

JESUS THE CHRIST

*A Study of the Messiah and His Mission according to
Holy Scriptures both Ancient and Modern*

By JAMES E. TALMAGE

One of the Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Commentary (Indented Italics), Underlining and Bolding by
Brenda L. High

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PREFACE

The scope of the subject presented in this work is expressed on the title page. It will be readily seen that the author has departed from the course usually followed by writers on the Life of Jesus Christ, which course, as a rule, begins with the birth of Mary's Babe and ends with the ascension of the slain and risen Lord from Olivet. The treatment embodied in these pages, in addition to the narrative of the Lord's life in the flesh comprises the Antemortal existence and activities of the world's Redeemer, the revelations and personal manifestations of the glorified and exalted Son of God during the apostolic period of old and in modern times, the assured nearness of the Lord's second advent, and predicted events beyond—all so far as the Holy Scriptures make plain.

It is particularly congruous and appropriate that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—the only Church that affirms authority based on specific revelation and commission to use the Lord's Holy Name as a distinctive designation—should set forth her doctrines concerning the Messiah and His mission.

The author of this volume entered upon his welcome service under request and appointment from the presiding authorities of the Church; and the completed work has been read to and is approved by the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve. It presents, however, the writer's personal belief and profoundest conviction as to the truth of what he has written. The book is published by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

A characteristic feature of the work is the guidance afforded by modern scriptures and the explication of the Holy Writ of olden times in the light of present day revelation, which, as a powerful and well directed beam, illumines many dark passages of ancient construction.

The spirit of the sacredness inherent in the subject has been a constant companion of the writer throughout his pleasing labor, and he reverently invokes the same as a minister to the readers of the volume.

JAMES E. TALMAGE.
Salt Lake City, Utah,
September, 1915.

PREFACE TO THE SIXTH EDITION

The second edition of this work appeared in December, 1915, and the third in March, 1916. The third edition presented several minor alterations in wording and contained additional notes and references. Succeeding issues, including the fifth which was printed on India paper, and the present edition are practically uniform with the third.

JAMES E. TALMAGE.
Salt Lake City, Utah,
October, 1922.

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FROM SUNSHINE TO SHADOW

Our Lord's descent from the holy heights[795] of the Mount of Transfiguration was more than a physical return from greater to lesser altitudes; it was a passing from sunshine into shadow, from the effulgent glory of heaven to the mists of worldly passions and human unbelief; it was the beginning of His rapid descent into the valley of humiliation. From lofty converse with divinely-appointed ministers, from supreme communion with His Father and God, Jesus came down to a scene of disheartening confusion and a spectacle of demonized dominion before which even His apostles stood in impotent despair. To His sensitive and sinless soul the contrast must have brought superhuman anguish; even to us who read the brief account thereof it is appalling.

HEALING OF YOUTHFUL DEMONIAIC

Jesus and the three apostles returned from the mount on the morrow following the Transfiguration;[796] this fact suggests the assumption that the glorious manifestation had occurred during the night. At or near the base of the mountain the party found the other apostles, and with them a multitude of people, including some scribes or rabbis.[797] There was evidence of disputation and disturbance amongst the crowd; and plainly the apostles were on the defensive. At the unexpected approach of Jesus many of the people ran to meet Him with respectful salutations. Of the contentious scribes He asked: "What question ye with them?" thus assuming the burden of the dispute, whatever it might be, and so relieving the distressed disciples from further active participation. The scribes remained silent; their courage had vanished when the Master appeared. A man, "one of the multitude," gave, though indirectly, the answer. "**Master,**" said he, kneeling at the feet of Christ, "I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit; and wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not."

The disciples' failure to heal the stricken youth had evidently brought upon them hostile criticism, taunts and ridicule from the unbelieving scribes; and their discomfiture must have been intensified by the thought that through their doubt had been cast upon the authority and power of their Lord. Pained in spirit at this – another instance of dearth of faith and consequent lack of power among His chosen and ordained servants – Jesus uttered an exclamation of intense sorrow: "**O faithless**

generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you?" These words, in which there is evident reproof, however mild and pitying it may be, were addressed primarily to the apostles; whether exclusively so or to them and others is of minor importance. As Jesus directed, the afflicted lad was brought nearer; and the tormenting demon, finding himself in the Master's presence, threw his youthful victim into a terrible paroxysm, so that the boy fell to the ground and wallowed in convulsions, the while frothing and foaming at the mouth. With calm deliberation, which contrasted strongly with the eager impatience of the distracted parent, Jesus inquired as to when the malady had first befallen the lad. **"Of a child," answered the father, adding, "And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him."** With pathetic eagerness he implored, "If thou canst do anything, have compassion on us and help us." The man spoke of his son's affliction as though shared by himself. "Help us," was his prayer.

To this qualifying expression **"If thou canst do anything,"** which implied a measure of uncertainty as to the ability of the Master to grant what he asked, and this perhaps as in part a result of the failure of the apostles, Jesus replied: "If thou canst believe"; and added, **"all things are possible to him that believeth."** The man's understanding was enlightened; up to that moment he had thought that all depended upon Jesus; he now saw that the issue rested largely with himself. It is noteworthy that the Lord specified belief rather than faith as the condition essential to the case. The man was evidently trustful, and assuredly fervent in his hope that Jesus could help; but it is doubtful that he knew what faith really meant. He was receptive and eagerly teachable, however, and the Lord strengthened his feeble and uncertain belief. The encouraging explanation of the real need stimulated him to a more abounding trust. Weeping in an agony of hope he cried out: "Lord, I believe;" and then, realizing the darkness of error from which he was just beginning to emerge, he added penitently "help thou mine unbelief "[798]

This is a beautiful statement, "help thou mine unbelief" - we should all confess this, often.

Looking compassionately upon the writhing sufferer at His feet, Jesus rebuked the demon, thus: "Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him. And the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead. But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose;" and as Luke adds, "and delivered him again to his father." The permanency of the cure was assured by the express command that the evil spirit enter no more into the lad;[799] it was no relief from that present attack alone; the healing was permanent.

The people were amazed at the power of God manifested in the miracle; and the apostles who had tried and failed to subdue the evil spirit were disturbed. While on their mission, though away from their Master's helpful presence, they had successfully

rebuked and cast out evil spirits as they had received special power and commission to do,[800] but now, during His absence of a day they had found themselves unable. When they had retired to the house, they asked of Jesus, "**Why could not we cast him out?**" The reply was: "**Because of your unbelief;**" and in further explanation the Lord said, "**Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.**"[801]

In other words, the hard cases will need fasting and prayer as part of the request to heal, and to strengthen one's faith and 'unbelief'.

Hereby we learn that the achievements possible to faith are limited or conditioned by the genuineness, the purity, the unmixed quality of that faith. "**O ye of little faith;**" "**Where is your faith?**" and "**Wherefore didst thou doubt?**"[802] are forms of admonitory reproof that had been repeatedly addressed to the apostles by the Lord. The possibilities of faith were now thus further affirmed: "**Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.**"[803] The comparison between effective faith and a grain of mustard seed is one of quality rather than of quantity; it connotes living, virile faith, like unto the seed, however small, from which a great plant may spring,[804] in contrast with a lifeless, artificial imitation, however prominent or demonstrative.

THE LORD'S DEATH AND RESURRECTION AGAIN PREDICTED [805]

From the locality whereat the last miracle was wrought, Jesus departed with the Twelve, and passed through Galilee toward Capernaum. It is probable that they traveled by the less frequented roads, as He desired that His return should not be publicly known. He had gone into comparative retirement for a season, primarily it seems in quest of opportunity to more thoroughly instruct the apostles in their preparation for the work, which within a few months they would be left to carry on without His bodily companionship. They had solemnly testified that they knew Him to be the Christ; to them therefore He could impart much that the people in general were wholly unprepared to receive. The particular theme of His special and advanced instruction to the Twelve was that of His approaching death and resurrection; and this was dwelt upon again and again, for they were slow or unwilling to comprehend. "**Let these sayings sink down into your ears**" was His forceful prelude on this occasion, in Galilee. Then followed the reiterated prediction, spoken in part in the present tense as though already begun in fulfillment: "**The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day.**" We read with some surprise that the apostles still failed to understand. Luke's comment is: "**But they understood not this saying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not: and they feared to ask him of that saying.**" The thought of what the Lord's words might mean, even in its faintest outline, was terrifying to those devoted

men; and their failure to comprehend was in part due to the fact that the human mind is loath to search deeply into anything it desires not to believe.

THE TRIBUTE MONEY – SUPPLIED BY A MIRACLE [806]

Jesus and His followers were again in Capernaum. There Peter was approached by a collector of the temple tax, who asked: "Doth not your Master pay tribute?"[807] Peter answered "Yes." It is interesting to find that the inquiry was made of Peter and not directly of Jesus; this circumstance may be indicative of the respect in which the Lord was held by the people at large, and may suggest the possibility of doubt in the collector's mind as to whether Jesus was amenable to the tax, since priests and rabbis generally claimed exemption.

The annual capitation tax here referred to amounted to half a shekel or a didrachm, corresponding to about thirty-three cents in our money; and this had been required of every male adult in Israel since the days of the exodus; though, during the period of captivity the requirement had been modified.[808] This tribute, as prescribed through Moses, was originally known as "atonement money," and its payment was in the nature of a sacrifice to accompany supplication for ransom from the effects of individual sin. At the time of Christ the annual contribution was usually collected between early March and the Passover. If Jesus was subject to this tax, He was at this time several weeks in arrears.

The conversation between Peter and the tax-collector had occurred outside the house. When Peter entered, and was about to inform the Master concerning the interview, Jesus forestalled him, saying: "What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers? Peter saith unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free."

Peter must have seen the inconsistency of expecting Jesus, the acknowledged Messiah, to pay atonement money, or a tax for temple maintenance, inasmuch as the temple was the House of God, and Jesus was the Son of God, and particularly since even earthly princes were exempted from capitation dues. Peter's embarrassment over his inconsiderate boldness, in pledging payment for his Master without first consulting Him, was relieved however by Jesus, who said: "Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee."

The money was to be paid, not because it could be rightfully demanded of Jesus, but lest non-payment give offense and furnish to His opponents further excuse for complaint. The "piece of money," which Jesus said Peter would find in the mouth of the first fish that took his bait, is more correctly designated by the literal translation

"**stater**,"[809] indicating a silver coin equivalent to a shekel, or two didrachms, and therefore the exact amount of the tax for two persons. "That take, and give unto them for me and thee" said Jesus. It is notable that He did not say "for us." In His associations with men, even with the Twelve, who of all were nearest and dearest to Him, our Lord always maintained His separate and unique status, in every instance making the fact apparent that He was essentially different from other men. This is illustrated by His expressions "**My Father and your Father**," "**My God and your God**,"[810] instead of our Father and our God. He reverently acknowledged that He was the Son of God in a literal sense that did not apply to any other being.

While the circumstances of the finding of the stater in the fish are not detailed, and the actual accomplishment of the miracle is not positively recorded, we cannot doubt that what Jesus had promised was realized, as otherwise there would appear no reason for introducing the incident into the Gospel narrative. The miracle is without a parallel or even a remotely analogous instance. We need not assume that the stater was other than an ordinary coin that had fallen into the water, nor that it had been taken by the fish in any unusual way. Nevertheless, the knowledge that there was in the lake a fish having a coin in its gullet, that the coin was of the denomination specified, and that that particular fish would rise, and be the first to rise to Peter's hook, is as incomprehensible to man's finite understanding as are the means by which any of Christ's miracles were wrought. The Lord Jesus held and holds dominion over the earth, the sea, and all that in them is, for by His word and power were they made.

The Lord's purpose in so miraculously supplying the money should be studiously considered. The assumption that superhuman power had to be invoked because of a supposed condition of extreme poverty on the part of Jesus and Peter is unwarranted. Even if Jesus and His companions had been actually penniless, Peter and his fellow fishermen could easily have cast their net, and, with ordinary success have obtained fish enough to sell for the needed amount. Moreover, we find no instance of a miracle wrought by the Lord for personal gain or relief of His own need, however pressing. It appears probable, that by the means employed for obtaining the money, Jesus intentionally emphasized His exceptional reasons for redeeming Peter's pledge that the tax would be paid. The Jews, who did not know Jesus as the Messiah, but only as a Teacher of superior ability and a Man of unusual power, might have taken offense had He refused to pay the tribute required of every Jew. On the other hand, to the apostles and particularly to Peter who had been the mouth-piece of all in the great confession, the payment of the tax in ordinary course and without explanation by Jesus might have appeared as an admission that He was subject to the temple, and therefore less than He had claimed and less than they had confessed Him to be. His catechization of Peter had clearly demonstrated that He maintained His right as the King's Son, and yet would condescend to voluntarily give what could not be righteously demanded. Then, in conclusive demonstration of His exalted status, He provided the money by the utilization of knowledge such as no other man possessed.

AS A LITTLE CHILD [811]

On the way to Capernaum the apostles had questioned among themselves, as they supposed beyond the Master's hearing; questioning had led to argument, and argument to disputation. The matter about which they were so greatly concerned was as to who among them should be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. The testimony they had received convinced them beyond all doubt, that Jesus was the long-awaited Christ, and this had been supplemented and confirmed by His unqualified acknowledgment of His Messianic dignity. With minds still tinged by the traditional expectation of the Messiah as both spiritual Lord and temporal King, and remembering some of the Master's frequent references to His kingdom and the blessed state of those who belonged thereto, and furthermore realizing that His recent utterances indicated a near crisis or climax in His ministry, they surrendered themselves to the selfish contemplation of their prospective stations in the new kingdom, and the particular offices of trust, honor, and emolument each most desired. Who of them was to be prime minister; who would be chancellor, who the commander of the troops? Personal ambition had already engendered jealousy in their hearts.

When they were together with Jesus in the house at Capernaum, the subject was brought up again. Mark tells us that Jesus asked: "What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way?" and that they answered not, because, as may be inferred, they were ashamed. From Matthew's record it may be understood that the apostles submitted the question for the Master's decision. The apparent difference of circumstance is unimportant; both accounts are correct; Christ's question to them may have eventually brought out their questions to Him. Jesus, comprehending their thoughts and knowing their unenlightened state of mind on the matter that troubled them, gave them an illustrated lesson. Calling a little child, whom He lovingly took into His arm, He said: "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." With this lesson we may profitably associate a later teaching, that little children are typical of the kingdom of heaven.[812]

Even the apostles were in need of conversion;[813] respecting the matter at issue their hearts were turned, partly at least, from God and His kingdom. They had to learn that genuine humility is an attribute essential to citizenship in the community of the blessed;

and that the degree of humility conditions whatsoever there is akin to rank in the kingdom; for therein the humblest shall be greatest.

Christ would not have had His chosen representatives become childish; far from it, they had to be men of courage, fortitude, and force; but He would have them become childlike. The distinction is important. Those who belong to Christ must become like children in obedience, truthfulness, trustfulness, purity, humility and faith. The child is an artless, natural, trusting believer; the childish one is careless, foolish, and neglectful. In contrasting these characteristics, note the counsel of Paul: "**Brethren, be not children in understanding; howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.**"[814] Children as such, and children as types of adults who are true believers, are closely associated in this lesson. Whosoever shall offend, that is cause to stumble or go astray, one such child of Christ, incurs guilt so great that it would have been better for him had he met death even by violence before he had so sinned.

To be "childish" and to be "childlike" is not the same thing. To be childlike is to be humble as a little child and to be childish is to be careless, foolish and neglectful.

Dwelling upon offenses, or causes of stumbling, the Lord continued: "**Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!**" Then, repeating some of the precious truths embodied in His memorable Sermon on the Mount,[815] He urged the overcoming of evil propensities whatever the sacrifice. As it is better that a man undergo surgical treatment though he lose thereby a hand, a foot, or an eye, than that his whole body be involved and his life forfeited, so is it commended that he cut off, tear away, or root out from his soul the passions of evil, which, if suffered to remain shall surely bring him under condemnation. In that state his conscience shall gnaw as an undying worm, and his remorse shall be as a fire that cannot be quenched. Every human soul shall be tested as by fire; and as the flesh of the altar sacrifices had to be seasoned with salt, as a type of preservation from corruption,[816] so also the soul must receive the saving salt of the gospel; and that salt must be pure and potent, not a dirty mixture of inherited prejudice and unauthorized tradition that has lost whatever saltiness it may once have had. "**Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another,**" was the Lord's admonition to the disputing Twelve.[817]

As applicable to children of tender years, and to child-like believers young and old, the Savior gave to the apostles this solemn warning and profound statement of fact: "**Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.**" The mission of the Christ was presented as that of saving those who are temporarily lost, and who, but for His aid would be lost forever. In elucidation of His meaning, the Teacher presented a parable which has found place among the literary treasures of the world.

THE PARABLE OF THE LOST SHEEP [818]

"How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray. Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish."

In this effective analogy the saving purpose of Christ's mission is made prominent. He is verily the Savior. The shepherd is portrayed as leaving the ninety and nine, pastured or folded in safety we cannot doubt, while he goes alone into the mountains to seek the one that has strayed. In finding and bringing back the wayward sheep, he has more joy than that of knowing the others are yet safe. In a later version of this splendid parable, as addressed to the murmuring Pharisees and scribes at Jerusalem, the Master said of the shepherd on his finding the lost sheep:

"And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance."[819]

Many have marveled that there should be greater rejoicing over the recovery of one stray sheep, or the saving of a soul that had been as one lost, than over the many who have not been in such jeopardy. In the safe-folded ninety and nine the shepherd had continued joy; but to him came a new accession of happiness, brighter and stronger because of his recent grief, when the lost was brought back to the fold. To this parable in connection with others of analogous import we shall recur in a later chapter.

"IN MY NAME" [820]

In continuation of the lesson illustrated by the little child, Jesus said: **"Whosoever shall receive this child in my name receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me receiveth him that sent me: for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great."** It may have been Christ's reference to deeds done in His name that prompted John to interject a remark at this point: **"Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us: and we forbid him, because he followeth not us. But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is on our part."** The young

apostle had allowed his zeal for the Master's name to lead to intolerance. That the man who had attempted to do good in the name of Jesus was evidently sincere, and that his efforts were acceptable to the Lord we cannot doubt; his act was essentially different from the unrighteous assumptions for which some others were afterward rebuked;[821] he was certainly a believer in Christ, and may have been one of the class from which the Lord was soon to select and commission special ministers and the Seventy.[822] In the state of divided opinion then existing among the people concerning Jesus, it was fair to say that all who were not opposed to Him were at least tentatively on His side. On other occasions He asserted that those who were not with Him were against Him.[823]

MY BROTHER AND I [824]

The proper method of adjusting differences between brethren and the fundamental principles of Church discipline were made subjects of instruction to the Twelve. The first step is thus prescribed: "**Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.**" The rule of the rabbis was that the offender must make the first advance; but Jesus taught that the injured one should not wait for his brother to come to him, but go himself, and seek to adjust the difficulty; by so doing he might be the means of saving his brother's soul. If the offender proved to be obdurate, the brother who had suffered the trespass was to take two or three others with him, and again try to bring the transgressor to repentant acknowledgment of his offense; such a course provided for witnesses, by whose presence later misrepresentation would be guarded against.

This is also excellent advice in all matters of law in today's world.

Extreme measures were to be adopted only after all gentler means had failed. Should the man persist in his obstinacy, the case was to be brought before the Church, and in the event of his neglect or refusal to heed the decision of the Church, he was to be deprived of fellowship, thereby becoming in his relationship to his former associates "as an heathen man and a publican." In such state of non-membership he would be a fit subject for missionary effort; but, until he became repentant and manifested willingness to make amends, he could claim no rights or privileges of communion in the Church. Continued association with the unrepentant sinner may involve the spread of his disaffection, and the contamination of others through his sin. Justice is not to be dethroned by Mercy. The revealed order of discipline in the restored Church is similar to that given to the apostles of old.[825]

The authority of the Twelve to administer the affairs of Church government was attested by the Lord's confirming to them as a body the promise before addressed to Peter: "**Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.**"[826] Through unity of purpose and unreserved sincerity they would have power with God,

as witness the Master's further assurance: **"Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."** Peter here broke in with a question: **"Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?"** He would fain have some definite limit set, and he probably considered the tentative suggestion of seven times as a very liberal measure, inasmuch as the rabbis prescribed a triple forgiveness only.[827] He may have chosen seven as the next number above three having a special Pharisaical significance. The Savior's answer was enlightening: "Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven." This reply must have meant to Peter as it means to us, that to forgiveness man may set no bounds; the forgiveness, however, must be merited by the recipient.[828] The instruction was made memorable by the following story.

PARABLE OF THE UNMERCIFUL SERVANT

"Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow servants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellow servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. So when his fellow servants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."[829]

Ten thousand talents are specified as expressive of a sum so great as to put the debtor beyond all reasonable possibility of paying. We may regard the man as a trusted official, one of the king's ministers, who had been charged with the custody of the royal revenues, or one of the chief treasurers of taxes; that he is called a servant introduces no inconsistency, as in an absolute monarchy all but the sovereign are subjects and servants. The selling of the debtor's wife and children and all that he had would not have been in violation of the law in the supposed case, which implies the legal

recognition of slavery.[830] The man was in arrears for debt. He did not come before his lord voluntarily but had to be brought. So in the affairs of our individual lives periodical reckonings are inevitable; and while some debtors report of their own accord, others have to be cited to appear. The messengers who serve the summons may be adversity, illness, the approach of death; but, whatever, whoever they are, they enforce a rendering of our accounts.

The contrast between ten thousand talents and a hundred pence is enormous.[831] In his fellow servant's plea for time in which to pay the hundred pence, the greater debtor should have been reminded of the dire straits from which he had just been relieved; the words, "**Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all,**" were identical with those of his own prayer to the king. The base ingratitude of the unmerciful servant justified the king in revoking the pardon once granted. The man came under condemnation, not primarily for defalcation and debt, but for lack of mercy after having received of mercy so abundantly. He, as an unjust plaintiff, had invoked the law; as a convicted transgressor he was to be dealt with according to the law. Mercy is for the merciful. As a heavenly jewel it is to be received with thankfulness and used with sanctity, not to be cast into the mire of undeservedness. Justice may demand retribution and punishment: "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."[832] The conditions under which we may confidently implore pardon are set forth in the form of prayer prescribed by the Lord: "**Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.**"[833]

NOTES TO CHAPTER 24

1. Faith in Behalf of Others – The supplication of the agonized father for the benefit of his sorely afflicted son – "**Have compassion on us, and help us**" (Mark 9:22) – shows that he made the boy's case his own. In this we are reminded of the Canaanite woman who implored Jesus to have mercy on her, though her daughter was the afflicted one (Matt. 15:22). In these cases, faith was exercised in behalf of the sufferers by others; and the same is true of the centurion who pleaded for his servant and whose faith was specially commended by Jesus (Matt 8:5-10); of Jairus whose daughter lay dead (Luke 8:41, 42, 49, 50), and of many who brought their helpless kindred or friends to Christ and pleaded for them. As heretofore shown, faith to be healed is as truly a gift of God as is faith to heal; and, as the instances cited prove, faith may be exercised with effect in behalf of others. In connection with the ordinance of administering to the afflicted, by anointing with oil and the laying on of hands, as authoritatively established in the restored Church of Jesus Christ, the elders officiating should encourage the faith of all believers present, that such be exerted in behalf of the sufferer. In the case of infants and of persons who are unconscious, it is plainly useless to look for active manifestation of faith on their part, and the supporting faith of kindred and friends is all the more requisite.

2. Power Developed by Prayer and Fasting— The Savior's statement concerning the evil spirit that the apostles were unable to subdue— "**Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting**" — indicates gradation in the malignity and evil power of demons, and gradation also in the results of varying degrees of faith. The apostles who failed on the occasion referred to had been able to cast out demons at other times. Fasting, when practiced in prudence, and genuine prayer are conducive to the development of faith with its accompanying power for good. Individual application of this principle may be made with profit. Have you some besetting weakness, some sinful indulgence that you have vainly tried to overcome? Like the malignant demon that Christ rebuked in the boy, your sin may be of a kind that goeth out only through prayer and fasting.

3. Nothing Impossible to Faith— Many people have questioned the literal truth of the Lord's declaration that by faith mountains may be removed from their place. Plainly there would have to be a purpose in harmony with the divine mind and plan, in order that faith could be exerted at all in such an undertaking. Neither such a miracle nor any other is possible as a gratification of the yearning for curiosity, nor for display, nor for personal gain or selfish satisfaction. Christ wrought no miracle with any such motive; He persistently refused to show signs to mere sign-seekers. But to deny the possibility of a mountain being removed through faith, under conditions that would render such removal acceptable to God, is to deny the word of God, both as to this specific possibility, and as to the general assurance that "**nothing shall be impossible**" to him who hath faith adequate to the end desired. It is worthy of note, however, that the Jews in the days of Christ and since often spoke of removing mountains as a figurative expression for the overcoming of difficulties. According to Lightfoot and other authorities a man able to solve intricate problems, or of particular power in argument or acumen in judgment, was referred to as a "**rooter up of mountains.**"

4. The Temple Tribute— That the tribute money referred to in the text was a Jewish contribution to the temple and not a tax levied by the Roman government, is apparent from the specification of the "didrachma," which in the authorized version is translated "tribute." This coin was equivalent to the half shekel, reckoned "after the shekel of the sanctuary," which was the fixed amount to be paid annually by every male "from twenty years old and above," with the provision that "**the rich shall not give more and the poor shall not give less**" (Exo. 30:13-15). A tax levied by the political powers would not be designated as the didrachma. Moreover, had the collector who approached Peter been one of the official publicans, he probably would have demanded the tax instead of inquiring as to whether or not the Master was to be counted among the contributors.

Among the many humiliations to which the Jews were subjected in later years, after the destruction of the temple, was the compulsory payment of what had been their temple tribute, to the Romans, who decreed it as a revenue to the pagan temple of Jupiter Capitolinus. Of the emperor Vespasian, Josephus (Wars of the Jews, vii, 6:6) says: That he also laid a tribute wheresoever they were, and enjoined every one of them to bring

two drachmæ every year into the capitol, as they used to pay the same to the temple at Jerusalem.

5. Talents and Pence – It is evident that by specifying ten thousand talents as the debt due the king, and a hundred pence as that owed by the fellow-servant, the Lord intended to present a case of great disparity and striking contrast. The actual amounts involved are of minor significance in the story. We are not told which variety of talent was meant; there were Attic talents, and both silver and gold talents of Hebrew reckoning; and each differed from the others in value. The Oxford marginal explanation is: "A talent is 750 ounces of silver, which after five shillings the ounce is 187 pounds, ten shillings." This would be in American money over nine and a quarter millions of dollars as the sum of the ten thousand talents. The same authority gives as the value of the penny (Roman) seven pence half-penny, or fifteen cents, making the second debt equivalent to about fifteen dollars. Comparison with talents mentioned elsewhere may be allowable. Trench says: "How vast a sum it was we can most vividly realize to ourselves by comparing it with other sums mentioned in Scripture. In the construction of the tabernacle, twenty-nine talents of gold were used (Exo. 38:24); David prepared for the temple three thousand talents of gold, and the princes five thousand (1 Chron. 29:4-7); the queen of Sheba presented to Solomon one hundred and twenty talents (1 Kings 10:10); the king of Assyria laid upon Hezekiah thirty talents of gold (2 Kings 18:14); and in the extreme impoverishment to which the land was brought at the last, one talent of gold was laid upon it, after the death of Josiah, by the king of Egypt (2 Chron. 36:3)." Farrar estimates the debt owed to the king as 1,250,000 times that owed by the lesser to the greater debtor.

Since this book was written in 1915 the value of money has grown substantially.

6. An Assumed Approval of Slavery – Some readers have assumed that they find in the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant an implied approval of the institution of slavery. The greater debtor, who figures in the story, was to be sold, together with his wife and children and all that he had. A rational consideration of the story as a whole is likely to find at most, in the particular incident of the king's command that the debtor and his family be sold, that the system of buying and selling bondservants, serfs, or slaves, was legally recognized at the time. The purpose of the parable was not even remotely to endorse or condemn slavery or any other social institution. The Mosaic law is explicit in matters relating to bondservants. The "angel of the Lord" who brought to Hagar a message of encouragement and blessing respected the authority of her mistress (Gen. 16:8, 9). In the apostolic epoch, instruction was directed toward right living under the secular law, not rebellion against the system (Eph. 6:5; Col. 3:22; 1 Tim. 6:1-3; 1 Peter 2:18). Recognition of established customs, institutions, and laws, and proper obedience thereto, do not necessarily imply individual approval. The gospel of Jesus Christ, which shall yet regenerate the world, is to prevail – not by revolutionary assaults upon existing governments, nor through anarchy and violence – but by the teaching of

individual duty and by the spread of the spirit of love. When the love of God shall be given a place in the hearts of mankind, when men shall unselfishly love their neighbors, then social systems and governments shall be formed and operated to the securing of the greatest good to the greatest number. Until men open their hearts to the reception of the gospel of Jesus Christ, injustice and oppression, servitude and slavery, in some form or other, are sure to exist. Attempts to extirpate social conditions that spring from individual selfishness cannot be otherwise than futile so long as selfishness is left to thrive and propagate.

FOOTNOTES

[795] Compare 2 Peter 1:18.

[796] Luke 9:37.

[797] Matt. 17:14-21; Mark 9:14-29; Luke 9:37-42.

[798] Note, end of chapter.

[799] Compare Matt. 12:40-45.

[800] Mark 6:12, 13; compare verse 7; also 3:15; Matt. 10:1.

[801] Note, end of chapter.

[802] Matt. 14:31; 16:8; Luke 8:25.

[803] Matt. 17:20; compare 21:21; Mark 11:23; Luke 17:6; see also Note 3, end of chapter.

[804] Compare Parable of the Mustard Seed, See chapter 19 herein.

[805] Matt. 17:22-23; Mark 9:30-32; Luke 9:44, 45.

[806] Matt. 17:24-27.

[807] Note 4, end of chapter.

[808] Exo. 30:13; 38:26. See chapter 12 herein.

[809] See reading in revised version, and in margin of Oxford and Bagster Bibles.

[810] John 20:17.

[811] Matt. 18:1-11; Mark 9:33-37, 42; Luke 9:46-48.

[812] Matt. 19:13-15; Mark 10:13-16; Luke 18:15-17.

[813] Compare Luke 22:32.

[814] 1 Cor. 14:20; compare 13:11; Matt. 11:25; Psa. 131:2.

[815] See chapter 17 herein.

[816] Mark 9:49, 50; compare Lev. 2:13; Ezek. 43:24.

[817] Mark 9:43-50; compare Matt. 18:8, 9. See chapter 17 herein.

[818] Matt. 18:12-14; compare Luke 15:3-7 in which occurs a repetition of this impressive parable, as given on a later occasion to Pharisees and scribes at Jerusalem with a somewhat different application.

[819] Luke 15:1-7. See chapter 27 herein.

[820] Luke 9:48-50; Mark 9:37-41.

[821] Contrast the instance of the sons of Sceva, Acts 19:13-17.

[822] Compare Luke 9:52; 10:1.

[823] Matt. 12:30; Luke 11:23.

[824] Matt. 18:15-20; compare Luke 17:3, 4.

[825] Compare Doc. and Cov. 20:80; 42:88-93; 98:39-48.

[826] Matt. 18:18; compare 16:19, and John 20:23.

[827] They based this limitation on Amos 1:3 and Job 33:29. In the latter passage, as it appears in the authorized version, the word "oftentimes" is an erroneous rendering of the original, which really signified "twice and thrice."

[828] Compare Luke 17:3, 4.

[829] Matt. 18:23-35.

[830] Compare 2 Kings 4:1; Lev. 25:39.

[831] Note 5, end of chapter.

[832] Matt. 7:1; see also verse 6.

[833] Matt. 6:12; compare Luke 11:4; B. of M., 3 Nephi 13:11; See chapter 17 herein.

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JESUS AGAIN IN JERUSALEM

DEPARTURE FROM GALILEE [834]

Of our Lord's labors during His brief sojourn in Galilee following His return from the region of Cæsarea Philippi we have no record aside from that of His instructions to the apostles. His Galilean ministry, so far as the people in general were concerned, had practically ended with the discourse at Capernaum on His return thither after the miracles of feeding the five thousand and walking upon the sea. At Capernaum many of the disciples had turned away from the Master,[835] and now, after another short visit, He prepared to leave the land in which so great a part of His public work had been accomplished.

It was autumn; about six months had passed since the return of the apostles from their missionary tour; and the Feast of Tabernacles was near at hand. Some of the kinsmen of Jesus came to Him, and proposed that He go to Jerusalem and take advantage of the opportunity offered by the great national festival, to declare Himself more openly than He had theretofore done. His brethren, as the visiting relatives are called, urged that He seek a broader and more prominent field than Galilee for the display of His powers, arguing that it was inconsistent for any man to keep himself in comparative obscurity when he wanted to be widely known. "**Shew thyself to the world,**" said they. Whatever their motives may have been, these brethren of His did not advise more extended publicity through any zeal for His divine mission; indeed, we are expressly told that they did not believe in Him.[836] Jesus replied to their presumptuous advice: "My time is not yet come: but your time is alway ready. The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil. Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come." It was not their prerogative to direct His movements, not to say when He should do even what He intended to do eventually.[837] He made it plain that between their status and His there was essential difference; they were of the world, which they loved as the world loved them; but the world hated Him because of His testimony.

This colloquy between Jesus and His brethren took place in Galilee. They soon started for Jerusalem leaving Him behind. He had not said that He would not go to the feast; but only "**I go not up yet unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come.**" Some time after their departure He followed, traveling "not openly, but as it were in secret." Whether He went alone, or accompanied by any or all of the Twelve, we are not told.

AT THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES [838]

The agitated state of the public mind respecting Jesus is shown by the interest manifest in Jerusalem as to the probability of His presence at the feast. His brethren, who probably were questioned, could give no definite information as to His coming. He was sought for in the crowds; there was much discussion and some disputation concerning Him. Many people expressed their conviction that He was a good man, while others contradicted on the claim that He was a deceiver. There was little open discussion, however, for the people were afraid of incurring the displeasure of the rulers.

As originally established, the Feast of Tabernacles was a seven day festival, followed by a holy convocation on the eighth day. Each day was marked by special and in some respects distinctive services, all characterized by ceremonies of thanksgiving and praise.[839] "**Now about the midst of the feast,**" probably on the third or fourth day, "**Jesus went up into the temple, and taught.**" The first part of His discourse is not recorded, but its scriptural soundness is intimated in the surprise of the Jewish teachers, who asked among themselves: "**How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?**" He was no graduate of their schools; He had never sat at the feet of their rabbis; He had not been officially accredited by them nor licensed to teach. Whence came His wisdom, before which all their academic attainments were as nothing? Jesus answered their troubled queries, saying: "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." His Teacher, greater even than Himself, was the Eternal Father, whose will He proclaimed. The test proposed to determine the truth of His doctrine was in every way fair, and withal simple; anyone who would earnestly seek to do the will of the Father should know of himself whether Jesus spoke truth or error.[840] The Master proceeded to show that a man who speaks on his own authority alone seeks to aggrandize himself. Jesus did not so; He honored His Teacher, His Father, His God, not Himself; and therefore was He free from the taint of selfish pride or unrighteousness. Moses had given them the law, and yet, as Jesus affirmed, none of them kept the law.

Then, with startling abruptness, He challenged them with the question, "**Why go ye about to kill me?**" On many occasions had they held dark counsel with one another as to how they could get Him into their power and put Him to death; but they thought that the murderous secret was hidden within their own circle. The people had heard the seducing assertions of the ruling classes, that Jesus was possessed by a demon, and that He wrought wonders through the power of Beelzebub; and in the spirit of this blasphemous slander, they cried out: "**Thou hast a devil: who goeth about to kill thee?**"

Jesus knew that the two specifications of alleged guilt on which the rulers were striving most assiduously to convict Him in the popular mind, and so turn the people against Him, were those of Sabbath-breaking and blasphemy. On an earlier visit to Jerusalem

He had healed an afflicted man on the Sabbath, and had utterly disconcerted the hypercritical accusers who even then had sought to compass His death.[841] To this act of mercy and power Jesus now referred, saying: "**I have done one work, and ye all marvel.**" Seemingly they were still of unsettled mind, in doubt as to accepting Him because of the miracle or denouncing Him because He had done it on the Sabbath. Then He showed the inconsistency of charging Him with Sabbath-desecration for such a merciful deed, when the Law of Moses expressly allowed acts of mercy, and even required that the mandatory rite of circumcision should not be deferred because of the Sabbath. "**Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment**" said He.

The masses were still divided in their estimate of Jesus, and were moreover puzzled over the indecision of the rulers. Some of the Jerusalem Jews knew of the plan to arrest Him, and if possible to bring Him to death, and the people queried why nothing was done when He was there teaching publicly within reach of the officials. They wondered whether the rulers had not at last come to believe that Jesus was indeed the Messiah. The thought, however, was brushed aside when they remembered that all knew whence He came; He was a Galilean, and from Nazareth, whereas as they had been taught, however wrongly, the advent of the Christ was to be mysterious so that none would know whence He came. Strange it was, indeed, that men should reject Him because of a lack of mystery and miracle in His advent; when, had they known the truth, they would have seen in His birth a miracle without precedent or parallel in the annals of time. Jesus directly answered their weak and faulty reasoning. Crying aloud within the temple courts, He assured them that while they knew whence He came as one of their number, yet they did not know that He had come from God, neither did they know God who had sent Him: "But," He added, "I know him: for I am from him, and he hath sent me." At this reiterated testimony of His divine origin, the Jews were the more enraged, and they determined anew to take Him by force; nevertheless none laid hands upon him "because his hour was not yet come."

Many of the people believed in their hearts that He was of God, and ventured to ask among themselves whether Christ would do greater works than Jesus had done. The Pharisees and chief priests feared a possible demonstration in favor of Jesus, and forthwith sent officers to arrest Him and bring him before the Sanhedrin.[842] The presence of the temple police caused no interruption to the Master's discourse, though we may reasonably infer that He knew the purpose of their errand. He spoke on, saying that He would be with the people but a little while; and that after He had returned to the Father, they would seek Him vainly, for where He would then be they could not come. This remark evoked more bitter discussion. Some of the Jews wondered whether He intended to leave the borders of the land and go among the Gentiles to teach them and the dispersed Israelites.

As part of the temple service incident to the feast, the people went in procession to the Pool of Siloam[843] where a priest filled a golden ewer, which he then carried to the altar and there poured out the water to the accompaniment of trumpet blasts and the acclamations of the assembled hosts.[844] According to authorities on Jewish customs, this feature was omitted on the closing day of the feast. On this last or "great day," which was marked by ceremonies of unusual solemnity and rejoicing, Jesus was again in the temple. It may have been with reference to the bringing of water from the pool, or to the omission of the ceremony from the ritualistic procedure of the great day, that Jesus cried aloud, His voice resounding through the courts and arcades of the temple: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."[845]

John, the recorder, remarks parenthetically that this promise had reference to the bestowal of the Holy Ghost, which at that time had not been granted, nor was it to be until after the ascension of the risen Lord.[846]

Again many of the people were so impressed that they declared Jesus could be none other than the Messiah; but others objected, saying that the Christ must come from Bethlehem of Judea and Jesus was known to have come from Galilee.[847] So there was further dissension; and though some wanted Him apprehended, not a man was found who would venture to lay hold on Him.

...probably none dared to lay a hand on him – cowards with closed minds.

The police officers returned without their intended prisoner. To the angry demand of the chief priests and Pharisees as to why they had not brought Him, they acknowledged that they had been so affected by His teachings as to be unable to make the arrest. "Never man spake like this man," they said. Their haughty masters were furious. "Are ye also deceived?" they demanded; and further, "Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him?" What was the opinion of the common people worth? They had never learned the law, and were therefore accursed and of no concern. Yet with all this show of proud disdain, the chief priests and Pharisees were afraid of the common people, and were again halted in their wicked course.

Many good people will disobey orders when the truth opens their hearts and minds.

One voice of mild protest was heard in the assembly. Nicodemus, a member of the Sanhedrin, and the same who had come to Jesus by night to inquire into the new teaching,[848] mustered courage enough to ask: "**Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?**" The answer was insulting. Maddened with bigotry and blood-thirsty fanaticism, some of his colleagues turned upon him with the savage demand: "**Art thou also of Galilee?**" meaning, Art thou also a disciple of this Galilean whom we hate? Nicodemus was curtly told to study the scriptures, and he

would fail to find any prediction of a prophet arising in Galilee. The anger of these learned bigots had blinded them even to their own vaunted knowledge, for several of the ancient prophets were regarded as Galileans;[849] if, however they had meant to refer only to that Prophet of whom Moses had spoken, the Messiah, they were correct, since all predictions pointed to Bethlehem in Judea as His birthplace. It is evident that Jesus was thought of as a native of Nazareth, and that the circumstances of His birth were not of public knowledge.

"GO, AND SIN NO MORE" [850]

After the festivities were over, Jesus went to the temple one morning early; and as He sat, probably in the Court of the Women, which was the usual place of public resort, many gathered about Him and He proceeded to teach them as was His custom. His discourse was interrupted by the arrival of a party of scribes and Pharisees with a woman in charge, who, they said, was guilty of adultery. To Jesus they presented this statement and question: "**Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned; but what sayest thou?**" The submitting of the case to Jesus was a prearranged snare, a deliberate attempt to find or make a cause for accusing Him. Though it was not unusual for Jewish officials to consult rabbis of recognized wisdom and experience when difficult cases were to be decided, the case in point involved no legal complications. The woman's guilt seems to have been unquestioned, though the witnesses required by the statutes are not mentioned as appearing unless the accusing scribes and Pharisees are to be so considered; the law was explicit, and the custom of the times in dealing with such offenders was well known. While it is true that the law of Moses had decreed death by stoning as the penalty for adultery, the infliction of the extreme punishment had lapsed long before the time of Christ. One may reasonably ask why the woman's partner in the crime was not brought for sentence, since the law so zealously cited by the officious accusers provided for the punishment of both parties to the offense.[851]

The question of the scribes and Pharisees, "**But what sayest thou?**" may have intimated their expectation that Jesus would declare the law obsolete; perhaps they had heard of the Sermon on the Mount, in which many requirements in advance of the Mosaic code had been proclaimed.[852] Had Jesus decided that the wretched woman ought to suffer death, her accusers might have said that he was defying the existing authorities; and possibly the charge of opposition to the Roman government might have been formulated, since power to inflict the death penalty had been taken from all Jewish tribunals; and moreover, the crime with which this woman was charged was not a capital offense under Roman law. Had He said that the woman should go unpunished or suffer only minor infliction, the crafty Jews could have charged Him with disrespect for the law of Moses. To these scribes and Pharisees Jesus at first gave little heed. Stooping down He traced with His finger on the ground; but as He wrote they continued to question Him. Lifting Himself up He answered them, in a terse sentence

that has become proverbial: **"He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her."** Such was the law; the accusers on whose testimony the death penalty was pronounced were to be the first to begin the work of execution.[853]

Having spoken, Jesus again stooped and wrote upon the ground. The woman's accusers were "convicted by their own conscience"; shamed and in disgrace they slunk away, all of them from the eldest to the youngest. They knew themselves to be unfit to appear either as accusers or judges.[854] What cowards doth conscience make! **"When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go and sin no more."**[855]

The woman was repentant; she remained humbly awaiting the Master's decision, even after her accusers had gone. Jesus did not expressly condone; He declined to condemn; but He sent the sinner away with a solemn adjuration to a better life.[856]

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD [857]

Sitting within the temple enclosure in the division known as the Treasury, which was connected with the Court of the Women,[858] our Lord continued His teaching, saying: **"I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."**[859] The great lamps set up in the court as a feature of the joyful celebration just ended gave point to our Lord's avowal of Himself as the Light of the World. It was another proclamation of His divinity as God and the Son of God. The Pharisees challenged His testimony, declaring it of no worth because He bore record of Himself. Jesus admitted that He testified of Himself, but affirmed nevertheless that what He said was true, for He knew whereof He spoke, whence He came and whither He would go, while they spoke in ignorance. They thought, talked, and judged after the ways of men and the frailties of the flesh; He was not sitting in judgment, but should He choose to judge, then His judgment would be just, for He was guided by the Father who sent Him. Their law required the testimony of two witnesses for the legal determination of any question of fact;[860] and Jesus cited Himself and His Father as witnesses in support of His affirmation. His opponents then asked with contemptuous or sarcastic intent, "Where is thy Father?" The reply was in lofty tone; "Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also." Enraged at their own discomfiture, the Pharisees would have seized Him, but found themselves impotent. "No man laid hands on him; for his hour was not yet come."

THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE [861]

Again addressing the mixed assemblage, which probably comprised Pharisees, scribes, rabbis, priests, Levites, and lay people, Jesus repeated His former assertion that soon He would leave them, and that whither He went they could not follow; and added the

fateful assurance that they would seek Him in vain and would die in their sins. His solemn portent was treated with light concern if not contempt. Some of them asked querulously, "**Will he kill himself?**" the implication being that in such case they surely would not follow Him; for according to their dogma, Gehenna was the place of suicides, and they, being of the chosen people, were bound for heaven not hell. The Lord's dignified rejoinder was: "**Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world. I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.**"

This reiteration of His distinctive supremacy brought forth the challenging question, "**Who art thou?**" Jesus replied, "**Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning.**" The many matters on which He might have judged them He refrained from mentioning, but testified anew of the Father, saying: "**He that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him.**" Explicit as His earlier explanations had been, the Jews in their gross prejudice "**understood not that he spake to them of the Father.**" To His Father Jesus ascribed all honor and glory, and repeatedly declared Himself as sent to do the Father's will. "**Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.**"

The evident earnestness and profound conviction with which Jesus spoke caused many of His hearers to believe on Him; and these He addressed with the promise that if they continued in that belief, and shaped their lives according to His word, they should be His disciples indeed. A further promise followed: "**And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.**" At these words, so rich in blessing, so full of comfort for the believing soul, the people were stirred to angry demonstrations; their Jewish temper was immediately ablaze. To promise them freedom was to imply that they were not already free. "**We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?**" In their unbridled fanaticism they had forgotten the bondage of Egypt, the captivity of Babylon, and were oblivious of their existing state of vassalage to Rome. To say that Israel had never been in bondage was not only to convict themselves of falsehood but to stultify themselves wretchedly.

Jesus made it clear that He had not referred to freedom in its physical or political sense alone, though to this conception their false disavowal had been directed; the liberty He proclaimed was spiritual liberty; the grievous bondage from which He would deliver them was the serfdom of sin. To their vaunted boast that they were free men, not slaves, He replied: "**Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.**" As a sinner, every one of them was in slavery. A bond-servant, Jesus reminded them, was allowed in the master's house by sufferance only; it was not his inherent right to remain there; his owner could send him away at any time, and might even sell

him to another; but a son of the family had of his own right a place in his father's home. Now, if the Son of God made them free they would be free indeed. Though they were of Abrahamic lineage in the flesh, they were no heirs of Abraham in spirit or works. Our Lord's mention of His Father as distinct from their father drew forth the angry reiteration, "**Abraham is our father**", to which Jesus replied: "**If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father.**" In their blind anger they apparently construed this to imply that though they were children of Abraham's household some other man than Abraham was their actual progenitor, or that they were not of unmixed Israelitish blood. "**We be not born of fornication**" they cried, "**we have one Father, even God.**" Jesus said unto them, "**If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.**"

They failed to understand because of their stubborn refusal to listen dispassionately. With forceful accusation Jesus told them whose children they actually were, as evinced by the hereditary traits manifest in their lives: "**Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.**[862] And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not." He challenged them to find sin in Him; and then asked why, if He spake the truth, they so persistently refused to believe Him. Answering His own question, He told them that they were not of God and therefore they understood not the words of God. The Master was unimpeachable; His terse, cogent assertions were unanswerable. In impotent rage the discomfited Jews resorted to invective and calumny. "**Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?**" they shrieked. They had before called Him a Galilean; that appellative was but mildly depreciatory, and moreover was a truthful designation according to their knowledge; but the epithet "Samaritan" was inspired by hate,[863] and by its application they meant to disown Him as a Jew.

The charge that He was a demoniac was but a repetition of earlier slanders. "**Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me.**" Reverting to the eternal riches offered by His gospel, the Master said: "**Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.**" This rendered them the more infuriate: "**Now we know that thou hast a devil**" they cried, and as evidence of what they professed to regard as His insanity, they cited the fact that great as were Abraham and the prophets they were dead, yet Jesus dared to say that all who kept His sayings should be exempt from death. Did He pretend to exalt Himself above Abraham and the prophets? "**Whom makest thou thyself?**" they demanded. The Lord's reply was a disclaimer of all self-aggrandizement; His honor was not of His own seeking, but was the gift of His Father, whom He knew; and were He to deny that He knew the Father He would be a liar like unto themselves. Touching the relationship between Himself

and the great patriarch of their race, Jesus thus affirmed and emphasized His own supremacy: "**Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.**" Not only angered but puzzled, the Jews demanded further explanation. Construing the last declaration as applying to the mortal state only, they said: "**Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?**" Jesus answered, "**Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.**"

This was an unequivocal and unambiguous declaration of our Lord's eternal Godship. By the awful title I AM He had made Himself known to Moses and thereafter was so known in Israel.[864] As already shown, it is the equivalent of "**Yahveh,**" or "**Jahveh,**" now rendered "**Jehovah,**" and signifies "**The Self-existent One,**" "**The Eternal,**" "**The First and the Last.**"[865] Jewish traditionalism forbade the utterance of the sacred Name; yet Jesus claimed it as His own. In an orgy of self-righteous indignation, the Jews seized upon the stones that lay in the unfinished courts, and would have crushed their Lord, but the hour of His death had not yet come, and unseen of them He passed through the crowd and departed from the temple.

His seniority to Abraham plainly referred to the status of each in the Antemortal or preexistent state; Jesus was as literally the Firstborn in the spirit-world, as He was the Only Begotten in the flesh. Christ is as truly the Elder Brother of Abraham and Adam as of the last-born child of earth.[866]

BODILY AND SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS – SIGHT GIVEN TO A MAN ON THE SABBATH [867]

At Jerusalem Jesus mercifully gave sight to a man who had been blind from his birth.[868] The miracle is an instance of Sabbath-day healing, of more than ordinary interest because of its attendant incidents. It is recorded by John alone, and, as usual with that writer, his narrative is given with descriptive detail. Jesus and His disciples saw the sightless one upon the street. The poor man lived by begging. The disciples, eager to learn, asked: "**Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?**" The Lord's reply was: "**Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.**" The disciples' question implied their belief in a state of moral agency and choice antedating mortality; else, how could they have thought of the man having sinned so as to bring upon himself congenital blindness? We are expressly told that he was born blind. That he might have been a sufferer from the sins of his parents was conceivable.[869] The disciples evidently had been taught the great truth of an Antemortal existence. It is further to be seen that they looked upon bodily affliction as the result of personal sin. Their generalization was too broad; for, while as shown by instances heretofore cited,[870] individual wickedness may and does bring physical ills in its train, man is liable to err in his judgment as to the ultimate cause of affliction. The Lord's reply was sufficing; the man's blindness would be turned to account in bringing about a manifestation of divine power. As Jesus

explained respecting His own ministry, it was necessary that He do the Father's work in the season appointed, for His time was short. With impressive pertinency as relating to the state of the man who had been in darkness all his days, our Lord repeated the affirmation before made in the temple, "**I am the light of the world.**"

As a note: A person might commit moral sins and catch a deadly disease, but later repent. Still, the physical disease is with them, a consequence of prior living. Another example; A person smokes until he/she is 35 and then joins the church. The blessing is that they may live longer, but they still have the risk of getting Cancer, a consequence of prior living.

*In the case above, of the man born blind, he had done nothing in the preexistence to warrant blindness at birth. According to the words of the Saviour, there were no sins of consequence and no one to blame. He was born blind "**that the works of God should be made manifest in him.**" This is clearly a physical challenge given for a test of works, not only by the man born blind, but by his parents and those associated or knowledgeable of him. We grow when we pass a 'test' (challenge) that we are given, wanted or not, in our life.*

The outward ministration to the blind man was different from the usual course followed by Jesus. "**He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay**"; and then directed him to go to the pool of Siloam and wash in its waters.[871] The man went, washed, and came seeing. He was evidently a well-known character; many had seen him in his accustomed place begging alms, and the fact that he had been blind from birth was also of common knowledge. When, therefore, it was noised about that he could see, there was much excitement and comment. Some doubted that the man they questioned was the once sightless beggar; but he assured them of his identity, and told how he had been made to see. They brought the man to the Pharisees, who questioned him rigorously; and, having heard his account of the miracle, tried to undermine his faith by telling him that Jesus who had healed him could not be a man of God since He had done the deed on the Sabbath. Some of those who heard demurred to the Pharisaic deduction, and asked: "**How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles?**" The man was questioned as to his personal opinion of Jesus, and promptly answered: "He is a prophet." The man knew his Benefactor to be more than any ordinary being; as yet, however, he had no knowledge of Him as the Christ.

The inquisitorial Jews were afraid of the result of such a wondrous healing, in that the people would support Jesus whom the rulers were determined to destroy. They assumed it to be possible that the man had not been really blind; so they summoned his parents, who answered their interrogatories by affirming that he was their son, and they knew him to have been born blind; but as to how he had received sight, or through whose ministration, they refused to commit themselves, knowing the rulers had

decreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Christ should be cast out from the community of the synagog, or, as we would say today, excommunicated from the Church. With pardonable astuteness the parents said of their son: "He is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself."

Compelled to acknowledge, to themselves at least, that the fact and the manner of the man's restoration to sight were supported by irrefutable evidence, the crafty Jews called the man again, and insinuatingly said unto him: "Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner." He replied fearlessly, and with such pertinent logic as to completely offset their skill as cross-examiners: "Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." He very properly declined to enter into a discussion with his learned questioners as to what constituted sin under their construction of the law; of what he was ignorant he declined to speak; but on one matter he was happily and gratefully certain, that whereas he had been blind, now he could see.

The Pharisical inquisitors next tried to get the man to repeat his story of the means employed in the healing, probably with the subtle purpose of leading him into inconsistent or contradictory statements; but he replied with emphasis, and possibly with some show of impatience, "I have told you already, and ye did not hear:[872] wherefore would ye hear it again? will ye also be his disciples?" They retorted with anger, and reviled the man; the ironical insinuation that they perchance wished to become disciples of Jesus was an insult they would not brook. "Thou art his disciple," said they, "but we are Moses' disciples. We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is." They were enraged that this unlettered mendicant should answer so boldly in their scholarly presence; but the man was more than a match for all of them. His rejoinder was maddening because it flouted their vaunted wisdom, and withal was unanswerable. "Why herein is a marvellous thing," said he, "that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes. Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing."

For such an affront from a layman there was no precedent in all the lore of rabbis or scribes. "Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us?" was their denunciatory though weak and inadequate rejoinder. Unable to cope with the sometime sightless beggar in argument or demonstration, they could at least exercise their official authority, however unjustly, by excommunicating him; and this they promptly did. "Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? he answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him."

In commenting upon the matter Jesus was heard to say that one purpose of His coming into the world was "that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind." Some of the Pharisees caught the remark, and asked in pride: "Are we blind also?" The Lord's reply was a condemnation: "If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth."

...There is no sin in being blind, but it's not so easy to see when blinded by pride – their sins will still be with them.

SHEPHERD AND SHEEPHERDER [873]

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheep fold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep." With these words Jesus prefaced one of His most impressive discourses. The mention of shepherd and sheep must have brought to the minds of His hearers many of the oft-quoted passages from prophets and psalms.[874] The figure is an effective one, and all the more so when we consider the circumstances under which it was used by the Master. Pastoral conditions prevailed in Palestine, and the dignity of the shepherd's vocation was very generally recognized. By specific prophecy a Shepherd had been promised to Israel. David, the king of whom all Israelites were proud, had been taken directly from the sheepfold, and had come with a shepherd's crook in his hand to the anointing that made him royal.

As the Teacher showed, a shepherd has free access to the sheep. When they are folded within the enclosure of safety, he enters at the gate; he neither climbs over nor creeps in.[875] He, the owner of the sheep loves them; they know his voice and follow him as he leads from fold to pasture, for he goes before the flock; while the stranger, though he be the herder, they know not; he must needs drive, for he cannot lead. Continuing the allegory, which the recorder speaks of as a parable, Jesus designated Himself as the door to the sheepfold, and made plain that only through Him could the under-shepherds rightly enter. True, there were some who sought by avoiding the portal and climbing over the fence to reach the folded flock; but these were robbers, trying to get at the sheep as prey; their selfish and malignant purpose was to kill and carry off.

Changing the figure, Christ proclaimed: **"I am the good shepherd."** He then further showed, and with eloquent exactness, the difference between a shepherd and a hireling herder. The one has personal interest in and love for his flock, and knows each sheep by name, the other knows them only as a flock, the value of which is gaged by number; to the hireling they are only as so many or so much. While the shepherd is ready to fight in defense of his own, and if necessary even imperil his life for his sheep, the hireling flees when the wolf approaches, leaving the way open for the ravening beast to scatter, rend, and kill.

Never has been written or spoken a stronger arraignment of false pastors, unauthorized teachers, self-seeking hirelings who teach for pelf and divine for dollars, deceivers who pose as shepherds yet avoid the door and climb over "some other way," prophets in the devil's employ, who to achieve their master's purpose, hesitate not to robe themselves in the garments of assumed sanctity, and appear in sheep's clothing, while inwardly they are ravening wolves.[876]

With effective repetition Jesus continued: "**I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.**" For this cause was Jesus the Father's Beloved Son – that He was ready to lay down His life for the sake of the sheep. That the sacrifice He was soon to render was in fact voluntary, and not a forfeiture under compulsion, is solemnly affirmed in the Savior's words: "**Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.**" The certainty of His death and of His subsequent resurrection are here reiterated. A natural effect of His immortal origin, as the earth-born Son of an immortal Sire, was that He was immune to death except as He surrendered thereto. The life of Jesus the Christ could not be taken save as He willed and allowed. The power to lay down His life was inherent in Himself, as was the power to take up His slain body in an immortalized state.[877] These teachings caused further division among the Jews. Some pretended to dispose of the matter by voicing anew the foolish assumption that Jesus was but an insane demoniac, and that therefore His words were not worthy of attention. Others with consistency said "These are not the words of him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?" So it was that a few believed, many doubted though partly convinced, and some condemned.

As part of this profound discourse, Jesus said: "**And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.**"[878] The "other sheep" here referred to constituted the separated flock or remnant of the house of Joseph, who, six centuries prior to the birth of Christ, had been miraculously detached from the Jewish fold in Palestine, and had been taken beyond the great deep to the American continent. When to them the resurrected Christ appeared He thus spake: "**And verily, I say unto you, that ye are they of whom I said, other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.**"[879] The Jews had vaguely understood Christ's reference to other sheep as meaning in some obscure way, the Gentile nations; and because of their unbelief and consequent inability to rightly comprehend, Jesus had withheld any plainer exposition of His meaning, for so, He informed the Nephites, had the Father directed. "**This much did the Father command me,**" He explained, "**that I should tell unto them, That other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear**

my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd." On the same occasion the Lord declared that there were yet other sheep, those of the Lost, or Ten, Tribes, to whom He was then about to go, and who would eventually be brought forth from their place of exile, and become part of the one blessed fold under the governance of the one supreme Shepherd and King.[880]

NOTES TO CHAPTER 25

1. The Feast of Tabernacles— In the order of yearly occurrence this was the third of the great festivals, the observance of which was among the national characteristics of the people of Israel; the others were the Passover, and the feast of Weeks or Pentecost; at each of the three all the males in Israel were required to appear before the Lord in formal celebration of the respective feast (Exo. 23:17). The feast of Tabernacles was also known as the "feast of ingathering" (Exo. 23:16); it was both a memorial and a current harvest celebration. In commemoration of their long journeying in the wilderness following their deliverance from Egypt, in the course of which journey they had to live in tents and improvised booths, the people of Israel were required to observe annually a festival lasting seven days, with an added day of holy convocation. During the week the people lived in booths, bowers, or tabernacles, made of the branches or "boughs of goodly trees" wattled with willows from the brook (Lev. 23:34-43; Numb. 29:12-38; Deut. 16:13-15; 31:10-13). The festival lasted from the 15th to the 22d of the month Tizri, the seventh in the Hebrew calendar, corresponding to parts of our September and October. It was made to follow soon after the annual Day of Atonement which was a time of penitence and affliction of the soul in sorrow for sin (Lev. 23:26-32). The altar sacrifices at the feast of Tabernacles exceeded those prescribed for other festivals, and comprised a daily offering of two rams, fourteen lambs, and a kid as a sin offering, and in addition a varying number of young bullocks, thirteen of which were sacrificed on the first day, twelve on the second, eleven on the third, and so on to the seventh day, on which seven were offered, making in all seventy bullocks (Numb. 29:12-38). Rabbinism invested this number, seventy, and the graded diminution in the number of altar victims, with much symbolical significance not set forth in the law.

At the time of Christ, tradition had greatly embellished many of the prescribed observances. Thus the "boughs of goodly trees," more literally rendered "fruit" (Lev. 23:40), had come to be understood as the citron fruit; and this every orthodox Jew carried in one hand, while in the other he bore a leafy branch or a bunch of twigs, known as the "lulab," when he repaired to the temple for the morning sacrifice, and in the joyous processions of the day. The ceremonial carrying of water from the spring of Siloam to the altar of sacrifice was a prominent feature of the service. This water was mingled with wine at the altar and the mixture was poured upon the sacrificial offering. Many authorities hold that the bringing of water from the pool was omitted on the last or great day of the feast, and it is inferred that Jesus had in mind the circumstance of the

omission when He cried: "**If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.**" At night, during the progress of the feast, great lamps were kept burning in the temple courts, and this incident Christ may have used as an objective illustration in his proclamation: "I am the light of the world."

For fuller account see any reliable and comprehensive Bible Dictionary, and Josephus Ant. viii, 4:1; xv, 3:3, etc. The following is an excerpt from Edersheim, *Life and Times of Jesus The Messiah*, vol. ii, p. 158-160: "When the Temple-procession had reached the Pool of Siloam, the priest filled his golden pitcher from its waters. Then they went back to the Temple, so timing it that they should arrive just as they were laying the pieces of the sacrifice on the great altar of burnt-offering, towards the close of the ordinary morning-sacrifice service. A threefold blast of the priests' trumpets welcomed the arrival of the priest as he entered through the Water Gate, which obtained its name from this ceremony, and passed straight into the Court of the Priests.... Immediately after the 'pouring of the water,' the great 'Hallel,' consisting of Psalms 113 to 118 inclusive, was chanted antiphonally, or rather, with responses, to the accompaniment of the flute.... In further symbolism of this Feast, as pointing to the ingathering of the heathen nations, the public services closed with a procession round the altar by the priests.... But on 'the last, the Great Day of the Feast,' this procession of priests made the circuit of the altar, not only once, but seven times, 'as if they were again compassing, but now with prayer, the Gentile Jericho which barred their possession of the promised land.'"

2. The Test of our Lord's Doctrine – Any man may know for himself whether the doctrine of Christ is of God or not by simply doing the will of the Father (John 7:17). Surely it is a more convincing course than that of relying upon another's word. The writer was once approached by an incredulous student in college, who stated that he could not accept as true the published results of a certain chemical analysis, since the specified amounts of some of the ingredients were so infinitesimally small that he could not believe it possible to determine such minute quantities. The student was but a beginner in chemistry; and with his little knowledge he had undertaken to judge as to the possibilities of the science. He was told to do the things his instructor prescribed, and he should some day know for himself whether the results were true or false. In the senior year of his course, he received for laboratory analysis a portion of the very substance whose composition he had once questioned. With the skill attained by faithful devotion he successfully completed the analysis, and reported results similar to those, which in his inexperience he had thought impossible to obtain. He was manly enough to acknowledge as unfounded his earlier skepticism and rejoiced in the fact that he had been able to demonstrate the truth for himself.

3. The Pool of Siloam – "The names 'Shiloah' ('Shelah,' Neh. 3:15, 'Siloah' in authorized version) and 'Siloam' are the exact equivalent in Hebrew and Greek, respectively, of 'Silwan' in the modern Arabic name ('Ain Silwan') of the pool at the mouth of El-Wad. All the ancient references agree with this identification (compare Neh. 3:15; Josephus,

Wars of the Jews, v, 4:1, 2; 6:1; 9:4; 12:2; ii, 16:2; vi, 7:2; 8:5). In spite of its modern designation as an 'ain' (spring), Siloam is not a spring, but is fed by a tunnel cut through the rock from the Gihon, or Virgin's Fountain." – L. B. Paton, in article "Jerusalem," *Stand. Bible Dictionary*.

4. Whence was the Messiah to Come? – Many stifled their inward promptings to a belief in Jesus as the Messiah, by the objection that all prophecies relating to His coming pointed to Bethlehem as His birthplace, and Jesus was of Galilee. Others rejected Him because they had been taught that no man was to know whence the Messiah came and they all knew Jesus came from Galilee. The seeming inconsistency is thus explained: The city of David, or Bethlehem in Judea, was beyond question the fore-appointed place of the Messiah's birth; but the rabbis had erroneously taught that soon after birth the Christ Child would be caught away, and after a time would appear as a Man, and that no one would know whence or how He had returned. Geikie (ii, p. 274), citing Lightfoot in part, thus states the popular criticism: "Do not the rabbis tell us' said some, 'that the Messiah will be born at Bethlehem, but that He will be snatched away by spirits and tempests soon after His birth, and that when He returns the second time no one will know from whence He has come?' But we know this man comes from Nazareth."

5. The Record Relating to the Woman Taken in Adultery – Some modern critics claim that the verses John 7:53 and 8:1-11 inclusive are out of place as they appear in the authorized or King James version of the Bible, on the grounds that the incident therein recorded does not appear in certain of the ancient manuscript copies of John's Gospel, and that the style of the narrative is distinctive. In some manuscripts it appears at the end of the book. Other manuscripts contain the account as it appears in the English Bible. Canon Farrar pertinently asks why, if the incident is out of place or not of John's authorship, so many important manuscripts give place to it as we have it?

6. The Treasury, and Court of the Women – "Part of the space within the inner courts was open to Israelites of both sexes, and was known distinctively as the Court of the Women. This was a colonnaded enclosure, and constituted the place of general assembly in the prescribed course of public worship. Chambers used for ceremonial purposes occupied the four corners of this court; and between these and the houses at the gates, were other buildings, of which one series constituted the Treasury wherein were set trumpet-shaped receptacles for gifts." (See Mark 12:41-44.) – *The House of the Lord*, pp. 57-58.

7. The Sheepfold – Dummelow's *Commentary* says, on John 10:2: "To understand the imagery, it must be remembered that Eastern folds are large open enclosures, into which several flocks are driven at the approach of night. There is only one door, which a single shepherd guards, while the others go home to rest. In the morning the shepherds return, are recognized by the doorkeeper, call their flocks round them, and lead them forth to pasture."

FOOTNOTES

- [834] John 7:1-10.
- [835] See chapter 21 herein.
- [836] John 7:5; compare Mark 3:21 in which "friends" is an inaccurate rendition for "kinsmen".
- [837] Compare Christ's answer to His mother, John 2:4; see also 7:30; 8:20.
- [838] John 7:11-53.
- [839] Note 1, end of chapter.
- [840] Note 2, end of chapter.
- [841] John 5; See chapter 15 herein.
- [842] See chapter 6 herein.
- [843] Note 3, end of chapter.
- [844] **This was regarded as a literal fulfillment of Isa. 12:3.**
- [845] John 7:37, 38; compare with the assurance respecting "living water" given to the Samaritan woman, 4:10-15.
- [846] John 7:39; compare 14:16, 17, 26; 15:26; 16:7; Luke 24:49; Acts 2:4.
- [847] Note 4, end of chapter.
- [848] John 3; See chapter 12 herein.
- [849] According to many excellent authorities, Jonah, Nahum, and Hosea were all of Galilee; and it is further believed that Elijah also was of Galilean nativity.
- [850] John 8:1-11.
- [851] Deut. 22:22-27.
- [852] Matt. 5:21-48.
- [853] Deut. 17:6, 7; also 13:9.
- [854] Compare Rom. 2:1, 22; Matt. 7:1, 2; Luke 6:37; 2 Sam. 12:5-7.
- [855] John 8:10, 11; compare 5:11. Consider another instance of mercy granted through contrition Luke 7:36-50.
- [856] Note 5, end of chapter.
- [857] John 8:12-20.
- [858] Note 6, end of chapter.
- [859] John 8:12; compare 1:4, 5, 9; 3:19; 9:5; 12:35, 36, 46. See also Doc. and Cov. 6:21; 10:58, 70; 11:11; 14:9; 84:45, 46; 88:6-13.
- [860] Deut. 17:6; 19:15; Numb. 35:30; Matt. 18:16.
- [861] John 8:21-59.
- [862] Compare P. of G.P., Moses 4:4; 5:24; B. of M., 2 Nephi 2:18; Doc. and Cov. 10:25; 93:25.
- [863] See chapter 13 herein.
- [864] Exo. 3:14; compare 6:3.
- [865] Compare Isa. 44:6; Rev. 1:4, 8; see also John 17:5, 24; Col. 1:17. See chapter 4 herein.
- [866] See chapter 2 herein.
- [867] John 9.
- [868] Whether this incident occurred in immediate sequence to the events last considered, or at a later time after the return of Jesus to Jerusalem following an unrecorded departure therefrom, is not stated in the scriptural record. The value of the lesson is not affected by its place in the catalog of our Lord's works.
- [869] Exo. 20:5; 34:7; Lev. 26:39; Numb. 14:18; 1 Kings 21:29; compare Ezek. chap. 18.
- [870] See chapters 14 and 15 herein.
- [871] Note 3, end of chapter.
- [872] That is, "heed" or "believe".
- [873] John 10:1-21.
- [874] Note the promise of a Shepherd to Israel, Isa. 40:11; 49:9, 10; Ezek. 34:23; 37:24; compare Jer. 3:15; 23:4; Heb. 13:20; 1 Peter 2:25; 5:4; Rev. 7:17. Read studiously Psalm 23.

[875] Note 7, end of chapter.

[876] Matt. 7:15; compare 24:4, 5, 11, 24; Mark 13:22; Rom. 16:17, 18; Eph. 5:6; Col. 2:8; 2 Peter 2:1-3; 1 John 4:1; Acts 20:29.

[877] See chapters 3 and 7 herein.

[878] John 10:16; compare as to "one fold and one shepherd," Ezek. 37:22; Isa. 11:13; Jer. 3:18; 50:4. See "Articles of Faith," xviii,—"The Gathering of Israel."

[879] B. of M., 3 Nephi 15:21; read verses 12-24; see chapter 39 herein.

[880] 3 Nephi 16:1-5.

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OUR LORD'S MINISTRY IN PEREA AND JUDEA

When or under what attendant circumstances our Lord departed from Jerusalem after the Feast of Tabernacles, in the last autumn of His earthly life, we are not told. The writers of the synoptic Gospels have recorded numerous discourses, parables, and miracles, as incidents of a journey toward Jerusalem, in the course of which, Jesus, accompanied by the apostles, traversed parts of Samaria and Perea, and the outlying sections of Judea. We read of Christ's presence in Jerusalem at the Feast of Dedication,[881] between two and three months after the Feast of Tabernacles; and it is probable that some of the events now to be considered occurred during that interval.[882] That Jesus left Jerusalem soon after the Feast of Tabernacles is certain; whether He returned to Galilee, or went only into Perea, possibly with a short detour across the border into Samaria, is not conclusively stated. We shall here as heretofore devote our study primarily to His words and works, with but minor regard to place, time, or sequence.

As the time of His foreknown betrayal and crucifixion drew near, "**he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem**,"[883] though, as we shall find, He turned northward on two occasions, once when He retired to the region of Bethabara, and again to Ephraim.[884]

HIS REJECTION IN SAMARIA [885]

Jesus sent messengers ahead, to announce His coming and to prepare for His reception. In one of the Samaritan villages He was refused entertainment and a hearing, "because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem." Racial prejudice had superseded the obligations of hospitality. This repulse is in unfavorable contrast with the circumstances of His earlier visit among the Samaritans, when He had been received with gladness and entreated to remain; but on that occasion He was journeying not toward but farther from Jerusalem.[886]

The disrespect shown by the Samaritans was more than the disciples could endure without protest. James and John, those Sons of Thunder, were so resentful as to yearn for vengeance. Said they: "Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?"[887] Jesus rebuked His uncharitable servants thus: "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." Repulsed in this village the little company went to another, as the Twelve had been instructed to do under like

circumstances.[888] This was but one of the impressive lessons given to the apostles in the matter of tolerance, forbearance, charity, patience, and long-suffering.

Luke gives next place to the incident of three men who were desirous or willing to become disciples of Christ; one of them seems to have been discouraged at the prospect of hardship such as the ministry entailed; the others wished to be temporarily excused from service, one that he might attend the burial of his father, the other that he might first bid his loved ones farewell. This, or a similar occurrence, is recorded by Matthew in another connection, and has already received attention in these pages.[889]

THE SEVENTY CHARGED AND SENT

The supreme importance of our Lord's ministry, and the shortness of the time remaining to Him in the flesh, demanded more missionary laborers. The Twelve were to remain with Him to the end; every hour of possible instruction and training had to be utilized in their further preparation for the great responsibilities that would rest upon them after the Master's departure. As assistants in the ministry, He called and commissioned the Seventy, and straightway sent them forth,[890] **"two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come."** The need of their service was explained in the introduction to the impressive charge by which they were instructed in the duties of their calling. **"Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest."**[891]

Many matters on which the Twelve had been instructed prior to their missionary tour were now repeated to the Seventy. They were told that they must expect unfriendly and even hostile treatment; their situation would be as that of lambs among wolves. They were to travel without purse or scrip, and thus necessarily to depend upon the provision that God would make through those to whom they came. As their mission was urgent, they were not to stop on the way to make or renew personal acquaintanceships. On entering a house they were to invoke peace upon it; if the household deserved the gift peace would rest therein, but otherwise the Lord's servants would feel that their invocation was void.[892] To any family by whom they were received they were to impart blessing – healing the afflicted, and proclaiming that the kingdom of God had come nigh unto that house. They were not to go from one house to another seeking better entertainment, nor should they expect or desire to be feasted, but they should accept what was offered, eating that which was set before them, thus sharing with the family. If rejected in any city, they were to depart therefrom, leaving, however, their solemn testimony that the city had turned away from the kingdom of God, which had been brought to its doors, and attesting the same by ridding themselves of the dust of that place.[893] It was not for them to pronounce anathema or curse, but the Lord assured them that such a city would bring upon itself a fate worse than the

doom of Sodom.[894] He reminded them that they were His servants, and therefore whoever heard or refused to hear them would be judged as having so treated Him.

They were not restrained, as the Twelve had been, from entering Samaritan towns or the lands of the Gentiles. This difference is consistent with the changed conditions, for now the prospective itinerary of Jesus would take Him into non-Jewish territory, where His fame had already spread; and furthermore, His plan provided for an extension of the gospel propaganda, which was to be ultimately world-wide. The narrow Jewish prejudice against Gentiles in general and Samaritans in particular was to be discountenanced; and proof of this intent could not be better given than by sending authorized ministers among those peoples. We must keep in mind the progressiveness of the Lord's work. At first the field of gospel preaching was confined to the land of Israel,[895] but the beginning of its extension was inaugurated during our Lord's life, and was expressly enjoined upon the apostles after His resurrection.[896] Duly instructed, the Seventy set out upon their mission.[897]

Mention of the condemnation that would follow willful rejection of the authorized servants of God aroused in our Lord's mind sad memories of the repulses He had suffered, and of the many unrepentant souls, in the cities wherein He had accomplished so many mighty works. In profound sorrow He predicted the woes then impending over Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum.[898]

THE SEVENTY RETURN

Considerable time may have elapsed, weeks or possibly months, between the departure of the Seventy and their return. We are not told when or where they rejoined the Master; but this we know, that the authority and power of Christ had been abundantly manifest in their ministry; and that they had rejoiced in the realization. "Lord," said they, "**even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.**"[899] This testimony was followed by the Lord's solemn statement: "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." This was said with reference to the expulsion of the rebellious son of the morning, after his defeat by Michael and the heavenly hosts.[900] Commending the Seventy for their faithful labors, the Lord gave them assurance of further power, on the implied condition of their continued worthiness: "I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you."[901] The promise that they should tread on serpents and scorpions included immunity from injury by venomous creatures if encountered in the path of duty[902] and power to prevail over the wicked spirits that serve the devil, who is elsewhere expressly called the serpent.[903] Great as was the power and authority thus imparted, these disciples were told not to rejoice in such, nor primarily in the fact that evil spirits were subject unto them, but rather because they were accepted of the Lord, and that their names were written in heaven.[904]

The righteous joy of His servants and His contemplation of their faithfulness caused Jesus to rejoice. His happiness found its most appropriate expression in prayer, and thus He prayed: **"I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight."** Compared with the learned men of the time, such as the rabbis and scribes, whose knowledge served but to harden their hearts against the truth, these devoted servants were as babes in humility, trust, and faith. Such children were and are among the nobles of the kingdom. As in the hours of darkest sorrow, so in this moment of righteous exultation over the faithfulness of His followers, Jesus communed with the Father, to do whose will was His sole purpose.

Our Lord's joy on this occasion is comparable to that which He experienced when Peter had burst forth with the confession of his soul: **"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."** In solemn discourse Jesus said: **"All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him."** Then in more intimate communion with the disciples He added: **"Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see: For I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them."**

WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?

We have seen that the Pharisees and their kind were constantly on the alert to annoy and if possible disconcert Jesus on questions of law and doctrine, and to provoke Him to some overt utterance or deed.[905] It may be such an attempt that is recorded by Luke in immediate sequence to his account of the joyous return of the Seventy,[906] for he tells us that the **"certain lawyer,"** of whom he speaks, put a question to tempt Jesus. Viewing the questioner's motive with all possible charity, for the basal meaning of the verb which appears in our version of the Bible as **"to tempt"** is that of putting to test or trial and not necessarily and solely to allure into evil,[907] though the element of entrapping or ensnaring is connoted, we may assume that he wished to test the knowledge and wisdom of the famous Teacher, probably for the purpose of embarrassing Him. Certainly his purpose was not that of sincere search for truth.

This lawyer, standing up among the people who had gathered to hear Jesus, asked: **"Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"**[908] Jesus replied by a counter question, in which was plainly intimated that if this man, who was professedly learned in the law, had read and studied properly, he should know without asking what he ought to do. **"What is written in the law? how readest thou?"** The man replied with an admirable summary of the commandments: **"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself"**[909] The answer was approved. **"This do, and thou shalt**

live" said Jesus. These simple words conveyed a rebuke, as the lawyer must have realized; they indicated the contrast between knowing and doing. Having thus failed in his plan to confound the Master, and probably realizing that he, a lawyer, had made no creditable display of his erudition by asking so simple a question and then answering it himself, he tamely sought to justify himself by inquiring further; "**And who is my neighbour?**" We may well be grateful for the lawyer's question; for it served to draw from the Master's inexhaustible store of wisdom one of His most appreciated parables.

The story is known as the Parable of the Good Samaritan; it runs as follows:

"A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee."

Then of the lawyer Jesus asked: "**Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbor unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.**"[910]

Whatever of motive there may have been in the lawyer's query, "**Who is my neighbour?**" aside from that of self-justification and a desire to retreat in the best form possible from an embarrassing situation, we may conceive to lie in the wish to find a limitation in the application of the law, beyond which he would not be bound to go. If he had to love his neighbors as he loved himself, he wanted to have as few neighbors as possible. His desire may have been somewhat akin to that of Peter, who was eager to learn just how many times he was required to forgive an offending brother.[911]

...Talmage had a great sense of humor.

The parable with which our Lord replied to the lawyer's question is rich in interest as a story alone, and particularly so as an embodiment of precious lessons. It was withal so true to existing conditions, that, like the story of the sower who went forth to sow, and other parables given by the Lord Jesus, it may be true history as well as parable. The road between Jerusalem and Jericho was known to be infested by highway robbers; indeed a section of the thoroughfare was called the Red Path or Bloody Way because of the frequent atrocities committed thereon. Jericho was prominent as a residence place

for priests and Levites. A priest, who, out of respect to his office, if for none other cause, should have been willing and prompt in acts of mercy, caught sight of the wounded traveler and passed by on the far side of the road. A Levite followed; he paused to look, then passed on. These ought to have remembered the specified requirement of the law – that if one saw an ass or an ox fall down by the way, he should not hide himself, but should surely help the owner to lift the creature up again.[912] If such was their duty toward a brother's beast, much greater was their obligation when a brother himself was in so extreme a plight.

Doubtless priest as well as Levite salved his conscience with ample excuse for his inhumane conduct; he may have been in a hurry, or was fearful, perhaps, that the robbers would return and make him also a victim of their outrage. Excuses are easy to find; they spring up as readily and plentifully as weeds by the wayside. When the Samaritan came along and saw the wretched state of the wounded man, he had no excuse for he wanted none. Having done what he could by way of emergency treatment as recognized in the medical practice of the day, he placed the injured one upon his own beast, probably a mule or an ass, and took him to the nearest inn, where he tended him personally and made arrangements for his further care. The essential difference between the Samaritan and the others was that the one had a compassionate heart, while they were unloving and selfish. Though not definitely stated, the victim of the robbers was almost certainly a Jew; the point of the parable requires it to be so. That the merciful one was a Samaritan, showed that the people called heretic and despised by the Jews could excel in good works. To a Jew, none but Jews were neighbors. We are not justified in regarding priest, Levite, or Samaritan as the type of his class; doubtless there were many kind and charitable Jews, and many heartless Samaritans; but the Master's lesson was admirably illustrated by the characters in the parable; and the words of His application were pungent in their simplicity and appropriateness.

MARTHA AND MARY [913]

On one of His visits to Bethany, a small town about two miles from Jerusalem, Jesus was received at the home where dwelt two sisters, Martha and Mary. Martha was housekeeper, and therefore she assumed responsibility for the proper treatment of the distinguished Guest. While she busied herself with preparations and "**was cumbered about much serving,**" well intended for the comfort and entertainment of Jesus, Mary sat at the Master's feet, listening with reverent attention to His words. Martha grew fretful in her bustling anxiety, and came in, saying: "Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me." She was talking to Jesus but really at Mary. For the moment she had lost her calmness in undue worry over incidental details. It is reasonable to infer that Jesus was on terms of familiarity in the household, else the good woman would scarcely have appealed to Him in a little matter of domestic concern. He replied to her complaining words with marked tenderness: "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: but

one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

There was no reproof of Martha's desire to provide well; nor any sanction of possible neglect on Mary's part. We must suppose that Mary had been a willing helper before the Master's arrival; but now that He had come, she chose to remain with Him. Had she been culpably neglectful of her duty, Jesus would not have commended her course. He desired not well-served meals and material comforts only, but the company of the sisters, and above all their receptive attention to what He had to say. He had more to give them than they could possibly provide for Him. Jesus loved the two sisters and their brother as well.[914] Both these women were devoted to Jesus, and each expressed herself in her own way. Martha was of a practical turn, concerned in material service; she was by nature hospitable and self-denying. Mary, contemplative and more spiritually inclined, showed her devotion through the service of companionship and appreciation.[915]

By inattention to household duties, the little touches that make or mar the family peace, many a woman has reduced her home to a comfortless house; and many another has eliminated the essential elements of home by her self-assumed and persistent drudgery, in which she denies to her dear ones the cheer of her loving companionship. One-sided service, however devoted, may become neglect. There is a time for labor inside the home as in the open; in every family time should be found for cultivating that better part, that one thing needful – true, spiritual development.

ASK, AND IT SHALL BE GIVEN YOU [916]

"**And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray.**" Our Lord's example and the spirit of prayer manifest in His daily life moved the disciples to ask for instruction as to how they should pray. No form of private prayer was given in the law, but formal prayers had been prescribed by the Jewish authorities, and John the Baptist had instructed his followers in the mode or manner of prayer. Responding to the disciples' request, Jesus repeated that brief epitome of soulful adoration and supplication which we call the Lord's Prayer. This He had before given in connection with the Sermon on the Mount.[917] On this occasion of its repetition, the Lord supplemented the prayer by explaining the imperative necessity of earnestness and enduring persistency in praying.

The lesson was made plain by the Parable of the Friend at Midnight:

"And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with

me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth."

The man to whose home a friend had come at midnight could not let his belated and weary guest go hungry, yet there was no bread in the house. He made his visitor's wants his own, and pleaded at his neighbor's door as though asking for himself. The neighbor was loath to leave his comfortable bed and disturb his household to accommodate another; but, finding that the man at the door was importunate, he at last arose and gave him what he asked, so as to get rid of him and be able to sleep in peace. The Master added by way of comment and instruction: "*Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.*"

The hospitable man in the parable had refused to be repulsed; he kept on knocking until the door was opened; and as a result received what he wanted, found what he had set out to obtain. The parable is regarded by some as a difficult one to apply, since it deals with the selfish and comfort-loving element of human nature, and apparently uses this to symbolize God's deliberate delay. The explanation, however, is clear when the context is duly considered. The Lord's lesson was, that if man, with all his selfishness and disinclination to give, will nevertheless grant what his neighbor with proper purpose asks and continues to ask in spite of objection and temporary refusal, with assured certainty will God grant what is persistently asked in faith and with righteous intent. No parallelism lies between man's selfish refusal and God's wise and beneficent waiting. There must be a consciousness of real need for prayer, and real trust in God, to make prayer effective; and in mercy the Father sometimes delays the granting that the asking may be more fervent. But in the words of Jesus: "**If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?**"

Sometime later Jesus spake another parable, the moral of which is so closely akin to that of the story of the midnight visitor, as to suggest the study of the later lesson here. It is known as the Parable of the Unjust Judge, or of the Importunate Widow:

"There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me."[918]

The judge was of wicked character; he denied justice to the widow, who could obtain redress from none other. He was moved to action by the desire to escape the woman's importunity. Let us beware of the error of comparing his selfish action with the ways of God. Jesus did not indicate that as the wicked judge finally yielded to supplication so

would God do; but He pointed out that if even such a being as this judge, who "**feared not God, neither regarded man,**" would at last hear and grant the widow's plea, no one should doubt that God, the Just and Merciful, will hear and answer. The judge's obduracy, though wholly wicked on his part, may have been ultimately advantageous to the widow. Had she easily obtained redress she might have become again unwary, and perchance a worse adversary than the first might have oppressed her. The Lord's purpose in giving the parable is specifically stated; it was "**to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint.**"[919]

CRITICISM ON PHARISEES AND LAWYERS [920]

Varied comment as to the source of our Lord's superhuman powers was aroused afresh by His merciful act of expelling a demon from a man, who, in consequence of this evil possession had been dumb. The old Pharisaic theory, that He cast out devils through the power of "Beelzebub, the chief of the devils," was revived. The utter foolishness of such a conception was demonstrated, as it had been on an earlier occasion to which we have given attention.[921] The spiritual darkness, in which evil men grope for signs, the disappointment and condemnation that await them, and other precious precepts, Jesus elucidated in further discourse.[922]

Then, by invitation He went to the house of a certain Pharisee to dine. Other Pharisees, as also lawyers and scribes, were present. Jesus intentionally omitted the ceremonial washing of hands, which all others in the company scrupulously performed before taking their places at table. This omission caused a murmur of disapproval if not an open expression of fault-finding. Jesus utilized the occasion by voicing a pungent criticism of Pharisaic externalism, which He likened to the cleansing of cups and platters on the outside, while the inside is left filthy. "**Fools**" said He, "**did not he that made that which is without make that which is within also?**" In another form we may ask, Did not God who established the outward observances of the law, ordain the inward and spiritual requirements of the gospel also? In response to a question by one of the lawyers, Jesus included them in His sweeping reproof. Pharisees and scribes resented the censure to which they had been subjected, and "**began to urge him vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things: laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him.**" As our Lord's recorded utterances on this occasion appear also in His final denunciation of Pharisaism, later delivered at the temple, we may well defer further consideration of the matter until we take up in order that notable occurrence.[923]

THE DISCIPLES ADMONISHED AND ENCOURAGED [924]

Popular interest in our Lord's movements was strong in the region beyond Jordan, as it had been in Galilee. We read of Him surrounded by "**an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trode one upon another.**" Addressing the multitude, and

more particularly His disciples, Jesus warned them of the leaven of the Pharisees, which He characterized as hypocrisy.[925] The recent scene at the table of a Pharisee gave special significance to the warning. Some of the precepts recorded in connection with His Galilean ministry were here repeated, and particular stress was laid upon the superiority of the soul to the body, and of eternal life as contrasted with the brief duration of mortal existence.

One man in the company, intent on selfish interests and unable to see beyond the material affairs of life, spoke out saying, "Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me." Jesus promptly refused to act as mediator or judge in the matter. "**Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?**" was the Master's rejoinder. The wisdom underlying His refusal to interfere is apparent. As in the case of the guilty woman who had been brought before Him for judgment,[926] so in this instance, He refrained from intervention in matters of legal administration. An opposite course would have probably involved Him in useless disputation, and might have given color to a complaint that He was arrogating to Himself the functions of the legally established tribunals. The man's appeal, however, was made the nucleus of valuable instruction; his clamor for a share in the family inheritance caused Jesus to say: "**Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.**"

This combined admonition and profound statement of truth was emphasized by the Parable of the Foolish Rich Man. Thus runs the story:

"The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."[927]

The man's abundance had been accumulated through labor and thrift; neglected or poorly-tilled fields do not yield plentifully. He is not represented as one in possession of wealth not rightfully his own. His plans for the proper care of his fruits and goods were not of themselves evil, though he might have considered better ways of distributing his surplus, as for the relief of the needy. His sin was twofold; first, he regarded his great store chiefly as the means of securing personal ease and sensuous indulgence; secondly, in his material prosperity he failed to acknowledge God, and even counted the years as his own. In the hour of his selfish jubilation he was smitten. Whether the voice of God came to him as a fearsome presentiment of impending death, or by angel messenger, or how otherwise, we are not informed; but the voice spoke his doom: "**Thou fool, this**

night thy soul shall be required of thee."[928] He had used his time and his powers of body and mind to sow, reap and garner – all for himself. And what came of it all? Whose should be the wealth, to amass which he had jeopardized his soul? Had he been other than a fool he might have realized as Solomon had done, the vanity of hoarding wealth for another, and he perhaps of uncertain character, to possess.[929]

Turning to the disciples Jesus reiterated some of the glorious truths He had uttered when preaching on the mount,[930] and pointed to the birds of the air, the lilies and grass of the field, as examples of the Father's watchful care; He admonished His hearers to seek the kingdom of God, and, doing so, they should find all needful things added. "**Fear not, little flock,**" He added in tone of affectionate and paternal regard, "**for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.**" They were urged to store their wealth in bags that wax not old,[931] containers suited to the heavenly treasure which, unlike the goods of the foolish rich man, shall not be left behind when the soul is summoned. The man whose treasure is of earth leaves it all at death; he whose wealth is in heaven goes to his own, and death is but the portal to his treasury.

The disciples were admonished to be ever ready, waiting as servants wait at night with lights burning, for their master's return; and, inasmuch as the lord of the household comes at his will, in the early or later watches, if when he comes he finds his faithful servants ready to open immediately to his knock he will honor them as they deserve. So is the Son of Man to come, perhaps when least expected. To a question interjected by Peter as to whether "this parable" was spoken to the Twelve only or to all, Jesus made no direct reply; the answer, however, was conveyed in the continuation of the allegory of contrast between faithful and wicked servants.[931] "**Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season?**" The faithful steward is a good type of the apostles, individually or as a body. As stewards they were charged with the care of the other servants, and of the household; and as to them more had been given than to the others, so of them more would be required; and they would be held to strict accountability for their stewardship.

The Lord then referred feelingly to His own mission, and especially to the dreadful experiences then soon to befall Him, saying: "**I have a baptism to be baptised with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!**" He told again of the strife and dissension that would follow the preaching of His gospel, and dwelt upon the significance of then current events. To those who, ever ready to interpret the signs of the weather, yet remained willfully blind to the important developments of the times, He applied the caustic epithet, hypocrites![933]

"EXCEPT YE REPENT YE SHALL ALL LIKEWISE PERISH" [934]

Some of the people who had been listening to our Lord's discourse reported to Him the circumstances of a tragical event that had taken place, probably but a short time before, inside the temple walls. A number of Galileans had been slain by Roman soldiers, at the base of the altar, so that their blood had mingled with that of the sacrificial victims. It is probable that the slaughter of these Galileans was incident to some violent demonstration of Jewish resentment against Roman authority, which the procurator, Pilate, construed as an incipient insurrection, to be promptly and forcibly quelled. Such outbursts were not uncommon, and the Roman tower or fortress of Antonia had been erected in a commanding position overlooking the temple grounds, and connected therewith by a wide flight of steps, so that soldiers could have ready access to the enclosure at the first indication of turmoil. The purpose of the informants who brought this matter to the attention of Jesus is not stated; but we find probability in the thought that His reference to the signs of the times had reminded them of the tragedy, and that they were inclined to speculate as to the deeper significance of the occurrence. Some may have wondered as to whether the fate of the Galilean victims had befallen them as a merited retribution. Anyway, to some such conception as this Jesus directed His reply. By question and answer He assured them that those who had so been slain were not to be considered as sinners above other Galileans; "But," said He, "**except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.**"

Then, referring on His own initiative to another catastrophe, He cited the instance of eighteen persons who had been killed by the fall of a tower at Siloam, and affirmed that these were not to be counted greater sinners than other Jerusalemites. "But," came the reiteration, "except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." There were perhaps some who believed that the men upon whom the tower had fallen had deserved their fate; and this conception is the more probable if the generally accepted assumption be correct, that the calamity came upon the men while they were engaged under Roman employ in work on the aqueduct, for the construction of which Pilate had used the "corban" or sacred treasure, given by vow to the temple.[935]

It is not man's prerogative to pass upon the purposes and designs of God, nor to judge by human reason alone that this person or that suffers disaster as a direct result of individual sin.[936] Nevertheless men have ever been prone to so judge. There are many inheritors of the spirit of Job's friends, who assumed his guilt as certain because of the great misfortunes and sufferings that had come upon him.[937] Even while Jesus spake, calamity dark and dire was impending over temple, city and nation; and unless the people would repent and accept the Messiah then in their midst, the decree of destruction would be carried to its dread fulfillment. Hence, as Jesus said, except the people repented they should perish. The imperative need of reformation was illustrated by the Parable of the Barren Fig Tree.

"A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down."[938]

In Jewish literature, particularly in rabbinical lore, the fig tree is of frequent mention as a symbol of the nation. The warning conveyed in the parable is plain; the element of possible escape is no less evident. If the fig tree represents the covenant people, then the vineyard is naturally the world at large, and the dresser of the vineyard is the Son of God, who by personal ministry and solicitous care makes intercession for the barren tree, in the hope that it may yet bear fruit. The parable is of universal application; but so far as it had special bearing upon the Jewish "**fig tree**" of that time, it was attended by an awful sequel. The Baptist had cried out in warning that the ax was even then in readiness, and every unfruitful tree would be hewn down.[939]

A WOMAN HEALED ON THE SABBATH [940]

On a certain Sabbath Jesus was teaching in a synagog, of what place we are not told, though it was probably in one of the towns of Perea. There was present a woman who for eighteen years had been suffering from an infirmity that had so drawn and atrophied the muscles as to bend her body so that she could in no wise straighten herself. Jesus called her to Him, and without waiting for petition or request, said simply, "**Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity**." These words He accompanied by the laying-on of hands, a feature of His healing ministrations not always performed. She was healed forthwith and stood erect; and, acknowledging the source of the power by which she had been released from her bonds, glorified God in a fervent prayer of thanksgiving. Doubtless many of the beholders rejoiced with her; but there was one whose soul was stirred by indignation only; and he, the ruler of the synagog. Instead of addressing himself to Jesus, of whose power he may have been afraid, he vented his ill feeling upon the people, by telling them there were six days in which men ought to work, and that on those days they who wished to be healed should come, but not on the Sabbath. The rebuke was ostensibly directed to the people, especially to the woman who had received the blessing, but in reality against Jesus; for if there were any element of work in the healing it had been done by Him, not by the woman nor by others. Upon the ruler of the synagog the Lord turned with direct address: "Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?"

It may be inferred that the woman's affliction had been more deeply seated than in the muscles; for Luke who was himself a physician[941] tells us she "**had a spirit of infirmity**," and records the significant words of the Lord to the effect that Satan had held her bound for eighteen years. But whatever her ailment, whether wholly physical or in part mental and spiritual, she was freed from her bonds. Again was the Christ triumphant; His adversaries were shamed into silence, while the believers rejoiced. The rebuke to the ruler of the synagog was followed by a brief discourse in which Jesus gave to these people some of the teachings before delivered in Galilee; these included the parables of the mustard seed and the leaven.[942]

WILL MANY OR FEW BE SAVED? [943]

Continuing His journey toward Jerusalem, Jesus taught in many of the cities and towns of Perea. His coming had probably been announced by the Seventy, who had been sent to prepare the people for His ministry. One of those who had been impressed by His doctrines submitted this question: "**Lord, are there few that be saved?**" Jesus replied: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."[944] The counsel was enlarged upon to show that neglect or procrastination in obeying the requirements for salvation may result in the soul's loss. When the door is shut in judgment many will come knocking, and some will plead that they had known the Lord, having eaten and drunk in His company, and that He had taught upon their streets; but to them who had failed to accept the truth when offered the Lord shall say: "I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity." The people were warned that their Israelitish lineage would in no wise save them, for many who were not of the covenant people would believe and be saved, while unworthy Israelites would be thrust out.[945] So is it that "**There are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last.**"

JESUS WARNED OF HEROD'S DESIGN [946]

On the day of the discourse last noted, certain Pharisees came to Jesus with this warning and advice: "Get thee out, and depart hence: for Herod will kill thee."[947] We have heretofore found the Pharisees in open hostility to the Lord, or secretly plotting against Him; and some commentators regard this warning as another evidence of Pharisaic cunning – possibly intended to rid the province of Christ's presence, or designed to drive Him toward Jerusalem, where He would be again within easy reach of the supreme tribunal. Ought we not to be liberal and charitable in our judgment as to the intent of others? Doubtless there were good men in the fraternity of Pharisees,[948] and those who came informing Christ of a plot against His life were possibly impelled by humane motives, and may even have been believers at heart. That Herod had designs against our Lord's liberty or life appears most probable in the answer Jesus made. He received the information in all seriousness, and His comment thereon is one of the strongest of His utterances against an individual. "**Go ye," said He, "and tell that**

fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to day and to morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected." The specifying of today, tomorrow, and the third day, was a means of expressing the present in which the Lord was then acting, the immediate future, in which He would continue to minister, since, as He knew, the day of His death was yet several months distant, and the time at which his earthly work would be finished and He be perfected. He placed beyond doubt the fact that He did not intend to hasten His steps, neither cut short His journey nor cease His labors through fear of Herod Antipas, who for craft and cunning was best typified by a sly and murderous fox. Nevertheless it was Christ's intention to go on, and soon in ordinary course He would leave Perea, which was part of Herod's domain, and enter Judea; and at the foreknown time would make His final entry into Jerusalem, for in that city was He to accomplish his sacrifice. "It cannot be," He explained, "**that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem.**"

The awful reality that He, the Christ, would be slain in the chief city of Israel wrung from Him the pathetic apostrophe over Jerusalem, which was repeated when for the last time His voice was heard within the temple walls.[949]

NOTES TO CHAPTER 26

1. Christ's Ministry Following His Final Withdrawal From Galilee — John tells us that when Jesus went from Galilee to Jerusalem to attend the Feast of Tabernacles, He went "**not openly, but as it were in secret**" (7:10). It appears improbable that the numerous works recorded by the synoptic writers as features of our Lord's ministry, which extended from Galilee through Perea, into Samaria and parts of Judea, could have attended that special and, as it were secret, journey, at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles. The lack of agreement among writers as to the sequence of events in Christ's life is wide. A comparison of the "Harmonies" published in the most prominent Bible Helps (see e.g. Oxford and Bagster "Helps") exemplifies these divergent views. The subject-matter of our Lord's teachings maintains its own intrinsic worth irrespective of merely circumstantial incidents. The following excerpt from Farrar (*Life of Christ*, chap. 42) will be of assistance to the student, who should bear in mind, however, that it is professedly but a tentative or possible arrangement. "It is well known that the whole of one great section in St. Luke — from 9:51 to 18:30 — forms an episode in the Gospel narrative of which many incidents are narrated by this Evangelist alone, and in which the few identifications of time and place all point to one slow and solemn progress from Galilee to Jerusalem (9:51; 13:22; 17:11; 10:38). Now after the Feast of Dedication our Lord retired into Perea, until He was summoned thence by the death of Lazarus (John 10:40, 42; 11:1-46); after the resurrection [raising] of Lazarus, He fled to Ephraim (11:54); and He did not leave His retirement at Ephraim until He went to Bethany, six days before His final Passover (12:1).

"This great journey, therefore, from Galilee to Jerusalem, so rich in occasions which called forth some of His most memorable utterances, must have been either a journey to the Feast of Tabernacles or to the Feast of Dedication. That it could not have been the former may be regarded as settled, not only on other grounds, but decisively because that was a rapid and secret journey, this an eminently public and leisurely one.

"Almost every inquirer seems to differ to a greater or less degree as to the exact sequence and chronology of the events which follow. Without entering into minute and tedious disquisitions where absolute certainty is impossible, I will narrate this period of our Lord's life in the order which, after repeated study of the Gospels, appears to me to be the most probable, and in the separate details of which I have found myself again and again confirmed by the conclusions of other independent inquirers. And here I will only premise my conviction—

"1. That the episode of St. Luke up to 18:30, mainly refers to a single journey, although unity of subject, or other causes, may have led the sacred writer to weave into his narrative some events or utterances which belong to an earlier or later epoch.

"2. That the order of the facts narrated even by St. Luke alone is not, and does not in any way claim to be, strictly chronological; so that the place of any event in the narrative by no means necessarily indicates its true position in the order of time.

"3. That this journey is identical with that which is partially recorded in Matt. 18:1; 20:16; Mark 10:1-31.

"4. That (as seems obvious from internal evidence) the events narrated in Matt. 20:17-28; Mark 10:32-45; Luke 18:31-34, belong not to this journey but to the last which Jesus ever took—the journey from Ephraim to Bethany and Jerusalem."

2. Jesus at the Home in Bethany—Some writers (e.g. Edersheim) place this incident as having occurred in the course of our Lord's journey to Jerusalem to attend the Feast of Tabernacles; others (e.g. Geikie) assume that it took place immediately after that feast; and yet others (e.g. Farrar) assign it to the eve of the Feast of Dedication, nearly three months later. The place given it in the text is that in which it appears in the scriptural record.

3. Shall but Few be Saved?—Through latter-day revelation we learn that graded conditions await us in the hereafter, and that beyond salvation are the higher glories of exaltation. The specified kingdoms or glories of the redeemed, excepting the sons of perdition, are the Celestial, the Terrestrial, and the Telestial. Those who obtain place in the Telestial, the lowest of the three, are shown to be "**as innumerable as the stars in the firmament of heaven, or as the sand upon the seashore.**" And these shall not be equal, "**For they shall be judged according to their works, and every man shall receive**

according to his own works, his own dominion, in the mansions which are prepared. And they shall be servants of the Most High, but where God and Christ dwell they cannot come, worlds without end." See Doc. and Cov. 76:111, 112; read the entire section; see also *The Articles of Faith* xxii:16-27; and chapter 33 herein.

FOOTNOTES

- [881] John 10:22.
- [882] Note 1, end of chapter.
- [883] Luke 9:51.
- [884] John 10:40; 11:54.
- [885] Luke 9:51-56.
- [886] John 4:4-42; See chapter 13 herein.
- [887] Luke 9:54; compare 2 Kings 1:10, 12.
- [888] Matt. 10:23.
- [889] Luke 9:57-62; See chapter 19 herein.
- [890] Luke 10:1-12.
- [891] Compare Matt. 9:37, 38; see also John 4:35.
- [892] Edersheim (vol. ii, p. 138) says: "The expression 'if the son of peace be there' is a Hebraism, equivalent to 'if the house be worthy' (compare Matt. 10:13) and refers to the character of the head of the house and the tone of the household."
- [893] Compare Matt. 10:14; See chapter 21 herein.
- [894] Compare the charge given the Seventy with that of the Twelve, Matt. 10:5-42; Mark 6:7-11; Luke 9:1-5; See chapter 21 herein.
- [895] Matt. 10:5, 6; 15:24.
- [896] Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:15.
- [897] Doc. and Cov. 107:25; 124:137-140; see also "Articles of Faith," xi:20, 28. The special office of the Seventy has been reestablished in the restored Church; and in this, the last dispensation, many quorums of Seventy are maintained for the work of the ministry. The office of the Seventy is one belonging to the Higher or Melchizedek Priesthood.
- [898] Luke 10:13-15; compare Matt. 11:20-24; See chapter 18 herein.
- [899] Luke 10:17.
- [900] Rev. 9:1; 12:8, 9; See chapter 2 herein.
- [901] Luke 10:19; read verses 20-24.
- [902] Compare Mark 16:18; Acts 28:5.
- [903] Rev. 12:9; 20:2; compare Gen. 3:1-4, 14, 15.
- [904] Compare Rev. 13:8; 20:12; 21:27.
- [905] Compare Mark 12:13; see also Luke 11:53, 54.
- [906] Luke 10:25-37.
- [907] Compare Gen. 22:1.
- [908] Compare Matt. 19:16; Mark 10:17; Luke 18:18.
- [909] Luke 10:27; compare Deut. 6:5, and Lev. 19:18; see also Matt. 22:35-40.
- [910] Luke 10:30-37.
- [911] Matt. 18:21, 22; compare Luke 17:4; See chapter 24 herein.
- [912] Deut. 22:4; compare. Exo. 23:5.
- [913] Luke 10:38-42. Note 2, end of chapter.
- [914] John 11:5.
- [915] Compare John 12:2, 3.
- [916] Luke 11:1-13.
- [917] See chapter 17 herein.

- [918] Luke 18:2-5; read verses 1, and 6-8. See also Doc. and Cov. 101:81-94.
- [919] Luke 18:1; compare 21:36; Rom. 12:12; Eph. 6:18; Col. 4:2; 1 Thess. 5:17.
- [920] Luke 11:37-54.
- [921] Luke 11:14-28; See chapter 18 herein.
- [922] Luke 11:29-36; See chapter 18 herein.
- [923] Matt. 23; See chapter 31 herein.
- [924] Luke 12:1-12.
- [925] See chapter 22 herein.
- [926] See chapter 25 herein.
- [927] Luke 12:14-21.
- [928] Compare the fate that overtook Nebuchadnezzar, while the words of boastful pride were yet in his mouth (Dan. 4:24-33); and that of Belshazzar, before whose eyes appeared the hand of destiny in the midst of his riotous feast; in that night was the king's soul required of him. (Dan. 5.)
- [929] Eccles. 2:18, 19; compare succeeding verses; see also Psa. 39:6: 49:6-20; Job 27: 16, 17.
- [930] Luke 12:22-31; compare Matt. 6:25-34.
- [931] Compare Matt. 6:20.
- [932] Luke 12:35-48.
- [933] Luke 12:49-57; compare Matt. 10:34-37.
- [934] Luke 13:1-5.
- [935] Josephus, Wars ii, 9:4; See chapter 22 herein.
- [936] Compare John 9:2, 3; See chapter 25 herein.
- [937] Job 4:7; 8:2-14, 20; 22:5.
- [938] Luke 13:6-9.
- [939] Luke 3:9.
- [940] Luke 13:11-17.
- [941] Colos. 4:14.
- [942] Luke 13:19-21; See chapter 19 herein.
- [943] Luke 13:23-30. Note 3, end of chapter.
- [944] Compare Matt. 7:13.
- [945] Compare Matt. 7:23; 8:11, 12; 19:30; Mark 10:31.
- [946] Luke 13:31-33.
- [947] In the revised version the last clause reads "for Herod would fain kill thee."
- [948] Paul the apostle had been a Pharisee of the most pronounced type. (Acts 23:6; 26:5.)
- [949] Luke 13:34, 35: compare Matt. 23:37-39.