

Jesus of Nazareth: How He Thought, Lived, Worked, and Achieved

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JESUS OF NAZARETH

HOW HE THOUGHT, LIVED, WORKED, AND ACHIEVED

By ERNEST D. BURTON

THE WEEK OF TRIUMPH AND OF SUFFERING (*Continued*)

32. THREE QUESTIONS BY THE JEWISH RULERS, AND JESUS' QUESTION TO THEM. MARK 12:13-37

Read Mark 12:13-17. To understand vs. 14 we need to remember the circumstances. A hundred years before this the Jewish nation was independent. Two brothers of the ruling family, the Hasmoneans or Maccabees, quarreled over who should succeed to the throne and appealed to the Roman general Pompey to decide between them. In the outcome Rome became the real ruler of the nation, and at the time of the Gospel incident Judea had been under Roman governors for twenty years. The question of the scribes was the much-disputed one—whether it was lawful to recognize and submit to this foreign and heathen rule. Jesus' question reminds his hearers of this past history and of the fact that, having proved themselves unable to maintain their independence by their incompetence for self-government, they had had to employ Rome to rule them. His first verdict, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, to God the things that are God's," is on the one hand an injunction to pay those whom they had in effect hired to rule them what they owed, and, on the other, a reminder that such payment in no way conflicted with the fulfilment of their obligations to God. The question was shrewdly framed to entrap him (notice vs. 15), since an affirmative answer would have excited the anger of the people and a negative answer would have been the basis for a charge of treason against Rome. What does his answer show as to his shrewdness and his keenness in analyzing a situation? What does it indicate as to whether he ever thought about problems of political life or studied the political history of his nation? Recall Luke 13:1-5 and the parables of Matt. 21:28—22:14.

Read Mark 12:18-27. This passage also deals with one of the questions of current history, pertaining, however, not to politics but to the idea of the future life. The Pharisees believed in a future life but expected it to be much like the present one, differing chiefly in that it would have greater physical luxuries. The question of the Sadducees was probably one they had often put to the Pharisees and which the latter could not answer. It presented to the Pharisees the dilemma: deny the future life or admit polygamy in it. Notice the two parts of Jesus' answer. In vs. 25 he avoids the dilemma in which the Sadducees put the Pharisee by a new conception of the future life. Do you think

he meant to exclude only marriage from that life and retain all the other things that go with bodily life, or did he mean to exclude the physical altogether as we know it here? Where did he get the thought of a future non-physical existence? The second part of his answer goes to the root of the Sadducees' skepticism, and deals not with the character of the future life but its existence. Verses 26, 27 seem clearly to mean that if God has once brought men into that relation of friendship with himself, which is expressed in the phrase, "I am the God of Abraham," etc., he cannot suffer that friendship to end; hence the people themselves cannot cease to be. God is not the God of dead people; those whom he loves must live. Do you know of any stronger or sounder reason for believing in the future life than this? What has Jesus implied in all his teaching as to the value, in themselves and God's estimation, of *people*, men and women?

Read Mark 12:28-31. In this passage again we have one of those brief but far-reaching sayings of Jesus. How would the modern questions, "What is the heart of religion?" "What is essential to Christianity?" differ from that of the scribe in vs. 28? What word is common to the two parts of Jesus' answer? Henry Drummond wrote a book called *The Greatest Thing in the World*, meaning love. Is that title in harmony with vs. 31? Does this statement of Jesus explain his attitude toward other commandments of the Old Testament than these two? In Mark, chap. 7, he implies that the command to children to honor their parents is a law of God and ought to be obeyed, but that the command to distinguish between foods was not such. If love to God and man is the essence of religion, is the former command included and is the latter excluded from religion? Did Jesus think religion ought to include unessential things?

Read Mark 12:32-34. Were all the scribes narrow-minded and bigoted? Did Jesus judge of people by groups or as individuals? What does the fact that Jesus considered a man who could see that love to God was more than all external ordinances not far from the Kingdom of God imply respecting his thought of the importance of this truth and the nature of the Kingdom of God?

Read Mark 12:35-37. The passage which Jesus quotes is from Ps. 110. His use of the passage turns on the fact that if, as the scribes supposed, the psalm was written by David and referred to the Messiah in the second word "Lord," David speaks of the Messiah as his Lord and therefore greater than David. The conflict between this idea and that of the Messiah as David's son is not in the mere fact of descent from David—a descendant of a man is often greater than the man from whom he is descended—but in the idea of a Jewish king and a national kingdom which the Jews associated with the title "son of David." In other words Jesus desires to show the scribes, out of the Scriptures as they themselves interpreted them, the falsity or inadequacy of their idea of the Messiah. Do you think he wished to persuade them that the Messiah would not be descended from David, or that he would be a greater political ruler than David, or to suggest to them that they should reconsider their whole idea of the Messiah?

Suggestions for further study: 1. What do Jesus' answers to the questions put to him and the questions that he asked show respecting the range and depth of his thinking? Did he think solely about religion as a thing apart from the common life, or was he interested in all aspects of life and all interests of men? Did he think on the surface of things, or deal with the fundamentals? 2. For which is Jesus most notable as a teacher, his acquaintance with the history of human opinion or the keenness of his insight and the originality of his own thinking?

33. DENUNCIATION OF THE SCRIBES AND COMMENDATION OF THE GENEROUS WIDOW. MATT., CHAP. 23, MARK 12:41-44

Mark has at this point a few verses of Jesus' criticism of the scribes, but Matthew, as in several other places, taking these verses as the nucleus, gathers from different sources a collection of Jesus' sayings on this subject. These we will study first, and then the brief story of the poor widow, which Matthew omits.

Read Matt. 23:1-4. Do you think that Jesus meant in vs. 3 to tell people to follow all the teachings of the scribes, even when they differed from his own, or in general to beware rather of their example than of their teaching?

Read Matt. 23:5-12. What is the essence of the fault for which Jesus here criticizes the scribes?

Read Matt. 23:13-15. How did the scribes shut other people out of the Kingdom? What does Jesus think of the conduct of those who try to prevent other people from accepting new ideas without considering carefully whether they are not also true? Did he regard the attempt to get other people to agree with one as necessarily commendable? What did he evidently think ought always to accompany such an effort? What did accompany it in this case?

Read Matt. 23:16-24. The word "debtor" clearly means, as the margin suggests, "bound by his oath." The interpretations of the law about oaths, which Jesus here quotes, are examples of the extreme literalism of the scribes and of the kind of hair-splitting casuistry to which literalism leads. What is the characteristic of Jesus' interpretation and teaching as against such literalism and casuistry? Did he recognize the great and the small in the Old Testament, and hold to the first and discard the second? How did he decide which was great and which was small, and what was "binding" for him and the people of his day? Is his own saying in vs. 23 to be taken literally? Did he mean that all the commands of the Old Testament were to be kept? What about the Sabbath and fasting and food? What does vs. 24 show as to Jesus' sense of humor? Picture the man carefully straining the gnat out of a pool of water and then drinking down the camel.

Read Matt. 23:25-28 and define the quality of the Pharisaic conduct which Jesus disapproves.

Read Matt. 23:29-36. recalling that we have already found most of these verses in Luke, chap. 11 (sec. 21).

Read Matt. 23:37-39. These verses found also in Luke 13:34,35 show how clearly Jesus foresaw what would be the result of the continuance of the course of action which the Jewish nation was following.

Read Mark 12:41-44. The treasury here referred to was a row of trumpet-shaped vessels along the side of the so-called court of the women, the court beyond which women were not allowed to go. What was the standard of measurement by which Jesus judged the woman's gift of two mites to be more than that of all the others?

Suggestions for further study: Is the statement of Matt. 23:12 inconsistent with Jesus' own criticism of the teaching of the scribes? Does the latter show that the former was not intended to be taken without qualification? Is it in general true that on most subjects men must follow the best teachers they have, at most choosing between teachers? Is it better to do this than for each man to strike out quite independently for himself? Must we all to a certain extent

go along together in the development of ideals and establishing standards? How does this affect the responsibility of the leaders of thought? Is the ordinary man to blame for not being ahead of his times? What about the man who lags behind the best thought of his age? Are these questions important in the present situation?

34. JESUS' DISCOURSE ABOUT FUTURE EVENTS. MARK, CHAP. 13

This report of the sayings of Jesus about the future presents some very difficult problems. On the one hand it is clear that the Gospel writers believed that Jesus expected certain great events, including his return on the clouds, to happen in the then near future, and that some of these events did not so happen and have not yet happened. On the other hand it is plain that in his report of Jesus' utterances at this time Matthew has included sayings gathered from different Gospels and probably uttered on different occasions, and especially that he has to a certain extent modified the form of the sayings to make them express more clearly what he supposed to be their meaning. One such change is very important. The question of the disciples as reported by Mark (13:4) is, "When shall these things (the destruction of the temple spoken of in vs. 2) be, and what shall be the sign when these things are all about to be accomplished?" This makes the subject of the discourse the destruction of the temple. But Matthew makes the question, "When shall these things be and what shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the world?" thus giving the discourse a very different subject. There is indeed in Mark one passage that furnishes the suggestion for this form of the question. In 13:23 there is a prediction of the coming of the Son of Man in clouds with great power and glory.

There is no doubt that the early church expected Jesus thus to return, and believed that he had said that he would so come. And in view of the fact that Matthew has clearly modified the record of Mark in such a way as to introduce this idea, the question has been raised whether the passage in Mark 13:24-27, which is out of harmony with the question of the disciples as reported by him, may not be due to the same influence. To many this has seemed more probable than that Jesus, who in this very conversation confesses his ignorance of certain matters about the future, should have supposed that he was justified in predicting his own return in a way and at a time which later history has not confirmed. Thus this chapter brings to us one of the most difficult questions of the Gospels. To answer it we must first see just what the Gospels clearly say. (Remember how the Gospels were produced—not by pens operated from heaven, but by a process of growth and copying from older books—and then consider what kind of a person Jesus was intellectually, how accurate his knowledge, and what he did not know.)

Read Mark 13:12. We have already seen that Jesus was concerned about the future of his nation and feared great disasters to it because of its rejection of the messengers of God to it. On this occasion he seems definitely to have predicted the utter destruction of the temple, which could scarcely happen except in connection with the overthrow of Jerusalem. The prediction, doubtless not intended to be taken quite literally, was substantially fulfilled in the destruction of the city by the Romans in 70 A.D.

Read Mark 13:4-13. Notice especially that the question of the disciples pertains only to the destruction of the temple and the signs of it. Does Jesus

answer this question, or does he warn his disciples against being misled by false prophets and tell them certain things that would happen before the end came?

Read Matt. 13:14-23. The phrase "the abomination of desolation" is taken from Dan. 11:31; 12:11 and I Macc. 1:54. In the last passage it clearly refers to the heathen sacrifices offered on the altar of the Jewish temple. As Jesus used it, it would naturally refer to some similar event, in general the entrance of heathen into the temple, which would scarcely happen except in connection with the entrance of hostile armies into Jerusalem. When this happens, he says, it is time to flee from Judea. Does this answer the question of the disciples? The rest of the passage emphasizes the terrible character of the experience and in vss. 21-23 repeats the warning of vss. 5, 6 against being misled by false Christs.

Read Mark 13:24-27. This is the passage of greatest difficulty in the conversation as given in Mark, especially taken in connection with vss. 28-31. It definitely predicts a coming of the Son of Man in clouds in the days following the great tribulation, and the writers undoubtedly understood the term Son of Man to refer to Jesus and the coming to be a visible one, literally on the clouds. Some have thought that this is highly figurative language for a spiritual fact, and it is perhaps not impossible that this was the meaning of Jesus, but it is more likely that the words have been modified as suggested above, or that the whole passage, vss. 24-27, has been introduced from some other book supposed to be from Jesus, but not really his words.

Read Mark 13:28-37. Notice two things about this passage, the definite prediction that "these things" are to be accomplished before this generation passes away, and that no one but God knows the exact time. These words occasion no difficulty if they refer to what precedes vs. 24. Through his interpretation of current events, of which we have abundant evidence in the Gospels, Jesus may well have judged that the forces making for the overthrow of the nation would certainly bring about that event in the lifetime of men then living (as actually came to pass forty years later), at the same time he might be quite unable to state the exact date. But it is evident that in the mind of the Gospel writer vs. 30 refers to the events predicted in vss. 24-27. This was undoubtedly the thought of the early Christians generally. But was it also the thought of Jesus?

At the end of the record taken from Mark, Matthew in 24:43-51 adds material found also in Luke 12:39-46 (see our sec. 23) and then introduces three important passages not found elsewhere. The connection of thought seems to be in the word "watch" in Mark 13:35. Compare Matt. 24:42 and 25:13.

Read Matt. 25:1-13. This parable was undoubtedly understood by Matthew with reference to the coming of the Lord, about which he represents the disciples as inquiring in 24:3. Would it also be a significant utterance of Jesus if interpreted by the necessity of being always ready for the demands and exigencies of life?

Read Matt. 25:14-30. Does the teaching of this parable respecting the duty of using what has been intrusted to us and being prepared to give a good account of ourselves apply only to money or to all that we possess? Is it materially affected by the question when and how the day of reckoning comes?

Read Matt. 25:31-46. Is this possibly intended chiefly to teach how and when men will be judged, or what is the basis of the divine judgment? Could

Jesus have uttered this parable if he had regarded physical welfare as of no consequence? Is it just to understand it as implying that food, drink, clothing, and physical comfort are the only good things? Is it consistent with Jesus' teaching elsewhere in the Gospels to understand "these my brethren" in vs. 40 to refer only to the Jews or only to the followers of Christ? What is the central teaching of the passage?

Suggestions for further study: 1. There was among the Jews in Jesus' day an expectation of an apocalyptic Messiah, that is of one who should descend from heaven and bring about a marvelous and instantaneous change of the whole situation. Paul and the early Christians held the hope and expected Jesus to return in this way (see I Thess. 4:16, 17 and 5:1-3). Jesus rejected the political idea of the Messiah and in reference to the whole religious thought of his day adopted an independent attitude. Would he be likely to adopt this apocalyptic idea of the Messiah without scrutiny? If he examined it would he have found any ground for it? 2. Does your study of the Gospels thus far lead you to think that Jesus was chiefly interested in the program of future events or in fundamental principles of religion and conduct? 3. If you were persuaded that Jesus, being, as he said, ignorant about some matters pertaining to the future, held some expectations as to how God would accomplish his plans in the world which have not been realized, would that fact make the teaching of Jesus about religion and morals, as for example, the Golden Rule, and the principal commandment, and the basis of God's judgment of men, and the wisdom of faith in God, any less true and valuable?

35. THE COMPANIONSHIP OF FRIENDS AND THE PLOTTINGS OF ENEMIES. MARK 14:1-31

Read Mark 14:1, 2. Recall the indications at various earlier points in the Gospel story that the Pharisees were irreconcilably out of harmony with Jesus' way of looking at life and his conception of religion. As on so many other occasions in history, this disharmony led at length to a determination to put the disturbing advocate of new ideas to death. What was the ultimate ground of the Pharisees' hostility to Jesus? Was it that he stood for the Old Testament and they for later traditions; that he stood for a religion of principles and they for conformity to rules; that he believed in the right and duty of men to discover truth through experience and they held that all that was knowable was already known and included in their system of teaching; or that he holding both to a religion of principles and to the possibility of discovering these by experience and insight was a menace to their continuance of their hard and fast legalism and their leadership of the nation? Why did they fear the people? Were the latter more open to conviction than the Pharisees?

Read Mark 14:3-9. What does the incident show as to the personal attractiveness of Jesus and the hold that he had gained upon the affection of his followers? What does it show as to Jesus' opinion of the legitimacy of sentiment in life, as compared with a coolly calculating altruism? Was he opposed to feeding the hungry?

Read Mark 14:10, 11. This is the first mention in this oldest Gospel of any disloyalty to Jesus on the part of Judas. Could this have been the beginning of it in fact? What was the root of Judas' perfidy? Was it simply love of money based on an overestimate of its value, or must there also have been a gross failure to appreciate Jesus and his ideas and their value to the world?

Read Mark 14:12-16. Recall that the Passover was a very ancient feast of the Jews commemorating the deliverance of the nation from the Egyptian bondage, and that it was observed in family groups. What does the fact that Jesus observed it show as to his feeling about the ancient customs of his people? Did he wish to discard them all? Did he think they ought all to be observed? Does he hold fast to all that were not harmful and discard those that were so? Whom does Jesus treat as his family on this occasion?

Read Mark 14:17-21, noticing the evidence of this narrative that Jesus saw clearly that the trend of events was leading to his death and understood the part that Judas was playing. Then read Mark 14:22-26, observing that under the influence of his foresight of his death the bread and the wine of the passover supper took on a new significance becoming to him the symbols of his body that was to be broken and his blood that he was to shed. Is his language literal? Does he mean that the bread *is* his body and the wine *is* his blood? The covenants commonly spoken of in the Bible are between God and men. When he calls his blood "my blood of the covenant" does he mean that by shedding his blood he will help to bring God and man together? Has it proved to be so? Has the cross of Christ served to bring men into harmony with God? Verse 25 seems clearly to mean that this was the last passover that he expected to eat with his disciples under the conditions under which this one was eaten—on earth, as we should say. Does it also mean that he expected to return and eat the passover with them again under new conditions? Or is this taking the language too literally and finding in it more than he intended?

Read Mark 14:27-31. Jesus evidently understood Peter as well as he did Judas. What was the difference between the two men? Was it simply that Peter repented afterward while Judas felt only remorse, or was there a difference in their acts and the cause of them? If the root of Judas' conduct was a failure to appreciate real values, a blindness of mind and heart to the infinite spiritual worth of Jesus and his teaching as compared with the material value of thirty pieces of silver, while Peter's fault was timidity, lack of courage, which of the two is the deeper fault and the more difficult to eradicate?

36. IN GETHSEMANE

Read Mark 14:32-36. Recall the evidence that Jesus had foreseen that he would be rejected by the Jews and die, and consider carefully his conduct as he drew near to it. Had fear of physical pain anything to do with his dread of death? Was this the chief element of it? Was the fact that his people were rejecting him and his message an important factor in it? Did he regard their rejection of him as a rejection of God also? See Luke 10:16. If he had foreseen his end why did he yet pray that the cup might pass from him? Does this tend to show that as one of us might have done, he saw the evidence that seemed to point already to the result, yet hoped against hope that he might escape it? Knowing why they were rejecting him could he have done otherwise than to dread the outcome and hope to escape it?

Read Mark 14:37-42. Notice Jesus' craving for the sympathy and help of his disciples, combined with his solicitude, in the midst of his own struggle, for them. Does the last part of vs. 41 indicate that the outcome of his praying—the answer to his prayer in a sense—was the conviction that the cup was not to pass from him, and are his words here an acceptance of the cup as God's will for him?

Read Mark 14:43-50. The chief priests, the scribes, and the elders seems to be an inclusive phrase for the high officials of the nation, and to include both Pharisees and Sadducees. Reproduce the scene in your mind, and consider what characteristic or characteristics of Jesus stand out most clearly in the incident. Consider again the motives under which the Jewish leaders, Judas, and Jesus respectively acted.

37. THE TRIAL OF JESUS BEFORE THE JEWISH AUTHORITIES.

MARK 14:53-72

Read Mark 14:53-65. Picture the scene. It is in the court and adjoining rooms of an oriental house of the better sort. It is in the spring, but cool enough to require a fire at night. The members of the Sanhedrin, the supreme Jewish council and court, are present. The Jews had very recently lost the right to inflict the death penalty, but they could examine a man and recommend to the Roman authorities that he be put to death. It has been much discussed whether this was a legal trial according to Jewish law and usage. Apparently it was not, but perhaps it was not regarded as a trial in the strict sense at all, but only as a preliminary hearing to decide whether and how to present the case to Pilate. Yet it had much of the formality of a trial and the effort seems to have been to find evidence of acts or utterances that would be criminal under the Jewish law. The notable features of the narrative are the diligent but unsuccessful effort to find witnesses that could agree in their testimony against Jesus; the reference to the destruction of the temple (what gave occasion to this charge?); the question of the high priest (vs. 61) and Jesus' answer; the ground of the final condemnation, namely, blaspheming in answering in the affirmative the question whether he was the Christ, the Son of the Blessed. Respecting this last, notice (1) that there is no inquiry whether the claim was true; it is assumed that it is false, and that the very making of it is blasphemy; (2) that this is the first occasion recorded in this Gospel on which Jesus outside the circle of his disciples has said explicitly that he was the Christ; now at length, despite whatever misunderstandings might remain after all his effort to make clear what his mission really was, he will not deny that he is the Christ. Did he now mean it in the sense of those who expected a political Messiah? Did he now mean it in the sense of those who looked for an apocalyptic Messiah, that is, one who would come from heaven in miraculous fashion? The last part of vs. 62 indicates that the gospel writers understood the words in this latter sense, and this is undoubtedly in accordance with the general thought of the early church. Yet both Matthew and Luke report Jesus as saying that the coming of the Son of Man on the clouds will be from this time, and this phrase suggests that the original utterance referred not to a literal appearance in the clouds, but, probably in figurative language, to the triumph of his cause which would begin even from his death.

Read Mark 14:66-72. What is the relative importance for the history of the world of the events here narrated compared with those recorded in vss. 55-65? Early Christian tradition makes the preaching of Peter the chief source of Mark's Gospel. If this tradition is correct, is there any connection between that fact and the prominent place of this story in the gospel narrative? If so, what light does this throw on the character of Peter?

Suggestions for further study: 1. Aside from all questions of technical legality, about which lawyers and historians do not agree, was the trial of Jesus before the Jewish authorities a fair one? If not, wherein was it unfair? 2. The condemnation of Jesus by the Jews is one of the most far-reaching events of human history, of significance far beyond the thought of those who participated in it. What was the real reason why the Jews desired his death and brought it about? Was the event the outcome of the conflict of two great conceptions of religion? If so, what were these two? 3. Where was the real parting of the ways between Jesus and the Jewish leaders? At the last they made their decision turn on the answer to the question whether he claimed to be the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? Was this the fundamental issue? Had he been pressing this claim? What attitude ought they to have taken at the beginning, the taking of which would have made him and them friends and co-workers. 4. The character of Peter; its elements of strength and weakness; comparison with the representative Jewish leaders; comparison with Judas; comparison with Paul; the part he has played in the history of Christianity.

38. THE TRIAL BEFORE PILATE. MARK 15:1-20

Read Mark 15:1-5. In accordance with the fact that the Jews could not execute sentence of death, but must present the case to the Roman governor of Judea for decision, the leaders of the Sanhedrin presented Jesus to Pilate (vs. 1). The question of Pilate evidently implies that the Jews had made the charge against Jesus that he claimed to be the King of the Jews. This statement of Jesus that he was the Christ made in answer to the question of the high priest (Mark 14:61, 62), was here cast by his accusers into a form to make it an offense against the Roman government. A Roman governor would not be concerned with a charge of blasphemy or with a claim to be the Messiah in a wholly religious or non-political sense. But the charge that Jesus professed to be the King of the Jews, that is, a political Messiah laying claim to the throne of David or the Maccabees, was one that a Roman governor could not ignore. Thus shrewdly but dishonestly the Jews converted the confession which the high priest had practically extorted from Jesus into a charge that if proved would secure his sentence to death in a Roman court. Luke evidently had in addition to Mark an independent account of the trial of Jesus and of events associated with it. Read Luke 23:2, and notice the explicitly political offense which according to this examination was charged against Jesus. Does the transformation of his answer to the high priest into a political form explain Jesus' refusal to answer Pilate? Would a negative answer have seemed to retract what he had said to the high priest? Would an affirmative answer to the question as put have been wholly untrue?

Luke adds at this point two or three paragraphs, which interestingly supplement Mark. Read Luke 23:4-16, and notice the evidence in vs. 4, 13-16 that Pilate saw through the duplicity and attempted deception of the Jews, and perceived that Jesus was guilty of no political offense and of nothing for which a Roman court could condemn him.

Read Mark 15:6-15. The whole Barrabbas incident illustrates the large measure of discretion that a Roman governor was allowed to exercise. Despite the Roman emphasis on justice as compared with the autocratic power exercised by an oriental monarch, a Roman governor's task was not primarily to secure justice, but to keep his province quiet, preventing insurrection. Hence Pilate's

attempt to satisfy the people by releasing Jesus instead of Barrabbas. But hence also his final consent, against his own clear perception of the facts and his own sense of justice, to release Barrabbas and condemn Jesus to death. Who is chiefly responsible for this result: the people, their leaders, or Pilate?

Read Mark 15:16-20. This narrative again illustrates the barbarity which has so often been associated with the autocratic exercise of power and which lingers on even under democratic government. Which impresses your imagination more, this story or the preceding one? Which is historically more significant?

39. THE CRUCIFIXION AND BURIAL OF JESUS. MARK 15:21-47

Read Mark 15:21-32, noting the facts associated with the death of Jesus that had become fixed in the memory of his disciples: (1) the fact that Simon of Cyrene carried the cross; Alexander and Rufus were probably well-known Christians when the Gospel was written; (2) the place of the crucifixion; (3) Jesus' refusal of the anesthetic drink; (4) the parting of his garments; (5) the superscription; (6) the taunts of the bystanders and of those who were crucified with him.

Read Mark 15:33-38. The veil of the temple referred to in vs. 38 is that which hung between the holy place and the most holy place. The darkness that came just before Jesus died (vs. 33) and the rending of the veil were evidently understood by the Gospel writer in the literal sense, and looked upon by early Christians as symbolizing the significance of Jesus' death. Perhaps the latter was originally a figurative expression signifying that the old dispensation with its temple sacrifices and ceremonies and indirect approach to God had passed, henceforth the way of approach was open to all. To us perhaps the most significant part of the narrative is Jesus' utterance, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (vs. 35). The words are a quotation from Ps. 22:1 where they express the state of mind of a pious man who clinging in the midst of great distress to his faith in God, yet boldly expresses his perplexity that God in whom he trusts should permit him to suffer. They were probably used by Jesus with remembrance of their source (as a dying man today might quote a hymn or a passage of Scripture) and as an expression of substantially the same state of mind as that of the psalmist. So far from expressing loss of faith on his part, they are an affirmation of faith (notice the words "*my* God, *my* God") in the midst of perplexity and suffering, than which there is no more real faith. The latter part of the psalm expresses the triumph of faith even over perplexity (see vs. 24: "He hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted, neither hath he hid his face from him. But when he cried unto him he heard") and the Gospel of Luke records that before his death Jesus passed into this calmer atmosphere, saying as his last words: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Luke 23:46). To infer from the narrative that Jesus was actually deserted by God is to convert the language of deep emotion into that of exact fact. Is it possible to believe that God would forsake his Son at the very moment when he was most perfectly and at greatest cost doing God's will?

Read Mark 15:39-41. The utterance of the centurion—a Roman and presumably a pagan—is perhaps an echo of what he has heard of the proceedings before the high priest. But on his lips the words probably meant, as the margin

of the Revised Version gives them, "a Son of a god." To him it seemed that Jesus must have been a supernatural being. Have the women mentioned in vss. 40, 41 been previously spoken of in the Gospels? See Luke 8:1-3. What does it suggest as to the place of women in the early church that the presence of these women at the cross is mentioned in our earliest extant Gospel? What does the fact of their presence show as to the impression which Jesus had made on women as well as men and of his treatment of them? The Twelve were all men. Was this because Jesus regarded women as religiously inferior to men, or because a travelling company could not under conditions then prevailing include both men and women? Which of the two were most faithful to Jesus to the end?

Read Mark 15:42-47. Like the women mentioned in vss. 40, 41, Joseph of Arimathea was not one of the Twelve, apparently not up to this time a follower of Jesus (Matt. 27:57 should probably read: "who also became a disciple of Jesus"), but one of that rather large class of men who with genuine interest in religion and respect for Jesus are ready to do friendly deeds, but are very slow to commit themselves openly to his cause. Is he perhaps mentioned here to make it clear that there was no doubt about the body of Jesus being securely entombed? Compare the story of Matt. 27:62-66, of which this is the evident intent.

Suggestions for further study: 1. The character of the Roman government of the provinces and dependent kingdoms. 2. Jesus had more than once opposed the proposal to throw off the Roman yoke. The Roman power eventually pronounced sentence of death against him. Does the fact show that he was mistaken in opposing rebellion against it? In anticipating his death did he foresee that it would have to be by consent of the Roman power? 3. The relative responsibility of Jew and Roman for the crime of putting Jesus to death. 4. A far more important question: What were the attitudes of mind on the part of Jew or Roman that were the ultimate cause of his being put to death? Consider for example whether the following entered in, and what was their relative importance: (a) religious conservatism (unwillingness to consider views and ideas widely different from those which we hold for fear we shall have to change our opinions or our ecclesiastical relations, or our personal friendships); (b) religious indifferentism, which makes the question what is true in the field of religion seem an unimportant one; (c) love of power issuing in hostility to any person or movement which threatens by changing other people's opinions to deprive us of our leadership or ecclesiastical position, regardless of the cause of right and justice; (d) love of money and of what it buys, which in conjunction with the love of power leads one to choose the course which will leave one in undisturbed possession of his present position. 5. The existence of these various attitudes of mind today and their relative importance as hindrances to the acceptance of Christianity and its progress. 6. Jesus' attitude toward his death beforehand and his conduct in its presence. Did he desire to die as he did? If so, why? Could he have escaped death? If so, how, and why did he not escape? What did he believe would be accomplished by his death on the cross? 7. Christian thought from Paul to the present day has discussed the death of Jesus, and there have been many theories of its significance and value. Aside, as far as possible, from these theories, in the light of history as far as you know it, what do you regard as the significance of Jesus' death? What did he accomplish by his adherence to that course of duty that brought him to his death on the cross which would not have been accomplished if he had pursued a more prudential course and lived out the normal term of a human life? 8. Are the principles of conduct, adherence to which brought Jesus to a violent death, universally applicable, or did they apply only to him?

THE TRIUMPH OVER DEATH: THE REBIRTH OF FAITH

The problem presented by the record of the events by which the disciples of Jesus became convinced that, having died on the cross, he still lived and was carrying forward the work which he began before his crucifixion is a complicated one. Let us first state the general facts without at this time reading the text of the passages cited.

1. The Gospel of Mark contains in 16:1-8 the story of the women who visited the tomb on the morning of the third day after Jesus' death, and found it empty. The probability is that this Gospel originally contained a story similar to that which now stands in Matthew (28:9, 10, 16-20), which was in some way lost and after a time replaced by the present Mark 16:9-20.

2. The Matthew narrative is probably based upon the Mark narrative in its original form. It repeats the statement that Jesus will appear in Galilee (converting the young man of Mark's narrative into an angel), and in accordance with this statement records an appearance of Jesus to his disciples on a mountain in Galilee (28:16-20), inserting, however, an appearance of Jesus to the women immediately after they had received the message of the angel (28:9, 10). Matt. 28:2-4 is clearly, and 28:11-15 probably, derived from some source other than Mark.

3. Luke follows Mark in part, but departs from him in substituting for the young man of Mark's narrative two men, and for his message directing the disciples to go to Galilee, a reminder to them of what Jesus had said while he was still in Galilee (24:6). He then narrates appearances of Jesus in Judea only, seeming to place his final appearance and ascension on the same day (see 24:13, 33, 36, 44-47, 50, 51). Luke, though possessing Mark 16:1-8, evidently drew mainly from a source quite independent of Mark.

4. The Book of Acts, though from the same author as the Gospel of Luke, interjects a period of forty days (Acts 1:3) between the resurrection and the ascension, but like the Gospel places this event in Judea and says nothing of appearances in Galilee.

5. In I Cor. 15:5-8 Paul enumerates a series of appearances most of which are not mentioned in the Gospels, naming an appearance to Peter first and adding the appearance to himself as the last.

6. The Gospel of John was written, of course, after the other Gospels and long after Paul. Its narratives of the appearances of Jesus are in the main quite independent of those of the other Gospels and of Paul. In its twentieth chapter it agrees with Luke in making the appearances of Jesus in Judea; the twenty-first chapter, however, which is generally regarded as an appendix to the original Gospel, narrates an appearance in Galilee but one quite distinct from that related by Matthew.

7. Mark 16:9-20 is, as indicated above, a late summary based chiefly, it would seem, on Matthew and Luke.

These various narratives written by various persons and from different points of view show clearly that there early arose among the disciples of Jesus the conviction that Jesus had conquered death and triumphed over his enemies, not simply by surviving as a spirit awaiting resurrection at the end of the age, but by rising from the dead on the third day, the first-fruits, as Paul says, of them that

slept; and that this conviction had its starting-point and support in a series of vision experiences. This conviction once created was steadily maintained, finding support in various accounts of Jesus' appearance to various individuals and groups.

The purposes of this study do not include an attempt to construct a continuous narrative from these various reports. We shall seek rather to discover in general how the faith of the disciples in Jesus was reborn and became the seed of the Christian church. With this purpose in mind we will take up the record paragraph by paragraph.

40. THE VISION AT THE TOMB AND THE FIRST APPEARANCE OF JESUS IN JUDEA. MARK 16:1-8; MATT. 28:1-10; LUKE 24:1-12

Read Mark 16:1-8, noticing (*a*) that this incident is assigned by Mark to the early morning of the day after the Sabbath, i.e., to Sunday morning; Matthew's phrase "late on the Sabbath" seems to be taken over from Mark's reference to the bringing of the spices, which Matthew omits; (*b*) that according to this narrative, which is followed in this respect by all the other Gospels, the first event in the process of convincing the disciples that Jesus was alive was the discovery of the empty tomb. Matthew's added section, 28:11-15, is intended to support the assertion that the tomb was empty by affirming that even the Jews who did not believe in the resurrection of Jesus did not say the body was in the tomb, but that it had been taken away.

Read Matt. 28:9-10. This brief narrative, very similar to the previous report of the appearance of the young man, except in the important fact that it is now Jesus who appears, is not repeated in Luke, who instead relates that the women carried the message of the young men to the disciples and that Peter ran to the tomb and looked in. This is the more notable because this appearance is in Jerusalem, in or near which Luke places all the appearances. John at this point (20:11-18) relates the appearance of Jesus to Mary Magdalene, whom all the other evangelists name as one of the women who came to the tomb.

Read Luke 24:1-12, noticing Luke's additions to the Mark narratives, especially the visit of Peter to the empty tomb.

41. THE APPEARANCES ON THE LATTER PART OF THE RESURRECTION DAY AS REPORTED BY LUKE. LUKE 24:13-53

Read Luke 24:13-35. Notice (*a*) that Luke puts this event also on the first Sunday after the crucifixion; (*b*) that vss. 22, 23 refer back to his own vss. 3-9, and vs. 24 to vs. 12. Notice how beautifully the whole passage expresses the faith of the early church. See especially vss. 19, 20, 26, 27, 34. How impressive and moving this narrative must have been as repeated or read in Christian congregations.

Read Luke 24:36-43. Luke 24:31 suggests what John 20:19, 26 quite clearly imply, that the body of Jesus was not an ordinary material body, but appeared and disappeared in extraordinary fashion, even passing through closed doors. This narrative, however, ascribes to it emphatically the qualities of a real body, excluding the supposition that what the disciples saw was simply a ghost that had no actual reality.

Read Luke 24:44-53. Notice (*a*) the emphasis upon the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy; (*b*) on the world-wide mission, with Jerusalem as the starting-point; (*c*) the promised gift of the Spirit; (*d*) the disappearance of Jesus into heaven from the Mount of Olives, apparently at the close of the same Sunday on which the tomb was found empty; (*e*) the temple as the place of worship, indicating that the disciples of Jesus did not at the beginning detach themselves from the religious life of their fellow-Jews.

42. THE APPEARANCE IN GALILEE, AS REPORTED BY MATTHEW. MATT. 28:16-20

Read Matt. 28:16-20. Recall the words of Matt. 28:7, and observe the consistency of the Matthew narrative with itself, and the difference between it and Luke as to the place of Jesus' final commission to his disciples. On the other hand compare the two forms of the commission itself, Luke 24:47-49 and Matt. 28:18-20, and note the points of resemblance and difference. Observe that both Gospels report Jesus to have sent the disciples to all nations and to have assured them of divine power for their work.

43. THE EFFECT OF THE APPEARANCES: THEIR SIGNIFICANCE FOR FAITH

The various records of the experiences of the disciples in the days immediately following the crucifixion are alike in this, that these experiences carried to the disciples the conviction that Jesus was alive. In most of them also they were convinced that they themselves saw Jesus. In certain other respects these records differ among themselves. (*a*) As already pointed out they differ as to the place in which and the time at which Jesus appeared. The Gospel of Luke knows only appearances in Jerusalem and vicinity, places these all in one day, and closes the record with the disappearance into heaven. The Mark narrative (not including 16:9-20) speaks only of an appearance in Galilee, which because of the distance from Jerusalem to Galilee could not have occurred on that first Sunday. Matthew following Mark in the main, also narrates an appearance at the tomb on the first Sunday. Paul narrates a series of appearances without giving time or place. Acts extends the appearances over forty days, relating only the final appearance and placing this on the Mount of Olives. The Fourth Gospel, as already mentioned, narrates Jerusalem appearances on successive Sundays, in the twentieth chapter, and a Galilean appearance in the twenty-first chapter. (*b*) The narratives differ in their conception of the mode of Jesus' existence as affected by the resurrection. This point calls for a little further study.

There are intimations in the New Testament of three different conceptions of what constitutes resurrection. (1) In Jesus' answer to the question of the Sadducees (Mark 12:18-27) he evidently thinks of resurrection as the survival of the spirit after death. He repudiates the idea that the conditions of the present bodily life will continue, and bases his argument for resurrection on the nature of the fellowship between God and the human soul, which carries with it no implication of any form of bodily existence after death. (2) At the opposite extreme is the idea which has been so widely prevalent in the church (compare the words of the Apostles' Creed, "I believe in the resurrection of the body")

that resurrection, involves resuscitation of the dead body and resumption of life in it, or did so at least in Jesus' case. This view is nowhere explicitly stated in the New Testament, but it evidently underlies the narratives of the empty tomb and the narrative of Matt. 28:11-15. In the body that was buried, it is implied, Jesus rose and appeared to his disciples. The same conception underlies the narrative in Luke 24:36-42, with its affirmation, "a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have," and its account of Jesus eating in their presence. (3) Midway between these two is the conception of Paul. Expressly rejecting the idea that the body that dies will rise again, he yet feels the necessity of the spirit having a body of some kind, and holds that the spirit which is unclothed by death is re clothed in the resurrection in a spiritual body, which, distinct from the body that dies, springs from it as a plant springs from the seed. By a spiritual body Paul apparently means a body ethereal in character, not a body of flesh and blood (I Cor. 15:50), yet a body. In this kind of body he apparently believed Jesus to have appeared after his resurrection. For he speaks of Jesus as being the first-fruits of them that slept (I Cor. 15:20) and expects the resurrection to transform the bodies of his followers into the likeness of the body of his glory (Phil. 3:21). This third conception, which Paul holds, is like the second in that he believes that the spirits of the glorified will be embodied; it is like the first in that it is not concerned with what becomes of the material earthly body. In the first view the earthly body is simply left behind; it is the spirit that lives. In Paul's view the spiritual body springs from the old body, but the latter is also left behind. For him the empty tomb could have no significance, and he never refers to it. While he undoubtedly believed in the objective personal presence of Jesus as the cause of his own experience at Damascus and of the appearances to the older apostles, he did not conceive of the body of Jesus as being that material body in which he had walked in Galilee.

The Fourth Gospel seems to waver between the view of Paul, and that of the early gospel narratives. Seemingly rejecting the view of Luke's Gospel that the risen Jesus had flesh and bones, it repeatedly emphasizes his passage through closed doors, yet represents Thomas as being convinced by thrusting his hand into the spear wound. Even the first three Gospels do not consistently maintain the more materialistic view. As a whole they do not suggest a resumption of earthly life with the continuity of appearance which this would naturally involve. The appearances are brief, and come to an end, not by an ordinary departure to some other place, but by a vanishing out of sight. See Luke 24:31, 36.

These facts make it evident that that which lies behind our records is primarily a series of experiences of the disciples through which they and eventually the whole Christian community became convinced that Jesus was alive. It is vain to discuss the question in which body Jesus appeared. The New Testament furnishes no basis for any consistent statement even of the theory of the early church. Nor is it possible to discover with accuracy and certainty what lay behind the experiences of the disciples, how far the cause of them was external and objective, how far they were the product of hope and desire and deep religious feeling, and how far, when once they began, they tended to reproduce themselves in other like experiences. We know what the early church believed about these experiences, what interpretation they put upon them, and what the effect on

their faith was. Of what the experiences were themselves the result, we know only in part. The disciples had believed in Jesus, had accepted him as their teacher and leader, had confessed that he was the Christ, and looked for him to accomplish great things in which they would have a part. His death was a great shock to them not only because of their love for him but because of the blow to their hopes. Then came the experiences by which they were convinced that he was still alive and was going forward with his work. Hope and faith revived and the Christian church was born. Here we stand on solid ground, and here we discover the real value of these experiences. Through them the faith of the disciples was rekindled, as they became convinced that the Jesus whom they had accepted as the Christ, their teacher and spiritual leader, was still alive and that through him men could still come to God and obtain salvation. So the Book of Acts reports Peter as arguing to the Jews: "This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses. . . . Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified. . . . Repent ye and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For to you is the promise and to your children and to all who are afar off."

In short, the significance of these vision-experiences of the disciples was primarily that *they brought about the continuance of the spiritual leadership of Jesus*. The work that Jesus began did not cease, but went forward. The disciples, convinced that Jesus had been raised by the power of God and that he was appointed of God to be both Lord and Christ, able to explain his death as the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies respecting the Messiah, looked for him to accomplish all the works of the Messiah, including his return on the clouds. Doubtless also their belief in a future life for themselves was confirmed by their conviction that Jesus had conquered death; Paul at least associated the resurrection of Jesus and that of his followers (I Cor., chap. 15, especially vs. 20).

The faith that found confirmation or rebirth in the resurrection visions involved some hopes that were destined to disappointment, some that his followers still cherish. In every great religious movement there are mingled elements, some of which, tried by the test of centuries, prove to be of greater, others of less, value, and it is by no means always the former that are in the foreground. But the essential, abiding element of that faith, which then reborn has never perished, was the acceptance of the *spiritual leadership of Jesus*, and, through this, trust in the God whom he called Father. That faith begotten through personal companionship with Jesus, revived and confirmed by belief in his resurrection, sustained the test of opposition and persecution; it was transmitted to multitudes who had never seen Jesus; it was confirmed in them, without the visions of the apostles, by their own spiritual experiences; and, sustained by the same spiritual evidence, it has become the possession of generations.

Thus the resurrection experiences of the followers of Jesus were the hinge on which the door of faith swung. But Jesus himself was and always has been the door. Without the career of Jesus as teacher and leader, the resurrection experiences would have been impossible or without significance. Without the subsequent spiritual experience of successive generations, the resurrection experiences

alone could never have kept alive the faith in Jesus. Belief in a future life must rest eventually where Jesus rested it, in the conviction that the Heavenly Father cares for his children as individuals. The supreme significance of the resurrection experience is in the fact that at a critical moment in the history of faith, it helped to perpetrate the spiritual leadership of Jesus.

The continuance of this leadership carried with it important consequences for religion and found expression in many forms. It converted the death of Jesus from a seemingly fatal blow to faith into an argument for his lordship and a basis of the forgiveness of sin. The idea of the political messiahship of Jesus was brought to an end by his death. But the survival of the faith in his leadership gave immediate vitality to the belief in his messiahship in the apocalyptic sense, kindled the hope of his speedy return in the clouds of heaven, and sustained the courage of men amid the trials of life. That hope was disappointed; he did not return as they had expected. But faith in his leadership lived on in undiminished power. In contact with Greek thought, faith found congenial expression in the belief that Jesus was the eternal Word, through whom God had always revealed himself, and that the period of his humiliation being ended he was at the right hand of God, Son of God, Lord of all, yet present and living in the hearts of men and in his church. With the growth of a sense of the unity of the race it revived the missionary spirit of the early church and gave birth to the modern missionary enterprise now transforming the world. Rivals of Jesus have arisen without the church and within it. Bitter controversies have been waged over doctrine and ritual and organization, and not least bitter over Jesus himself. But rivals and controversies have never been able to do more than temporarily to obscure the moral and spiritual leadership of Jesus. Christianity has always been properly so called, and the church has been the church of Christ.

It is this same moral and spiritual leadership of Jesus that is the outstanding fact in modern Christianity. His profound insight into the great realities of life, his breadth of vision and balance of judgment, his simple expression of truths of immeasurable scope, the life that he lived in exemplification of the principles that he taught, his death wherein he gave supreme expression to those principles and bore testimony to his own acceptance of them, have made him to this day the moral and spiritual leader of the race.

And he still leads on. In the days of safety and easily achieved prosperity men forget him, and even his church becomes self-satisfied and self-seeking. But in the great hours of personal life and of national history, he stands out, the leader of men, the great Son of Man, and to his challenge men respond with the devotion of their lives, as he devoted his. He becomes to them as he was to his own immediate followers the revelation of God, the warrant for faith in the heavenly Father, and the challenging, inspiring ideal of their own lives.

Nor is there in sight any suggestion of a time when that leadership shall have been superseded and left behind. Under his influence great social wrongs have been done away, new standards of life and conduct have been set and widely adopted, the story of his life and teaching have been carried to almost every nation under heaven, devoted and loyal followers have been won in every race, and Christian churches founded under every sky. But nowhere, even in the most Christian of lands, has Jesus been surpassed or equaled or his leadership become

no longer necessary. Still as in the centuries past, in a sense more than ever before, men turn back to the Gospels and find in Jesus of Nazareth, Galilean peasant, unique Son of Man, strong Son of God, the revelation of the Heavenly Father, the ideal of human life, the challenge of the race.

Suggestions for further study: 1. Over how long a period do the Synoptic Gospels imply that the work of Jesus as a public teacher extended? 2. What was the method of Jesus' teaching? Did he establish a school and enrol pupils? Did he deliver set lectures? 3. How did he gather disciples? Did he require subscription to a creed, an oath of allegiance, formal initiation into a society? 4. What measures did he undertake to secure the perpetuation of his teaching and the spread of his ideas? Did he write or publish books? Did he organize a cult? 5. What was his attitude toward the current religious teachings of his day? Did he follow the generally accepted teachers, or oppose all that they taught, or occupy an independent position, judging for himself, accepting what approved itself to him, and rejecting what seemed to him false? 6. What was his attitude toward the Old Testament? Did he draw a sharp line between Scripture and tradition, rejecting all the latter and accepting all the former, or was his attitude discriminative in respect to both? 7. What was his attitude (a) toward the various types of messianic expectation that were current in his day? (b) toward the legalism of the Pharisees? (c) toward the militarism of the Zealots? (d) toward the materialism and worldliness of the Sadducees? (e) toward the common people with their sins and their failures? 8. Was Jesus himself a religious man? Did he have a religion of his own? If so, what were its elements and characteristics? 9. What were the great outstanding teachings of Jesus? What did he believe about God? What value did he give to men as compared with institutions and material things? Did he reduce religion and morals to central principles or expand them into a multitude of rules? Did he sum up all duty in one great principle? If so, what was it? 10. In which of his teachings did he disagree with orthodox Pharisaism? In which did he agree with it? 11. In the end both Pharisees and Sadducees united in bringing about Jesus' death. Which of them opposed him first? Why were the Pharisees opposed to him? What made them wish to put him to death? Why did the Sadducees oppose him? 12. What part did the Roman authorities play in his death? 13. Could Jesus have avoided a violent death, and lived out his natural period of life as a teacher? If so, how? 14. What would have been the effect of such a course of action (a) on his own character? (b) On his disciples? (c) On the future history of the world? 15. Did Jesus regard his death as a duty imposed upon him by arbitrary command, or as demanded by fidelity to a moral principle? If the latter, what was that principle, and did he regard it as applicable to himself only or to all men? 16. What happened to the faith of Jesus' disciples in him after his crucifixion? 17. How did they become convinced that Jesus was still living? 18. What effect did this conviction have on their belief about Jesus and their plans and conduct? 19. What fact or combination of facts gives to the career of Jesus its significance in human history? 20. What place does Jesus occupy among the forces of the world today?

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW (STUDY III)

1. What seems to you most significant in the story of the centurion's servant?
2. What indications have we of the estimate in which John the Baptist held Jesus?
3. What had happened to John?
4. Tell in your own words the story of John's messengers and Jesus' response.
5. What did the people who accompanied Jesus upon the first evangelistic tour probably think of him?
6. Describe the party and its methods.

7. What attitude did Jesus' relatives take concerning him and his work?
8. How would you describe Jesus' attitude toward his family?
9. What is a parable?
10. Name several reasons why Jesus might present truth in a parable with more lasting impression than if he had baldly stated the same truth.
11. Name several of the more important of Jesus' nature parables.
12. Tell what you can about the belief concerning and the treatment of "demoniacs" in New Testament times.
13. What was Jesus' attitude toward these sufferers and how did he treat them?
14. Which do you regard as the more important—Jesus' sympathy and helpfulness or his healing power?
15. If one were to feel and to express similar sympathy today would he have a greater measure of healing power? Why?
16. Was it the words or works of Jesus which first attracted attention?
17. Do acts or words best express sympathy?
18. Which would most quickly settle our present labor problems—power or mutual sympathy?
19. Which would help most to restore international order?
20. Which did Jesus think most important—his power or his teaching?

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW (STUDY IV)

1. What was the significance of the instructions given by Jesus to his disciples who were sent out to preach, as described in Mark, chap. 6?
2. What effect might the death of John the Baptist have had upon the spirit and work of Jesus and his disciples?
3. What is the most significant thing concerning Jesus which can be learned from the story of the feeding of the five thousand?
4. Jesus appreciated the value of food. How did this appreciation differ from the ideas of the Pharisees concerning foods?
5. Why did all these food-ceremonial laws seem foolish to Jesus?
6. Why did not the fact that these laws were in the Old Testament command his allegiance to them?
7. What is it that Jesus says defiles character?
8. How did Jesus decide as to the value of Old Testament regulations?
9. How did Jesus treat gentile people on his northern journey?
10. How did Peter express himself concerning Jesus at this time?
11. What was his idea of the Christ and his mission?
12. What elements in the idea of messiahship would naturally appeal to Jesus?
13. By what sort of conversation did Jesus follow the declaration of Peter?
14. Was this a contradiction of Peter's statement?
15. Express the meaning of Jesus' statement in Mark 8:34-37.
16. Do you think that Jesus thought his death would mean the defeat of the Kingdom of God which he had undertaken to establish? Give reasons.
17. What part did the transfiguration probably play in encouraging the disciples of Jesus at this dangerous juncture?
18. Did the disciples believe that Jesus was soon to die? Give reasons.
19. Tell the story of the strolling exorcist who used Jesus' name as magic. How does this story reveal the tolerant spirit of Jesus?
20. Do followers of Jesus as a class exhibit equal tolerance today? Why?

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW (STUDY V)

1. How do you account for the existence of section 19:21-28 in Luke when it is not in Mark?
2. Describe the spirit that Jesus deemed necessary in those who would work with him in spreading abroad his message.

3. What responsibility does Jesus place upon those who having heard the truth reject it?
4. How does the principle of Luke 10:16 apply to modern times?
5. Why in the story of the Good Samaritan did Jesus choose as his lay figures (a) a priest, (b) a Samaritan?
6. What did Jesus seem to believe about prayer: (a) what one may pray for? (b) what God would do if his children ask for things not good for them?
7. What life lessons did Jesus draw from the comfort of the birds and the beauty of the flowers?
8. What did he warn his disciples to fear?
9. What in modern life might represent some of these destructive forces to be feared?
10. What attitude toward preparedness for the future and material necessity should the follower of Jesus take today?
11. What did Jesus mean by "interpreting the times"?
12. If we would today rightly interpret the times what fundamental principle of Jesus' idea of God would he insist that we use in that interpretation?
13. What relation has the rejection of these principles by the Jews to their national history?
14. Is there any likelihood that such neglect or rejection might have similar effect on our own national history? Illustrate your reply by facts from American history.
15. Why was Jesus on his way to Jerusalem?
16. What does he mean by the Kingdom of God?
17. How did he believe that it was to grow in the world?
18. What principles of the forgiveness of God are set forth in the stories of Luke, chapter 15?
19. Would forgiven people necessarily become members of the Kingdom?
20. Did Jesus believe that the Kingdom would come slowly or rapidly, noisily or quietly, without hindrance or after triumphing over obstacles? What obstacles do you see to its progress at the present time?

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW (STUDY VI)

1. Name some of the possible reasons for the manner of Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem as described in Mark 11:1-11.
2. What was the significance of the story of the fig tree?
3. With what rights did the traffic in the temple court interfere?
4. Did Jesus' action in driving out this traffic mean that he would regard places as holy in themselves, such as modern churches?
5. What did Jesus regard as most important, assent to the truth of a message or conduct according to it?
6. What is the underlying significance of the parables of the Vineyard and the Marriage Feast?
7. How far has this forecast of the future of the Jewish nation been realized in subsequent history?
8. Can a nation sin? If so, what may be some of America's sins?
9. What questions were put to Jesus by the Jews in Mark 12:13-37, and what mental and spiritual characteristics of Jesus appear in his answers?
10. How did Jesus distinguish between essentials and nonessentials in religion?
11. What is the substance of Jesus' criticism of the conduct of the scribes and Pharisees?
12. How did they "shut the Kingdom of Heaven against men"?
13. Are our churches organized today in such a way that any are kept out who ought to be in?
14. Do any people voluntarily stay out because of the attitude of those who are in?

15. Why should people "join" the church? Give three reasons.
16. Was Jesus more concerned for his own personal future or for that of the world?
17. What is the chief significance of Matt. 25:14-30?
18. What probably concerned Jesus most, the time and manner, or the basis of judgment, as described in Matt. 25:31-46?
19. Was he more concerned with a definite program of future events or in fundamental principles which would affect those events?
20. In what ways has Jesus become more real to you through these studies thus far?