this could be attained only by practice and personal essays, he sought to send them forth as soon as possible as partners in his own work, that they might learn to promote the kingdom of God both by preaching and teaching and by the power of active healing and assistance, and that they might become accustomed without his immediate presence to live and to labour just as if he himself were always with them . . . .<sup>9</sup>

All the above statements indicate that the Lord was much concerned about carefully training a select group of men whom He planned to use for a great service. This was of course not the only purpose of Christ's activity on earth. Otherwise He would have spent all of His time instructing the Twelve. On occasion Jesus would even set aside His teaching of the disciples to minister to the multitudes.<sup>10</sup> Yet the fact remains that the training of the Twelve was a major part in the plan of Christ's

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8. Heinrich Ewald, The History of Israel, vol. VI, The Life and Times of Christ, p. 417.

9. Ibid., pp. 299, 300.

10. When the Twelve returned from their preaching tour, Jesus withdrew with them, probably intending rest and further instruction for them, but when He arrived at a desired location a multitude already awaited Him. He had "compassion" on them, and for the time being set aside His previous plans (Mark 6:30-14.).

earthly labors. Ewald adds that even the service to the multitudes was included in the training, for in order to show the disciples how to minister to the people, Christ had to perform this ministration before their very eyes.<sup>11</sup>

A note on the methods Jesus used to achieve His desired result is in order. Duncan sums it up nicely. He observes that it was not Jesus' aim to surround Himself with a band of scholars; rather, He had a job for His men to do.

It was not to a life of study that He called them; it was to a life of consecrated action. "Fishermen were to become fishers of men, peasants were to be laborers in God's vineyard or God's harvest field. And Jesus was their Master not so much as a teacher of right doctrine, but rather as the master-craftsman whom they were to follow and imitate. Discipleship was not matriculation in a Rabbinical college but apprenticeship to the work of the Kingdom."<sup>12</sup> . . . Jesus has a work to accomplish in His disciples before He can accomplish anything effectual through them. They must be trained to know the Father as He Himself knows Him. The spiritual experience of the Son must reproduce itself in the lives of those whom the Son calls to be His own . . . Jesus is not leading His disciples to know certain truths about God, but to know God Himself; in their own lives, individually and as a fellowship,<sup>13</sup> they must experience the grace and power of God the Father . . . [This training proceeded by] constantly learning from the unspoken sermon of His daily life—His tenderness to children for example, and His unconquerable courage in the face of challenge and of danger. . . . There must have been abundant occasions, as when they were in some quiet retreat, or gathered together for a meal, when He gave them fuller instruction (dare we perhaps even say, more systematic instruction?) on the promises of God in the Sacred Books or the history of God's dealing with His

11. Ewald, *op. cit.*, p. 307.

12. T. W. Manson, *The Teaching of Jesus*, p. 239 f. Here it is argued that the Aramaic word which Jesus used for disciple was probably not *talmid* (pupil) but *scholya* (apprentice), quoted in Duncan, *op. cit.*, p. 210.

13. Jesus trained the disciples in a fellowship, or, expressed otherwise, to live as "Church." We see this fellowship at work in the Jerusalem Church. Cf. Duncan, *op. cit.*, pp. 223, 224.

people of Israel. . . . The word "mystery" or "secret" . . . implies . . . a principle of God's working which, left to themselves, men would never have realised [sic], but which, once they understand the nature of the God with whom they have to do, they grasp with clear perception and strong conviction. . . . Thus . . . we may say that in all His relations with His followers, and especially with the Twelve, Jesus is constantly opening their eyes to see how the new life into which He is leading them is by its very nature full of such mysteries,<sup>14</sup> just because the ways of God are so different from the ways of man.<sup>15</sup>

Duncan concludes his observations on Christ's methods of instructing by declaring that no amount of mere teaching would prepare the disciples for their job. The thing that did it was the imparting of God's spirit. Since the "most effective demonstration . . . of the truth and . . . power of the . . . gospel is to be found in the lives of those who in spirit and in truth are followers of Jesus," it is evident that what the disciples needed was the Holy Spirit, so that they could live a life evidencing that they were followers of Jesus.<sup>16</sup> It is well to bear in mind that the teachings which Jesus delivered to His disciples were at the same time channels of the Spirit.<sup>17</sup>

We have briefly noted the methods which Jesus used to carry out His important work. It will be the purpose of this paper to consider in detail the manner in which our Lord conducted the instruction and training of the twelve disciples. We shall see what things Jesus thought necessary for them to know, before He sent them out with the great final

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14. One such mystery is that the Son of Man must be rejected and put to death before He can enter into His glory. So, the true brothers of the Son of Man will have to take up their cross and follow Him.

15. Duncan, *op. cit.*, pp. 210, 213, 217, 221, 222.

16. *Ibid.*, pp. 221, 222.

17. Cf. John 6, 63. "The words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit and they are life."

commission. We shall find in our study that Jesus exhibits all the traits of a good teacher. Every utterance of the Savior recorded in the Gospels could have served as instruction for the disciples, but in this paper we shall concern ourselves mainly with utterances of Christ and events which occurred in the presence of the disciples. It has seemed best in developing this study, in general to follow the chronological sequence of events recorded in the four Gospels concerning the life of Christ and His association with the disciples. Thus Jesus' instructions to the Twelve can be considered with the background of the attendant circumstances. And inasmuch as we believe that there was a progression of revelation and increase in the complexity of the various individual teachings of Christ to the disciples, along with a corresponding growth in the ability of the disciples to comprehend the Savior's instruction, the work of considering the training of the disciples will be facilitated by following such a procedure as outlined. For reasons of expediency I shall follow the chronology as found in Robertson's Harmony of the Gospels.<sup>18</sup>

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18. A. T. Robertson, A Harmony of the Gospels for Students of the Life of Christ.

## JESUS' TRAINING OF THE DISCIPLES FOR THEIR WORK

### I. Earliest Acquaintanceship and Beginnings

#### Making His First Disciples

When our Savior began His work on this earth, the way had already been prepared for Him by the forerunner, John the Baptist. The first of Jesus' disciples had benefited from this preparation, for they had believed John's message. His message of repentance and the advent of the Kingdom of God, served as a foundation for their training under Jesus of Nazareth. The story of Jesus' initial meeting with the first five, or the first six,<sup>1</sup> of His future disciples is told us only by the Apostle John.<sup>2</sup> Andrew, Peter, Philip, Nathanael and one unnamed disciple constituted this group. As we study the fourth Gospel we are led to believe that this last unnamed disciple was the Apostle John, himself.<sup>3</sup> Bruce tells us that these men were all Galileans.<sup>4</sup> What was it

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1. On the basis of John 1:11, it is often assumed that just as Andrew, as the first one of the two disciples listening to Jesus, found his brother Simon, so also John, or James, as the second one, found his own brother. Cf. Theodor Zahn, "Das Evangelium des Johannes," in Kommentar zum Neuen Testament, vol. IV, pp. 129-132.

2. John 1:35-51.

3. Throughout the Gospel a spirit of modesty seems to urge John to conceal his identity.

4. Bruce, op. cit., p. 3.

that brought them into submission to Jesus? Farrar believes the look which Jesus gave them had something to do with their willing submission. He calls to our attention the power of the look which Jesus gave Peter after the latter had denied Him. Farrar declares, "All the facts of His life speak convincingly of that strength, and endurance, and dignity, and electric influence, which none could have exercised without a large share of human, no less than of spiritual, gifts." Quoting St. Jerome, Farrar continues, "Certainly a flame of fire and starry brightness flashed from His eye, and the majesty of the Godhead shone in His face."<sup>5</sup> This much is true that after the disciples had met Jesus, His teachings must have brought a conviction that He was truly the Messiah and in addition a spark of the desire to be near Him. Concerning the remark of John, "Behold the Lamb of God,"<sup>6</sup> Bruce does not believe that the Baptist was deliberately directing his disciples to leave him and follow Jesus, but that this expression was rather the "involuntary utterance of one absorbed in his own thoughts."<sup>7</sup> Still it is true that John, as the forerunner of the Messiah and preparer of His way, had spoken much of the Lamb of God, telling others to be ready for Him. Now when John by his utterance indicated that the one concerning whom he had been preaching, was standing before them, it was as much as a command to the disciples of John to go to Jesus and receive Him.

Two of John's disciples did follow Jesus and spent a good part of the day receiving their first instruction from the Lord. These two were

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5. Frederick W. Farrar, The Life of Christ, pp. 123-126.

6. John 1:29-34.

7. Bruce, op. cit., p. 4.

Andrew and an unnamed disciple. This man was probably John, the brother of James. What Jesus told them after they had reached the place where the Lord was dwelling, we do not know, but it so stirred them that Andrew left to tell his brother, and the unnamed disciple told his own brother. Soon after this Jesus met Simon, Andrew's brother. Jesus told him he would be known by the name Cephas, which is the Aramaic word for "petros," for which the English equivalent is "rock." This remark must have stirred Simon's imagination, and probably led him to ask further questions. Only this brief word of Jesus is recorded, but we can assume that He had more to say to Peter on this occasion. On the next day Jesus found Philip and invited him to join Him. Doubtless Jesus had many things to say also to this young Galilean, for very soon afterwards we see Philip finding Nathanael and telling him that they had found the one "of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write."<sup>8</sup> Obviously Jesus had showed Philip, on the basis of the Old Testament Scriptures, that He was the Messiah. John treats of the Savior's meeting with Nathanael in greater detail than he gives us concerning the others mentioned above. As a result of the revelation which Jesus granted him, Nathanael was led to say, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel."<sup>9</sup> The revelation consisted in this, that Jesus told Nathanael He saw him under the fig tree before Philip had ever called him. On this point Eidersheim supplies an interesting conjecture. He says that in all likelihood Nathanael was

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8. John 1:45.

9. John 1:49.

engaged in close, intimate prayer and meditation while pausing under the fig tree. Also, it being the Passover, he may have been pondering Israel's deliverance and perhaps thinking of a verse with which a well known Rabbinic meditation for the Passover month closes, "Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help."<sup>10</sup> Now Jesus shows him He knows all that has transpired. Nathanael seeing that this man has read his thoughts so clearly, cannot help but confess Him as the Son of God.<sup>11</sup> If Edersheim is correct, Jesus' prediction about His disciples seeing the heaven opened and the angels ascending and descending on the Son of Man, would fit in very well with Nathanael's thoughts on the blessedness of the one who has the God of Jacob for his help. Perhaps Jesus meant to show Nathanael in particular that he would someday see a fulfillment of Jacob's dream, come true, which would testify in an even more remarkable manner than that which Nathanael had just experienced that the man of Nazareth was the Messiah promised to Jacob. Robertson offers us as a fulfillment of this prophecy the incidents in which the angels came and ministered unto Jesus, namely at the close of the Savior's temptation in the wilderness and at the close of Christ's agony in the Garden of Gethsemane.<sup>12</sup> The latter of these two possibilities seems to be the more probable. This much is certain, that here Jesus taught Nathanael that in addition to being the Son of God, He was the Son of Man, that is, the Messiah, and the one spoken of as such in the Old Testament.

10. Psalm cxlvi:5; Pesiqta, ed. Buber, p. 62a, quoted by Alfred Edersheim, in The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, vol. I, p. 349.

11. Edersheim, op. cit., pp. 348-350.

12. Robertson, op. cit., p. 24, f.n.

Thus it was that Jesus established the first acquaintanceship with these young men of Galilee. It appears that this first association was only a temporary one. Bruce explains it with these words:

We do not affirm that the persons here named [Andrew, Simon, etc.] finally quitted the Baptist's company at this time, to become henceforth regular followers of Jesus. But an acquaintance now begins which will end in that. The bride is introduced to the Bridegroom, and the marriage will come in due season; not to the chagrin, but to the joy of the bridegroom's friend.<sup>13</sup>

#### The Wedding in Cana

Not long after Jesus extended the first invitation to these Galileans to be His disciples, He took them with Him to a wedding in Cana. There He performed His first miracle before their eyes. He turned the water into wine. He "manifested his glory; and his disciples believed on him."<sup>14</sup> He clearly performed the miracle with the secondary purpose of deepening the faith and confidence of these first disciples. From now on they would behold many more of His miracles. Yet Jesus never gave evidence of seeking to become a miracle monger. Each time He performed a miracle, He did so out of love toward needy individuals. As Bruce declares, "What they [the disciples] wondered at [when Jesus performed a miracle,] was not the supernaturalness of Christ's healing operations, but the unfathomable depth of divine compassion which they revealed."<sup>15</sup> Yet one may properly draw the inference from John 2, 11, quoted above, that Jesus intended every miracle of His to demonstrate His glory and to call for belief on Him.

13. Bruce, op. cit., p. 4.

14. John 2:11.

15. Bruce, op. cit., p. 50.

Jesus and the Disciples at Their First  
Passover in Jerusalem

It was the Passover feast, and Jesus went to Jerusalem with His friends. While there the first cleansing of the Temple by Jesus took place. Certainly the men who witnessed it must have observed the courage of Jesus as He opposed those who encouraged the nefarious traffic in God's House. The disciples must learn like Him to be fearless when laboring for God. Indeed, inasmuch as all of their life should be a service to God, so they must always be fearless. Also, the prophecy spoken by Jesus, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up," entered into their training at this time. John the Apostle indicates the training when he states that later, after the prophecy was fulfilled, it served to strengthen the disciples' faith in the Scriptures in general and in Jesus who had uttered this prophecy.<sup>16</sup> It should be observed that in cleansing the Temple Jesus was not demonstrating to His disciples how to challenge and to antagonize the Jews, but was rather teaching them reverence for God's House.

The Samaritan Woman

Soon after the incident in the Temple, Jesus went through Samaria on His way to Galilee. At Jacob's well, He met a Samaritan woman who had come there to draw water. Also this incident was intended to have educational value for His disciples. The disciples had gone into Sychar to conduct some business there, and upon returning, they saw Jesus speaking to this woman. Edersheim says it was "contrary to all Judean notions of a Rabbi" to carry on discussions with a woman.<sup>17</sup> Naturally,

16. John 2:13-22.

17. Edersheim, op. cit., vol. I, p. 418.

the disciples thought it strange that the Master had been talking to this woman. Jesus knew they would be amazed, but they must learn to disregard artificial customs and follwavs when God's will needed to be done. When love for man's neighbor demands, no man-made prejudice or barrier can be countenanced. The Gospel is meant for all men. After the woman had departed, the disciples wanted Jesus to care for His body's needs by eating something. But at just that moment His time was too precious. Jesus knew that an opportunity was coming, in which He could serve many with the Gospel. Hence He told the disciples that He had food to eat, of which they did not know. They did not at the moment receive the full import of His teaching, but they were soon to discover that He wanted them to rise above the appetites of the body when, there is need for work in the Kingdom. They, too, must learn to deny themselves, especially in view of the fact that there was now need for work in the Kingdom. Jesus told the disciples to lift up their eyes and look on the fields, that they were white for harvest. Farrar thinks that at that very moment the Samaritans, who were coming to Jesus from the city of Sychar, were appearing in sight.<sup>18</sup> If Farrar's right, the scene presents a vivid picture to the disciples, of the work which had to be done at that very moment. The Samaritans were the fields, white unto harvest. The time to labor was now and not four months from now. According to Eidersheim the disciples had in their minds that it was little more than seed

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18. Farrar, in a footnote, says that the Greek verbs ἐξ ἡλίου and ἤρχοντο indicate this. Farrar, op. cit., p. 170, f.n. 1.

time in the work of the Kingdom, and that the real work of harvesting and gathering lay in the future. Jesus shows them that the time for them to work is now.<sup>19</sup> In the remaining portion of the Lord's admonition to the disciples, it appears that Jesus is referring to Himself as the sower and to the disciples as the reapers. He teaches them that they as reapers will verily have their reward, and that He as the sower will rejoice with them as they reap. A word of caution against pride is added. Jesus tells them that in reality they have entered into another's labor. Another has sown the seed before them.<sup>20</sup> The difficult task has already been done. Neander sees in these words of Jesus a hint to the disciples of the Lord's coming death. When the men were told that they shall reap where the Master has previously sown, they could have inferred that a time was coming when the Lord's earthly sowing shall have ended, but their reaping shall go on, and He shall rejoice together with them in it.<sup>21</sup>

#### The Call to the Four Fishermen

It is uncertain whether the five or six personal friends of Jesus remained with Him after the small party reached Galilee. However, soon afterwards Jesus once more called them to accompany Him. Bruce characterizes this second stage of association with the Master by calling it an "uninterrupted attendance on His person, involving entire, or at least habitual abandonment of secular occupations."<sup>22</sup> The call to discipleship at this time was issued by Jesus as He was by the

19. Edersheim, op. cit., vol. I, p. 419.

20. John 4:5-42.

21. Neander, op. cit., p. 185.

22. Bruce, op. cit., p. 11.

Sea of Galilee teaching the multitudes. There were two boats on the shore, but the fishermen were not in them. They were engaged in washing their nets. Jesus entered the boat that was Peter's and told him to push it out from the land. Then the Savior sat down and taught the multitudes from the small craft. When He had finished speaking, He told Peter to row out to the deep water and let down his nets for a draught. This seemed folly to the fisherman, for as he told the Lord, they had toiled all night and gotten nothing. Nevertheless at the Savior's word, he was ready to let down the net. Upon doing this, to his amazement, he caught a great multitude of fishes. We cannot fail to notice the mark of a good teacher which the Savior exhibits here. He knows Peter's weaknesses and consequently spends time with him individually. He impresses the lesson on Peter that he should obey the Lord's commands, even if they seem absurd to him. Eidersheim believes that Peter in saying, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord,"<sup>23</sup> is showing the humility of a man who feels that he certainly could not be "a fisher of men, out of whose heart, after a life's night of toil, the net would come up empty, or rather only clogged with sand and torn with pebbles." Jesus comforted Peter by saying that he nevertheless would be made a fisher of men.<sup>24</sup> Each disciple had his individual weakness. Peter seems to have been a very self-reliant man instead of a man relying on God. Through this incident Jesus has demonstrated to Peter that relying on himself he shall fail,

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23. Luke 5:8.

24. Eidersheim, op. cit., vol. I, p. 477.

and that all depends on the Lord. Peter can toil by himself, but he shall draw up only an empty net, whereas Jesus can give him a great multitude. Depending on himself, Peter is indeed a sinful man and unworthy; but, depending on Christ, he will lose all unworthiness and catch men. Thus at the beginning of Peter's call to the discipleship, Jesus showed him that he must lose this self-reliance and place all confidence for success in the Savior. At the close of Peter's discipleship, the man of rock once more had to learn this lesson, when he denied his Lord. Nevertheless now, in this incident which we have before us, Peter obediently and humbly follows Jesus. Andrew, James, and John were near the scene of the action. They were also called by the Savior to follow Him.<sup>25</sup>

#### Events of the Busy Day in Capernaum

With these men Jesus came down to Capernaum. There in the synagogue on the Sabbath, Jesus cast an unclean spirit out of a man. The power which the Lord had over evil spirits must have aroused the confidence of the disciples in their new-found Master. Inasmuch as Jesus forbade the unclean spirit in this instance to proclaim Him as the Holy One of God, the disciples could see that Jesus had no desire to find acceptance with people on the basis of the testimony of evil spirits.<sup>26</sup> Jesus wanted to be received on the basis of the testimony which God had supplied. At one time He very plainly informed the Pharisees that they should receive Him on the basis of John the Baptist's testimony, His own Messianic works, the Father's testimony,

25. Luke 5:1-11; Matt. 4:18-22.

26. Luke 4:31-37.

the testimony of Scripture, and the testimony of Moses.<sup>27</sup> This was part of the scheme of salvation which God had laid down from eternity and Jesus followed it explicitly. The disciples were to see many other instances in which Jesus commanded those whom He had healed to tell no man, and unclean spirits to be silent. The followers of the Savior could learn in their job as Apostles, to proclaim the Lord through the means which God ordained.

On this same day, immediately after coming out of the synagogue, Jesus and those with Him went to the home of Simon and Andrew. Simon's wife's mother was ill with a burning fever. Jesus evidenced His love toward her in her need. He took her by the hand and raised her. Immediately the fever left her. This was to be but one of many kind acts of healing performed by Jesus on this busy day in Capernaum. "At even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were sick, and them that were possessed with devils. And all the city was gathered together at the door." It seemed that Jesus was never too tired to minister to their needs. This was an example to the disciples that they should have a similar love. Even here Jesus would not have Himself proclaimed by the demons which He cast out. "He suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew Him."<sup>28</sup>

The next morning the Savior arose very early. He began His day with prayer in a desert place. He needed rest away from the crowd. What better way to find it than in communion with His Father. The disciples could observe His action and make it their own in times when

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27. John 5:31-47.

28. Mark 1:29-34.

they would need their strength renewed. His followers came looking for Him. After a period of searching, Simon and those who were with him found Jesus. They reported to him, "All men seek thee." Farrar says, "They even wished to detain Him among them by gentle force."<sup>29</sup> Their idea was, "Stay here; return to Capernaum; enjoy this popularity." But Jesus would go elsewhere. His Kingdom was not of this world. Let the disciples take note! The popularity resulting from ministering to people's temporal needs was not what the Master wanted. He had preached His message in that area, and now He had to go to another place. "Let us go elsewhere into the next towns, that I may preach there also; for to this end came I forth."<sup>30</sup> This was the Savior's sentiment. His own men should keep in mind the need for pressing on to every possible place, when they themselves should preach the Gospel.

#### The First Tour of Galilee with the Four

So it was that Jesus took Peter and Andrew, James and John with Him on a tour through the towns and cities of Galilee. These disciples saw the love of Jesus day after day. He healed all manner of disease and sickness. He preached the Gospel of the Kingdom to them.<sup>31</sup> At one time Jesus was moved with compassion toward a leper and healed him. The mere performing of a miracle however was so far removed from the Lord's purpose that He "strictly charged him, . . . See thou say nothing to any man."<sup>32</sup> The many miracles which the disciples behold

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29. Farrar, *op. cit.*, p. 188. In footnote #1 on this same page, Farrar advances the Greek verbs: ἐπεζητήσαντες, κατέλιχον in Luke 4:42; κατέδιδωσαν in Mark 1:36 as evidence for his assertion.

30. Mark 1:35-39.

31. Matt. 4:23-25.

32. Mark 1:40-45.

Jesus perform could not help but strengthen their confidence in Him as the Messiah. The Messiah was the one of whom it had been foretold that He would heal the people's diseases, giving sight to the blind, and hearing to the deaf, as Matthew indicates.<sup>33</sup> Eidersheim notices that in the case of the leper we can see that Jesus had no intention of setting up a "new" religion which would be separate from that of the Old Testament. His religion was a fulfillment of that of the Old Testament. But as of yet the law was not completely fulfilled. The leper is commanded by Jesus to obey the regulations of Moses. All could know that Jesus was linking His teachings and actions to the Old Testament Scriptures.<sup>34</sup>

After this the small band returned to Capernaum. Here occurred the incident in which the paralytic was lowered through the roof to be healed by Jesus. The event served to demonstrate to the disciples and all in the house that Jesus, the man of Nazareth, was the true God of Heaven. The crowd had said, "Who can forgive sins but God alone?" By making the man walk, Jesus demonstrated that He had been able to forgive this man's sin, taking away the source of his affliction. Also, the disciples could see once more the courage with which Jesus defended His action before the Jews.<sup>35</sup>

Following this event, Jesus passed by the toll booth where Matthew was collecting the customs. He called this publican to follow Him as a disciple. It may have been that Matthew had heard Jesus preach beside

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33. Matt. 8:17. Of course this goes beyond just physical illness, to the cause of physical illness, namely spiritual illness, or sin.

34. Eidersheim, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 497.

35. Luke 5:17-26.

the lake many times before this meeting. Having received the call to discipleship, this man's heart was filled with joy, and he made a feast for Jesus. Many of Matthew's publican friends were invited to this feast. The fact that Jesus would sit down to eat with such a group was a great offense to the Jews. Jesus could not help being a stumbling block to them. The Savior's love did not despise any class as unfit or not ready for the Gospel. Neither should the disciples despise sinners. All sinners must have the Physician, namely Jesus, to heal them from their sickness. The disciples could see that God wants to be merciful because of His grace, and not to be required to be merciful because of some sacrifice on the part of a man, as if He must then grant a favor in return. The disciples learned a sorrowful truth, that those who depend upon their own righteousness will not be open to the Savior's call. They will shut their hearts to Him.<sup>36</sup>

Further offense was taken by the Jews and in addition by the disciples of John at the liberty which Jesus allowed His disciples. The disciples of John and the Pharisees fasted often and made supplications, but Jesus permitted His disciples to eat and drink and in general to lead a happy, carefree existence. They criticized Jesus to His face for allowing this, but the Lord defended such an attitude on the part of His followers. By means of the illustration of the bridegroom and the sons of the bridegroom, Jesus informed the accusers that while the Lord was with His disciples, theirs was a season of joy. It was customary among the Jews that the marriage week should be free from sorrow, and should be a season of continuous festivity.<sup>37</sup> Hence

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36. Matt. 9:9-13.

37. Edersheim, op. cit., vol. I, p. 663.

it was fitting for the disciples to be joyful. There would come a time when the Savior would be gone. Then His disciples would mourn. This was another indication in a chain of many which the Lord gave His disciples that there would come a day when they would no longer have Him with them. Seasons of sorrow would surely come to those in the Kingdom, in addition to seasons of joy. In all of this Jesus taught His disciples not to be coerced by the pressure of large groups who insist on things which are not demanded by God. Jesus spoke several additional parables to the crowd in answer to the question which had been put to Him. He reminded the crowd that no one cuts a piece out of a new garment to patch an old garment. Also, no one would think of putting new wine into old wine skins; a man who has drunk old wine does not desire the new. The Jews and even Christ's own disciples should realize that there was a difference between the members of the New Testament Kingdom and those of the Old Testament Kingdom. Something new was here.<sup>38</sup> The heirs of the New Testament Kingdom were reaching spiritual majority, as Paul pictures it in his letter to the Galatians. The Christian youth was coming into adulthood.<sup>39</sup> Farrar gives this explanation: Jesus wanted to illustrate by the new wine, that His Kingdom is something new, that it is not like the old earthly Israel Kingdom. "The new spirit was to be embodied in wholly renovated forms; the new freedom was to be untrammelled by obsolete and long meaningless limitations; the spiritual doctrine was to be sundered forever from mere elaborate and external ceremonials."<sup>40</sup> John's disciples had indeed been fasting.

38. Matt. 9:14-17; Luke 5:33-39.

39. Gal. 3 and 4.

40. Farrar, op. cit., p. 267.

They were experiencing difficult and sorrowful times. There would also come sorrowful times to Jesus' disciples, but just now the Bridegroom was with them. Sorrowing under such circumstances would be as unfitting as a new patch on an old garment. John's disciples had tasted the "old wine" of Old Testament, namely life under the Mosaic law. Finding it good, they would have all men live likewise. But Jesus showed them there is for His disciples "new wine," a freedom from the old ceremonial life. Neander observes concerning this matter:

It was not his [Jesus'] purpose to impose the exercises of spiritual life, fasting and the like, by an outward law, upon his yet untrained disciples, but rather, by a gradual change of their whole inward nature, to make them vessels, fit for the indwelling of the higher life. When they had become such, all the essential manifestations of that indwelling life would spontaneously reveal themselves; no outward command would then be needed . . . . It was not his [Jesus'] purpose to impart the dead letter of a ready-made and fragmentary knowledge to minds whose worldly modes of thought disabled them from apprehending it. He aimed rather to implant the germ, to give the initial impulse of a total intellectual renovation, by which men might be enabled to grasp, with a new spirit, the new truths of the kingdom of GOD.<sup>11</sup>

### Three Sabbath Controversies

Jesus took advantage of three Sabbath controversies to instruct His disciples very thoroughly in the matter of religious freedom. The first controversy occurred at a feast in Jerusalem, which Jesus was attending with His disciples. The Lord incurred the wrath of the religious leaders of that city by healing a lame man at the pool of Bethesda on the Sabbath. They accused Him of sinning against the Sabbath by so doing. Jesus answered the accusation by saying that since God did not cease to perform His mighty works on the Sabbath, He,

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<sup>11</sup>Neander, op. cit., p. 121.

as the Son of God, could perform His works when they were needed. Jesus gave them ample evidence for His claim that He was the very God Himself.<sup>42</sup> As has been indicated above in the discourse with John's disciples, the Old Testament era of the ceremonial law which was a "schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ"<sup>43</sup> was passing away. Now men are placed by God on the level of sons, and instead of being under a pedagogue they are like their "brother,"<sup>44</sup> Christ. It ought to have been understood by the disciples that even as Jesus and the Father work on the Sabbath, so it is men's privilege to go beyond the ceremonial law when love urges them.<sup>45</sup> This was the first link in this series of teachings on religious freedom.

It was probably in Galilee while on the way back from Jerusalem, that the second controversy occurred. Jesus and His disciples passed through a field of grain on the Sabbath. Because they were hungry from the trip, the disciples picked some of the grain. With their hands they rubbed off the chaff and then ate the kernels. The Pharisees had declared such an act to be reaping, and reaping on the Sabbath was contrary to their conception of keeping its sanctity. Hence some of the sect of the Pharisees approached Jesus and rebuked Him for allowing such behavior on the part of His disciples. Jesus defended His followers. He called to the Pharisees' attention that David, in a time of great need, had eaten the shewbread which was in the House of God, the shewbread which only the priests were permitted to eat. Did not the

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42. John 5:1-47.

43. Gal. 3, 24.

44. Mark 3:35.

45. John 13:35; I Thess. 3:12; Gal. 6:10.

priests do work for the Temple on the Sabbath? And a greater one than the Temple was here. Service to Him, Jesus indicated, demanded as much and more from the disciples as service to the Temple demanded from the priests. Moreover, Jesus declared He was Lord of the Sabbath.<sup>46</sup> Much hinges on this statement of the Savior that He was the Lord of the Sabbath. We must understand what this claim meant for the disciples if we are to understand the freedom from the ceremonies and laws of the Old Testament, which was exhibited by the Apostles of the New Testament Church. It is clear that Jesus' position as the Lord of the Sabbath allowed Him to determine how the Sabbath was to be used. Bruce is perhaps right when he says that Jesus was not abrogating the Sabbath law by asserting Himself as its Lord. He was merely asserting that He had a right to interpret the Sabbath law. The Lord's interpretation was that the Sabbath was made for man. Under such an interpretation rest is necessary, but man should truly try to achieve rest. He should not think he is properly observing the Sabbath by legalistically prohibiting all work.<sup>47</sup> While it is true that the disciples were not breaking the Sabbath law as given by God, and interpreted by Jesus, nevertheless the statement of Jesus that He was Lord of the Sabbath, if read together with the preceding account, asserts in answer to the Jews, a right on the part of Jesus to do with the Sabbath as He please, namely to work as His Father works on the Sabbath. Edersheim shows that the disciples had not broken the Sabbath law as given by God. He explains that the Sabbath law intended

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<sup>46</sup>. Matt. 12:1-8; Luke 6:1-5.

<sup>47</sup>. Bruce, op. cit., pp. 91, 92, 96.

that man should rest, and should rest for worship. David was right in his action because he needed bread to do the service of the Lord. Also, the priests are right in working, for they are doing service for the Lord. Jesus' disciples were guiltless because they were in the process of serving the Lord, Jesus. "Ministering to Him was more than ministering in the Temple, for He was greater than the Temple." "We are free while we are doing anything for Christ; God loves mercy, and demands not sacrifice; His sacrifice is the service of Christ, in heart, and life, and work."<sup>48</sup> Farrar offers the following interpretation: the Sabbath was made for man; it was designed for mercy primarily; therefore, all acts of mercy may be performed on this day. And the Son of Man, inasmuch as He is a true man, is Lord of the Sabbath. He can determine what acts of mercy should be done on the Sabbath.<sup>49</sup> We might add one more thought. When Jesus said, "The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath; so that the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath,"<sup>50</sup> He meant to set forth this argument: the Sabbath was made for man; Jesus' purpose on earth was to do things for man; hence, He is Lord of the Sabbath. Neander supplies us with an excellent summation of the entire argument. He writes, "The Sabbath was only a means of religious development [sic] up to a certain period. That period had arrived in the manifestation of the Son of Man, the aim of all preparatory things, in whom the original dignity of man was restored, the ideal of humanity realized, and the interior

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48. Ebersheim, op. cit., vol. II, pp. 56-59.

49. Farrar, op. cit., p. 338.

50. Mark 2:28.

life of man made independent of time and place.<sup>51</sup> Thus Jesus taught His men religious liberty. Aided by experiences such as this one, the disciples of Christ were able to take the position which they as Apostles held with regard to Mosaic Law.

The third in this series of Sabbath controversies took place in a synagogue in Galilee. The Pharisees were watching Jesus as He entered. There was a man in the synagogue who had a withered hand, and the Pharisees watched to see whether Jesus would heal him on the Sabbath. Jesus knew what He would do, so He put the question to these religious leaders, whether it was lawful to do good on the Sabbath. He reminded them that they would pull out one of their sheep on the Sabbath, if it should happen to fall into a pit. The Pharisees could not answer the challenge of the Lord. They were silent. Then Jesus told the man to stretch forth his hand, and it was immediately healed.<sup>52</sup> Edersheim reasons that the Pharisees could not object to Christ's doing good, for omitting to do good would be evil. Concerning Jesus' action this writer explains, "He [the Savior] had broken the Sabbath-rest, as God breaks it, when He sends, or sustains, or restores life, or does good: all unseen and unheard, without touch or outward application, by the Word of His Power, by the Presence of His Life."<sup>53</sup> This event served to further establish the disciples in their religious freedom. Bruce remarks that these controversies and differences of opinion and action between Jesus and the Jewish leaders taught the disciples "the

51. Neander, *op. cit.*, p. 256.

52. Matt. 12:9-14; Luke 6:6-11.

53. Edersheim, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 60, 62.

power to bear isolation and its consequences." Peter and John illustrate that the disciples had learned this lesson well, as, after the Master's death, we see them stand boldly in the presence of the Sanhedrin, and without fear acknowledge their Lord. The Sanhedrin in this instance seems to have been prepared for any audacity on the part of those who "had been with Jesus." We can understand such boldness when we note that the disciples already "had been accustomed for years to stand alone, and to disregard the fashion of the world, till at length they could do what was right, heedless of human criticism, without effort, almost without thought."<sup>54</sup> Still we should remember that the disciples boldness had as the actual seat of its power, the fact that the Holy Ghost had been given them on Pentecost.<sup>55</sup>

Jesus concluded this section of His work with a great number of healings performed in the vicinity of the Sea of Galilee. As before, so now, He would not permit the evil spirits which He cast out, to testify of Him. Jesus would have His divinity attested solely by the means God had ordained.<sup>56</sup> Those who would accept Him, must do so on the basis of this kind of testimony.

In this chapter we have studied the first meeting of the Savior and His disciples, along with the beginnings of instruction. The disciples have attached themselves more or less frequently to the Savior. They have been eyewitnesses of what He has done. They have seen His love exercised toward the ill. They have received instruction from

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<sup>54</sup>. Bruce, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

<sup>55</sup>. Cf. also Acts 4:31. Here it is said that when they were filled with the Holy Ghost, they spoke the Word of God with boldness.

<sup>56</sup>. John 5:1-47.

His very lips. The temporary arrangement in which the disciples are not the constant companions of the Savior is about to come to a close. They are soon to enter a more serious association with Jesus, and are soon to begin to take a more active part in the work of the Kingdom.

stage in the training of His disciples. He had departed into a mountain to be alone with the Father. Communion with His Father strengthened Jesus at the critical stages of His earthly ministry. He desired His followers to seek the same help.<sup>1</sup>

After the night of prayer, Jesus chose the twelve men who were to follow Him as His closest disciples throughout the rest of His ministry on earth. Their names are recorded in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Acts. Matthew's list is as follows: Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, Jesus the son of Joseph, and Judas Iscariot.<sup>2</sup> Bruce notes that some of these men were entering the third stage of their association with the Master. In the first they had been "occasional companions at convenient, particularly festive seasons." The second stage was an "uninterrupted attendance on His person, involving entire or at least habitual abandonment of secular occupations." In this third stage, they were "chosen by their Master, from the mass of His followers, and formed into a select band, to be trained for the great work of the apostleship."<sup>3</sup>

1. "But, could ye not watch with me hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." Matt. 26:40, 41.

2. Luke 6:13-16.

3. Bruce, op. cit., pp. 10, 11.

## II. Calling the Men Who were to be His Chosen Disciples

Jesus spent a whole night in prayer in preparation for the next stage in the training of His disciples. He had departed into a mountain to be alone with the Father. Communion with His Father strengthened Jesus at the critical stages of His earthly ministry. He desired His followers to seek the same help.<sup>1</sup>

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1. "What, could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." Matt. 26:40, 41.

2. Luke 6:12-16.

3. Bruce, op. cit., pp. 11, 12.

Ewald observes that the disciples came, for the most part, from the "lowest basis of the entire ancient Community [the Old Testament earthly Israel], which had alone remained more free from the errors of the time and more receptive for the eternal truths and hopes of Israel."<sup>4</sup> It is true that the leaders of the "ancient Community" were so caught up with an earthly Israel that they could not comprehend the spiritual Israel. The schools and institutions of the day were caught up with the same spirit. Jesus had to go to the least trammelled segment of the society to find the best material out of which to fashion the heralds of the new Kingdom. These men must be willing to learn. They must be willing to submit themselves completely to the Master. With the same unqualified obedience which the modern-day Jesuits must render to their superiors, these disciples of Jesus must conform their will with that of the Lord. Their will must be one with His. They must know no other. As Paul confesses, "For me to live is Christ."<sup>5</sup> Duncan remarks that when Jesus chose the Twelve, He asked as His disciples, "men into whose souls there has come the power of the living God, so that nothing is left in their lives, to dispute His claim to their allegiance . . . ."<sup>6</sup> Neander agrees that a "child-like submission to Christ as Master and guide" was needed. "Revelation . . . demands a humble reception of its gifts, and Reason . . . will recognize nothing that is not wrought out, or at least, remodelled, in its own laboratory." There was such a humble attitude on the part of Jesus'

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4. Ewald, op. cit., p. 300.

5. Phil. 1:21.

6. Duncan, op. cit., p. 215.

disciples, and "this reverential submission to Christ . . . , in their daily intercourse with him, tended surely and constantly to refine and spiritualize their mode of thinking. His image, received into their inner life, exerted a steady and overruling influence."<sup>7</sup> Duncan sees in the number of disciples chosen (twelve), a symbol of the new Israel, as compared with Jacob's twelve sons, from whom came the old Israel.<sup>8</sup>

The men whom Jesus chose, deserve consideration. We do not have material on all of them, but then the New Testament does not claim to present a history of the disciples. We do have some indications of the personality of Peter. Bruce says of this fisherman, that Christ saw in him "latent capacities of faith and devotion, the rudiments of ultimate strength and power." For this reason Jesus gave him the name Peter. He shows "reverential awe in [the] presence of Divine Power" and a "tenderness of conscience" with "self-humiliation on account of unmerited favor."<sup>9</sup> In all the Gospels Peter exhibits a great reliance on his own powers, an impulsive manner of action. Jesus labored to bring about in him a reliance on God. It seems that the Lord succeeded; for, after His resurrection, He brought Peter to confess, "Lord, Thou knowest that I love thee."<sup>10</sup> Schreiber believes, "The characteristic traits of St. Peter . . . were candor, open-mindedness, and especially impetuosity. His freedom of speech naturally made him the spokesman and leader of the Apostolic circle on nearly all occasions."<sup>11</sup> Ewald

7. Heander, op. cit., pp. 119, 120.

8. Duncan, op. cit., p. 225.

9. Bruce, op. cit., pp. 6, 15.

10. John 21:15.

11. Schreiber, op. cit., p. 111.

declares that Peter, "distinguished by his age, his quiet [sic] steadfastness and decision, and also by his readiness in speech and daring amongst men, no less than by a special confidence in him on the part of Christ himself, . . . was soon looked upon as primus inter pares."<sup>12</sup>

Andrew was the man who first brought Peter to Jesus. He must have been close to his brother Simon, for the first thing he thought of doing, after he had found Jesus, was to find Simon and tell him all. Ewald infers from the incident of the feeding of the five thousand that Andrew was "intimately connected with Jesus and enjoyed freer approach to him" than others of the disciples.<sup>13</sup> Schreiber notes that in John's Gospel, Andrew is always associated with Philip. They were fellow-townsmen.<sup>14</sup> There may have been some personal friendship there.

The brothers James and John were called Boanerges, Sons of Thunder, by Jesus.<sup>15</sup> Their zealous spirit showed up when they wanted to call down fire on the Samaritans who refused Christ passage. John exhibits this same spirit when he forbade a man to cast out devils in Jesus' name, because the man was not associated with Jesus' followers. Such a "strong, passionate devotion"<sup>16</sup> to the Savior was good, but this devotion must also be extended to others.<sup>17</sup> The weakness of these

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12. Ewald, op. cit., p. 301. It seems a contradiction in terms to speak of Peter as being distinguished by quiet steadfastness and readiness in speech at the same time. There does not appear to be a great deal of quietness in Peter's nature, as we see it pictured in the Gospels.

13. Ibid., p. 302.

14. Schreiber, op. cit., pp. 67, 68.

15. Mark 3:17.

16. Schreiber, op. cit., p. 97.

17. Mark 9:38-50; Luke 9:51-56.

brothers was a desire for personal glory. Their ambition for it led them to request the most honored positions in Heaven. Jesus told them rather to serve instead of trying to gain the plaudits of men.<sup>18</sup> In spite of all this, John was the disciple "whom Jesus loved."<sup>19</sup> In His last hour, the Savior commended His mother to the care of this disciple. Schreiber says of John, "Doubtless during his training he was effectively moulded by the spirit of the Christ, until in him we have the highest type of a saint."<sup>20</sup>

Philip is characterized by Bruce as an earnest enquirer after the truth. Bruce draws this conclusion from the indication Philip gives that he was accustomed to searching the Scriptures.<sup>21</sup> He seems to have made himself acquainted with the Messiah of promise proclaimed in the Old Testament. Philip appears to be closer to the Greeks than the other disciples. When the Greeks wanted to see Jesus, they approached Philip first.<sup>22</sup> Schreiber says Philip bore a Greek name, probably given to him in honor of Philip the Tetrarch, and may have been of Greek descent. This author also takes up the question why Philip failed to rely on Jesus to feed the five thousand in the wilderness. He explains that Philip was of a cautious and deliberate disposition. Another insight into this disciple's character is furnished by the scene in the Upper Room. As we hear Philip say, "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us," we are led to believe that he has not yet understood the deeper

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18. Mark 10:35-45.

19. John 13:23.

20. Schreiber, loc. cit.

21. John 1:45.

22. Bruce, op. cit., p. 6.

spiritual teachings of Christ.<sup>23</sup> Ewald speaks of Philip as "distinguished although . . . somewhat slow of understanding."<sup>24</sup> The story of the baptism of the Ethiopian official on the way to Gaza indicates to us, that Philip has learned that all men, Greeks and Gentiles, are acceptable to Jesus. This disciple demonstrates his knowledge of the Scriptures by interpreting Isaiah for this man.<sup>25</sup>

Nathanael was the one whom Philip first brought to Jesus. Bruce describes Nathanael as a man of "moral excellence," pure, of a gentle meditative spirit. When he asked whether any good could come out of Nazareth, he meant to ask whether anything good could come out of such a lowly people, as he himself was part of. He was almost too humble, but he had an open mind; he came and saw. Bruce adds that Nathanael is also called Bartholomew in the New Testament.<sup>26</sup>

At least five of these first six men and probably all of them constituted the initial group of Jesus' disciples. Bruce says they were like John the Baptist, men of moral earnestness, who wanted to put away all hypocrisy. They were also men of mature faith as evidenced by the way they followed Jesus when John described Him as the "Lamb of God." Indeed one of these men gave to Jesus the title "Son of God,"<sup>27</sup> thus exhibiting an understanding of the Savior's divine origin.

Thomas comes in for a good share of criticism for his doubting that Jesus rose from the dead,<sup>28</sup> but then all of the other disciples

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23. Schreiber, *op. cit.*, pp. 134, 137, 138, 139.

24. Ewald, *op. cit.*, p. 302.

25. Acts 8:26-40.

26. Bruce, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-8.

27. *Ibid.*, pp. 5, 9, 10.

28. John 20:24, 25.

showed a weakness of faith at one time or another. However, it is true that such action gives evidence of a rather materialistic mind on Thomas' part, a mind that seems caught up with this world's logic and reasoning, and can but with difficulty climb to the sphere of spiritual reasoning and faith. Neander says Thomas was "more in bondage to sense than others."<sup>29</sup> Ewald concludes that he was "not easily convinced of the truth of higher things."<sup>30</sup> Some men see this same spirit at work in Thomas, when he remarked, after learning Jesus was going back to hostile Judea at the death of Lazarus, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."<sup>31</sup> Ewald characterizes this statement as one of "somewhat satirical unbelief . . . . Here Thomas only speaks in conformity with that spirit slow of belief which is elsewhere ascribed to him; he supposes that inasmuch as Lazarus is dead, they would go to no purpose; perhaps he adds almost bitterly, in order to die with him!"<sup>32</sup> Farrar speaks of "affectionate but ever despondent Thomas" who means to say in this instance "'It is all a useless and perilous scheme, but still let us go."<sup>33</sup> However, in spite of all these interpretations, we might put the best construction on Thomas' words, and rather infer a spirit of bravado on the part of one who knows certain death lies ahead, and who nevertheless calls others to the noble sacrifice. Unfortunately, this spirit did not stay with Thomas, for he fled with all the others at the arrest of Jesus.<sup>34</sup> Bruce is charitable toward Thomas.

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29. Neander, *op. cit.*, p. 339.

30. Ewald, *op. cit.*, p. 303.

31. John 11:16.

32. Ewald, *op. cit.*, p. 371, f.n. 1.

33. Farrar, *op. cit.*, p. 479.

34. Matt. 26:56.

He calls him "a man of warm heart but melancholy temperament."<sup>35</sup>

Matthew and Jesus were from the same town, Capernaum. Undoubtedly they had many opportunities to see each other. Bruce thinks it strange that Jesus should chose for His close companion one who was such a stumbling block to the Jews, namely a publican, strange except that it illustrated Jesus acting "like one who know that His work concerned all nations and all time."<sup>36</sup> Jesus showed that there was no class of people that was not fit for His Gospel. Another example of this is Christ's choice of Simon the Zealot for His band. Although Simon had left the band of the Zealots, here was a man that would be a stumbling block to the Romans, and would constantly arouse suspicion in the minds of these overlords concerning the activities of Jesus. Bruce suggests that we try to imagine Matthew, the Roman puppet, and Simon, the former revolutionist, together in the same band.<sup>37</sup> Surely this illustrated Jesus' claim that His kingdom was not of this world.<sup>38</sup>

Judas, the betrayer, appears to have been from Kerioth. Bruce informs us that such a town, situated in the southern border of the tribe of Judah, is mentioned in the Book of Joshua.<sup>39</sup> If our supposition is true, then Judas was the only Judean among the disciples of Jesus. How remarkable it is that he by his act, typifies the betrayal of Jesus by the Judeans into the hands of the Romans! We shall consider this act of Judas more in particular in its chronological place in the events of Christ's life and in the training of the Twelve. It is

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35. Bruce, op. cit., p. 33.

36. Ibid, pp. 19, 20.

37. Ibid, pp. 35, 36.

38. John 18:36.

39. Joshua 25:24 in Bruce, op. cit., p. 33.

sufficient to note here that Judas must have been of a practical bent. He managed the financial matters of the small society. We know it did not grieve his conscience to pilfer from the treasury of the band.<sup>40</sup> He may have been ambitious and dreaming of a royal position in the Kingdom of Christ. He was surely of the same mind as the other disciples who believed Christ would set up an earthly Messianic Kingdom.<sup>41</sup>

Bruce groups the disciples, on the basis of Matthew's Gospel, into three divisions: the first group includes Peter, Andrew, James, and John; the second group contains Philip, Bartholomew or Nathanael, Thomas, and Matthew; the last group has James (the son) of Alphaeus (this disciple is possibly also called James the Less), the man who is called Lebbaeus, Thaddeus, and Judas of James, Simon the Zealot, and Judas ("the man of Kerioth").<sup>42</sup>

This same author concludes that all of the disciples had faith. It was the reason for their following Jesus. But at the same time they were in a sense "enthusiasts" dreaming of a kingdom to be set up in Israel, with Jesus of Nazareth for its king.<sup>43</sup> Their dream was to come true, but in a much higher way than they had ever imagined. It was to be a spiritual Kingdom. Ewald takes notice of the fact that the Twelve forsook all worldly things for the sake of the Kingdom of God,<sup>44</sup> "and that Community, which came before the world in that first Apostolic age, keeping its celestial purpose alone in view, and subordinating to it all earthly possessions, was already on the earth in fact as regards its outline and first formation."<sup>45</sup>

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40. John 12:5, 6.  
 41. Schreiber, op. cit., p. 111.  
 42. Bruce, op. cit., p. 36.  
 43. Ibid, pp. 16, 17.  
 44. Matt. 19:27.  
 45. Ewald, op. cit., p. 306.

### III. Jesus Instructs His Chosen Men as to the Nature of Their Work. (Sermon on the Mount)

In this chapter we shall consider the instruction which Jesus gave to the men He had chosen pertaining to the nature of their work. It was only fitting that the Lord make clear to His men what lay before them as they entered total discipleship. The "Sermon on the Mount" as recorded by Matthew shall comprise the extent of our consideration.<sup>1</sup> Neander has no sympathy with those who regard the "Sermon on the Mount" as being intended solely for the purpose assigned it in this paper. He insists it is untenable to show this sermon as an "ordination discourse for the Apostles."<sup>2</sup> It is true that many purposes were intended by the Savior when he taught on this occasion, but certainly this sermon served to instruct the disciples as to what lay before them, and in a measure to prepare them for the coming situations. Ewald finds this purpose in the "Sermon on the Mount." He explains that Jesus wanted to inform the disciples concerning the Kingdom of God, so that they would become accustomed to the proper mode of laboring for that Kingdom. "The first and most necessary thing was therefore, once more to give fuller instruction regarding the nature and duties of the Communities of the perfect religion." This man feels that the Sermon on the Mount can only have been intended for the circle of disciples or for those who were already members of the new "Community." He arrives at this conclusion by considering the utterances of the Savior in the sermon.<sup>3</sup>

1. Matt. 5-8:1.

2. Neander, op. cit., p. 116.

3. Ewald, op. cit., pp. 308, 309.

Introduction to the Sermon, Containing  
Consolation and Warnings

Jesus went up into a mountain, and when He had sat down His disciples came unto Him. He began to teach them. The Lord encouraged them to be "poor in spirit;" certainly such an attitude would be a demonstration to others that the Kingdom of God was in them. Professor Franzmann explains this poverty in spirit, as spiritual longing for what men need, namely salvation, or in other words the state of being beggars, in the spiritual realm, for salvation.<sup>4</sup> Conversely, those who feel they can earn their own salvation, and that they do not need to beg for it, shall not be given the Kingdom. The Master did not hide the fact from His disciples that they would see days of mourning, but He also consoled them with the promise that they would be comforted. Professor Franzmann defines this sorrow as a mourning about the evil in the world.<sup>5</sup> Next, Jesus told His followers to be meek; then they would "inherit the earth." By proclaiming the Gospel in meekness, they would conquer the earth and win it for Christ. Professor Franzmann defines this "meekness" as a humble, confident, dependence on God.<sup>6</sup> The Savior proceeded to comfort those who were hungering and thirsting after righteousness, with the assurance they would be filled. God would fill them with His Holy Spirit. Franzmann brings out that Christ's followers would have the same full religious assurance which Christ had, plus a similar sanctification. Jesus told the Twelve to be

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4. Professor Martin Franzmann, Lectures on the Sermon on the Mount, 1948-49.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

merciful toward others, knowing that they themselves were receiving mercy. Being "pure in heart" they would "see God." Franzmann describes this pureness as "candor of heart, unalloyed loyalty - not a heart spotted by sin."<sup>7</sup> Surely others would observe this purity in Jesus' disciples and be led to see God. Christ's men were told to be peacemakers; it would stamp them as sons of God. Jesus predicted that they would be persecuted because of their righteousness, but He promised them the Kingdom. The disciples would be evil spoken of and reproached, but it would be for the Lord's sake. Christ's followers would have the reward which the prophets entered into. In all of these beatitudes, Jesus held before His chosen men the blessings of God. Let this comfort them in their coming warfare with the world.<sup>8</sup>

Theme of the Sermon - Christ's Righteousness as Contrasted  
with that of the Scribes and Pharisees

From consolation, Christ proceeded to an explanation of the disciples' job. Their job is to be the "salt of the earth." If the disciples do not perform their function, they are of no further worth. Franzmann speaks of salt as a preservative.<sup>9</sup> This would picture the disciples' job as one of preserving souls for God, keeping them from rotting into the corruption of sin. Ebersheim thinks that Jesus was referring to the Old Testament preparing of sacrifices by sprinkling them with salt.<sup>10</sup> Such an interpretation of the necessity of performing the function of salt portrays the task of the Twelve as one of preparing men to be a sweet-smelling sacrifice to God (through the

7. Ibid.

8. Matt. 5:1-12.

9. Franzmann, op. cit.

10. Ebersheim, op. cit., vol. II, pp. 121, 122.

preaching of the Gospel). Both activities of the Apostles can fit the Savior's metaphor. In another picture, the disciples are urged to be lights in the world. With their sin forgiven and the attending darkness removed, they are living in light and doing the works of light. They should show other men how to come into this light. Others would see their good works, and be drawn to the light. These others having their wall of partition from God, destroyed, would have God's glory let loose on them also. Furthermore, Christ informed His men it is their job to teach the Law and the Prophets, and Him as the fulfillment of the whole Old Testament. They were not to omit the least part of it. If they in their job as teachers of the flock should lead men to break any of God's commandments as given in the Old Testament Scriptures, they would be the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. But if the disciples faithfully adhered to God's commandments in Scripture, and taught men so, they would be the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven. It seems here as though Christ's thoughts were leading over to the subject of the Pharisees, who were "blind leaders of the blind," "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."<sup>11</sup> Jesus instructed His disciples not to trust in a righteousness of a legal nature, as the Pharisees were doing; the disciples would need a greater righteousness than that. Not that the acts which the Pharisees performed were sinful in themselves, but there was needed the spirit of love in the act.<sup>12</sup> Since God is love, we understand here the teaching that it is necessary for God to be in an act, if that act is to be acceptable to Him.

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11. Matt. 15:9, 14.

12. Ibid. 5:13-20.

Christ's Ethics, Different from Those of the Scribes

Jesus now entered into a discussion of ethics, calling for perfection even as the Father in Heaven is perfect. He told the Twelve that one who is angry at his brother, and who speaks evil words against him, shall be just as much "in danger of the judgment" as one who kills his brother. Jesus made it clear that the brother is more desired by God than sacrifice. The disciples should forgive one who sins against them and be reconciled quickly. Sexual lust was equated with adultery by Christ. He proclaimed that if anything should stand between the disciples and God, if the necessity of a choice between God and self should present itself, if ever anything should hinder their work for the Kingdom, they must remove that hindrance. The disciples must learn to deny themselves, to put aside their own desires. Christ presented this necessity with an over-statement for the purpose of emphasis: if an eye caused them to stumble, they should pluck it out. "Putting away" or divorcing a wife without just cause was declared a sin by the Lord. The result would be that both she and the one who married the woman who had been thus divorced would commit adultery.<sup>13</sup> The disciples were not to swear. The devil is at the bottom of swearing, and by swearing Christ's followers would only succeed in profaning before others those things which are holy. The disciples were instructed as to the extent to which they must be prepared to expend themselves in love. They must be prepared to turn the other cheek to the man who has

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13. Christ here doubtless assumes that the marriage bond has not been broken. For if this man who divorced his wife should marry again, or if in some other way the marriage bond should be broken by him, then the divorced wife would be free to marry again and would not be committing adultery by so doing. Cf. Christ's teaching on divorce and marriage in chapter ten of this paper.

smitten them, and to give even their cloak to the man who takes their coat. In all these commandments, Jesus went beyond the laws of the scribes. Certainly the disciples would need a greater righteousness than the righteousness of these men. The necessity was laid upon the disciples to show forth ἀγάπη to all men, even as the perfect Father evidences ἀγάπη. They would thus show God to men, and themselves as His sons.<sup>14</sup> If others should see the disciples doing other than these commandments, then the disciples would not be doing their job of letting their Light shine.

Real Righteousness, not the Hypocrisy or Outward  
Show of the Pharisees

Jesus' chosen men were to fight the inner desire for the praise of others. They were to go out of their way to keep others from discovering the good things that they did. The Master gave His followers a lesson in prayer. The Twelve were to be sincere in praying. He told them it would not be necessary to utter every need to God in words; they should let their heart speak. The Lord's men should pray with humility, knowing that all depends on God, and that all glory is His, for everything is His. Also in prayer, they should fight against pride and the inner longing for the praise of men.<sup>15</sup> If the disciples were proud and were wanting everything for themselves, how could they draw others to a Gospel which proclaims a Savior who did all for others in place of Himself.

14. Matt. 5:21-48.

15. Ibid. 6:1-18.

Not Materialism but the Spiritual Things in Life

The Twelve were called upon by Jesus to remember that this life with its material goods will pass away. The disciples should keep their eyes and heart on Heaven and on union with the Father. The followers of the Savior must seek the Kingdom of God at all times. It would not be possible for them to seek anything else at the same time, for they could have but one master. The seeking of "mammon" would evidence itself in all manner of anxieties and worries.<sup>16</sup> Engaged in such activities of spiritual darkness, the disciples could not be lights to the world.

Judge Not!

Jesus was absolute in His demand that His disciples pass no judgments, that is, pass a sentence of judgment in their minds, toward any of their fellowmen. Such action would hinder their agape. No one could be excluded from their love or the Gospel which they preached. But they should also be cautious in their preaching of the Gospel. They should not cast their pearls before the swine. Later, after such men had ceased acting as swine, the disciples would be able to preach to them. The Gospel was the pearl of the disciple. He should be on guard to see that he, in his work as an Apostle, entrusted it to men who would not misuse it with regard to the sheep entrusted to their care.<sup>17</sup>

A Discussion of Prayer, and the Golden Rule

In this section of His sermon on the Mount, Jesus encouraged the disciples to be confident that God would supply all their needs,

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16. Ibid. 6:19-34.

17. Ibid. 7:1-6.

especially when they were engaged in performing His work, the vocation for which they had been selected. Jesus' men should trust God as a father, and more than a father. They were not to hesitate in the least to beseech Him for their needs. In what has come to be known as the "Golden Rule," Jesus once more urged His men to evidence agape. His wise way of stating this necessary basic element of every Christian act has intrigued men of all ages. Jesus told His followers to do for others just those things which their own human flesh so rushes to do for itself, or so desires that others would do for it. Notice that the Twelve were instructed to do these things for others, but they were to trust in the Father for their own needs.<sup>18</sup>

Conclusion: Parables Illustrating the Need of Personal  
Inward Righteousness

Jesus now summed up His teaching concerning the kind of life He desired in His followers. He warned against coming dangers to this life. There would be temptations, but the disciples should not be enticed by them. The true way is narrow and difficult. The disciples would have a good indication as to whether they were on the right way, if they would notice the number of people who were on that way with them. Jesus said, "Few there be that find it." The Twelve should avoid false prophets which would come to them as wolves in sheep's clothing. These could be discovered by their evil works. The Savior pointed out that the important thing is to do the will of God. The works of the Twelve would be worthless, if they did not know the Savior, and the Savior did not know them. Jesus declared the absolute necessity

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18. Matt. 7:7-12.

that men listen to Him and heed His words, if they would build stably in this life. They must build on Him, if they desire a structure that will stand into eternity, instead of being washed away into eternal darkness.<sup>19</sup>

With these words, Jesus closed His instruction to the men He had chosen to be His future witnesses. Before they entered their work He had laid down what was demanded of them. He enabled them to "count the cost."<sup>20</sup> Yet Jesus knew that a desire to do something can not be created by promulgating a law, or establishing a list of requirements. Hence Jesus concluded His sermon with a plea to build on Him, to know Him, and be known of Him. This would create the solid structure. This would arouse that inner desire to do for Christ. Yes, this was the thing that Jesus wanted, not the outward act of the hypocritical Pharisee, but the inner desire in a man's heart, to perform the will of God.

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19. Ibid. 7:13-8:1.

20. Luke 14:28.

1. Ibid. 14:28-30.

2. Ibid. 14:31-33.

#### IV. Observing the Master at Work in Galilee

Following the period of instruction on the mountain, Jesus had His disciples accompany Him on various tours of Galilee. It was good pedagogical method for the Lord to show His disciples how the principles outlined in the "Sermon on the Mount" should be put into practice. Ewald remarks, "After the Twelve had received sufficient higher instruction for the beginning, it was time to practice them in the details of the work of their life." They were to proclaim the Gospel throughout the world. Hence Jesus had them observe Him while He preached, and while He exhibited His love toward people.<sup>1</sup>

#### The Centurian's Servant and the Widow's Son

The initial event of the first trip finds Jesus healing a Roman centurian's servant at Capernaum. The Lord called to the attention of the disciples the great faith of this centurian. The event was a lesson to the Twelve that the Savior was interested in the Gentiles, and that such men were meant for the Kingdom. Jesus went so far as to indicate that the Gentiles would accept the Gospel readily, whereas the Jews, the "sons of the kingdom," would not.<sup>2</sup> On this tour of demonstration, it is notable that the first recorded event had to do with a Gentile and His acceptance of Christ. The disciples would later find that first place in point of numbers must go to the Gentiles, in the matter of accepting the Savior.

1. Ewald, *op. cit.*, pp. 315, 316.

2. Matt. 8:5-13.

The little incident concerning the widow's son in Nain gave the disciples a further insight into the compassion of Jesus toward mankind. Here was a mother who had already lost her husband and now her only son. Jesus could not help but ease her sorrow. In kindness He raised the dead son and gave him back to his mother.<sup>3</sup>

#### The Disciples Sent by John

A delegation of disciples was sent by John the Baptist to Jesus. There is much discussion as to the purpose of this action by the Baptist, but that shall not concern us. Whatever the occasion of the action may have been, Jesus handled the situation charitably, merely giving a gentle warning that no one should take offense at the humble state of Christ. It may have been that there were some who were offended at the manner in which Christ pursued His work. They felt that He as the Messiah should proclaim His Lordship, and take an exalted position among men. Such who felt this way did not understand the Lord's purpose in life nor Isaiah's portrayal of the Messiah. Jesus' own disciples could learn from this discussion not to be offended at Christ's humility. The Savior closed the matter with a eulogy of John the Baptist, for his faithful work. The disciples would also receive praise from the Master if they labored faithfully. If it is so that John had been tempted to doubt the Messiahship of Jesus, the Savior here showed an understanding of the trials of this man, and a forgiveness for his doubt. Note that the Savior sends succor to him in his need, assuring John that the Son of Man is doing His job as the Messiah.

After praising John and saying that among those born of a woman, there had not arisen a greater than John the Baptist, Jesus turned to

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3. Luke 7:11-17.

His disciples and told them that whosoever was least in the Kingdom was greater than John. Until the days of Jesus, God's covenant had included an earthly promise, that those who were His people would be blessed with possession of the land of Canaan. The Old Testament Church and the Kingdom of Israel, as for example that under King David, were meant to be synonymous. To enter the Old Testament Church, a man must submit to all the Mosaic laws. Included in these were many political laws. This Old Testament Kingdom was often taken by force, i.e. overcome by the surrounding nations. Now Jesus declares that this new Kingdom is so superior that the least member of it is greater than the greatest of the Old.<sup>4</sup> The disciples, consequently, have a greater responsibility.

Jesus warned against trying to resurrect the old earthly Kingdom. He told the Jews they were pouting like children because He did not show sympathy with their plea that He become an earthly king.<sup>5</sup> The disciples also must not look for an earthly kingdom. Ebersheim discerns from this discourse that the disciples are to be cognizant of the fact that the world will be dissatisfied with them because of the Gospel which they as Apostles preach. The people of the world will ask for materialistic things. They will criticise the Church for an emphasis on spiritual things. Yes, many will come looking for material gain, and will turn against the disciples when it cannot be supplied.<sup>6</sup>

#### The Women Assisting Jesus

Inasmuch as Jesus did not support Himself by laboring, He and His band accepted aid from others. The chief benefactors mentioned in the

4. Matt. 11:2-15.

5. Ibid. 11:16-19.

6. Ebersheim, op. cit., vol. I, pp. 670, 671.

Gospel accounts are certain women who followed Jesus.<sup>7</sup> Jesus, demonstrated women are not to be despised, but can be of great service in the Kingdom. The Savior taught the disciples to accept help from those who unselfishly want to assist them. God chooses for the most part to work through earthly means. Schreiber sees in the manner of life chosen by the Lord for His band, a training in absolute dependence on the Savior for everything. There was no income for the group. And since the Twelve were required to depend on the generosity of others, they would learn to undervalue the worth of all earthly possessions. It is noteworthy that while they had little for themselves, yet they endeavored to manage it well, having Judas appointed as treasurer, and out of the meager supply giving to the poor and needy.<sup>8</sup>

#### The Charge of Being in League with Beelzebub

While Jesus was in a house in Galilee teaching the populace, an accusation was brought against Him by scribes from Jerusalem. These men charged that Christ performed miracles through the power of Beelzebub, the prince of the devils. Courage did not fail the Savior. He stood up to His enemies and defended Himself, calmly answering their charges. Jesus warned these scribes that the sin against the Holy Ghost would not be forgiven. There would be a possibility of repentance in the scribes for hurling evil charges against the Son of Man, but if they should reject the Holy Ghost continually and by a deceitful life attempt to pose as possessors of the Spirit, such a sin would not be forgiven them. Ananias and Saphyra illustrate the

7. Luke 8:1-3.

8. Schreiber, op. cit., pp. 48-51.

9. Acts 5:1-10.

results of such a deceitful life, which is part of the sin against the Holy Ghost.<sup>9</sup> The Apostles witnessed the truth of Christ's teaching when they saw the Holy Ghost strike these hypocrites dead. Jesus continued with an admonition to the scribes to cease attempting to legislate men into right action. They should first make the heart of a man good; then he will perform righteous deeds. Men's actions show the condition of their heart. The matter of chief importance is the renewing of a man's heart by the Holy Ghost. Legislation cannot enable a man to stand in the Judgment. Jesus warned the scribes from Jerusalem that once a man permits the evil spirit to return to his heart, he becomes much more wicked than before.<sup>10</sup>

#### Christ's Mother and Brethren

While the Lord was saying these things in the midst of the swarming multitude, Jesus' mother and brethren approached. They saw Him almost overwhelmed by the people. So great was the crowd that the Master could not manage to eat. His friends went so far as to think He was "beside Himself."<sup>11</sup> Fearful of this, His mother and brethren wanted to take Him away from the multitude. They called to Him from the edge of the crowd. At last someone told the Master that His mother and brethren were desiring to see Him. In reply Jesus pointed to His disciples and said, "Behold, my mother and my brethren!"<sup>12</sup> The Lord would permit nothing to detain Him from doing the work needed in the Kingdom. His earthly relatives had a claim to His attention, but His Heavenly Father

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9. Acts 5:1-10.  
 10. Matt. 12:22-45.  
 11. Mark 3:19-21.  
 12. Matt. 12:46-50.

had more claim. Eidersheim says that Jesus had entered into earthly relationships only "for the sake of the higher spiritual relationship which He was about to found," hence those who were in this latter were in closer kinship to Him than those in His earthly relationship.<sup>13</sup>

#### A Description of the Kingdom in Parables

Jesus left the house and went to the seaside. There He sat down and began to teach the people in parables. The disciples observed the Master's teaching methods. Undoubtedly later they as teachers, made use of illustrations and parables common to the people. Jesus afforded the Twelve an insight into the purpose behind His parables. The Lord told His men that the teachings which God reveals to believers, and which seem clear to such men, will be foolishness to others who shut their hearts to God's Spirit. The purpose of Jesus' parables for some is to confound them in their unbelief, while for those who have "hearing ears" and "seeing eyes," parables are a blessing. They bring God's teachings and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, the Twelve are told that their eyewitness of such matters has laid on them a great responsibility. Many men had longed to see those things which their eyes were beholding.<sup>14</sup> Assuming His men would accept their responsibility, the Lord proceeded through the parable of the sower and the seed to show His disciples what sort of a reception their preaching of the Gospel would find. Some men would receive the Gospel into non-understanding hearts. It would be taken from them by Satan. Some would receive it into rocky hearts, where it would not take root, but tribulation would cause it to

13. Eidersheim, op. cit., vol. I, p. 577.

14. Matt. 13:10-17.

wither and die. Some men would receive the seed of the Gospel into thorny hearts. The cares and love for pleasures in such a heart, would strangle the Gospel. Others would receive the Gospel into good hearts. Here it will grow and bring forth fruit to varying degrees of abundance.<sup>15</sup>

God intends the hidden things, i.e. spiritual matters, to be found out by those who have ears to hear, declared Christ. If the disciples having hearing ears, keep on listening, more ability to understand will be given them. He who does not listen or use his ability will lose it. The Twelve should be careful in what manner they practice their ability to hear God's mysteries.<sup>16</sup>

At this point Jesus tested their ability to "hear." He taught them through a number of parables, something of the mysterious working power of the Kingdom of God. We define the expression, "Kingdom of God," as God's power and rule.<sup>17</sup>

1. Through the parable of the seed, growing of itself, the Lord taught His disciples that the Kingdom grows in a similar manner.<sup>18</sup>

2. Through the parable of the tares, He taught them that the Kingdom grows side by side with men who are Satan's.<sup>19</sup> The disciples

15. Ibid. 13:1-23.

16. Mark 4:21-25.

17. Ebersheim substantiates our definition of the term Kingdom of God. He says, "An analysis of 119 passages in the New Testament where the expression 'Kingdom' occurs, shows that it means the rule of God; which was manifested in and through Christ; is apparent in the Church; gradually develops amidst hindrances; is triumphant at the second coming of Christ ('the end'); and, finally, perfected in the world to come." Op. cit., vol. I, p. 270.

18. Mark 4:26-29.

19. Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43.

would be sown out into the evil world. Their job would be there, not in some secluded corner.

3. As in the parable of the mustard seed, the final state of the extent of the Kingdom would be vast, whereas the beginning had been very small.<sup>20</sup>

4. Leaven is another picture of the Kingdom.<sup>21</sup> As leaven breaks off and starts its action in another place, until the whole matter is leavened, so the Kingdom travels from one person to another, and there builds up a similar existence in the other person.<sup>22</sup>

5. Through the parable of the treasure in the field, Jesus urged His followers to sell all, give everything to obtain the Kingdom.<sup>23</sup> Like the "pearl of great price," the Kingdom must be priceless to them.<sup>24</sup>

6. In the parable of the net, Jesus showed the disciples that the Kingdom comes to all. All classes of men are represented. It is worldwide.<sup>25</sup>

7. Lastly, in the parable of the householder, Jesus taught His followers that every student of the Scriptures, who is a member of the Kingdom, has a treasury of revelations given to him by this Kingdom. This man therefore under the power of the Kingdom can reach into his treasury, namely the Scriptures, and bring forth for others those

20. Mark 4:30-32.

21. Matt. 13:24-30.

22. Dr. Richard R. Caemmerer, Lectures on The Church and The World, 1949.

23. Matt. 13:44.

24. Ibid., 13:35-36.

25. Ibid., 13:47-50.

27. Matthew, ch. 13, v. 31. Luke 17:20.

28. Mark 4:35-41.

things which he has already learned, plus new things for himself and others.<sup>26</sup>

In such a manner did Jesus picture to the disciples the workings of the Kingdom of God. There were of course other times when the Master spoke to them of the Kingdom. Schreiber notes that even in His simple, humble life, Jesus demonstrated to His disciples that the "Kingdom cometh not with observation."<sup>27</sup>

#### Stilling of the Tempest

Shortly after the foregoing teachings, Jesus took His disciples with Him to the other side of the Lake of Gennesaret, into the country of the Gerasenes and Gadarenes. On the way a storm overtook the group, while Jesus was sleeping. When the boat began to fill with water, the disciples in great fear awoke the Lord. They called to Him to save them. He rebuked the storm, and it was calm. Then the Lord turned to them, and admonished them, saying that if they would have had faith, they would not have feared. The disciples were amazed at all that had happened. They marvelled among themselves, "Who is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him."<sup>28</sup> Their statement causes us to wonder whether they did not fully realize who Jesus was; or, is this perhaps

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26. Ibid., 13:51-53. Neander takes a slightly different view of this parable. He explains, "As a householder shows his visitors his jewels; exhibits, in pleasing alternation, the modern and the antique, and leads them from the common to the rare, so must the teacher of Divine truth, in the new manifestation of the kingdom of GOD, bring out of his treasures of knowledge truths old and new, and gradually lead his hearers from the old and usual to the new and unaccustomed." Neander believes this parable illustrates to the disciples that they should use common experiences of the people such as parables, to lead people to the new teachings, from the old to which they have been accustomed. Jesus set them an example by His own parabolic method of teaching. Neander, op. cit., pp. 101, 102.

27. Schreiber, op. cit., p. 51. Luke 17:20.

28. Mark 4:35-41.

their idiomatic manner of exclaiming that a miraculous deed was done?<sup>29</sup>

Eldersheim observes on this point,

No longer, as at His first wonder-working in Capernaum [the casting out of a demon<sup>30</sup>], was it: 'What [new doctrine with authority] is this?' but 'Who, then, is this?' And so the grand question, which the enmity of the Pharisees had raised [the Pharisees ascribed to Jesus Satanic agency], and which, in part, had been answered in the Parables of teaching [concerning the Kingdom of God], was still more fully and practically met in what not only to the disciples, but to all times, was a Parable of help.<sup>31</sup>

Neander says of this miracle,

[It served] to confirm the faith of the Apostles in his power to subjugate nature, and make her operations tributary to the kingdom of God. And this sensible miracle was a image of that higher spiritual one which Christ works in all ages, in speaking peace to the soul amid all the tempests of life, and in bringing to obedience all the raging powers that oppose the progress of his kingdom.<sup>32</sup>

Bwald believes that this display of authority on the part of the Savior served to arouse the disciples' confidence in the one who had instructed them in the Sermon on the Mount.<sup>33</sup>

#### Healing

The band arrived in the country of the Gadarenes and Gerasenes.

Bwald says of this country that it was one in which there were few Judeans. For this reason it was always more difficult for a Jew to travel through. Jesus did not avoid this region, but rather intentionally

29. Neander believes that Matthew in his use of *οἱ ἀνεργῶτες* (Matt. 8:27) indicates that these men were not the disciples, but strangers. *Op. cit.*, p. 191, f.n. This appears to be a weak argument.

30. *Mark* 1:21-28.

31. Eldersheim, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 602.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 192.

33. Bwald, *op. cit.*, pp. 316, 317.

selected it.<sup>34</sup> Here Jesus healed a demoniac who was possessed with many devils.<sup>35</sup> When healed, this man wished to follow Jesus. Jesus explained to the man that it should not be his main concern to follow the Savior throughout Palestine, but rather to remain in his own region and preach to those living about himself. It was most evident that Jesus was interested in the heathen and Gentiles; this former demoniac was to remain in that country and preach to such. Eidersheim finds in this event an answer to the Jewish charge that Christ was casting out devils through Beelzebub. Here was an actual conflict between Christ and Beelzebub, a parabolic miracle wrought by Christ.<sup>36</sup> We see from the action presented here that allegorically Jesus would not "cast His pearls before swine" but rather allowed evil spirits to possess them.

Upon being urged to leave by the populace, Jesus returned to the Galilean side of the lake.<sup>37</sup> Here he was met by Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue. This man's daughter was ill, and he requested that Jesus come and help him. On the way, a woman in the crowd touched Jesus' garment. She had had an issue of blood for twelve years, and she believed that by touching something belonging to Jesus, she would be healed. It happened as she had hoped, but Christ constrained her to acknowledge Him.<sup>38</sup> Ewald says that Jesus would not have superstition

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34. Ibid, p. 317.

35. Ewald believes this man to have been originally of Judean faith and origin, because he asks that the devils be sent into the swine, as if that were the only fit place for them. Op. cit., p. 318.

36. Eidersheim, op. cit., vol. I, p. 609.

37. Mark 5:1-20.

38. Ibid. 5:25-34.

concerning Him arise.<sup>39</sup> The disciples could see that Jesus does not want superstition but a true faith in Him. Further on the journey, Jairus' faith was tested when he was informed that his daughter had died. Jesus urged him to believe in spite of this. He did, and his trust was not in vain, for Jesus healed his daughter.<sup>40</sup> The disciples learned never to despair, but always to trust in the Savior. It is recorded that Jesus also in this place healed two blind men, and in addition one who was dumb and possessed with a devil. These men had faith in Him. In keeping with His policy, Jesus instructed these men not to proclaim the miracles.<sup>41</sup> Summing up these healings, Schreiber says that the Lord through them manifested His insight, patience, tolerance, charity, and sympathy.<sup>42</sup>

Yet a third tour was taken by Jesus with His newly instructed disciples. Not many events of it are recorded, but we are told that the same type of activity was maintained as on the first two tours. When Jesus saw the success of His preaching and the multitudes that followed Him, He instructed His disciples to pray for more workers in the Kingdom.<sup>43</sup> Through these tours Christ had illustrated to His Chosen Twelve the manner in which they were to conduct their work. They had seen His love exhibited through miracles. They had learned of the Kingdom and its universality.

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39. Ewald, *op. cit.*, pp. 320, 321.

40. Mark 5:21-43.

41. Matt. 9:27-34.

42. Schreiber, *loc. cit.*

43. Matt. 9:35-38.

## V. The Trial Mission of the Twelve

It was now time for the disciples to be sent out alone, and to try their skill at serving the Master. Jesus knew that they must be prepared for the time when He would no longer be with them. A mission journey alone would give them confidence in applying the truths they had learned, and in using the powers with which they would be entrusted.

Before they were sent out Jesus called them together and gave them power over unclean spirits and diseases.<sup>1</sup> Healings, worked through these powers, would be a confirmation of the disciples' message. Such powers would also enable the disciples to help people's needs, thus exercising themselves in agape. The disciples must learn that the Kingdom is something vital, not merely intellectual.

The sphere of the activity of the trial mission was defined. The disciples were instructed not to go into the ways of the Gentiles or cities of the Samaritans, but to go to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel."<sup>2</sup> Bruce sees a plan in Jesus' mind to establish a base in Jewry first, as the starting point for "His ultimate . . . conquest of the world."<sup>3</sup> It is also true that Paul speaks in Galatians, as we have noted before, of the special need of doing good to those who are "of the household of faith." Certainly agape is applied first to those who are nearest the Christian in locality and sphere of influence. Ewald

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1. Matt. 10:1.

2. *Ibid.* 10:5, 6.

3. Bruce, *op. cit.*, pp. 100, 101.

feels that Jesus did not wish unnecessarily on this trial journey to bring His disciples into too great difficulties. Galilee was best known to them.<sup>4</sup> Bruce reminds us that Jesus was following what, humanly speaking, looks like a dangerous policy. He was sending out men who had been in His company a comparatively short time. As of yet they were filled with many wrong notions, such as the one concerning an earthly Messianic kingdom.<sup>5</sup> In view of this incapacity on the part of the disciples, it was well to keep these temporary apostles in a limited sphere of activity. Eidersheim views the command to avoid the Gentiles as merely a present necessity. "The command to abstain from any religious fellowship with Gentiles and Samaritans was in temporary accommodation to the prejudices of His disciples and of the Jews."<sup>6</sup> Neander adds that it was necessary for the disciples to receive the Holy Spirit, after Jesus' departure, for the complete knowledge requisite to work with heathen.<sup>7</sup>

In these Israelite cities, the disciples were to proclaim a simple message, "The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."<sup>8</sup> The people were to know that which was promised has come nigh. Bruce notes that it was a Kingdom of Heaven not of earth which was to be proclaimed.

A kingdom of heaven! That was only for such as had no earthly hope; a refuge from despair, a melancholy consolation in absence of any better comfort . . . . Only for such as ye deem miserable was the message meant. To the poor the kingdom was to be preached. To the

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4. Ewald, *op. cit.*, p. 325.
  5. Bruce, *op. cit.*, pp. 102, 103.
  6. Eidersheim, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 613.
  7. Neander, *op. cit.*, pp. 258, 259.
  8. Matt. 10:7.

laboring and heavy laden was the invitation "Come to me" addressed, and the promise of rest made; of rest from ambition and discontent, and scheming, carking care, in the blessed hope of the supernal and the eternal.<sup>9</sup>

The disciples were to make no physical preparations for the journey. It should not be their concern to consider clothing, money, or housing. All would be supplied. Eidersheim interprets this to mean that they should "avoid even the appearance of being engaged on other business; . . . the whole being should be absorbed in the service of the Lord."<sup>10</sup>

In the matter of housing, the disciples were to say to the occupants of a dwelling, "Peace be unto you," if, as Farrar puts it, "the children of peace were there it would be effective; if not, it would return on their own heads." By shaking off the dust of their feet, they would clear themselves of all responsibility for the judgment which would fall on all rejectors of the Lord.<sup>11</sup> Eidersheim further explains the symbolism of shaking off the dust. "The expression, no doubt, indicated that the ban of the Lord was resting on it [the house], and the symbolic act would, as it were, be the solemn pronouncing that 'naught of the cursed thing' clave to them."<sup>12</sup> Concerning the instructions up to this point, Farrar says, "So far their Lord had pointed out to them the duties of trustful faith, of gentle courtesy, of self-denying simplicity, as the first essentials of missionary success."<sup>13</sup>

9. Bruce, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

10. Eidersheim, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 643.

11. Farrar, *op. cit.*, p. 276.

12. Eidersheim, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 644. Note "c" refers to Deut. 13:17.

13. Farrar, *loc. cit.*

The disciples were told of the difficulties ahead of them, and were prepared for such trials.

1. They were to be wise as serpents, yet harmless as doves.<sup>14</sup>
  2. They were told to beware of men.<sup>15</sup>
  3. They were not to worry about what they would speak; it would be given them.<sup>16</sup>
  4. Jesus called for endurance in faith to the end despite all persecution.<sup>17</sup>
  5. The time is short. Haste would be necessary if the Twelve were to cover as many cities as possible.<sup>18</sup> Edersheim thinks the reference to the Son of Man's coming is a reference to the destruction of Jerusalem.<sup>19</sup>
  6. The disciples should have no fear. Fear and the lack of confessing the Lord are signs of a lack of faith.<sup>20</sup>
  7. Christ and His work must be the disciples' highest love; nothing can be permitted to interfere with service to Him.<sup>21</sup>
  8. The strength to endure all these trials lies in the fact that the disciples and Christ will be closely joined in a mystical union.<sup>22</sup>
- With these instructions the Lord sent them out. It seemed wise to the Savior to send them out two by two.<sup>23</sup> Perhaps He was teaching them

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14. Matt. 10:16.

15. *Ibid.* 10:17.

16. *Ibid.* 10:19.

17. *Ibid.* 10:22.

18. *Ibid.* 10:23.

19. Edersheim, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 646.

20. Matt. 10:25-33.

21. *Ibid.* 10:34-39.

22. *Ibid.* 10:40-42.

23. Mark 6:7.

the necessity of fellowship in the Christian life, giving them an experience in nurturing and guarding the other's faith. With these admonitions firmly fixed in their minds, the disciples went forth, preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom and healing the sick.<sup>24</sup>

24. Luke 9:1-6.

After returning from their missionary activity, Jesus desired them to "cease . . . apart into a desert place and rest awhile."<sup>1</sup> Would this be a valley of resting instead of immediately sending out the men again, an indication that it was not the Savior's purpose merely to gain as many into His circle as possible?<sup>2</sup> The withdrawal to rest the disciples that there was a time for rest away from the crowd. Also, this retirement to a quiet place would afford an opportunity to discuss the happenings of the trial mission. This mission must have been a successful one. The faith of the disciples had been deepened, and they had learned how to conduct themselves in the difficult situations of life.

#### Feeding the Five Thousand

This anticipated rest was not to be had. For when Jesus and His disciples arrived at the desert place, they found the multitude already there waiting for them. What would be the sentiments of the Master? Surely the Twelve thought He would discuss the crowd, telling them He had many things which required His immediate care, or that He needed rest. In the opinion of the disciples, Jesus had "compassion" on the multitude. Was there no end to the Savior's love? Jesus spent the whole day teaching the people and healing their sick. He was never

1. Matt 9:10.

2. Matt 9:11, 12, 13.

## VI. Special Training in the Districts Around Galilee

### Taught to Rest

After the men had returned from their missionary activity, Jesus desired them to "come . . . apart into a desert place and rest awhile."<sup>1</sup> Ewald finds in this policy of resting instead of immediately sending out the men again, an indication that it was not the Savior's purpose merely to gain as many into His circle as possible.<sup>2</sup> The withdrawal taught the disciples that there was a time for rest away from the crowd. Also, this retirement to a quiet place would afford an opportunity to discuss the happenings of the trial mission. This mission must have been a successful one. The faith of the disciples had been deepened, and they had learned how to conduct themselves in the difficult situations of life.

### Feeding the Five Thousand

This anticipated rest was not to be had. For when Jesus and His disciples arrived at the desert place, they found the multitude already there waiting for them. What would be the sentiments of the Master? Possibly the Twelve thought He would dismiss the crowd, telling them He had many things which required His immediate care, or that He needed rest. To the amazement of the disciples, Jesus had "compassion" on the multitude. Was there no end to the Savior's love? Jesus spent the whole day teaching the people and healing their sick. He was never

1. Mark 6:31.

2. Ewald, op. cit., p. 335.

too tired to perform this work of seeking and saying "that which was lost."<sup>3</sup> When it became evident that the crowd could not be dismissed lest they perish on their homeward journey, Jesus decided to come to their rescue with sustenance. Moreover, He would use this incident as a test for His disciples, particularly Philip and Andrew. The Master asked Philip where they could obtain bread to feed the multitude. Philip answered realistically, giving the facts as they were, with no remark evidencing confidence in the Lord. Andrew answered similarly, but mentioned that there was a lad there with several small fishes and five loaves of bread. This was the only suggestion that occurred to Andrew, and even this seemed hopeless to him. Farrar thinks Jesus may have desired "simple-hearted Philip" to suggest these loaves and fishes to Him as a "possible resource."<sup>4</sup> At least Jesus wanted Philip to exhibit some confidence that the Savior had the power to help in this emergency. Ewald understands this testing of the disciples as a desire on the part of the Master to show them "how much the higher faith is still wanting to them." Such a faith would not doubt the love of the Master when need is great. This faith coupled with the Master's love "redoubles everything in glad giving and distribution."<sup>5</sup> The Lord knew what He was going to do. He called for the small supply, and with it fed the multitude. After the eating Jesus made the disciples gather up the remains.<sup>6</sup> He taught them not to waste God's gifts, as though

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3. Luke 19:10.

4. Farrar, *op. cit.*, p. 303, f.n. 4. Farrar argues that probably Philip knew of the boy with the fishes and bread, even as Andrew did. Mark 6:38 seems to indicate that this small boy was "in attendance upon the Apostles." Furthermore, says Farrar, probably this boy was from the same town as Philip and Andrew, namely the western Bethsaida.

5. Ewald, *op. cit.*, p. 337.

6. Mark 6:33-44.

all that was necessary was to wait for God to supply them again. No laziness could be suffered. God as a rule chooses to work through means, and the disciples must yet continue to labor. Ewald concludes from this incident that a spiritual blessing may naturally be followed by a physical blessing.<sup>7</sup> The disciples learn to "seek first the Kingdom of God." Bruce believes that the feeding of the five thousand was to be a test. It was to supply the basis for Christ's future sermon on the "Bread of Life." Even the disciples would be asked at that crucial stage, "Will ye also go away?"<sup>8</sup> Here now, at the feeding, those who were spiritual would receive the food as a seal of Christ's divinity and saving grace, while those who were carnal would simply fill themselves with provender.<sup>9</sup> Some even at this time wanted to proclaim Jesus a king, but the Lord withdrew into a mountain.<sup>10</sup>

#### Jesus Walks on the Water

The disciples were instructed to proceed to the other side of the Sea. Bruce supposes that Jesus sent the disciples away because they sympathized with the attempt to make Him a king.<sup>11</sup> While the men were sailing at night, a sudden storm came upon them. Bruce sees here a picture of the coming storm on the land, when Jesus would not heed the people's carnal desire.<sup>12</sup> On the sea the men were alone. "The twelve must learn to defy, when they are alone by themselves also, the greatest danger of the world, after they had learnt . . . to meet it

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7. Ewald, *op. cit.*, p. 338.  
 8. John 6:67.  
 9. Bruce, *op. cit.*, p. 124.  
 10. John 6:14, 15.  
 11. Bruce, *op. cit.*, p. 127.  
 12. *Ibid.*, p. 130.

first always in his immediate presence," says Ewald.<sup>13</sup> Jesus saw their need and came to them walking on the water. They were terrified when they saw Him, thinking it was an apparition. Jesus assured them it was He. Yet Peter asked to be permitted to walk on the sea also, to make certain. Jesus gave him leave, and while walking thus, this disciple's faith wavered. Peter began to sink, and cried out in despair, but Jesus saved him. When the Lord had entered the ship, He brought all to land at once in a miraculous manner.<sup>14</sup> Bruce believes Peter's sinking an indication of his future fall. Here is a lesson to this disciple not to be rash but to use discretion.<sup>15</sup> Christ knew Peter's weakness. The man of rock was prone to trust his own power. Hence Jesus made him cry, "Lord, save me."<sup>16</sup>

"Will Ye Also Go Away?"

On land occurred the test which Jesus had been preparing. The populace wanted to crown Him. Jesus told them they were seeking Him only because of the loaves with which He had fed them. He did not want such support. He told them to seek rather the "Bread of Life." They must eat His body and drink His blood, or they would have no life in them. This was a "hard saying" to many of Jesus' followers. They left Him. The Master turned to the Twelve and asked whether they would also leave. This was a test for the disciples. They must stop to ponder why they are following Jesus of Nazareth. Is it for material gain, with their hope centered on the things of this world? If so,

13. Ewald, op. cit., p. 310.

14. Matt. 14:24-33.

15. Bruce, op. cit., p. 134.

16. Matt. 14:30.

they must leave, for the world cannot understand Christ when He says, "Eat My body and drink My blood!" This was a test, but the disciples came through with victory over their flesh. Peter answers that they cannot leave. There is no one else who has "words of eternal life." Jesus is to them the "Holy One of God." This was sweet comfort to the Master, in the midst of defection on the part of the huge multitude which had followed Him all throughout Galilee. But yet there is one black spot on this moment of consolation. One of the remaining twelve is a devil.<sup>17</sup> Schreiber supposes that Judas was aggravated that Jesus had antagonized the crowd and refused to be their king. In spite of such an attitude on the part of this disciple, Jesus did not cast him out of the band, but instead lovingly warned him "against the evil spirit which he was allowing to take possession of his mind." This is the intent of Christ's statement, "Have I not chosen you Twelve, and one of you is a devil."<sup>18</sup> Heander understands Jesus as calling Judas to see what is at work in him and repent.<sup>19</sup> The scene of the defection of the multitude could never be forgotten by the disciples. Jesus was preparing them for disloyalty and desertion in the future on the part of their own disciples.

#### Things from Within Defile

Following this event there began a different phase in Christ's journeys with the disciples. Hitherto there had been great popularity. Now the situation was different. Jesus was forced to take continually

17. John 6:22-71.

18. Schreiber, op. cit., p. 111.

19. Heander, op. cit., p. 269.

increasing and extended journeys with His men. Ewald studies the present circumstance. He observes that Jesus was making every effort to avoid antagonizing the world and to train His disciples in quiet, but the world would not leave Him alone.

This world perceived that even his most quiet and silent work really threatened its very existence with the most weird peril<sup>20</sup>. . . . Everything that proceeded from him, even the smallest and most useful things for suffering humanity, always proceeded at the same time from an entirely different spirit than [sic] that which animated the prevailing powers at the time.<sup>21</sup>

It was necessary that the Savior should avoid the world's hostility as long as possible in order to continue the difficult task of forming His "Community." At this time, Jesus began to state more emphatically and clearly what sort of opposition the disciples should expect in their work and also the nature of the opposition. He began to give brief hints about His coming death. As the Lord's work now entered fully and clearly into the world, its opposition became more pronounced, but by this time the disciples were more ready to understand and to rightly estimate the opposition.<sup>22</sup>

One of the first episodes of opposition was provided by the Pharisees who came from Jerusalem. They reproached Jesus for allowing His disciples to disregard the ceremonial washing of the hands. Jesus defended His followers. The disciples learned that in their future work and dealing with men, the important thing to be concerned with is the heart, not a number of ceremonies. The Twelve should not be anxious

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20. Jesus said to His brethren, "The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil." John 7:7.

21. Ewald, *op. cit.*, p. 313.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 316.

to have all men conform to ceremonies, but should be anxious that all cleanse their hearts. The disciples were to concentrate on being bishops of men's souls. They were to "regard everything pure or impure in relation to the inner man," says Ewald. He adds that Jesus in this instance showed the general perversity of the Pharisaic doctrines and rules of life.<sup>23</sup> The Lord further taught His disciples not to permit men to impose upon them commandments which set aside or annul those of God. God's commandments are in line with the life of the soul. Break them, and the soul is defiled. Mark in his Gospel informs us that the parable, told by Jesus to illustrate the impossibility of things from without defiling a man, made "all meats clean."<sup>24</sup> The Jewish ceremonial laws were gone.

#### The Syrophenician Woman

In order to escape the opposition for awhile and be enabled to calmly instruct His disciples, Jesus journeyed to Phoenicia. Here He was besought by a Syrophenician woman, that He would heal her daughter who "had an unclean spirit." Jesus tried her faith by making her continue beseeching Him. Finally He granted her request.<sup>25</sup> The disciples could learn persistence in prayer from her example. Also they could see that Gentiles were fit for the Kingdom, fit to be recipients of its blessings. Ewald tells us it appears that Christ turned aside into this heathen region intentionally to give the disciples a plain example of how strong a faith a Gentile, and a woman at that, can have.<sup>26</sup>

23. Ewald, op. cit., p. 347.

24. Mark 7:1-23.

25. Ibid., 7:24-30.

26. Ewald, op. cit., pp. 347, 348.

### Further Withdrawal and the Feeding of the Four Thousand

Leaving this region, Jesus headed for Decapolis. Here He healed a man who was deaf and dumb. As was His policy, He forbade the man to publish the matter.<sup>27</sup> Ewald feels that in view of the fact that the population of this area was largely heathen, Jesus may have wanted to teach the disciples the same lesson as in the case of the Syrophenician woman.<sup>28</sup>

Also in this region Jesus fed the four thousand. There probably were both Gentiles and Jews in this crowd. Jesus once more evidenced His "compassion" toward the people. In addition, the episode served to illustrate to the calculating disciples that they should ask God's assistance in their troubles, He was not to be left out of consideration. The Twelve should let their requests be made known unto God and ask His guidance. They were not to permit their thoughts to be caught up with material planning and a mere earthly, mathematical, calculation. This is the type of thinking which believes that if a problem cannot be solved mathematically, it is impossible of solution. When the meal was finished, thrift was once more enjoined upon the disciples in that they were commanded to gather up the remaining fragments.<sup>29</sup>

### The Sign of Jonah

In the region of Dalmanutha, Jesus was accosted by the Pharisees and Sadducees. They demanded of Him a sign from Heaven. Jesus told them they would receive no signs except the sign of Jonah.<sup>30</sup> The Son of Man

27. Mark 7:31-37.

28. Ewald, op. cit., p. 348.

29. Mark 8:1-9.

30. Ibid. 8:10; Matt. 16:1-4.

was not seeking acceptance by signs, that is, by miraculous wonders which He might perform. The sign of Jonah was all that would be given that generation. Eidersheim interprets the "sign of Jonah" as referring to Jonah's "solemn warning of near judgment, and his call to repentance - the only sign now, or rather 'unto this generation no sign,' was the warning cry of judgment and the loving call to repentance."<sup>31</sup> These people did not even recognize the sign which was given them. Ewald explains the sign thus: as Jonah had "returned from the depths of the sea that he might both by his own person and his remarkable history speak the more powerfully as a witness for the truth of his words, so he [Jesus] also will after his visible destruction return only to speak to this generation with stronger words."<sup>32</sup>

#### The Leaven of the Pharisees

After this clash Jesus entered a boat once more to leave the region. As He sat in the vessel perhaps musing over what had just happened, He warned the Twelve to beware of the "leaven" of the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herod. Fehling calls to our attention that "the Pharisees with their extreme legalism and the Sadducees with their worldly interests had just combined against Him."<sup>33</sup> The disciples had neglected to bring bread with them. Jesus knew they would begin worrying about this. Hence His warning to them. The disciples should not think materialistically like the Pharisees and Sadducees or Herod, who were caught up with the things of this world. The Twelve should not exclude God from consideration

31. Eidersheim, op. cit., vol. II, pp. 69, 70.

32. Ewald, op. cit., p. 349.

33. Adam Fehling, The Life of Christ, p. 371.

in this need. Jesus reminds them of the previous feedings of the multitudes.<sup>34</sup> This was the second time that Jesus had used the metaphor of leaven. We see that there are two kinds of leaven in the world. One pertains to the Pharisees and the other to the Kingdom. The first operates without God, is a god unto itself, is materialistic. The other leans on God and does not worry. Edersheim correctly observes that the discourse on the leaven of the Pharisees is to be linked with their recent seeking for a sign.<sup>35</sup> This leaven is the earthly leaven which will have nothing to do with the Spirit and His convincing. It desires earthly signs. Without them it refuses to believe. Bruce agrees that the leaven of the Pharisees was their unbelief.<sup>36</sup> The man who refuses to believe is completely materialistic. It was this materialism therefore, which was the leaven of the Pharisees and against which the Savior warned His disciples.

When the boat had landed at Bethsaida, Jesus healed a blind man. Again the admonition was to go home secretly, not even to enter into the nearby village.<sup>37</sup> Agape was the basis for Christ's miracles, not self-glorification.

#### The Keys of the Kingdom

The Master took His disciples north to the region of Caesarea Philippi. On this journey, Jesus called for a profession of faith from the disciples. He first asked them who men said He was. Then He put the question squarely to them. "Who say ye that I am?" Bruce believes

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34. Mark 8:13-21; Matt. 16:5-12.

35. Edersheim, op. cit., vol. II, p. 71.

36. Bruce, op. cit., p. 160.

37. Matt. 8:22-26.

Jesus made His disciples formulate this confession because He wanted to tell them of His coming death.<sup>38</sup> The Twelve must face this question and search the depths of their souls. Peter serves as spokesman for the group. He confesses, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." This profession of faith brought joy to the heart of the Lord. Ewald says the Lord rejoiced at the "rock-firm faith" which was evidenced. His labor among them had not been in vain.<sup>39</sup> Christ told Peter that "flesh and blood" had not revealed this to him. Bruce finds here an indication that Jesus of Nazareth was God, for He had revealed this to Peter.<sup>40</sup> Human reason cannot comprehend or discover such spiritual knowledge. God must reveal it. Later as the disciples made conversions and gathered the elect, there would be no cause for pride, for all was the Lord's doing. All glory belongs to God. Following Peter's confession, the Lord declared, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." Bruce observes concerning this utterance, that Christ meant to say, Thou art Petros - for the first time you are worthy of the name of Rock. You have your foot planted on the Eternal Rock. Bruce adds that Peter might fall, but his eternally true confession would never.<sup>41</sup> It is true that Peter is in the foundation of the Christian Church. As the writer of the Epistle to the Ephesians says, "[Ye] are built upon the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone."<sup>42</sup> But this is equally true and more so, that Jesus is the chief

38. Bruce, op. cit., p. 164.

39. Ewald, op. cit., p. 351.

40. Bruce, op. cit., p. 163.

41. Ibid., pp. 169, 170.

42. Eph. 2:20.

cornerstone of that building and foundation. Even the fact that Peter was told he would be in the foundation would not exclude other apostles also from being placed by Christ in that foundation. Bruce correctly observes,

. . . if it be true that Peter is here called the rock on which the church shall be built, this is to be understood in the same way as the promise of the keys [namely a promise given first to one disciple and later to all]. Peter is called the foundation of the church only in the same sense as all the apostles are called the foundation by the Apostle Paul, viz. as the first preacher of the true faith concerning Jesus as the Christ and Son of God; and if the man who first professed that faith be honored by being called originally the rock, that only shows that the faith, and not the man is after all the true foundation. That which makes Simon a Petros, a rock-like man, fit to build on, is the real Petra on which the Ecclesia is to be built.<sup>43</sup>

Jesus went a step further. He promised Peter that He would give him the "keys of the kingdom of heaven." This statement also does not imply that Jesus cannot give the "keys" to others later. In this instance Christ assures the disciple that in the future whatsoever he would bind would have God's stamp of approval, also whatsoever he would loose. We infer that this is possible through the fact that God Himself is present within Peter.

Ebersheim discusses the meaning of the power to "bind" and "loose." He holds that Jesus must have intended a meaning which the disciples understood; there must be a connection with something that was in the realm of their experience. This author declares that binding ("Asar") and loosing ("Hittir") meant for the Rabbis their legislative power to prohibit and permit. Ebersheim also mentions a Hebrew word, "Shera" or "Sheri," which was often used in place of "Hittir." "Shera" or

<sup>43</sup>. Bruce, op. cit., p. 169.

"Sheri" meant permitting, but in time it also came to mean pardoning. In addition to their legislative power the Rabbis had a judicial power. "These two powers - the legislative and judicial - which belonged to the Rabbinic office, Christ now transferred, and that not in their pretension, but in their reality to His Apostles: the first here to Peter as their Representative, the second after His Resurrection to the Church."<sup>144</sup>

Farrar goes a step further than Eidersheim. He distinguishes between three powers. The first was the power of the "keys." A key was used in connection with the ordination of a scribe. Therefore, the keys meant the "power to open the treasury of the Divine oracles, and bring them out to Christ's disciples" (Cf. Matt. xiii. 52; Luke xi. 52; Matt. xxiii. 4). To those who heard it, it must have implied the teaching power of the Church." Binding and loosing is the power to declare which precepts are, and which are not binding. This was the legislative power of the Church. The power to forgive sins or to retain them is linked with the gift of the Holy Spirit and "was possible only so far as the prophetic gift, in greater or less measure, was bestowed on those who exercise it."<sup>145</sup> Farrar states in another place, "The key was a common Jewish metaphor for authority (Isa. xxi. 22; Luke xi. 52). (Crozier, i. 155, 283; Schoettg., Hor. Heb. ii. 894.)" Farrar is honest enough however, to say with regard to the entire passage, that he has not "fully solved its difficulties."<sup>146</sup>

<sup>144</sup>. Eidersheim, op. cit., vol. II, p. 85.

<sup>145</sup>. Farrar, op. cit., p. 372, f.n. 2, p. 372, f.n. Farrar says he obtained this opinion from a sermon, "Confession and Absolution," by Professor Plumtre (Isbister, 1874).

<sup>146</sup>. Ibid, p. 370, f.n.

Neander views the gift of Christ to Peter and the Apostles as the power to announce forgiveness to those who receive the Gospel and condemnation to those who reject it. He refers us to John 20:23. Neander adds, "The same thing is expressed in other words in Matt., x., 13; 2 Cor., ii., 15, 16." The "keys" refer to reception or exclusion from the Kingdom of Heaven. "Binding" and "loosing" refer to the means of reception and exclusion, namely the pardoning of sin or the withholding of pardon.<sup>47</sup>

Jesus closed the discourse with a charge to the disciples that they should not make Him known as "the Christ." Dr. Bretscher points out that it was because of the false ideas which people had of the Christ, that Jesus preferred to have Himself known as the Son of Man.<sup>48</sup>

#### Foretelling His Death

After this Jesus began to speak to His disciples plainly of His coming death. Before this He had given them hints as to this fact. Bruce explains that Jesus had first spoken to them in riddles, because premature plainness, before they were certain of His divinity, might have frightened them and wrecked their faith. At this later date it was natural to speak plainly, no longer in riddles, because the clouds of opposition were gathering.<sup>49</sup> Ewald finds in the Savior's action a desire to tell them plainly of His coming suffering and death, so that the disciples might learn from Him how to conduct themselves under similar circumstances. Jesus "prepares his friends to meet with the proper weapons the dangers he foresees."<sup>50</sup>

47. Neander, op. cit., p. 272, f.n.

48. Dr. Paul Bretscher, lectures on the Gospel of John, 1949.

49. Bruce, op. cit., p. 174.

50. Ewald, op. cit., pp. 350, 351.

When Peter heard this, he attempted to dissuade the Savior from undergoing such suffering. Christ would not be tempted. He recognized the Temptor in Peter's word. Therefore He rebuked the disciple harshly. There happened to Peter something common in the Christian experience. After a moment of great honor, there often comes a moment of disgrace. Christ here made it clear to Peter that the Son of Man would not follow men's ideas. It is men's desire that Christ be an earthly king and be highly glorified here. Jesus will follow God's eternal plans which call for Him to be the opposite of what men would like Him to be. Jesus wants His band also to do God's will and not to follow men's wishes.<sup>51</sup> If they would be true disciples, they must leave the road of the body's fleshly desires when God and the Gospel need their energies. They too would have crosses to bear, even as He had His. They must count the whole world as nothing when the bonds of living under God's rule call for their labors. Jesus asks His disciples what can equal this life under God's rule. It is a "pearl without price."<sup>52</sup> Jesus told His followers that some of them would still be living, when He would come with His terrible judgment on those who would cause His suffering and death.<sup>53</sup> Ebersheim believes this is a reference to the destruction of Jerusalem.<sup>54</sup>

With this discourse Jesus was bringing to a close the special training of His disciples in the districts around Galilee and beginning a new phase of their training. Now was beginning the preparation for His coming death. Bruce terms the above discourse by Christ in the region of Caesarea Philippi, "The First Lesson on the Cross."<sup>55</sup>

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51. Matt. 16:21-23.

52. *Ibid.* 16:24-26.

53. *Ibid.* 16:27, 28.

54. Ebersheim, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 88.

55. Bruce, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

VII. The Start of the Road to the Cross

The Transfiguration

The initial event in this period of the disciples' training was the transfiguration of Jesus on Mount Hermon. Peter, James, and John were present. While transfigured, Jesus discussed with Moses and Elijah His coming death. Peter wanted to build a tabernacle for Christ and those with whom the Lord was speaking. Jesus would not permit it.<sup>1</sup> Bruce infers that Peter wished to stay on this happy mount, away from all coming suffering; but, it could not be so.<sup>2</sup> Ewald explains that Peter wished to build an earthly tabernacle, but Christ is not an earthly ruler. If a man would become materialistic before the transfigured Christ, the "whole epiphany of glory . . . would immediately vanish."<sup>3</sup>

This author discusses the purpose of the Transfiguration.

[Jesus had now] in reality substantially completed . . . the rock-firm foundation of his Community, although the final conclusion, and as it were the outer covering of his work, had still to be added . . . . We behold here at the same time, as in a prelude, the eternal transfiguration beginning, scarcely at all retarded by the few things that have yet to be completed on the earth.<sup>4</sup>

Eidersheim interprets the meaning of the transfiguration for the disciples. He declares, "Coming after the announcement of His death and passion, it [the Voice from Heaven at the transfiguration] sealed

1. Matt. 17:1-8.

2. Bruce, op. cit., p. 196.

3. Ewald, op. cit., p. 353.

4. Ibid., pp. 352, 353.

5. Mark 9:30-32.

that testimony, and, in view of it, proclaimed Him as the Prophet to Whom Moses had bidden Israel hearken . . . ."<sup>5</sup> The Transfiguration was also a lesson in fellowship. Jesus took His disciples along to strengthen their faith. So also the disciples should be concerned about building up the faith of their fellow saints.

#### Inability to Heal the Demonic Boy

The disciples and the Master returned to their fellows. Those left behind had failed in an attempt to heal the demonic son of a man of the region. Jesus healed the boy, not without first expressing His vexation at the faithless generation that was so caught up with "signs" that it believed this to be the Savior's only vocation. The disciples wondered why they were not able to cure the lad. Jesus told them that their faith was lacking. As Eidersheim states: cures were not to be performed by merely using formulas; real faith was needed.<sup>6</sup> We note that Jesus made the father of the boy confess his own faith and desire for faith, before He cured the boy.<sup>7</sup>

#### Lessons in Humility

Returning through Galilee, Jesus once more told His disciples plainly of His death. They still could not comprehend the matter, but they would after Jesus' prophecy had been fulfilled.<sup>8</sup>

In Capernaum, Peter was accosted by those who collected the Temple tax. They asked him whether his Master paid the tax. Peter answered quickly, "Yes." Eidersheim thinks that Peter was conscious of the words of Jesus concerning His suffering, and afraid lest something happen here,

5. Eidersheim, op. cit., vol. II, p. 101.

6. Ibid, vol. II, pp. 106-109.

7. Mark 9:14-29; Matt. 17:14-20.

8. Mark 9:30-32.

he quickly replied in the affirmative.<sup>9</sup> Afterwards when Peter came into the house, he had to face the Master. Jesus seems to have desired that Peter not act so quickly in fear, but that he let the Master make the decisions. He pointed out to Peter that it really is not fitting for Him to pay the tax. Kings do not charge tribute from their own sons to pay for their palaces and servants. Farrar interprets the Savior as teaching Peter that, as sons of the Great King of Heaven, He especially, and even Peter, are not bound to pay the tax. If they do so, it is merely out of "free and cheerful giving."<sup>10</sup> With this, Jesus paid the tax and even paid Peter's. He instructed Peter that he should go to the sea, and in the mouth of the first fish he caught he would find sufficient to pay the tax. Jesus knew that the men collecting the tax would not understand the reasons why the Savior should be exempt, and lest He offend them, He would pay.<sup>11</sup> Perhaps they would someday be believers in Him, and Jesus would not want His refusal to pay the tax to be a stumbling block to their faith. Jesus also was not courting death. This could be a lesson to the disciples not to beg for martyrdom. Farrar observes in this story, that Peter had put Jesus on the spot with his hasty answer. Jesus corrects him in a loving manner. In the end Christ shows His forgiveness and good will to the disciple by also paying the latter's tax. Farrar observes in addition that by paying in such a manner, Jesus would show to the tax collectors His authority. "He pays the tribute, therefore," says Clarus, "but taken from a

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9. Merschlein, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 111.  
 10. Farrar, *op. cit.*, p. 391.  
 11. Matt. 17:24-27.

fish's mouth, that His majesty may be recognized."<sup>12</sup> Paying the tax in an ordinary way would have compromised the principle He set before Peter, argues Farrar.<sup>13</sup> Bruce sees the teaching of humbleness in this incident. Christ is saying, "If I were like you disciples, I would stand on my rights, especially in view of my recent transfiguration, but I pay the tax."<sup>14</sup>

Not long after this the disciples fell to disputing who was the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven. Selfish ambition was at work. Jesus taught them that each man should be as a child among the others. They were not to strive for greatness. The one who is least among them is really great.<sup>15</sup> Bruce says a child is the greatest in the Kingdom because it is unpretentious. He adds that the disciples were taught to receive little ones, i.e. those who are weak and the like. If Jesus has come to save the lost, how much more those who are merely little.<sup>16</sup>

It appears as though John, after this rebuff, tried to soothe his and his fellow disciples' shamed and deflated spirits by reporting something to the Master which would illicit praise. He told Jesus that they had found a man who was casting out devils in the Savior's name. They had forbidden this man to do so, because he was not following with them. Instead of gaining the Savior's praise, this action also called down His rebuke. Jesus told them not to be narrow and exclusive toward those who were not of His immediate group. Jesus taught them that in

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12. Clarins, quoted in Trench, On the Miracles, p. 406, quoted in Farrar, op. cit., p. 392.

13. Farrar, op. cit., pp. 391, 392.

14. Bruce, op. cit., p. 226.

15. Matt. 18:1-5.

16. Bruce, op. cit., pp. 201, 203, 206, 207.

reality there is no middle ground. He who is not against Jesus is of course for Him, and he who is not with Jesus is against Him. The disciples should not have forbidden this man, seeing that he was not working against Jesus. Eidersheim says this discussion is in keeping with the dispute over who was the greatest in the Kingdom.<sup>17</sup> The disciples were told to exhibit it within their own band toward each other. In striving for greatness, they will offend others by not manifesting agape. They will be taking advantage of each other in trying to gain the chief place in the Kingdom. Jesus very definitely warned the disciples against offending. "Woe unto the world because of offenses." The Master urged His followers not to live for themselves. If anything, hands, feet, or eyes, should pull them away from God, and make them live for themselves, they should do away with them. As in the "Sermon on the Mount" this was an overstatement for emphasis.

Jesus spoke further of the necessity of laying aside their own fleshly desires and ambitions. He told them "every one shall be salted with fire . . . . But if the salt have lost its savor, wherewith will ye season it." Eidersheim informs us that every sacrifice had to be sprinkled with salt to be acceptable to God. He tells us that the statement, "If the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted," must be proverbial. It occurs in exactly the same words in the Talmud - apparently to denote a thing that is impossible.<sup>18</sup> So, the disciples must, according to Fahling, make themselves acceptable to God as a living sacrifice, by the salt of crucifying their

17. Eidersheim, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 117.

18. *Ibid.*, vol. II, pp. 121, 122.

fleshly desires and ambitions through the power of the Spirit. If they do not do this, there is nothing that can make them acceptable.<sup>19</sup> Then let the disciples have this salt in themselves, and be at peace; let there be no earthly ambitions, no striving for supremacy. Another reason why they should be careful not to offend is that, even as no man likes to lose one out of his hundred sheep, so God is concerned over the one soul that may have been offended by someone.<sup>20</sup> What if the man whom the disciples had forbade to work in Christ's name would have been offended, and would have stopped using the salt, had ceased using Christ to make himself acceptable to God! The disciples had learned their lesson.

#### A Lesson In Fellowship

The Savior was still concerned about how His band would live together. He instructed them as to how to act in love when someone has sinned against them. This was a little picture of their future life in the Church as "Church."<sup>21</sup> They must be concerned for their brother's soul and watch over it. By following Christ's suggestions they may gain their brother who has sinned against them. On the other hand, they cannot allow such an absence of agape, as exhibited by flagrant sinning, to exist in their midst. The example of Ananias and Saphyra later demonstrated this. As Bruce says, the chronic alienation between two Christians is "fraught with deadly harm to the spiritual life" of

19. Fahling, op. cit., p. 392.

20. Mark 9:38-50; Matt. 18:6-14.

21. By living as "Church," I mean the taking up of responsibility for another's faith on the part of everyone who has been called out by God to be a believer. I obtained this definition from Dr. R. R. Gaemmerer, lectures on the Church and the World, 1949.

the whole Church.<sup>22</sup> The brother who has sinned must be made to see that he is working against Christ. He must see he is not with Christ. Edersheim explains the matter well. He declares that ". . . the principle of the Kingdom - which, negatively, is that of self-forgetfulness, positively, that of service of love - would first seek the good of the offending brother." If his persistence not to listen makes it necessary, he must be put out of the Church. This excommunication meant to the disciples that, "He was to be treated as was the custom in regard to a heathen or a publican - not persecuted, despised, or avoided, but not received in Church - fellowship (a heathen), nor admitted to close familiar intercourse (a publican)."<sup>23</sup> This "binding" or "loosing," excluding from the Church or gaining the brother, is valid in Heaven, says Christ. This seems to give to the expression, "binding and loosing," more meaning than just the legislative power to prohibit or permit as Edersheim had earlier indicated.<sup>24</sup> Here it includes the power to forgive or retain sins. The aforementioned author, however, makes a fine observation on what it meant to the disciples when Christ said, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Edersheim expounds, "The Incarnation of Christ was the link which bound earth to heaven; through it whatever was agreed upon in the fellowship of Christ, as that which was to be asked, would be done for them of His Father which was in heaven." There is "also the infinite possibility of a higher service of love. For, in

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22. Bruce, *op. cit.*, p. 209.

23. Edersheim, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 123, 124.

24. Cf. pp. 69, 70.

the smallest gathering in the Name of Christ, His presence would be, and with it the certainty of nearness to, and acceptance with, God."<sup>25</sup>

At this point Peter interrupted the Savior to ask how many times he should forgive his brother. He suggested seven times as a possibility. Peter exhibits here the spirit of legalism instead of agape. He wants to resolve the whole matter down to a number. This is the spirit which would rather operate with laws than apply the law of love, the spirit that wants to be told what to do in every act by a specific rule, rather than to make every act an expression of agape. Perhaps Peter by his remark, was trying to gain Jesus' approval, by specifying a number greater than did the Rabbis;<sup>26</sup> or, was it that he felt the need to extend the Pharisees' specification, knowing Jesus as he did?

Jesus seized the opportunity to instruct the whole group of disciples on this matter. Christ told them a parable to illustrate that they must forgive at all times. He told them of the unjust steward who was forgiven by his lord, but who refused to forgive one of his own debtors. This steward was thrown into everlasting imprisonment by his master. Bruce finds even in this parable a call for humility on the part of the disciples. He says that the evil debtor was probably a minister of state. Thus Christ is showing what those who occupy the chief places in this world are so often like. They practice fraud and rob their king, yet they are most exacting on those under them. Why should the disciples then clamor after the highest places of honor?<sup>27</sup>

25. Edersheim, op. cit., vol. II, p. 124.

26. We learn from Edersheim that among the Rabbis, ". . . it was a settled rule, that forgiveness should not be extended more than three times." Op. cit., vol. II, p. 125.

27. Bruce, op. cit., p. 218.

However, the most obvious teaching which Christ intended for His men was that, in every instance in which they were sinned against, there would be before them the choice of Heaven or Hell. If they would not forgive, God would not. If they would not forgive, Christ certainly is not in their heart, so how could God forgive!<sup>28</sup> In the words of Edersheim, "Christ forgives sin, not sins - and he who has experienced it follows in His footsteps."<sup>29</sup>

#### The Needs of the Kingdom Come First

After this discourse, Jesus had another opportunity to show the disciples that the Kingdom must have first place in their lives. Three men approached desiring to be disciples. To the first Jesus pictured discipleship as often involving the necessity of leaving behind the comforts of a home. To the second Jesus pointed out that the needs of the Kingdom come first in point of time and in choice of where to expend energy. To the last man Jesus said the Kingdom must come first in point of affection.<sup>30</sup> Jesus' own disciples were to remember that the needs of Kingdom are urgent. This would necessitate much denial of their personal desires. Edersheim remarks, "There are critical moments in our inner history, when to postpone the immediate call, is really to reject it; when to go and bury the dead - even though it were a dead father - were to die ourselves!"<sup>31</sup>

Thus with many discourses and examples the Savior made clear His coming sacrifice and death. He also stressed for His disciples the

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28. Matt. 18:15-35.

29. Edersheim, loc. cit.

30. Luke 9:57-62.

31. Edersheim, op. cit., vol. II, p. 133.

necessity of sacrifice on their part. They must hold themselves very low, but hold the Kingdom very high. They must not live for themselves, but all must be done for the Kingdom.

## VIII. The Journey to Jerusalem

### Avoiding the Crowd

The Jewish feast of tabernacles was at hand. Jesus' brethren urged Him to attend this feast in Jerusalem. They wanted Him to go there and proclaim Himself by miracles. He was doing these things in Galilee, which was like doing them "in secret." They wished Him to do such works in the heart of Jewish influence, namely Jerusalem. John informs us that the Lord's brethren did not believe on Him. Jesus told these brethren that His method for winning disciples was much different from theirs. They wanted Him to gain support by signs and wonders. This the world would love. But Jesus method was to gain the heart of a man through repentance and conversion. In the words of Eidersheim, "Discipleship is not the result of any outward manifestation by 'evidences' or demonstration. It requires the conversion of a child-like spirit."<sup>1</sup> Jesus said that the world hates this method which He uses. It hates Him because He testifies of it that its works are evil.<sup>2</sup>

When these brethren had gone on ahead to the feast, the Lord went up to the Holy City in secret. Jesus went to Jerusalem after all, but He went for a far different reason from the one His brethren had urged on Him. Ewald looks into the purposes of Christ on this visit. He finds that Jesus as a true human being wished to go to Jerusalem once more to see whether they would accept Him. Yet, He did not want to cut

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1. Eidersheim, op. cit., vol. II, p. 130.  
 2. John 7:2-9.

short His "life-work." In fact He eagerly seized every hour in which He could devote Himself further to the Twelve and to sufferers. By waiting a few days, the noise, excitement, and the pilgrims' procession would be over. He could have calm and leisure to proclaim His message. Jesus did not intend to give "a surprise and challenge" either by suddenly appearing in Jerusalem, or by His subsequent actions there.<sup>3</sup> The Lord in going to Jerusalem was giving to His disciples an example, that they should never cease trying to lead a man to repentance, even if the endeavor seemed hopeless. Jesus knew by the use of His Godly powers, that the people of Jerusalem would not repent and accept Him, yet He as a true human being, continued to try to gain them. He longed to gather them under His wings as a hen gathers her chicks.<sup>4</sup> In the same spirit, Jesus kept on trying to gain Judas. Yet in the end the result often is that while the preaching is intended to save, when it is rejected it stands as a judgment.<sup>5</sup>

#### The Samaritan Rejection

Jesus intended to pass through Samaria on His way to Jerusalem. One of the villages through which He wished to journey refused Him passage. The "Sons of Thunder," James and John, wanted to call down fire on this village. Jesus told them they did not know of what spirit they were. It was not Jesus' wish to use force to gain His will.<sup>6</sup> The disciples should learn not to force men into Christ's Kingdom, nor gain His way by force of arms. Farrar says of the men who wanted to call down fire from Heaven, "They had not realized the difference which separated Sinai and Carmel from Calvary and Herson."<sup>7</sup>

3. Ewald, op. cit., pp. 358, 359.

4. Matt. 23:37.

5. Ibid. 23:13 ff.; Luke 10:10-15.

6. Luke 9:51-56.

7. Farrar, op. cit., p. 437.

### Keeping Christ's Word

Jesus arrived in Jerusalem at the middle of the feast. He went up into the Temple and taught. As usual there was opposition from the Jews. Before His hearers in the Temple Jesus laid down the standard for true discipleship. Those who keep His Word are true disciples. These shall know the truth, and the truth shall make them free.<sup>8</sup> In their future ministry, the Twelve should learn that they could strengthen themselves in their true discipleship, by thinking about, discussing, and using Jesus' Word. The Lord had said to them at another time, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."<sup>9</sup>

### The Man Born Blind

In Jerusalem occurred the healing of a man who was born blind. Jesus and the disciples happened to pass this man by the side of the road. The disciples casually asked whose sin had caused this affliction. Jesus answered that God had His own purpose in this man's blindness. It was not a result of anyone's sin. This man's blindness had come upon him that the works of God might be made manifest in him. It was not the job of the followers of Christ to fathom afflictions or to search God's mind. The Twelve should realize that not every affliction arises from sin. An affliction may be the means which God wishes to use for showing forth His glory. Edersheim interprets the answer of Christ to mean that the reason for this man's blindness was, that Christ might be shown to be the Savior from sin by His healing of evil.<sup>10</sup> Thus the works of God would be made manifest in this blind man.

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8. John 8:31.

9. Ibid. 6:63.

10. Edersheim, op. cit., vol. II, p. 179.

Jesus continued on this idea of work. He told the disciples to work while it is day, lest the night would come when no man could work. The work of spreading the Gospel is urgent. The Lord further remarked that while He was in the world He could not help being its Light. Later inasmuch as He was in the disciples, they too could not help but be the world's light. To the Pharisees who opposed Christ's healing of the blind man, the Lord said, "If ye were blind, ye would have not sin; but now ye say, We See: your sin remaineth."<sup>11</sup> Neander explains, "Ignorance would have excused them, as in the case of the sin against the Son of Man. But their boast of knowledge was a witness against themselves. Able to see, but not willing, their blindness was their guilt."<sup>12</sup> This is again an instance of the sin against the Holy Ghost. The Pharisees deceived others into thinking they were channels of God to men, while they in truth closed their hearts to God. They were rejecting the Spirit of Truth and teaching lies to the people.

Through the parable of the good Shepherd, Jesus once more intimated to His disciples that He was going to die for the flock and come to life again.<sup>13</sup>

#### The Mission of the Seventy

After these things the Lord was ready to send the disciples out on another mission. He appointed seventy for this task. The mission was to be rapid. They were to take no shoes, no wallet, and were to enter into no long greetings. They were to go into every city where

11. John 9:1-41.

12. Neander, *op. cit.*, p. 301.

13. John 10:1-21.

the Lord Himself would come. They would be His assistants. Jesus would follow up their work. The disciples learned from the Master to have assistants help them with their work. Jesus labored in the small area of Palestine for three years. His disciples later carried the message of the Gospel over all the Mediterranean world. Let the Twelve train disciples for themselves who would do likewise. Even now the Seventy should pray the Lord of the Harvest for more harvesters. The message of the Seventy should be that the Kingdom of God is come nigh. It seems that Jesus wanted to cover all of Palestine with this message. Once again, if a city would not receive them, they should shake off the dust of their feet as a testimony against that city. Woe was pronounced against the cities that rejected them. These cities would fare worse than Sodom. Greater responsibility arises from greater opportunity. A warning against the evilness of men was given the Seventy. In all, the men should remember that Christ would be with them, and that they would have His authority. So the men were sent out. Bruce feels that the disciples might have thought this type of revivalism would be the method they should use in their work in the future, but they could also recall that Jesus had trained them thoroughly. Arousing the masses would be one part of their future job, but instructing men already eager would be another.<sup>14</sup>

The Seventy completed their mission and returned with joy. In exuberance they told the Master, "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us in thy name." Jesus warned them against pride. Of course,

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<sup>14</sup>. Bruce, op. cit., p. 107.

they had been given miraculous powers,<sup>15</sup> but they should not think that they themselves had performed the wonders, and that they no longer needed God. Jesus told them rather to rejoice that they had God; then they would not fall as had the evil spirits. Ewald observes that lest these novices become filled with pride, Jesus began to moderate their joy "the more frequently in proportion as they began to labour more independently."<sup>16</sup> If Judas was in this joyful band, he needed such a rebuff as would warn him to avoid seeking earthly glory and to seek rather God.

In spite of the necessity of warnings against pride, Christ rejoiced in spirit to God for the success which had been granted this mission. Bruce wonders whether the "fastidious" and "refined" sections of "Jewish religious society" had rejected the Seventy, since Jesus said these things had been "hidden from the wise and prudent."<sup>17</sup> The disciples could learn to expect such treatment at their hands. Jesus

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15. Eidersheim believes that these miraculous powers were to be continued in the Church. He claims, "The authority and power over 'the demons,' attained by faith, was not to pass away with the occasion that had called it forth. The Seventy were the representatives of the Church in her work of preparing for the Advent of Christ. As already indicated [before this], the sight of Satan fallen from heaven is the continuous history of the Church. What the faith of the Seventy had attained was now to be made permanent to the Church, whose representatives they were. For, the words in which Christ now gave authority and power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the Enemy, and the promise that nothing should hurt them, could not have been addressed to the Seventy for a Mission which had now come to an end, except so far as they represented the Church Universal." The serpents and scorpions are to be symbolically understood. *Op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 140, 141.

16. Ewald, *op. cit.*, pp. 333, 334.

17. Bruce, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

followers could see that the Father is the one who does the revealing, not men. The Son likewise reveals these things to whosoever He will. Once more Jesus tells them that their eyes are blessed.<sup>18</sup> This great blessing brings great responsibility. If they think on these things, there will be no cause for pride.

#### The Good Samaritan

Jesus was accosted by a lawyer who wished to tempt Him. The Lord took advantage of the occasion to teach that all men are the Christian's neighbors. The disciples should manifest agape to all in need of their assistance. No prejudice such as the Jews had toward the Samaritans should exclude anyone from the disciples' love. The Twelve could learn that a man will not accept the Savior if he will not admit his sin. To such a man, a Savior is of no use.<sup>19</sup>

#### Ask, and It Shall be Given

Jesus made it clear to His followers that they should pray when in need. He pictured God as a friend and Father, one who is longing to help. If the disciples wanted to learn to pray, they should ask this of God. God would give the Holy Spirit to them. Then they would ask the right things. In further answer to the request to be taught how to pray, Jesus gave them the Lord's Prayer.<sup>20</sup> Bruce infers that the model prayers which Jesus prayed before His disciples had occasioned their request to be taught how to pray. They measured their poor attempts against His perfection. In the above incident Christ gave His "immature disciples" two things: first, words and thoughts; and

18. Luke 10:1-24.

19. Ibid. 10:25-37.

20. Ibid. 11:1-13.

secondly, "aids to faith in God as the answerer of prayer. There is first a form of prayer, and then an argument enforcing perseverance in prayer."<sup>21</sup>

#### Preaching to the Pharisees and People of Judea

The Lord continued His ministry in Judea. Many discourses were held with the Pharisees and the people of that region. The discourses also served to instruct the disciples. In one of these Jesus condemned that generation for its evil seeking after a sign. Once more Christ declared that the only sign which would be given that generation would be the sign of Jonah.<sup>22</sup> Ebersheim detects a difference between this and the former similar remark of the Savior. This author clarifies, "Whereas on the former occasion Christ chiefly referred to Jonas' preaching (of repentance), on this He rather pointed to the allegorical history of Jonas as the Divine attestation of his Mission." The fact that Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale and was sent forth alive to preach to the Ninevites was evidence to them that Jonah was sent by God. So it would be with Christ.<sup>23</sup> This then was another hint by Christ as to His approaching death, burial, and resurrection.

#### Preparing the Disciples for the Time When the Master is Gone

The Lord at this time gave His disciples a succession of instructions as to how to live and work in their calling. They were to "beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy." Ebersheim defines this hypocrisy as being not so much a hypocrisy of individuals.

21. Bruce, op. cit., pp. 53, 55.

22. Luke 11:14-36.

23. Ebersheim, op. cit., vol. II, p. 200.

as the Pharisaic system.<sup>24</sup> Probably this system, however, would very easily lead to a hypocrisy of the individual. The warning for the disciples was that it is not possible to deceive God. He sees into the heart. Hypocrisy is a leaven. It can even infect the Apostles, and begin its work there. Was not Judas already in danger? Someday men's inmost acts of evil would be revealed by God openly, said Jesus. Not forever will men be able to conceal from others their true attitude to God. The disciples in addition to being warned lest this disease strike them, should also realize that many who seem religious may consciously or unconsciously be hypocrites. Hence the disciples should beware of men.<sup>25</sup>

Jesus argued that the Twelve should not fear men, but rather fear God. Instead of worshipping men and serving their whims, let the Twelve serve God. There is no possibility of fearing both. "A man cannot serve two masters."<sup>26</sup> If a man fears God, God will protect Him against men.<sup>27</sup>

The Savior promised that whosoever would confess Him before men would be confessed by the Son before the Father. A warning was given that if anyone refused to let the Christ in Him shine forth, he would be denying Christ. Inasmuch as there is no faith in a man who never confesses Christ, Jesus cannot be in him, and the Savior will have to deny that man before the Father.<sup>28</sup>

If anyone speaks a word against the Son of Man, said Jesus, it shall be forgiven him. Here it is true that some from fear and weakness

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24. Ibid., vol. II, pp. 214, 215.

25. Luke 12:1-3.

26. Matt. 6:24.

27. Luke 12:4-7.

28. Ibid. 12:8, 9.

may speak a word against the Son of Man. Christ may be thinking of Peter who would speak a word against Him, denying his Lord. Possibly this is a warning to Simon. But the one who blasphemes against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven.<sup>29</sup> This is possibly a warning to Judas not to reject the Holy Ghost under an air of hypocritical homage to the Spirit. It is only too tragic that Judas did not take to heart the warning, but twice hypocritically confronted Christ saying, "Is it I?" in the Upper Room and, "Hail, Master" at the betrayal.<sup>30</sup>

The Lord proceeded to offer consolation to the disciples. When they would be hailed before magistrates and like rulers, the Holy Spirit would teach them what to say in answer to questions about their faith.<sup>31</sup> When Paul writes, "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth,"<sup>32</sup> we see that this prophecy of the Savior has been fulfilled.

The disciples were admonished to put away all materialistic worry. They should rather have trust in God. Jesus told them to remove their affections from the things which are in the world and set them on God. Let Him be their treasure. Instead of giving the appearance that they were all caught up with this world's goods, the disciples should look like men who were awaiting the coming of the Lord. They should be prepared for this advent.<sup>33</sup> The man who has Christ in him will be

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29. Mueller writes, "The sin against the Holy Ghost is unpardonable because it is directed, not against the divine person of the Holy Ghost, but against His divine office or His gracious operation upon the human heart. . . . The sin against the Holy Ghost is committed only when the Holy Spirit has clearly revealed the divine truth to the sinner and the sinner nevertheless utters blasphemies against it." Dr. J.T. Mueller, *Christian Dogmatics*, pp. 232, 233.

30. Matt. 26:25, 49.

31. Luke 12:11, 12.

32. I Cor. 2:13.

33. Luke 12:13-40.

prepared. To the disciples it should have been evident that if Jesus were coming again, it must be that He was going away.

At this point Peter asked whether Jesus meant His statements to apply to the disciples or to all. Eidersheim infers from the question of Peter that Peter had the Jewish notion that the disciples would come from the marriage supper with the Lord, as honored friends of the Bridegroom, instead of staying behind, waiting for the Lord, and working while waiting. It was to this notion that Jesus replied telling Peter that if the disciples are to be rulers, "it is as stewards."<sup>34</sup> Dr. Arndt considers the reply of Jesus to the question.

The question of Peter whether the parabolic sayings of Jesus pertain to all or only the apostles, (verse 41) Jesus answers not directly. His words indicate by their drift that what He had spoken before was of a general nature, while what He is saying in regard to Peter's question refers particularly to the pastors of the church. . . . Note that Jesus is speaking of stewards who have a supervision of the household - and evidently refers to pastors. But these stewards are likewise servants or slaves. (verse 43) They cannot lord it over the household at pleasure. Verse 43 gives a beautiful description of the work of a faithful pastor. . . . Unfaithful pastors, it is dreadful to know, will be treated like unbelievers. (Verse 46). . . . The responsibility of pastors is greater than that of their parishioners because of their more intensive knowledge. Their punishment will be greater too in case of disloyalty. (Verses 47-48). It is implied that there are degrees of punishment.<sup>35</sup>

Farrar's opinion in this matter is that Jesus did not answer Peter's question. The silence of the Lord was the best reply. He merely admonished that each should see that he himself is a good and wise steward.<sup>36</sup>

34. Eidersheim, op. cit., vol. II, p. 219.

35. Dr. Arndt, Notes on the Gospel of Luke, p. 71.

36. Farrar, op. cit., p. 353.

It does seem apparent that the Savior avoided giving a direct answer to this disciple. Peter was simply told to follow Christ's words faithfully, and to feed the Lord's people on these "words."<sup>37</sup> Jesus realized that the disciples were not yet ready to comprehend all His teachings. The Spirit would later reveal all things. It seems to have been a policy with Christ to avoid answering questions when He knew they would be taken wrongly, e.g. He seldom directly answered that He was the Christ. He also gave indirect answers to other questions from Jewish leaders.

In addition to the foregoing instructions, the Master warned the Twelve that as they went out in His name, they could expect trouble and opposition from any source, even on the part of those from whom it was least expected.<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, the disciples might learn from the words Jesus spoke to the multitude, how to admonish their own evil nature when doubts concerning the Christ arose.<sup>39</sup> ("Ye can discern the time of the earth, why can ye not discern the Christ?") After further preaching to the Judeans, Jesus left the region.

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37. Luke 12:41-48.

38. Ibid. 12:49-53.

39. Ibid. 12:54-59.

## IX. The Perea Ministry

### Disdain of Herod's Threats

After leaving Judea, Jesus journeyed in Perea. He preached many times to the people of that area. Of course there was opposition even here. At one time several of the Pharisees told Jesus, "Get thee out, and go hence: for Herod would fain kill thee." Jesus replied, "Go and say to that fox, Behold I cast out devils and perform cures to-day and to-morrow and the third day I am perfected. Howbeit I must go on my way to-day and to-morrow and the day following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem."<sup>1</sup> When Christ did not will it, none of His enemies could touch Him. When Jesus was taken prisoner and crucified, it would be His own choosing.

### Count the Cost!

The Master seized this moment to speak to the Twelve as to what lay ahead of them. It served as a test for them when Jesus mentioned the difficulties through which any man must be willing to pass who wishes to be one of the Lord's disciples. There will come times when the disciple must choose who will be first in his life. If the disciple cannot meet the test now, he should turn back from following the Master at this time. Hence, let all count the cost before they begin to follow. The man who cannot in necessity renounce everything that he has, cannot be a disciple of Jesus. The essence of discipleship is to love Christ

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1. Luke 13:31-34.

above all else. Nothing else can qualify a man for this work.<sup>2</sup>

Eidersheim has a word on the advisability of a disciple facing himself with this test. He writes, "And thus discipleship, then, and, in measure, to all time, involves the complete inward surrender of everything for the love of Christ, so that if, and when, the time of outward trial comes, we may be prepared to conquer in the fight. He fights well, who has first fought and conquered within."<sup>3</sup>

### Many Parables

In the course of the Master's preaching at this time, there were uttered many parables. One of the most difficult is that concerning the unjust steward. This one was addressed to Jesus' "disciples." Eidersheim claims that these disciples were not primarily the Twelve but rather the publicans and sinners who were followers of His, and who were standing in the crowd alongside the Pharisees. To these publicans and sinners was addressed the parable of the unjust steward, while to the Pharisees was addressed the parable of the rich man and Lazarus.<sup>4</sup>

The application of this difficult first parable is explained to us by this same author.

[The main point is] the wisdom with which those who care not for the world to come choose the means most effectual for attaining their worldly objects. It is this prudence by which their aims are so effectually secured, and it alone, which is set before 'the children of light,' as that by which to learn. And the lesson is the more practical, that those primarily addressed had hitherto been among these men of the world. Let them learn from the serpent its wisdom, and from the dove its harmlessness; from the children of this world, their prudence as regarded their

2. Ibid. 14:25-35.

3. Eidersheim, op. cit., vol. II, p. 305.

4. Ibid., vol. II, p. 264.

generation, while, as children of the new light, they must remember the higher aim for which that prudence was to be employed.<sup>5</sup>

Dr. Arndt agrees with this application of the parable. He says, "Jesus wants to teach us that just as the steward used material things very prudently in order to provide for the future, so Christians must use their material possessions prudently in order to provide good things for themselves in eternity."<sup>6</sup> Christ promised that if His disciples exercise prudence in the use of God's gifts, then when all things earthly fail, their Heavenly friends, Christ, the Father, and the Spirit, will receive them into everlasting tabernacles. Theirs must either be a service to materialism or to God.<sup>7</sup> The same wise and diligent use of God's gifts is enjoined in the parable of Lazarus and the rich man.<sup>8</sup>

In another parable, Jesus asked the disciples to give no offense. It were better that a millstone be hung about the neck, and a man drowned in the depth of the sea than to cause another one to stumble in his faith, especially if that one be a child. Christ enjoined upon His men the care of their brother's faith. They should rebuke him if he sins, and also forgive his sins against them.

The disciples pleaded with the Master to increase their faith.<sup>9</sup> Thereupon, as Eidersheim points out, Jesus spoke to them to comfort them in answer to their plea. He told them of the "absolute power of even the smallest faith, and of the service and humility of faith."

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5. Ibid., vol. II, p. 266.
  6. Arndt, op. cit., p. 78.
  7. Luke 16:1-13.
  8. Ibid. 16:14-31.
  9. Ibid. 17:1-10.

In this matter of returning to the vicinity of Jerusalem, the Lord told the Twelve that He was glad for their sakes, for they would be made more ardent believers.<sup>14</sup> He foresaw that the raising of Lazarus would strengthen their faith.

Many Jews also believed on Jesus when they heard of this miracle. But when the Lord knew that the Jews had taken counsel together to kill Him, He walked no longer openly among them. He departed to a city called Ephraim, which was out in the country near to the wilderness.<sup>15</sup>

14. John 11:1-10.

15. Ibid. 11:45-51.

to see His once more, but He would be gone.  
try to deceive them, telling them that Christ  
has returned. But His return would be like the lightning which flashes  
from one part of the heavens to the other. All can see the streak of  
light, so likewise all will know when Christ has returned. One more  
the Master foretold suffering for His followers. These last times would  
which unrepent all those who are obstinately refusing to repent. In view  
of these coming last things, the Master counseled His disciples to fore-  
get all materialities. Those who are caught up with material things and  
are thus trying to keep this life, shall lose it. Those who are fore-  
getting this temporal existence and concentrating on the future things,  
shall gain eternal life. In these last times the clearest shall be  
separated, as for example, the husband from the wife. How and how the  
other wife may all depends on how a man himself stands with Christ.  
Those who have fed on Christ and are accustomed to do so (the eagles)  
shall be gathered to Him (the body).<sup>1</sup>

1. Ibid. 17:22-23.

## X. The Last Journey to Jerusalem

### The Last Times

Jesus was going to Jerusalem once more. He would arrive in time for the feast of the Passover. It was fitting that at this time as He was making His last Journey to Jerusalem, He should speak to His disciples concerning the last times. He told them that days would come when they would long to see Him once more, but He would be gone. Mary would in the future try to deceive them, telling them that Christ has returned. But His return would be like the lightning which flashes from one part of the heavens to the other. All can see the streak of light, so likewise all will know when Christ has returned. Once more the Master foretold suffering for His followers. These last times would catch unawares all those who are stubbornly refusing to repent. In view of these coming last times, the Savior counseled His disciples to forget all materialism. Those who are caught up with material things and are thus trying to keep this life, shall lose it. Those who are forgetting this temporal existence and concentrating on the future things, shall gain eternal life. In these last times the closest shall be separated, as for example, the husband from the wife. None can draw the other with him; all depends on how a man himself stands with Christ. Those who have fed on Christ and are accustomed to do so (the eagles) shall be gathered to Him (the body).<sup>1</sup>

1. Luke 17:22-37.

### The Importunate Widow

The parable of the importunate widow was used by the Master to offer a lesson in prayer to the disciples. He wanted them to understand that even though the Father should not immediately answer their prayer, they should continue beseeching Him. If an unjust judge heard this widow, how much more will not the Father hear them! If God delays His help, it is for their sakes. Faith, of course, is what keeps men coming and talking to the Father, confident that He will hear them. The Savior warns His men that there is great danger that many will weary of calling, and losing trust, will say God never hears. Then the Savior asks that when He returns, will He find faith on the earth.<sup>2</sup> Again His followers could see that He will go away and return. Eidersheim takes God's hearing and avenging of His elect to mean the final coming of God in judgment. This author draws a parallel between God's avenging of the elect, and the coming of the Son of Man spoken of in the verse following. These two verses form a parallelism. The conclusion is, that God is delaying His coming to judgment for the sake of the elect, that their number may be filled up and they be fully prepared. "Nevertheless," says Christ, sadly, "When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth." Let "each man's heart, make answer!"<sup>3</sup>

### Divorce and Marriage

The Lord spoke to the Twelve on divorce and marriage. He taught them that it is not lawful for men to "put asunder" what God has joined

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2. Ibid. 18:1-8.

3. Eidersheim, op. cit., vol. II, pp. 288, 289.

together. There could be no divorce. If, of course, the one partner commits fornication, or (as we infer) in like manner "puts asunder" the marriage bond, it is then broken and what men call divorce can be entered into by the wronged party, if he or she so desires. Anyone who would put away his wife for any other cause, and would marry again, would commit adultery. And if the marriage bond has not been broken already by the first husband, the one who marries a wife that has been "put away" unjustly, commits adultery along with the woman.

When the disciples heard this, they ventured that perhaps after all, since marriage brings so many troubles, it is best not to marry. Jesus would not let Himself be made the sponsor of a religion that taught all men not to marry. He said that in some cases men rightly decide not to marry. There are some who are born with no desire for marriage; there are some who are incapacitated for marriage, and there are some who feel they must not marry for the sake of the Kingdom.<sup>4</sup> It is true that there are times in the work of the kingdom, when some men must deny themselves marriage to carry on the work they are called to do. But this does not pertain to all men serving the Kingdom. Moreover the man who for this reason denies marriage to himself, may find in the course of time that the needs of the Kingdom cease to necessitate celibacy, and perhaps, then he will marry. Kiersheim states his opinion.

It is not bare abstinence from marriage, together, perhaps, with . . . unchaste continency . . . , which is here commended, but such inward preoccupation with the Kingdom of God as would remove all other thoughts and desires. [His footnote #1 is

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4. Matt. 19:1-12.

here included by me in this quotation] For, it [that celibacy which is commended by the Lord] is not merely to practice outward continence, but to become in mind and heart a eunuch [end of footnote]. It is this which requires to be 'given' of God; and which 'he that is able to receive it'<sup>5</sup> - who has the moral capacity for it - is called upon to receive. Again, it must not be imagined that this involves any command of celibacy; it only speaks of such who in the active service of the Kingdom feel, that their every thought is so engrossed in the work, that wishes and impulses to marriage are no longer existent in them.<sup>6</sup>

Neander supplies us with his view.

It is to be carefully noted that Christ by no means says "Blessed are those who abstain from marriage for the sake of the kingdom," &c., as if this, in itself, was pre-eminently excellent; but simply describes an existing state of facts: "There are some eunuchs," &c.: distinguishing such as adopt this mode of life for the sake of the kingdom from those that either have no choice in the matter, or are actuated by other motives. His decision, therefore, was opposed not only to the old Hebrew notion that celibacy was *per se* ignominious, but also to the ascetic doctrine which made it *per se* a superior condition of life; a doctrine so widely diffused in later time. It involves his great principle, that the heart and disposition must be devoted to the interests of the kingdom of GOD, and for it must voluntarily modify all the relations of life as the necessity may require.<sup>7</sup>

#### Blessing the Children

Some mothers wanted to bring their little children and babies to Jesus to be blessed by Him. The disciples rebuked the mothers for this action. Jesus was "moved with indignation" toward the Twelve. He called the babes to Him. He told the disciples that the little babes were members of the Kingdom, and that if a man did not receive the Kingdom of

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5. I feel that the Lord in saying, "All men cannot receive this saying, . . . He that is able to receive it, let him receive it," means to imply that what He is saying about eunuchs is hard to understand, and there are some who will misinterpret it.

6. Ebersheim, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 336.

7. Neander, *op. cit.*, pp. 330, 331.

God as a child does, that man would not be able to enter it.<sup>8</sup> The disciples learned not to neglect the children in their future work. Ederheim rightly notes that both children and infants were brought by their mothers to Jesus, and that the Kingdom must be received as by a little child. He sets forth the moral of the incident thus: of course it was contrary to Jewish thought that a Rabbi should concern himself with babes and children, but "here there could be no question of intellectual qualification, nor of distinction due to a great Rabbi, but only of humility, receptiveness, meekness, and a simple application to, and trust in, the Christ."<sup>9</sup>

#### Teaching Concerning the Rich and Rewards

A young man who wished to become a disciple of Jesus, but who went away sorrowing when he learned he must give up his great riches, served as the occasion for the Lord to speak to His disciples on material possessions and the Kingdom's rewards. Jesus described to the Twelve how often it is that people will cling to the things of this world, especially those who have much of this world's goods. He made it clear that those who cling to this world, in particular the wealthy, will find it harder to enter the Kingdom of Heaven than for a camel to go through a needle's eye. The disciples, realizing that almost all people are infected by this disease of materialism, were astonished and exclaimed, "Who then can be saved?" Perhaps it was natural for the lowly disciples like other poor men, to look up to and respect the wealthy and influential. Their thinking still being to a large extent on an earthly

8. Mark 10:13-16; Luke 18:15-17.

9. Ederheim, op. cit., vol. II, pp. 336, 337.

level, they esteemed and respected those who had achieved earthly success. Then, hearing that these were almost impossible to save, the disciples were shocked.

Jesus granted that with men who are caught up with this earth's goods, it is impossible that they should tear themselves away from this awful magnet. "But with God all things are possible," said the Lord. Farrar says that of a surety there was room for the rich in His Kingdom. "The teaching of Jesus about riches was as little Ebionite as His teaching about marriage was Essene. Things impossible to nature are possible to grace; things impossible to man are easy to God."<sup>10</sup>

When Peter considered the state of himself and all the Apostles, he saw that he and they had truly forsaken all seeking after riches. They had given up much as disciples. He thought he and the others would gain special commendation from the Lord. It seems Peter expected that he and his fellows would receive the promise of a high position from Jesus. "Lo," said Peter, "we have left all, and followed thee; what then shall we have?" The Lord told him that one thing was necessary, that all this be done for the Savior's sake. If a man denied himself anything for the Savior's sake, that man would truly find a great reward. Such a man would have that which he had forsaken, restored to him a hundredfold and would "inherit eternal life." Jesus now turned Peter's thoughts from what had been done to what was still required of every man in the Kingdom. The Lord warned this disciple, lest he be tempted to pride, that many who were first in the Kingdom may find that they are last when

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10. Farrar, op. cit., p. 476.

God's eternal reward is given. The first places of honor may be given to those who began working in the Kingdom last. As Farrar explains with regard to Jesus' discourse to Peter in the presence of the other disciples,

The warning was that familiar one which they had heard before. And to impress upon them still more fully and deeply that the kingdom of heaven is not a matter of mercenary calculation or exact equivalent - that there could be no bargaining with the Heavenly Householder - that before the eye of God's clearer and more penetrating judgment Gentiles might be admitted before Jews, and Publicans before Pharisees, and young converts before aged Apostles - He told them the memorable Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard.<sup>11</sup>

In this parable of the laborers, Jesus stressed that none should feel jealousy or anger toward those who have come into the Kingdom late. God chooses how He will give. Let no one put down his reward and reject it because he feels he deserves more than another laborer. "Many shall be last that are first; and first that are last," declared the Lord. Perhaps this is what is meant, that some who were first in the Kingdom, and who are angered because they feel they deserve more than latecomers, shall be last, namely left out of the Kingdom, as they in anger throw away their "pearl of great price." This is also true, that those whom men regard as chief in the Kingdom, may be regarded as the least by God. Men highly regarded the Pharisee, but he may not even receive the eternal gift. "Many are called, but few are chosen," says Christ. The call is sent out to many, but many likewise reject it or having accepted it for a long time, throw it away in disgust, and the end result is that the number of the elect is small.

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11. Ibid, p. 477.

Service, the Only Ambition

If there ever was a man who thought less of His own body's interests or did more to serve His fellows, it was the God-man Jesus Christ. Jesus now had set His face to go to Jerusalem to offer the supreme sacrifice for men, and He was leading the way. Mark says that "Jesus was going before them." Eidersheim infers that He was walking "apart and alone, as One, busy with thoughts all-engrossing, Who is setting Himself to do His great work, and goes to meet it."<sup>12</sup> Jesus advanced at the head, while the others followed with a sense of dread, observes Ewald.<sup>13</sup> The Master gave to His disciples an example of how a man should face God's will and not run from it. How different Christ's action from that of Jonah! Even while Jesus is telling His followers about His coming death in Jerusalem, He is leading them. There is no shirking or hanging back.<sup>14</sup>

In spite of all the Savior's teaching against self-aggrandizement, there approached Him, James and John with their mother. The mother requested that her two sons be given the places of honor to the right and left of the Master in His Kingdom. The sons supported her in her request. Jesus told them that they did not realize what they were seeking. He asked them whether they were able to drink of the cup that He would drink or to be baptized with the baptism, with which He would be baptized. This was the requirement for such positions. Bruce declares that the way to thrones in Christ's Kingdom is the "via dolorosa of the

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12. Eidersheim, op. cit., vol. II, p. 345.

13. Ewald, op. cit., p. 386.

14. Mark 10:32-34.

cross."<sup>15</sup> James and John answered that they were able to follow such a way. Ewald explains that James and John had already given up much, and the "Sons of Thunder" were of sufficiently fiery dispositions to expect the highest honors in the perfected Kingdom, for the highest sacrifices. These sacrifices they considered themselves able to bring in the future as they had in the past.<sup>16</sup> Edersheim says concerning their request, that it is the same spirit, which forbade one to cast out devils in the Savior's name, and that wished to call down fire on the Samaritan village, which moves in them now. "There is the same faith in Christ, the same allegiance to Him, but also the same unhallowed earnestness, the same misunderstanding - and, let us add, the same latent self-exaltation as in the two former instances . . . ."<sup>17</sup>

Jesus told James and John that they would surely suffer for the Kingdom, even as He was about to, but the places of honor in the Kingdom were not something to be given away by the Son of Man. The places would go to the ones for whom they had been prepared. Jesus would reveal nothing more to the sons of Zebedee. It was as if He had told them to put the whole matter out of their minds. The two brothers could later remember how kindly Jesus had dealt with them.

Soon the rest of the Twelve learned of the request and were moved with anger against James and John. Jesus explained to the band that if any of the disciples wanted to be great and in favor with God, he should serve the others. The disciples should not be angry with James and John.

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15. Bruce, *op. cit.*, p. 285.

16. Ewald, *op. cit.*, p. 387.

17. Edersheim, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 346.

They should even minister to them. The Lord urged greatness in serving, not in being served. Instead of a great number of men serving them, the disciples should do a great amount of serving. The disciples should follow Jesus' example. He "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."<sup>18</sup> This was another word on His coming death. It would be a "ransom."

#### Examples of Service

The giving of sight to Blind Bartimaeus and the bringing of salvation to the house of Zacheus were two good examples of service on the Lord's part, which the disciples could observe. Jesus showed His men how to have regard for the most insignificant, in the person of the blind beggar. The crowd did not want Bartimaeus to disturb Jesus, but Christ's love extends to all.<sup>19</sup> The people also said when the Savior entered Zacheus' house, "He is gone in to lodge with a man that is a sinner." Jesus showed His men how to have no prejudice, no barrier which excludes some from your love. He told them that the Son of Man was come "to seek and to save that which was lost." That meant all men.<sup>20</sup> Let Christ's followers do likewise.

#### Parable of the Pounds

Our last recorded utterance by the Savior before the goal of the journey was reached is a parable. Through this parable Jesus told His disciples that He was going away. It would be their job to remain behind and use their "pound," or the spiritual gift which had been given

18. Matt. 20:20-28.

19. Mark 10:46-52.

20. Luke 19:1-10.

them. Someday they would have to give an account as to what they had done with it. At that time, the man who shows by what has been gained, that he has well used his gift, shall be rewarded. He who shows nothing gained at all, shall be punished, for obviously he has done nothing with his "pound." To the faithful servant shall be given more, namely the "pound" which the slothful servant did not use. The "pound" or gift which was presented each man by the departing Lord must be the gift of the Spirit, for not to the citizens of that Kingdom was the pound given, but only to the servants of the Master. When the Holy Spirit is in a man, the fruits of the Spirit<sup>21</sup> will appear. But a man such as the slothful servant can reject the Spirit's urging and, so to say, bury his pound. Then the Spirit will be taken from him, whereas the faithful man will be given an even greater measure of the Holy Spirit. There will be degrees of reward in Heaven in accordance with the use of the gift of the Spirit.

Eidersheim draws the following moral, "Faithful use for God of every capacity will ever open fresh opportunities, in proportion as the old ones have been used, while spiritual unprofitableness must end in utter loss even of that which, however humble, might have been used, at one time or another, for God and for good."<sup>22</sup> When Jesus had finished this teaching He went on as before, leading His disciples to the City of Crucifixion.<sup>23</sup>

21. Gal. 5:22, 23.

22. Eidersheim, op. cit., vol. II, p. 465.

23. Luke 19:11-28.

## XI. The Last Public Ministry in Jerusalem

### Preparation to Enter Jerusalem

The preparation which the Lord made to enter Jerusalem, served as a test for the disciples. They were to go to a stranger's house and take from him an ass and a colt. If the man asked them what they were doing, they should reply that the Lord had need of them, and that He would send them back shortly. This the trusting disciples did, and when everything happened just as the Lord had said, their confidence in the Master was strengthened. In the manner indicated, Jesus planned to enter Jerusalem, "riding upon an ass and upon a colt the foal of an ass." Ewald observes that Christ planned to enter in the manner of a king. He no longer had any reason to hide His Messiahship. Ewald further informs us that "according to ancient custom it was free to anyone about to go up to the feast to arrange glad or splendid processions; and on such occasions a good deal was winked at by the authorities." A glad procession was in order for the Savior at this time inasmuch as "the conviction that his regal work on the earth was already completed as far as he himself could carry it, no less than his glad readiness to die, raised him on this day to a festive mood . . . ." <sup>1</sup>

In spite of the Lord's planned kingly entrance, namely the joyous acclaim by the multitudes, it would be apparent from the humble attitude and apparel, plus the lowly animals on which the Savior rode, followed by

1. Ewald, op. cit., pp. 392, 393.

a band of dusty disciples, that His Kingdom, as He said, was "not of this world."<sup>2</sup>

On the way to the city the Twelve were permitted to view the Lord's glory as the people hailed and acclaimed Him. This must have been a source of assurance to the Twelve later. When a sudden turn in the road brought a view of the city of Jerusalem,<sup>3</sup> Christ burst out weeping. Eidersheim notes, "Not with still weeping (ἔδάκρυσεν) [did Jesus here mourn], but with loud and deep lamentation (ἔκλαυσεν)."<sup>4</sup> Such was the love for His enemies which Christ manifested to His disciples. The Master longed for the city's repentance and was filled with sorrow as He foresaw the destruction which would come upon it. If a man refuses to know the time of his "visitation," namely the calling by God's Spirit to accept the Christ, God will send many warnings to lead him to know, and if all is still unheeded, God will send final destruction. The scene of the Savior weeping over Jerusalem is pictured by Farrar as the "last invitation from 'the Glory of God on the Mount of Olives,' before that Shelminah vanished from their eyes forever."<sup>5</sup>

On entering the city, Jesus was accosted by the scribes, who wanted Jesus to silence this mad throng. Jesus refused, saying, "Yea: did you never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?"<sup>6</sup> The disciples could understand that children and the humble would be their best followers.

2. John 18:36.

3. Eidersheim gives us this picture: "Again the procession advanced. The road descends a slight declivity, and the glimpse of the City is again withdrawn behind the intervening ridge of Olivet. A few moments and the path mounts again, it climbs a rugged ascent, it reaches a ledge of smooth rock, and in an instance the whole City bursts into view . . ."<sup>11</sup>  
Op. cit., vol. II, p. 369.

4. Ibid.

5. Farrar, op. cit., p. 504.

6. Mark 11:1-11; Matt. 21:1-11, 14-17; Luke 19:29-44.

### The Barren Fig Tree

The barren fig tree could be considered a picture of Jerusalem. Although it had foliage and gave every appearance of being a good tree, yet it bore no fruit. So also Jerusalem gave every appearance of being godly, yet bore no fruit. Christ had given the barren tree its last opportunity to bear fruit. He cursed it. Jesus would no longer "dig about it and dung it."<sup>7</sup> So it would be with Jerusalem; in consequence of its barrenness and its sin against the Holy Ghost, Jerusalem also would be cursed by the Lord forever.<sup>8</sup> Later when the disciples discovered that the fig tree had actually withered and died, they were greatly impressed. Jesus made clear to them that this was an example of what God can do. They should trust Him. Faith is a powerful thing. In fact, everything that is asked of God through faith shall be granted. Jesus cautioned the disciples that if a man cannot forgive, Christ is not in him; he shall not be forgiven by God. Hence the prayer of faith cannot come from a man who is of an unforgiving spirit.<sup>9</sup> This discourse on faith was intended to help the disciples in their own approaching battle with the powers of evil. The Twelve would certainly need faith in the near future to overcome fear. A reminder of the necessity to forgive a sinner was also in order, since the remainder of the disciples might feel inclined to despise Peter, after he had denied his Lord. It is noteworthy that Peter is the one who mentioned the tree to Jesus, and the one to whom the lesson must have been especially directed.

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7. Luke 13:8.

8. Mark 11:12-14.

9. Ibid. 11:19-25.

Peter above all others would need faith to overcome his fear in Pilate's court. Jesus was trying to help Peter and the others to be steadfast in their trial. The God who could do powerful things, could also strengthen them.

#### Cleansing the Temple

Christ began His ministry by cleansing the Temple of its greedy money changers, and He closed His ministry by doing the same. The material has no place in the spiritual! His House shall be a House of Prayer for all nations.<sup>10</sup> The Kingdom is open to all nations, but Christ will have in His Kingdom only those who pray (i.e. those who are living constantly with Him). All materialistic parasites who are merely looking for gain, shall be driven out. The disciples must be equally as zealous in seeing that all materialistic thoughts are driven out of themselves, and that they worship God in singleness of heart. Combining Paul's metaphor with this incident, we understand the disciples as being taught to drive out the money changers from their own bodies, which are "temples of the Holy Ghost."<sup>11</sup>

#### The Greeks

In this period of the Savior's activity, there came some Greeks desiring to see Jesus. Ewald sees in this a final temptation of the Savior to turn aside from the road that leads to suffering and death, and go to the Greeks who would accept Him.

And if he had wholly listened to such requests, and now devoted himself fully to the Hellenists, what an

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10. Ibid. 11:15-18.

11. I Cor. 6:19; 3:16, 17.

entirely new situation of affairs would he thereby have yet brought about in this final phase of his labours thus far, what commotion in the land and what unforeseen perplexity to the representatives of the Hagiography would he have been able to cause! . . . Accordingly, this (as we can perfectly well suppose) became the last temptation of Christ in those last moments of the extreme crisis.<sup>12</sup>

These Greeks approached Philip first. Philip conferred with Andrew before bringing them to the Master. Bruce commends Philip for trying to use discretion in the matter.

Philip is pleased that his Master should be inquired after in such a quarter, but he is not sure about the propriety of action on his first impulse. He hesitates, and is in a flurry of excitement in presence of what he feels to be a new thing, a significant event, the beginning of a religious revelation. His inclination is to play the part of an intercessor for the Greeks; but he distrusts his own judgment, and, before acting on it, lays the case before his brother - disciple and fellow-townsmen Andrew, to see how it will strike him.<sup>13</sup>

The two men brought the matter before Jesus. This occasioned a discourse by the Lord. He told the Twelve that He would draw all men to Himself, after He had been "lifted up." This answered the problem of the two disciples. All men, both Jew and Greek, are acceptable to Jesus. The statement of the Savior also signified His death on a cross. Jesus declared that like a grain of wheat, He must be buried in the earth, if He were to be resurrected and bring forth much fruit. Thus dying for men, instead of abiding alone He would be multiplied over and over again in the men who would receive this salvation. Furthermore, in these men He would bring forth much fruit. The Master held Himself up before His disciples as an example of unswerving service. They too should learn

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12. Ewald, op. cit., p. 403.

13. Bruce, op. cit., p. 320.

ministry. Now, spurned, He would go to others. In the parable of the marriage supper, Jesus warned all those Jews who supposed they could be admitted to the Heavenly feast without their wedding garment, namely Christ, that they would be cast out "into outer darkness." The Lord reiterated that "many are called, but few are chosen."<sup>16</sup> Edersheim explains, "The first invitation had been sent to selected guests - who might have been expected to be 'worthy,' but had proved themselves to be unworthy; the next was to be given, not to the chosen city or nation, but to all that travelled in whatever direction on the world's highway, reaching them where the roads of life meet and part."<sup>17</sup>

#### The Questions

The first question came from the Pharisees and Herodians. This group who approached Jesus, may have been a combination of those who supported the Romans and those who despised the conquerors. If so, they would truly have the Savior between a vise. The one segment of the group would look after its interests, and the other segment after its. So between them, Jesus would have no room to escape. There would be no opportunity to retreat from the difficulty by a weak answer. No matter what the sentiments of the group actually were, they managed to present a dilemma to the Master. His reply, however, gave these men no room for accusation.

The Savior claimed that His realm and the state's realm are not in opposition to each other. It is necessary to give the state that

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16. Matt. 21:23-22:14.

17. Edersheim, op. cit., vol. II, p. 428.

which is due it, and God that which is due Him. Government has Jesus' divine sanction. There is no conflict between the government and Christ, for His Kingdom is not of this world.<sup>18</sup> The disciples should not hesitate to enter into affairs necessary for the functioning of good government, for that would in no way contradict their position as members of the Kingdom.

Farrar clarifies Christ's answer in the following manner. The Jews accepted Caesar's coinage. "It was their duty, then, to obey the power which they had deliberately chosen, and the tax, under these circumstances, only represented an equivalent for the advantages which they received." To God they owed themselves.<sup>19</sup> There is a difference between material things, money and the like, and your whole self. These men could give their money to Caesar, but they must give their whole self to God.<sup>20</sup>

The second question was addressed to Christ by the Sadducees. When they questioned Jesus on the doctrine concerning resurrection, Jesus replied, "Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God." Through the Old Testament Scriptures Christ showed them that there was a resurrection.<sup>21</sup> The disciples might learn that people err when they know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God. The Twelve should make it their business to teach people the Scriptures and to lead them to experience the power of God. This expression "power of God" can be thought of as being synonymous with the Kingdom

18. Cf. John 18:36.

19. Farrar, op. cit., pp. 526, 527.

20. Mark 12:13-17.

21. Luke 20:27-40.

of God. Edersheim understands the disciples as learning to meet all attacks as Christ did - they should appeal to the Word and to the Power of God, "how God has manifested, and how He will manifest Himself - the one flowing from the other."<sup>22</sup>

The third question came from a lawyer of the Pharisee sect. He inquired as to the great commandment in the law. Jesus replied that on the law of love to God, and that which is of the same nature, namely love to man, hang "the whole law, and the prophets."<sup>23</sup> The disciples could learn, according to Edersheim's interpretation, that "all revelation is one connected whole; not disjointed ordinances of which the letter was to be weighed, but a life springing from love to God and love to man."<sup>24</sup>

Jesus had a word to say to His disciples after silencing all His enemies' attempts to trap Him. He told His men not to seek their own glory while appearing to seek God's. Undoubtedly this had been the attitude of those who had just questioned the Lord. It is not the outward act but the heart which fathers the deed, that matters, declared the Savior. The scribes and Pharisees love to be called "Rabbi" by men and love to take the chief places, but the disciples were not to be called "Rabbi," neither were they to call any man "Father." In other words the Twelve should not assume authority over others, nor let others assume authority over them. Christ was warning in this instance against the desire in men to make others serve them.

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22. Edersheim, op. cit., vol. II, p. 401.

23. Matt. 22:34-40; Mark 12:28-34.

24. Edersheim, op. cit., vol. II, p. 405.

The disciples were all to be brothers. In fact, God would see to it that the man who should try to exalt himself, would be abased; while, God would Himself exalt the man who humbled himself to serve others.<sup>25</sup>

#### Woes Uttered Against the Scribes and Pharisees

The Savior went on to exclaim woes upon the scribes and Pharisees. These woes could serve as warnings to the disciples. Woe was pronounced for misleading others and preventing them from entering the Kingdom. Woe is decreed on men who have a zeal to convert, only to lead the converted one down their own pathway of pride to damnation. Farrar adds: woe on the Pharisees for confusing others by "hair - splitting," so that the poor ignorant people were led to sin.<sup>26</sup> The disciples must not lead others to sin. Peter later did this, when, under Judaistic influence, he separated himself from the Gentile Christians and led others to follow his example. Paul corrected him.<sup>27</sup> Woe was pronounced for ignoring deep sins - straining at gnats and swallowing camels. Woe is called out for not being concerned about the inner corruption of a man, yet being careful to wash "the outside of the cup." Condemnation is pronounced for giving the appearance of being pure, hence leading others astray. Woe to those who harm the truly righteous and hinder their work.

In spite of all the evil, against which Christ had just exclaimed, the Savior yet seeks the repentance of these men and desires to shelter

25. Matt. 23:1-12.

26. Farrar, op. cit., p. 536.

27. Gal. 2:11-13.

them from the wrath to come. "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, . . . how often would I have gathered thy children . . . !" Such was His love for sinners. Yet another warning He will give them. Their Temple, and they themselves, shall claim His presence no more, forever, until they shall say of Him, "blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."<sup>28</sup>

#### The Widow's Mite

One last Temple incident occurs before the Master leaves there for the last time. We see there are some true worshippers here. A widow approaches and casts into the treasury all that she has. The Savior points her out to His men as an example of how their love to God must be.<sup>29</sup> In the words of Edersheim: "The gift of absolute self-surrender and sacrifice" is desired by God above the rich gifts of superfluity.<sup>30</sup>

#### Destruction of Jerusalem and of the World

As the group was leaving the Temple, the disciples were caught by the beauty of the buildings. They remarked on it to the Master. Jesus sadly told them that of all that glory there would not one stone be left on another. Thus He made clear to them the passing of all things material, no matter how beautiful or mighty. Shortly after this, when the Master was resting in a spot on the Mount of Olives overlooking the Temple, several of the disciples approached and asked Him two questions: when these things would be of which He had just

28. Matt. 23:13-39.

29. Mark 12:41-44.

30. Edersheim, op. cit., vol. II, p. 388.

spoken, and what would be the sign of these times. In answer, their Master proceeded to warn them of many things to come.

1. They should not be led astray by false Christs.
2. They should not be dismayed by famines, earthquakes, wars, and rumors of wars. These things would be just the beginning of travail.
3. The disciples would be taken before magistrates and such like. They would be persecuted. The Holy Ghost would teach them what to say when hailed into judgment.
4. The Gospel must first be preached to all nations before the end will come. No doubt this preaching of the Gospel will bring its evangelists persecution.
5. The Gospel will split families. Brothers will deliver up brothers.
6. The disciples will be hated of all men for Christ's sake.
7. The love of many will wax cold; the disciples should endure to the end.
8. Jerusalem will be destroyed by the Gentiles. Christ's followers should flee when they see the "abomination of desolation . . . standing in the holy place."

Christ ended His prophecy by urging the disciples to make use of these signs as warnings and to be prepared for His coming.

Edersheim offers a good summary of Christ's teaching on the last things:

As regards the answer of our Lord to the two questions of His disciples, it may be said that the first part of His Discourse is intended to supply information on the two facts of the future; the destruction of the Temple, and His

Second Advent, and the end of the 'Age,' by setting before them the signs indicating the approach or beginning of these events. But even here the exact period of each is not defined, and the teaching given intended for purely practical purposes. In the second part of His Discourse the Lord distinctly tells them, what they are not to know, and why; and how all that was communicated to them was only to prepare them for that constant watchfulness, which has been to the Church at all times the proper outcome of Christ's teaching on the subject.<sup>31</sup>

Farrar supplies us with his interpretation. He expounds that Jesus showed the disciples two horizons, one near and the other in the future. The boundary line of each marked the ending or "τέλος" of an aeon. The judgment on Jerusalem was a type of the other. "Of each it was true that the then existing *γενεά* - first in its literal sense of 'generation,' then in its wider sense of 'race' - should not pass away until all had been fulfilled."<sup>32</sup>

In a succession of parables, Jesus brought to an end this preparation for the times to come. Through the parable of the thief and the master of the house, Jesus urged constant preparedness for the coming of the Son of God to judgment. The parable of the foolish virgins enjoined much the same admonition as the first parable, namely that once the Lord has come it is too late to prepare. The parable of the talents warned that a day of reckoning will come, when men must account for the manner in which they have used God's gifts. The Savior also indicated through this parable that He was going away. In the parable concerning the separating of the sheep from the goats, the Lord taught His followers that many good deeds done to Him will not

31. Ibid, vol. II, p. 445.

32. Farrar, op. cit., p. 546.

even have been noticed by the doer. A service done to one of the least of Christ's brethren has been done unto Him.<sup>33</sup> With this promise Jesus concluded His teaching of the last days. Bruce remarks, after studying the entire prophecy, that if anything, this discourse should have impressed on the disciples the fact that no new kingdom would be restored to Israel.<sup>34</sup> Now arising, the Master and His disciples left behind the view of the Temple.

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33. Mark 13:1-37; Matt. 24 and 25; Luke 21:5-36.

34. Bruce, op. cit., p. 338.

## XII. The Beginning of the End

### The Crucifixion is Lminent

The cross loomed large before the Savior. He made His last preparations to meet the approaching Crucifixion. Jesus began this section of His life by once more speaking to the disciples plainly concerning His death. "Ye know that after two days the Passover cometh, and the Son of Man is delivered up to be crucified." The chief priests and the elders were even then gathering at the court of the high priest Caiaphas to draw up plans to kill the Christ. They decided not to seize Him on the feast lest there be an uproar among the people.<sup>1</sup> Ewald adds that among the Jews, "nothing was looked upon . . . as more wicked than to interrupt a man's festive joy in Jerusalem."<sup>2</sup>

### Mary's Anointing for His Death

Jesus was dwelling in Bethany while attending the feast. A supper was prepared for Him, and while the Lord was sitting at the meal, Mary took a pound of ointment of spikenard, a very costly oil, and poured it on the Savior's head. The disciples, in particular Judas, were angered at her action. Among themselves they spoke of Mary's act as a waste of money which could have been given to the poor. Jesus' judgment was that Mary had performed a good deed. He

1. Matt. 26:1-5.

2. Ewald, op. cit., p. 383.

reminded the Twelve that they would always have the poor on earth to shower love on, but Him they would not have always. Mary had anointed His body "aforehand"<sup>3</sup> for the burial. As Ewald explains - Jesus argues that anointing would have been fitting on the day of His burial; the disciples should let this day stand for that one.<sup>4</sup> The Lord further prophesied that Mary's action would be spoken of for a memorial of her "wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world."<sup>5</sup> Bruce believes that Christ, in speaking of "this Gospel," was referring to the act of anointing which was the point of discussion at the time. In other words, Mary's pouring of the oil should be to the Twelve a symbol of how Jesus intended to pour out His life blood for the salvation of mankind. Bruce continues with a consideration of the reason why this deed would be spoken of so universally, namely that Mary was here an example of the unselfish, unstudying devotion which the Savior demands. Her action was liberty - the doing of what love demands, as opposed to legalism - the demon of conformance to the fixed customs and methods in religion, a slavish binding to the past. Bruce understands the disciples as being counseled not to judge. They were to "be under a constant fear of making mistakes, and calling good evil, and evil good."<sup>6</sup>

Eldersheim speaks highly of Mary's deed. He writes that "it is this believing apprehension of the mystery of His Death on her part, and the preparation of deepest love for it - this mixture of sorrow,

3. Mark 14:8.

4. Ewald, op. cit., p. 391.

5. Matt. 26:6-13; John 12:2-8.

6. Bruce, op. cit., pp. 300, 307, 314, 315.

faith, and devotion -- which made her deed so precious."<sup>7</sup>

#### Preparations for the Passover

To make preparations for eating the Passover Jesus instructed His disciples to go into the city of Jerusalem. There they would find a man carrying a pitcher of water. They should follow him. When this man would go into a house, the disciples should ask the goodman of that house where the guest chamber was, in which the Master was to eat the Passover with His disciples. The man would show them the room. There the disciples should make preparations for the feast. These instructions served as a test for the disciples as to their trust in the Master, and they passed it successfully. They followed His directions and found everything exactly as He had said.<sup>8</sup> The Lord had shown them that He was one in whom they could place their confidence. This should have been an assurance for them in the trial which they were to face in the near future. They should not have feared and fled at His arrest. Nor should they have been filled with fear after His crucifixion and death.

#### In the Upper Room

The disciples and the Lord entered the room to celebrate the Passover. This was to be the Lord's last night on earth with His own. It must have pained the Savior to leave them, inasmuch as He was a true human being. There were many burdens on His heart this evening. Nevertheless Jesus had been looking forward with desire to this meal. What last bit of instruction would He give them? Jesus seems to have summed

7. Edersheim, op. cit., vol. II, p. 359.

8. Mark 14:12-16.

up the teaching He had given the Twelve during the course of the years they had been in His seminary. And since their graduation to a new type of work was in the offing, with Pentecost as the commencement exercises, the Lord also spoke to them of future things. The central theme of His training through the past years, and in fact the essential element of every act which Jesus asked of the Twelve was love, agape. Using this as our key, let us trace the events of the evening in the Upper Room.

We immediately see that the disciples were in need of agape. The first thing that they did was to begin arguing as to who should get the chief seats. Jesus rebuked them. That was not what the Master wanted. He wanted His disciples to rush to look after others' interests instead of their own. He declared that He Himself was among them as one who served. In the manner of a good Master, Jesus, after rebuking the men, gave them the promise of a blessing. He told them they would share in His final office of judging.<sup>9</sup> To illustrate His teaching of agape, the Lord performed a servant's task for the band by washing their feet. Farrar notices that Jesus did that which "none of the disciples had offered to do for Him."<sup>10</sup> This was truly love, no seeking of self interests but a searching for ways to help others. Peter did not want the Lord to wash His feet. He had not yet learned obedience. He rebelled against the teaching of self-effacing agape which the Lord wanted to illustrate. Jesus told Peter that if he would

9. Dr. Arndt explains that the disciples as the chief ones among the Christians will give assent to Christ's judging. Op. cit., p. 109.

10. Farrar, op. cit., p. 562.

not obey, he had no part with Him. Disobedience to Christ puts Christ out of a man. Peter then wanted every part of his body to be washed. However, as Jesus informed him, obedience to the washing of his feet was enough. The whole body did not need to be touched. When once a man's heart has been cleansed of sin, and obedience to the Lord arises, that is all that is necessary. Bruce feels this washing of the disciples' feet should represent to the Twelve the washing of the soul. It represented all in Christ's life and work. When Christ told Peter he would have no part with the Savior if he refused to permit Him to perform this washing, Jesus was teaching all the disciples not to resist Christ's doing something for them. They were in desperate need of such service, since a man cannot make himself worthy by doing something for Christ. No man should question Christ's right to condescend for him. Concerning the teaching which He had illustrated by washing the disciples' feet, Jesus said, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." He thus indicated that such humility based on agape is rare. It might be added that the phrase, "Happy are ye if you do them," was meant as a warning to Judas.<sup>11</sup>

Christ's attitude toward Judas was another example of agape to the Twelve. Jesus knew what was in this man's mind on this night. He had seen through him all along and also all along had warned him of his danger. On this night the Savior clearly showed Judas that He knew what this disciple was planning, and yet He would do nothing to frustrate Judas' plot through force. Judas must himself act and put away this scheme. So it happened that while the group was eating,

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11. Bruce, *op. cit.*, pp. 345, 346, 352, 355.

Jesus suddenly burst out in anguish of soul, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me." The Lord was still trying to reclaim this disciple. Edersheim expounds, "He saw Judas about to take the last final step, and His soul yearned in pity over him. The very sop which He would so soon hand to him . . . was a last appeal to all that was human in Judas."<sup>12</sup> It was only after Satan had entered into Judas that the Lord said to him, "That thou doest, do quickly." This was the Master's agape, as illustrated by His every activity on this earth.

Judas left. Jesus seized the occasion to say, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him." Ewald explains that "the profoundest humiliation of Christ, as it now after the departure of the betrayer immediately and unavoidably awaits him, will be precisely his highest glorification."<sup>13</sup> Christ's passion would be the extreme illustration of that of which God consists, namely love. Hence this would show forth more than any other act of His life, His Godliness.

Judas had departed. Now Jesus told His men that He would have to depart whither they would not be able to come. The theme of the entire supper was at this point put into words by the Savior: "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another even as I have loved you." This would be the sign by which all men would know that the Twelve were Christ's disciples. Bruce says that in this statement of Jesus, the perfect tense, "as I have loved you," should

12. Edersheim, op. cit., vol. II, p. 505.

13. Ewald, op. cit., p. 425.

be taken as a future perfect, and includes the cross. This author groups the messages in which Jesus told the disciples that He was leaving. He finds these to be messages of comfort and counsel.

Jesus said: I am going away; find comfort in each other's love. I am going away; I will prepare mansions for you and come back. I am going away; yet, I will be here in my alter ego, namely the Paraclete.<sup>14</sup>

These messages of comfort are evidences of the love of the Savior for His disciples.

The departure of Judas furnished an opportunity for Jesus, as Robertson adeptly puts it, to warn the remaining disciples against desertion.<sup>15</sup> He told His followers that the agape which they now had could falter. There could come a time when they would cease thinking of others and would think only of themselves. Christ said all would be offended at Him that night; the Shepherd would be smitten and the sheep scattered abroad. Peter could not believe that he would ever be offended at Christ. He was "cock-sure" of his own strength. He did not acknowledge a need for God's help. Jesus warned him in particular as to what would happen. The Savior promised Peter, however, that his faith and love would be restored, and when this would come to pass, he should strengthen his brethren. Peter still professed a willingness to die with Christ. All the disciples did likewise.

The Savior continued with His theme of agape. He reminded the Twelve that when He had sent them out on a short mission, they had

<sup>14</sup>. Bruce, op. cit., pp. 380, 381. Edersheim defines the word Paraclete as "Advocate, or it may be, according to the circumstances, Defender, Representative, Counsellor, and Pleader." Op. cit., vol. II, p. 516, f.n. 1.

<sup>15</sup>. Robertson, op. cit., p. 193.

taken nothing with them, yet all had been provided. They lacked nothing. Now, however, they were to make provisions for themselves when on future missions. We might say that in the first instance they had a trusting love which needed to do no thinking. Everything was provided for them. Now they are to have a thinking love. They are to sit down, and without being told, think out when to show love and how to show love.

To the end that His men might have agape, Jesus gave them His body and blood in the Lord's Supper. Receiving Him into themselves, they would receive also all His capacity for loving. This sacrament was to the disciples, another picture of the Lord's imminent death. Christ told them that the cup was the new covenant in His blood that was poured out for them.

Bruce has much to say on the Lord's Supper. He declares that it showed the disciples the Savior's death was of a redemptive character. The institution of the Supper further showed the Twelve that the Lord would influence men for a long period to come. The cross would not end his influence. The words "for you" declare the Supper's purpose; it was not just to be a picture of Christ's death.<sup>16</sup> The Supper shows Jesus to be a "Paschal Lamb" that is to be eaten

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16. I do not wish to imply that Bruce does not hold the Calvinistic doctrine of the Lord's Supper. He declares the Supper is not merely a picture, but he nevertheless considers it only a spiritual eating by faith. He confesses, "We must eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man spiritually by faith, as we eat the bread and drink the wine literally with the mouth." *Op. cit.*, p. 365.

for spiritual nourishment.<sup>17</sup>

Ewald writes expressively:

There are moments in this fleeting earthly life in which the highest experiences, perceptions, and surmises of all humanity are crowded closely together, and everything that the individual has wrought out in all his past endeavors and labours seeks to gather itself up in one word and one symbol [better the word "sacrament"], that it may be preserved forever. Such a moment was this of that last meal of Jesus.<sup>18</sup>

It is notable that Judas was absent when the Supper was instituted.

Only the believing disciples partook.

Following the gift of His body and blood, the Savior proceeded with His theme. He spoke to the disciples rapidly of many other characteristics of love. Love asks things in Jesus' name, and the Savior does them. Love would do the works which Christ did, and even more, because He was going to the Father. Love keeps Christ's commandments. Love keeps Jesus' words; Christ and the Father come and make their abode where this obtains. Love feels a peace and oneness with God, no sin to keep one from God, an untroubled heart. Hence the

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17. Bruce, op. cit., pp. 356, 360, 364. This author, taking his cue from the events of the Upper Room, draws a fine picture of how Christians should eat this meal. "Christians should sit down at the table in a spirit of humility, thankfulness, and brotherly love; confessing sin, devoutly thanking God for His covenant of grace, and His mercy to them in Christ, loving Him who loved them, and washed them from their sins in His own blood, and who daily feeds their souls with Heavenly food, and giving Him all glory and dominion; and loving one another - loving all redeemed men and believers in Jesus as brethren, and taking the Supper together as a family meal; withal praying that an ever-increasing number may experience the saving efficacy of Christ's death." Ibid., p. 366.

18. Ewald, op. cit., pp. 416, 417.

disciples should not be troubled at the departure of Jesus, who was going to prepare mansions for them. He said that they knew the way whither He was going. Thomas could not rise above His cold earthly thinking, and he remarked to the Lord that they did not know where He was going, so how could they know the way. Thomas must have been thinking of some place on this earth's surface, probably Palestine. Jesus clarified this disciple's thinking. He told Thomas that the goal was the Father, and that the Savior was the way thither. In fact, by knowing Christ, they know the Father and see Him also. Philip in an almost pitiable earthly, materialistic, manner of thinking suggests to Christ that if they could be shown the Father, all troubles would be removed. Jesus explains to Philip that He and the Father are one. If Philip has been so long with Christ and knows the Father, he should have seen the Father in Jesus. If Philip had not this faith, let the works of the Savior kindle it.

Jesus returned to the subject of His departure. He consoled the disciples with the promise that they would behold Him with the eye of faith even after He had gone. They would behold Him because He would be living. This life in Him would cause them to live in a similar manner. Judas, not Iscariot, could not understand such a man manifestation. How, he asked, could the disciples see Jesus when the world could not? Of course this disciple could not comprehend, for he had always beheld Christ present and had never experienced seeing Christ by faith.

After this interlude, the Lord continued His teaching on love. Love, He said, rejoices in God's acts, even when God sends sorrow, as

the departure of Christ was to the disciples. "Ye heard how I said I go away and I come to you. If ye loved me, ye would have rejoiced because I go unto the Father." It is a further characteristic of love to feel toward Christ as a branch to a vine. Being in such a relationship the disciples would bear much fruit, and their fruit would abide. The results of their good deeds would remain. It is also true of love that it feels toward Jesus as to a friend.<sup>19</sup>

Love endures the hatred and persecution of the world. As a final characteristic of love, we believe that inasmuch as Jesus in His High Priestly Prayer, besought the Father that these men might be with Him where He was, love in the disciples would feel certain that they would be joined to Him at last in the Heavenly mansions.<sup>20</sup>

Such a discourse by the Savior reminds us of Paul's classic chapter on love, as found in the First Letter to the Corinthians.<sup>21</sup>

#### In the Garden

Leaving the Upper Room, Jesus and the disciples journeyed to the Garden of Gethsemane. The Lord went apart to pray, and took with Him Peter, James, and John. The Lord showed the disciples the importance of fellowship, the need for another's faith to support their own. "What could ye not watch with me one hour?" asked Jesus. The Savior warned the disciples to pray even as He was doing. Later, He did not cowardly run from the mob. Prayer would have strengthened the disciples

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19. Neander remarks that the disciples were servants while Christ was training them to apprehend His will. They followed His will unknowingly. After Jesus had made known to them what He had heard of the Father, He called them friends. Op. cit., p. 120. Bruce sees the disciples as treasurers of Christian doctrine because Christ had made known unto them all things that He heard from the Father. Op. cit., p. 422. He adds however that the gift of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost was necessary before they could understand all the implications of Christ's teachings, which they had received. Ibid. pp. 502, 503.

20. John 13-17; Luke 22:14-30, 31-38.

21. I Cor. 13.

also for the ordeal. It had been a fearsome struggle, but "Christ came forth triumphant [from prayer]," says Edersheim.<sup>22</sup> Jesus said to the sleeping disciples, "Arise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that betrayeth me." He now had a resolute, eager, tone. He had won. He was going forth no longer in amazement and sore trouble, but unflinchingly to do God's will. The disciples could but marvel at the wonderful effect of communion with God.<sup>23</sup>

22. Edersheim, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 541.

23. Matt. 26:30, 36-46.

### XIII. The Arrest, Trial, and Crucifixion

#### Arrest

In the Garden Jesus awaited now the betrayer. He did not have long to wait. Judas appeared on the scene with a multitude of ruffians and some soldiers. With a kiss he betrayed His Master. Even in this moment the Savior called him "friend." God desires not the death of a sinner.<sup>1</sup> Yet Judas was soon to die, his life taken by his own hand. Ewald tries to gain an insight into the causes for Judas' action. He suggests that perhaps Judas thought he might be espousing a lost cause, since the earthly kingdom had not been realized, and the people of Jerusalem were still lukewarm toward Jesus. In addition this disciple was mortified by his rebuke at the home of Mary. Judas may have rationalized in his own mind that after all, maybe he should talk to the Hagiography to get their views. In doing so, perhaps he would at the same time take a step toward saving his own life, should Jesus' cause come to disaster. The Hagiography could easily have told Judas that what he would do would be a meritorious act. They gave him thirty pieces of gold, and perhaps promises of coming material advantages. Ewald further supposes that the Hagiography thought it a fine move to arrest Jesus through one of the Twelve. This would tend to discredit the Nazarene.<sup>2</sup>

1. Cf. Ez. 18:23.

2. Ewald, op. cit., pp. 408, 409.

When Jesus answered the mob that He was the one whom they were seeking, "they went backward, and fell to the ground." The Master still had control of the situation. Of His own will He was entering this humiliation. Even in this hour, Jesus thought not of Himself, but asked that He be taken, and His followers be permitted to go their way. Peter drew a sword and made an effort to resist. Jesus rebuked him. Peter should not be so self-willed and impetuous. He should be obedient. "All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword," said Christ. Anyone who takes up the sword, uncommanded by the Lord, will perish by it. If not by violence, at least such an act of disobedience is one that carries with it eternal perishment. Bruce understands Jesus as meaning to say, "In this kind of warfare we must necessarily have the worst of it."<sup>3</sup> The Lord impressed upon Peter the necessity of the Old Testament Scriptures being fulfilled in this act of His Passion. Then Jesus showed Peter the kind of obedience to the Father which the latter should have - the Master suffered Himself to be led away to the Trial.<sup>4</sup> All the disciples fled.

#### Trial and Crucifixion

Peter and John followed the Savior at a distance. Peter walked into a trap. In desperation he lied, cursed, and uttered oaths to that fact that he did not know Jesus. Later as Jesus passed this fallen disciple, He "turned, and looked upon Peter."<sup>5</sup> Peter went out and wept bitterly. When converted he remembered the Savior's

3. Bruce, op. cit., p. 465.

4. John 18:2-12; Matt. 26:47-56.

5. Luke 22:61.

injunction to strengthen his fellows. Bruce remarks that falls can become "stepping-stones," helpful to keep others from falling.<sup>6</sup>

Christ had finally shattered Peter's self-assurance. Now there was a chance for a God-assurance to be built up.

Jesus throughout the trial and crucifixion was an example to the disciples as to how they should bear up under their own trials and crosses:

1. He showed courage before Annas, Caiaphas, Herod, and Pilate, not being cowed but answering boldly and firmly.

2. He showed a calm which was based on complete confidence in God.

3. He did not retaliate by striking back when smitten.

4. He did not shrink from drinking to the last drop the cup of bitterness. He took all that God sent. When offered wine mixed with gall, to ease the suffering, He refused it. Edersheim notes here that Jesus would not let His suffering be thought of as a necessity. He here showed it to be a voluntary self-surrender.<sup>7</sup>

5. In the hour of bitterest anguish He thought of others. Jesus on the cross was still trying to gain sinners. He won the dying thief. He also thought of His mother, commending her to the Apostle John's keeping.

Throughout His agony, in many ways Jesus fulfilled the Scriptures. His care to see that they were fulfilled shows the high regard He

6. Bruce, op. cit., p. 477.

7. Edersheim, op. cit., vol. II, p. 590.

had for them. None of its sayings could be broken. He felt a necessity for keeping all of them. In the end Jesus "gave up the ghost."<sup>3</sup> Again, it was His own doing. He had willingly entered, suffered, and ended His Passion.

Resurrection Appearances

8. Matt. 26:57-27:66; Mark 14:53-15:47; Luke 22:54-23:56; John 18:12-19:42.

recorded in Scripture. Bruce notes that part of the disciples' training was to be witnesses of the Resurrection of the Lord.<sup>1</sup> It is true that afterwards the disciples made much of the Resurrection in their preaching.<sup>2</sup> Peter and Paul told the Jewish council, "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."<sup>3</sup> The Resurrection turned blind and doubtful men into bold evangelists. It gave them the hope of a like resurrection. One of the first to whom Jesus showed Himself alive was to Peter.<sup>4</sup> Bruce notes that Christ met Peter alone to show him He was forgiven.<sup>5</sup>

Jesus

Before this appearance to Peter, on the way to Emmaus Jesus had taught two disciples (one by the name of Cleopas and the other unnamed) to look to the Old Testament Scriptures to learn things about God. Through this means He was explaining the Scriptures to them. Bruce remarks that Jesus first gave them the theory of His resurrection and then the fact, whereas to the other disciples Jesus made known first

1. Bruce, op. cit., p. 406.

2. As a side note it is interesting to know that when William French of Dunstable, the first Indian diocesan Bishop in the Anglican Church, was asked what he would do if suddenly set down in a totaly heathen village, he unhesitatingly answered that he would preach the resurrection. This seems to account for much of his amazing success in his work and that of his helpers. Cf. Carol Graham, Journal of Dunstable pp. 10, 11.

3. Acts 4:20.

4. Cf. Luke 24:34.

5. Luke 24:34-35; I Cor. 15:5.

6. Bruce, op. cit., p. 406.

#### XIV. The Resurrection Appearances and the Ascension of Christ

##### Resurrection Appearances

There were many Resurrection appearances. We have some of them recorded in Scripture. Bruce notes that part of the disciples' training was to be witnesses of the Resurrection of the Lord.<sup>1</sup> It is true that afterwards the disciples made much of the Resurrection in their preaching.<sup>2</sup> Peter and John told the Jewish council, "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."<sup>3</sup> The Resurrection turned timid and sceptic<sup>4</sup> men into bold evangelists. It gave them the hope of a like resurrection. One of the first to whom Jesus showed Himself alive was to Peter.<sup>5</sup> Bruce infers that Christ met Peter alone to show him he was forgiven.<sup>6</sup>

##### Emmaus

Before this appearance to Peter, on the way to Emmaus Jesus had taught two disciples (one by the name of Clopas and the other unnamed) to look to the Old Testament Scriptures to learn things about God. Through this means He was explaining the crucifixion to them. Bruce remarks that Jesus first gave them the theory of His resurrection and then the fact, whereas to the other disciples Jesus made known first

1. Bruce, op. cit., p. 496.

2. As a side note it is interesting to know that when Bishop Azariah of Dornakal, the first Indian diocessan Bishop in the Anglican Church, was asked what he would do if suddenly set down in a totally heathen village, he unhesitatingly answered that he would preach the resurrection. This seems to account for much of his amazing success in his work and that of his helpers. Cf. Carol Graham, Azariah of Dornakal, pp. 10, 11.

3. Acts 4:20.

4. Cf. Luke 24:11.

5. Luke 24:33-35; I Cor. 15:5.

6. Bruce, op. cit., p. 498.

the fact of His Resurrection and then the theory.<sup>7</sup> The Emmaus disciples mentioned that their hearts burned within them.<sup>8</sup> So it is always when a man hears Jesus speak to him through His Word. Eder-  
sheim draws the following conclusion from the Emmaus incident, "So, then, they had learned to the full the Resurrection-lesson - not only that He was risen indeed, but that it needed not His seen Bodily Presence, if only He opened up to the heart and mind all the Scriptures concerning Himself."<sup>9</sup>

#### The Disciples in Hiding

Jesus appeared twice to the disciples, who were in hiding behind closed doors for fear of the Jews. The first time Thomas was absent. Jesus appeared suddenly and upbraided them for not believing the reports of those who had seen Him alive. While they still "disbelieved for joy, and wondered," Jesus ate before them from the meal they had been engaged in at His miraculous entrance.<sup>10</sup> Jesus then breathed on His disciples and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." Christ further told them that even as the Father had sent Him so He would send them. As Duncan so aptly stated in our introduction, their job would be to gather a people for God.<sup>11</sup> They were "to seek and to save that which was lost."<sup>12</sup>

Thomas could not believe it, when the disciples told him of the

7. Ibid, p. 499.

8. Luke 24:13-32.

9. Edersheim, op. cit., vol. II, p. 642.

10. Luke 24:36-43.

11. Cf. page vii.

12. Luke 19:10.

happening. His inability to conceive of any such a possibility as the Resurrection was even more vociferous than that of the others had been. He stated what he thought was an impossibility; he would have to put his finger into the nail prints and his hand into Christ's side before he could believe. This was cold empirical logic. Later when all of the disciples were once more gathered together, Jesus confronted Thomas with his own statement. Thomas could but exclaim, "My Lord, and my God." The Lord taught His men that those would be blessed who had never physically seen Jesus alive, and yet would believe.<sup>13</sup> Bruce sees here that such a faith is possible.<sup>14</sup>

#### By the Sea of Galilee

The disciples had gone back to Galilee. Peter and the others decided to go fishing, but after toiling all night they caught nothing. When morning broke Jesus stood on the shore and made Himself known to the disciples by supplying them a miraculous catch of fish. This undoubtedly reminded Peter and some of the others of their first call into discipleship. At once they knew it was the Master, and they hastened to the shore. At the breakfast on the shore, Jesus restored Peter to his office in the presence of all the others. Christ asked Simon whether he loved Him more than did the other disciples, thus recalling Peter's statement in the Upper Room that even if all others would be offended, he would not. Three times the Lord questioned Peter's love and assigned him a task. It will be remembered that Peter had denied his Lord three times. Christ's questions also served as a

13. John 20:24-31.

14. Bruce, op. cit., p. 513.

test to see whether Peter had learned his lesson of humility. From Peter's answers it can be seen that he now leans not on himself but on God. He does not exclaim, "I love you," but he humbly reminds the Savior, "Thou knowest that I love thee." Bruce finds in the injunction, "Feed my sheep," a second reference to the scene in the Upper Room. It relates to Christ's statement about the sheep being scattered.<sup>15</sup> Bruce further believes the call to feed Christ's lambs was a call to Peter to strengthen the other disciples through his experience; the strong should care for the weak. While this call to feed Christ's lambs was issued primarily to Peter for the reason stated, the call to feed Christ's sheep was meant for all the disciples. It referred to their job of edifying the elect. They were to be shepherds in the Master's stead.<sup>16</sup> Jesus now gave Peter a prophecy that he would suffer death in the Lord's service. This showed Peter that there would come a time when he would no longer flee persecution in the Savior's cause but would face death as a good soldier. The command was then given Peter to follow the Lord. Peter saw John following also and asked what this man's future would be. Jesus as much as told Peter that he would have enough to occupy his mind in doing his job without trying to search God's mind for answers to all questions.<sup>17</sup> The disciples could learn to forget the "why's" concerning spiritual matters which God has not revealed in His Word. Bruce sees here a rejoinder to Peter not to set himself over others or meddle in another's bishopric. Bruce further

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15. Ibid, p. 518.

16. Ibid, pp. 518-521.

17. John 21.

observes that Peter in his first epistle evidences that the lesson which Christ enjoined upon him so often, has made a lasting impression. Peter here urges the Christians not to be busybodies in other men's matters, "literally, as a bishop intruding into another's diocese."<sup>18</sup>

#### Final Commission and Ascension

It was on a mount in Galilee where Jesus had commanded the disciples to meet Him, that He gave them their final commission. Christ first stated that all authority was given to Him. This would assure the disciples of His right to send them out. Bruce feels that this thought of the Master having all power would "cheer them on their way."<sup>19</sup> The commission was given, "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you." The disciples were to make others acknowledge Jesus as their Master and gather a people for God. They were to baptize these disciples in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Lastly they were to teach them all the things that Jesus had commanded them as disciples. Fahling calls to our attention that "the disciples were not primarily commissioned to become miracle-mongers, but were commanded to baptize and to teach."<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, Mark informs us that God did confirm their words by signs. The disciples were further told that if anyone would refuse to believe them, that person would be damned.<sup>21</sup> Jesus, after the great commission, gave His men a final promise that He would be with them alway "even unto the end of the world."<sup>22</sup>

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18. Bruce, op. cit., pp. 527, 528. The passage referred to is I Pet. 4:15.  
 19. Ibid., p. 534.  
 20. Fahling, op. cit., p. 707.  
 21. Mark 16:15-18.  
 22. Matt. 28:16-20.

Luke tells of another meeting with Christ before the Ascension. At this meeting, which was probably in Jerusalem, Jesus opened the minds of the disciples, demonstrating to them the Old Testament Scripture's prophecies concerning His purposes during His life. The Scriptures "must needs be fulfilled,"<sup>23</sup> said Jesus. This attitude on the part of the Lord confirmed for the disciples the divine origin and quality of the Old Testament Scriptures, for only the divine has a must. The apostles are told that their job is to be witnesses for Christ. Beginning at Jerusalem they were to cover the earth with the Gospel's message. Bruce sees the injunction to begin at Jerusalem as a good plan for the campaign to evangelize the world. Furthermore this showed Christ's forgiveness for the city that crucified Him. The command to the disciples to be witnesses on the earth was an answer to their question as to whether Jesus would restore the kingdom to Israel. They were the witnesses to all the earth; if just a national Jewish kingdom was intended by Christ, what necessity for world-wide witnessing? For their job they were to await power from on high. All disciples of all time must have this power from on high. Without it a man cannot qualify for discipleship.<sup>24</sup> The disciples were told to leave all times and seasons in God's hands. They should not be impatient for the final Kingdom.<sup>25</sup>

After this last word of the Lord, the evangelist Luke tells us that Jesus led His men out near Bethany. Here it was that the Lord

23. Luke 24:44-49.

24. Bruce, op. cit., pp. 536, 537, 542.

25. Acts 1:3-8.

ascended from their sight into Heaven, all the while blessing the disciples. Bruce sees in the Ascension a "gracious and benignant" departure. There was no parting kiss, shaking of hands, or symbol of farewell such as men are accustomed to use. "Jesus moved upwards as if lifted from the earth by some celestial attraction, with His face looking downwards upon His beloved companions, and His hand stretched out in an attitude of benediction."

The Ascension taught the disciples that the capitol of Christ's Kingdom is in Heaven, not on earth.<sup>26</sup> Heaven's seal of approval was given as it received Him. A promise of His return was given to the remaining disciples.<sup>27</sup> This promise strengthened them for their job, and instigated them to watch for Him. Hope was raised to see Jesus again visibly. The disciples "returned to Jerusalem with great joy: and were continually in the temple, blessing God."<sup>28</sup>

#### Backward Glance

Thus we come to the end of our study of the disciples in the seminary of Jesus. After following them through the various incidents of their training, we feel a sorrow as we see the Master leave them. In our study we have seen the Savior to be a good master, carefully instructing the group as a whole, and the members individually as their several weaknesses required. He took an interest in each man and saw that that disciple grew into the stature of a strong Apostle.

The men entering the seminary were raw unlettered recruits. They left as men tried with fire and filled with all that Christ had

26. Bruce, op. cit., pp. 534, 543.

27. Acts 1:9-12.

28. Luke 24:50-53.

revealed to them from the Father. They were worthy of the title "friends," which Jesus gave them in the Upper Room. The feet of these disciples were firmly planted on the Old Testament Scriptures, but their heads were raised above the traditions and laws of the elders. Their only imperative was the law of love. Their only guide was the "Spirit of Truth." They were ready to gather a people, any people, without prejudice, for God.

*W. J. D. ...*  
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*University of Chicago Press, 1945.*

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