

# 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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# 27

## CONTINUATION OF THE PEREAN AND JUDEAN MINISTRY IN THE HOUSE OF ONE OF THE CHIEF PHARISEES [950]

On a certain Sabbath Jesus was a guest at the house of a prominent Pharisee. A man afflicted with dropsy was there; he may have come with the hope of receiving a blessing, or possibly his presence had been planned by the host or others as a means of tempting Jesus to work a miracle on the holy day. The exercise of our Lord's healing power was at least thought of if not openly intimated or suggested, for we read that **"Jesus answering spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?"**[951] No one ventured to reply. Jesus forthwith healed the man; then He turned to the assembled company and asked: **"Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath day?"**[952] The learned expositors of the law remained prudently silent.

Observing the eager activity of the Pharisee's guests in securing for themselves prominent places at table, Jesus instructed them in a matter of good manners, pointing out not only the propriety but the advantage of decent self-restraint. An invited guest should not select for himself the seat of honor, for some one more distinguished than he may come, and the host would say: "Give this man place." Better is it to take a lower seat, then possibly the lord of the feast may say: "Friend, go up higher." The moral follows: **"For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."**[953]

This festive gathering at the house of the chief Pharisee included persons of prominence and note, rich men and officials, leading Pharisees, renowned scholars, famous rabbis and the like. Looking over the distinguished company, Jesus said: **"When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just."** This bit of wholesome advice was construed as a reproof; and someone attempted to relieve the embarrassing situation by exclaiming: **"Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God."**[954] The remark was an allusion to the great festival, which according to Jewish traditionalism

was to be a feature of signal importance in the Messianic dispensation. Jesus promptly turned the circumstance to good account by basing thereon the profoundly significant *Parable of the Great Supper*:

**"A certain man made a great supper, and bade many: And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper."**[955]

The story implies that invitations had been given sufficiently early to the chosen and prospective guests; then on the day of the feast a messenger was sent to notify them again, as was the custom of the time. Though called a supper, the meal was to be a sumptuous one; moreover, the principal meal of the day was commonly spoken of as supper. One man after another declined to attend, one saying: "I pray thee have me excused"; another: "I cannot come." The matters that engaged the time and attention of those who had been bidden, or as we would say, invited, to the feast, were not of themselves discreditable, far less sinful; but to arbitrarily allow personal affairs to annul an honorable engagement once accepted was to manifest discourtesy, disrespect and practical insult toward the provider of the feast. The man who had bought a field could have deferred the inspection; he who had just purchased cattle could have waited a day to try them under the yoke; and the newly married man could have left his bride and his friends for the period of the supper that he had promised to attend. Plainly none of these people wanted to be present. The master of the house was justly angry. His command to bring in the poor and the maimed, the halt and the blind from the city streets must have appealed to those who listened to our Lord's recital as a reminiscence of His counsel given a few minutes before, concerning the kind of guests a rich man could invite with profit to his soul. The second sending out of the servant, this time into the highways and hedges outside the city walls, to bring in even the country poor, indicated boundless benevolence and firm determination on the householder's part.

Explication of the parable was left to the learned men to whom the story was addressed. Surely some of them would fathom its meaning, in part at least. The covenant people, Israel, were the specially invited guests. They had been bidden long enough aforetime, and by their own profession as the Lord's own had agreed to be partakers of the feast.

When all was ready, on the appointed day, they were severally summoned by the Messenger who had been sent by the Father; He was even then in their midst. But the cares of riches, the allurements of material things, and the pleasures of social and domestic life had engrossed them; and they prayed to be excused or irreverently declared they could not or would not come. Then the gladsome invitation was to be carried to the Gentiles, who were looked upon as spiritually poor, maimed, halt, and blind. And later, even the pagans beyond the walls, strangers in the gates of the holy city, would be bidden to the supper. These, surprised at the unexpected summons, would hesitate, until by gentle urging and effective assurance that they were really included among the bidden guests, they would feel themselves constrained or compelled to come. The possibility of some of the discourteous ones arriving later, after they had attended to their more absorbing affairs, is indicated in the Lord's closing words: "For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper."

## COUNTING THE COST [956]

As had been in Galilee, so was it in Perea and Judea – great multitudes attended the Master whenever He appeared in public. When once a scribe has presented himself as a disciple, offering to follow wherever the Master led, Jesus had indicated the self-denial, privation and suffering incident to devoted service, with the result that the man's enthusiasm was soon spent.[957] So now to the eager multitude Jesus applied a test of sincerity. He would have only genuine disciples, not enthusiasts of a day, ready to desert His cause when effort and sacrifice were most needed. Thus did He sift the people: "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple." Literal hatred toward one's family was not specified as a condition of discipleship; indeed a man who indulges hatred or any other evil passion is a subject for repentance and reformation. The preeminence of duty toward God over personal or family demands on the part of one who had assumed the obligations of a disciple was the precept.[958]

As Jesus pointed out, it is good common-sense to count well the cost before one enters upon a great undertaking, even in ordinary affairs. A man who wishes to build, say a tower or a house, tries to determine, before he begins the work, what the expense will be; otherwise he may be able to do no more than lay the foundation; then, not only will he find himself a loser, for the unfinished structure will be of no service, but people may laugh at his lack of prudent forethought. So also a king, finding his realm menaced by hostile invaders, does not rush into battle recklessly; he first tries to ascertain the strength of the enemy's forces; and then, if the odds against him be too great, he sends an embassy to treat for peace. "So likewise," said Jesus to the people around Him, "whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my

**disciple.** " All who entered His service would be expected to maintain their self-sacrificing devotion. He wanted no disciples who would become like salt that had spoiled, unsavory and useless. "**He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.**"[959]

## **SALVATION FOR "PUBLICANS AND SINNERS" – ILLUSTRATIVE PARABLES [960]**

The Pharisees in Galilee had intolerantly criticized Jesus because of His friendly and helpful ministry among the publicans and their associates, who were disparagingly classed together as "publicans and sinners." [961] He had replied to these uncharitable aspersions by saying that a physician is most needed by them that are sick, and that He had come to call sinners to repentance. The Judean Pharisees raised a similar complaint, and were particularly virulent when they saw that "**all the publicans and sinners**" drew near to hear Him. He met their murmurs by presenting a number of parables, designed to show the incumbent duty of trying to recover the lost, and the joy of success in such God-like endeavor. The first of the series of parables was that of the Lost Sheep; this we have considered in connection with its earlier delivery in the course of instruction to the disciples in Galilee. [962] Its application in the present instance, however, is somewhat different from that of its former presentation. The lesson on this later occasion was directed to the self-seeking Pharisees and scribes who personified the theocracy, and whose bounden duty it should have been to care for the strayed and the lost. If the "publicans and sinners," whom these ecclesiasts so generally contemned, were nearly as bad as they were represented to be, if they were men who had broken through the close-hedged path of the law and had become in a measure apostate, they were the ones toward whom the helping hand of missionary service could be best extended. In no instance of Pharisaic slur upon, or open denunciation of, these "publicans and sinners," do we find Jesus defending their alleged evil ways; His attitude toward these spiritually sick folk was that of a devoted physician: His concern over these strayed sheep was that of a loving shepherd whose chief desire was to find them out and bring them back to the fold. This neither the theocracy as a system nor its officials as individual ministers even attempted to do. The shepherd, on finding the sheep that was lost, thinks not at the time of reprimand or punishment; on the contrary, "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."

A direct application of the parable appears in the Lord's concise address to the Pharisees and scribes: "**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.**" Were they the ninety and nine, who, by self-estimation had strayed not, being "just persons, which need no repentance?" Some readers say they catch this note of just sarcasm in the Master's concluding words. In the earlier part of the story, the Lord Himself appears as the solicitous Shepherd, and by plain implication His example

is such as the theocratic leaders ought to emulate. Such a conception puts the Pharisees and scribes in the position of shepherds rather than of sheep. Both explications are tenable; and each is of value as portraying the status and duty of professing servants of the Master in all ages.

Without break in the narrative, the Lord passed from the story of the lost sheep to the Parable of the Lost Coin.

**"Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost. Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."**

Between this parable and that of the lost sheep there are certain notable differences, though the lesson in each is in general the same. The sheep had strayed by its own volition; the coin<sup>[963]</sup> had been dropped, and so was lost as a result of inattention or culpable carelessness on the part of its owner. The woman, discovering her loss institutes a diligent search; she sweeps the house, and perhaps learns of dirty corners, dusty recesses, cobwebby nooks, to which she had been oblivious in her self-complacency as an outwardly clean and conventional housewife. Her search is rewarded by the recovery of the lost piece, and is incidentally beneficial in the cleansing of her house. Her joy is like that of the shepherd wending his way homeward with the sheep upon his shoulders – once lost but now regained.

The woman who by lack of care lost the precious piece may be taken to represent the theocracy of the time, and the Church as an institution in any dispensational period; then the pieces of silver, every one a genuine coin of the realm, bearing the image of the great King, are the souls committed to the care of the Church; and the lost piece symbolizes the souls that are neglected and, for a time at least, lost sight of, by the authorized ministers of the Gospel of Christ. These cogent illustrations were followed by one yet richer in imagery and more impressively elaborate in detail. It is the never to be forgotten Parable of the Prodigal Son.<sup>[964]</sup>

**"And he said, A certain man had two sons; And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and**

to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry. Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard musick and dancing. And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound. And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and intreated him. And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf. And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found."

The demand of the younger son for a portion of the patrimony even during his father's lifetime, is an instance of deliberate and unfilial desertion; the duties of family cooperation had grown distasteful to him, and the wholesome discipline of the home had become irksome. He was determined to break away from all home ties, forgetful of what home had done for him and the debt of gratitude and duty by which he was morally bound. He went into a far country, and, as he thought, beyond the reach of the father's directing influence. He had his season of riotous living, of unrestrained indulgence and evil pleasure, through it all wasting his strength of body and mind, and squandering his father's substance; for what he had received had been given as a concession and not as the granting of any legal or just demand. Adversity came upon him, and proved to be a more effective minister for good than pleasure had been. He was reduced to the lowest and most menial service, that of herding swine, which occupation, to a Jew, was the extreme of degradation. Suffering brought him to himself. He, the son of honorable parentage, was feeding pigs and eating with them, while even the hired servants at home had good food in plenty and to spare. He realized not alone his abject foolishness in leaving his father's well-spread table to batten with hogs, but the unrighteousness of his selfish desertion; he was not only remorseful but repentant. He had sinned against his father and against God; he would return, confess his sin, and ask, not to be reinstated as a son, but to be allowed to work as a hired servant. Having resolved he delayed not, but immediately set out to find his long way back to home and father.

The father became aware of the prodigal's approach and hastened to meet him. Without a word of condemnation, the loving parent embraced and kissed the wayward but now penitent boy, who, overcome by this undeserved affection, humbly acknowledged his error, and sorrowfully confessed that he was not worthy to be known as his father's son. It is noteworthy that in his contrite confession he did not ask to be accepted as a hired servant as he had resolved to do; the father's joy was too sacred to be thus marred, he would please his father best by placing himself unreservedly at that father's disposal. The rough garb of poverty was discarded for the best robe; a ring was placed on his finger as a mark of reinstatement; shoes told of restored sonship, not of employment as a hired servant. The father's glad heart could express itself only in acts of abundant kindness; a feast was made ready; for was not the son, once counted as dead now alive? Had not the lost been found again?

So far the story sustains a relation of close analogy to the two parables that preceded it in the same discourse; the part following introduces another important symbolism. No one had complained at the recovery of the stray sheep nor at the finding of the lost coin; friends had rejoiced with the finder in each case. But the father's happiness at the return of the prodigal was interrupted by the grumbling protest of the elder son. He, on approaching the house, had observed the evidences of festal joy; and, instead of entering as was his right, had inquired of one of the servants as to the cause of the unusual rejoicing. On learning that his brother had returned and that the father had prepared a festival in honor of the event, this elder son grew angry, and churlishly refused to enter the house even after his father had come out and entreated him. He cited his own faithfulness and devotion to the routine labor of the farm, to which claim of excellence the father did not demur; but the son and heir reproached his father for having failed to give him so much as a kid with which to make merry with his friends; while now that the wayward and spendthrift son had come back the father had killed for him even the fatted calf. There is significance in the elder one's designation of the penitent as "this thy son," rather than "my brother." The elder son, deafened by selfish anger, refused to hear aright the affectionate assurance; "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine," and with heart hardened by unbrotherly resentment he stood unmoved by the emotional and loving outburst, "this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found."

We are not justified in extolling the virtue of repentance on the part of the prodigal above the faithful, plodding service of his brother, who had remained at home, true to the duties required of him. The devoted son was the heir; the father did not disparage his worth, nor deny his deserts. His displeasure over the rejoicing incident to the return of his wayward brother was an exhibition of illiberality and narrowness; but of the two brothers the elder was the more faithful, whatever his minor defects may have been. The particular point emphasized in the Lord's lesson, however, had to do with his uncharitable and selfish weaknesses.

Pharisees and scribes, to whom this masterpiece of illustrative incident was delivered, must have taken to themselves its personal application. They were typified by the elder son, laboriously attentive to routine, methodically plodding by rule and rote in the multifarious labors of the field, without interest except that of self, and all unwilling to welcome a repentant publican or a returned sinner. From all such they were estranged; such a one might be to the indulgent and forgiving Father, "this thy son," but never to them, a brother. They cared not who or how many were lost, so long as they were undisturbed in heirship and possession by the return of penitent prodigals. But the parable was not for them alone; it is a living perennial yielding the fruit of wholesome doctrine and soul-sustaining nourishment for all time. Not a word appears in condonation or excuse for the prodigal's sin; upon that the Father could not look with the least degree of allowance;[965] but over that sinner's repentance and contrition of soul, God and the household of heaven rejoiced.

The three parables which appear in the scriptural record as parts of a continuous discourse, are as one in portraying the joy that abounds in heaven over the recovery of a soul once numbered among the lost, whether that soul be best symbolized by a sheep that had wandered afar, a coin that had dropped out of sight through the custodian's neglect, or a son who would deliberately sever himself from home and heaven. There is no justification for the inference that a repentant sinner is to be given precedence, over a righteous soul who has resisted sin; were such the way of God, then Christ, the one sinless Man, would be surpassed in the Father's esteem by regenerate offenders. Unqualifiedly offensive as is sin, the sinner is yet precious in the Father's eyes, because of the possibility of his repentance and return to righteousness. The loss of a soul is a very real and a very great loss to God. He is pained and grieved thereby, for it is His will that not one should perish.[966]

## DISCIPLES INSTRUCTED BY PARABLE

Addressing Himself more directly to the disciples present, who on this occasion probably comprised in addition to the apostles, many believers, including even some of the publicans, Jesus spake the Parable of the Unrighteous Steward.[967]

**"And he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods. And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward. Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed. I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses. So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord? And he said, An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and**

**sit down quickly, and write fifty. Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore. And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light."**

The three preceding parables show forth their lessons through the relationship of close analogy and intimate similarities; this one teaches rather by its contrast of situations. The steward in the story was the duly authorized agent of his employer, holding what we would call the power-of-attorney to act in his master's name.[968] He was called to account because a report of his wastefulness and lack of care had reached the master's ears. The steward did not deny his guilt, and forthwith he received notice of dismissal. Considerable time would be required for making up his accounts preparatory to turning the stewardship over to his successor. This interval, during which he remained in authority, he determined to use so far as possible to his own advantage, even though he wrought further injustice to his master's interests. He contemplated the condition of dependence in which he would soon find himself. Through unthrift and extravagance he had failed to lay by any store from his earnings; he had wasted his own and his lord's substance. He felt that he was unfit for hard manual labor; and he would be ashamed to beg, particularly in the community in which he had been a lavish spender and a man of influence. With the desire to put others under some obligation to himself so that when he was deposed he could the more effectively appeal to them, he called his lord's debtors and authorized them to change their bonds, bills of sale, or notes of hand, so as to show a greatly decreased indebtedness. Without doubt these acts were unrighteous; he defrauded his employer, and enriched the debtors through whom he hoped to be benefited. Most of us are surprised to know that the master, learning what his far-seeing though selfish and dishonest steward had done, condoned the offense and actually commended him for his foresight, "because he had done wisely" as our version reads, or "because he had done prudently" as many scholars aver to be the better rendering.

In pointing the moral of the parable Jesus said:[969] **"For the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light. And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations."** Our Lord's purpose was to show the contrast between the care, thoughtfulness, and devotion of men engaged in the money-making affairs of earth, and the half hearted ways of many who are professedly striving after spiritual riches. Worldly-minded men do not neglect provision for their future years, and often are sinfully eager to amass plenty; while the "children of light," or those who believe spiritual wealth to be above all earthly possessions, are less energetic, prudent, or wise. By "**mammon of unrighteousness**" we may understand material wealth or worldly things. While far inferior to the treasures of heaven, money or that which it represents may be the means of accomplishing good, and of furthering the purposes of

God. Our Lord's admonition was to utilize "mammon" in good works, while it lasted, for some day it shall fail, and only the results achieved through its use shall endure.[970] If the wicked steward, when cast out from his master's house because of unworthiness, might hope to be received into the homes of these whom he had favored, how much more confidently may they who are genuinely devoted to the right hope to be received into the everlasting mansions of God! Such seems to be part of the lesson.

It was not the steward's dishonesty that was extolled; his prudence and foresight were commended, however; for while he misapplied his master's substance, he gave relief to the debtors; and in so doing he did not exceed his legal powers, for he was still steward though he was morally guilty of malfeasance. The lesson may be summed up in this wise: Make such use of your wealth as shall insure you friends hereafter. Be diligent; for the day in which you can use your earthly riches will soon pass. Take a lesson from even the dishonest and the evil; if they are so prudent as to provide for the only future they think of, how much more should you, who believe in an eternal future, provide therefore! If you have not learned wisdom and prudence in the use of "unrighteous mammon," how can you be trusted with the more enduring riches? If you have not learned how to use properly the wealth of another, which has been committed to you as steward, how can you expect to be successful in the handling of great wealth should such be given you as your own? Emulate the unjust steward and the lovers of mammon, not in their dishonesty, cupidity, and miserly hoarding of the wealth that is at best but transitory, but in their zeal, forethought, and provision for the future. Moreover, let not wealth become your master; keep it to its place as a servant, for, "No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

## **DERISION OF THE PHARISEES MET; ANOTHER ILLUSTRATIVE PARABLES [971]**

The Pharisees, who were covetous, or more precisely stated, who were lovers of money,[972] overheard the foregoing instructions to the disciples, and openly scoffed at the Teacher and the lesson. What did this Galilean, who owned nothing but the clothes He wore, know about money or the best way of administering wealth? Our Lord's reply to their words of derision was a further condemnation. They knew all the tricks of the business-world, and could outdo the unrighteous steward in crafty manipulation; and yet so successfully could they justify themselves before men as to be outwardly honest and straightforward; furthermore, they made ostentatious display of a certain type of simplicity, plainness, and self-denial, in which external observances they asserted superiority over the luxury-loving Sadducees; they had grown arrogantly proud of their humility, but God knew their hearts, and the traits and practices they most esteemed were an abomination in His sight. They posed as custodians of the law and expounders of the prophets. The "law and the prophets" had been in force until the Baptist's time,

since which the gospel of the kingdom had been preached, and people were eager to enter it[973] though the theocracy strove mightily to prevent. The law had not been invalidated; easier were it that heaven and earth pass away than that one tittle of the law fail of fulfillment;[974] yet those Pharisees and scribes had tried to nullify the law. In the matter of divorce, for example, they, by their unlawful additions and false interpretations, had condoned even the sin of adultery.

The Master gave as a further lesson the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus:

**"There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham; but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."**[975]

The afflicted beggar is honored with a name; the other is designated simply as "a certain rich man."[976] The two are presented as the extremes of contrast between wealth and destitution. The rich man was clothed in the costliest attire, purple and fine linen; and his every-day fare was a sumptuous feast. Lazarus had been brought to the gates of the rich man's palace, and there left, a helpless mendicant, his body covered with sores. The rich man was attended by servitors ready to gratify his slightest desire; the poor beggar at his gates had neither companions nor attendants except the dogs, which like himself waited for the refuse from the rich man's table. Such is the picture of the two in life. An abrupt change of scene brings into view the same two on the far side of the veil that hangs between the here and the hereafter. Lazarus died; no mention is made of his funeral; his festering body was probably thrown into a pauper's grave; but angels bore his immortal spirit into Paradise, the resting place of the blessed and commonly known in the figurative lore of the rabbis as Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died; his

burial was doubtless an elaborate affair, but we read not of any angelic escort receiving his spirit. In hell he lifted up his eyes and saw, afar, Lazarus at peace in the abode of Abraham.

As a Jew the man had often boasted of having Abraham for his father; and now the wretched spirit appealed to the patriarch of his race by the paternal address, "Father Abraham," and asked only the boon of a single drop of water to be placed on his parched tongue; this he prayed that Lazarus, the erstwhile beggar, might bring. The reply throws light on certain conditions existing in the spirit world, though as in the use of parables generally, the presentation is largely figurative. Addressing the poor tormented spirit as "Son," Abraham reminded him of all the good things he had kept for himself on earth, whilst Lazarus had lain a suffering, neglected beggar at his gates; now by the operation of divine law, Lazarus had received recompense, and he, retribution. Moreover, to grant his pitiful request was impossible, for between the abode of the righteous where Lazarus rested and that of the wicked where he suffered "**there is a great gulf fixed,**" and passage between the two is interdicted. The next request of the miserable sufferer was not wholly selfish; in his anguish he remembered those from whom he had been separated by death, fain would he save his brothers from the fate he had met; and he prayed that Lazarus be sent back to earth to visit the ancestral home, and warn those selfish, pleasure-seeking, and yet mortal brothers, of the awful doom awaiting them except they would repent and reform. There may have been in this petition an insinuation that had he been sufficiently warned he would have done better, and would have escaped the torment. To the reminder that they had the words of Moses and the prophets, which they should obey, he replied that if one went to them from the dead they would surely repent. Abraham answered that if they would not heed Moses and the prophets neither would "they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

In any attempt to interpret the parable as a whole or definitely apply any of its parts, we should bear in mind that it was addressed to the Pharisees as an instructive rebuke for the derision and scorn with which they had received the Lord's warning concerning the dangers attending servitude to mammon. Jesus employed Jewish metaphors, and the imagery of the parable is such as would most directly appeal to the official expounders of Moses and the prophets. While as a practice it would be critically unfair to deduce doctrinal principles from parabolic incidents, we cannot admit that Christ would teach falsely even in parable; and therefore we accept as true the portrayal of conditions in the world of the disembodied. That righteous and unrighteous dwell apart during the interval between death and resurrection is clear. Paradise, or as the Jews like to designate that blessed abode, "Abraham's bosom," is not the place of final glory, any more than the hell to which the rich man's spirit was consigned is the final habitation of the condemned.[977] To that preliminary or intermediate state, however, men's works do follow them;[978] and the dead shall surely find that their abode is that for which they have qualified themselves while in the flesh.

The rich man's fate was not the effect of riches, nor was the rest into which Lazarus entered the resultant of poverty. Failure to use his wealth aright, and selfish satisfaction with the sensuous enjoyment of earthly things to the exclusion of all concern for the needs or privations of his fellows, brought the one under condemnation; while patience in suffering, faith in God and such righteous life as is implied though not expressed, insured happiness to the other. The proud self-sufficiency of the rich man, who lacked nothing that wealth could furnish, and who kept aloof from the needy and suffering, was his besetting sin. The aloofness of the Pharisees, on which indeed they prided themselves, as their very name, signifying "separatists," expressed, was thus condemned. The parable teaches the continuation of individual existence after death, and the relation of cause to effect between the life one leads in mortality and the state awaiting him beyond.

## UNPROFITABLE SERVANTS [979]

From the Pharisees, Jesus turned to His disciples and admonished them to diligence. Having cautioned them against unguarded utterances or actions at which others might take offense, He proceeded to impress the absolute necessity of unselfish devotion, toleration and forgiveness. The apostles, realizing the whole-souled service required of them, implored the Lord, saying: "**Increase our faith.**" They were shown that faith was less fitly reckoned in terms of quantity than by test of quality; and the analogy of the mustard seed was again invoked. "**And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you.**"[980] Their faith could best be gaged by obedience and untiring service.

This was emphasized by the Parable of the Unprofitable Servants.

**"But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat? And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink? Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not. So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do."**

The servant might well feel that after a day's work in the field he is entitled to rest; but on reaching the house he finds other demands made upon him. The master has a right to the servant's time and attention; such was among the conditions under which the servant had been engaged; and while his employer might thank him or give some substantial reward, the servant cannot demand such recompense. So the apostles, who had given themselves entirely up to their Master's service, were not to hesitate nor

demur, whatever the effort or sacrifice required. The best they could do would be no more than their duty required; and, without regard to the Master's estimate of their worth, they were to account themselves as unprofitable servants.[981]

### TEN LEPERS HEALED [982]

In the course of His journey toward Jerusalem Jesus "passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee." Ten men afflicted with leprosy approached, probably they came as near as the law permitted, yet they were afar off. These men were of mixed nationality; the plague under which they suffered in common had made them companions in distress. They cried aloud "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." The Lord answered: "Go shew yourselves unto the priests."[983] This instruction implied their ultimate healing; obedience would be the test of their faith. None who had been leprous could be lawfully restored to community life until pronounced clean by a priest. The stricken ten hastened to obey the Lord's command, "and it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed."[984] One of the ten turned back, and with loud voice glorified God; then he prostrated himself at the feet of Christ, giving thanks. We are told that the grateful one was a Samaritan, from which we infer that some or all of the others were Jews. Pained over the lack of gratitude on the part of the nine, Jesus exclaimed: **"Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that return to give glory to God, save this stranger."** And to the cleansed Samaritan, still worshipping at His feet, the Lord said: "Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole." Doubtless the nine who came not back were obedient to the strict letter of the Lord's command; for He had told them to go to the priests; but their lack of gratitude and their failure to acknowledge the power of God in their restoration stand in unfavorable contrast with the spirit of the one; and he was a Samaritan. The occurrence must have impressed the apostles as another evidence of acceptability and possible excellence on the part of aliens, to the disparagement of Jewish claims of superiority irrespective of merit.

### THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN [985]

**"And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others:**

**"Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."**

We are expressly told that this parable was given for the benefit of certain ones who trusted in their self-righteousness as an assurance of justification before God. It was not addressed to the Pharisees nor to the publicans specifically. The two characters are types of widely separated classes. There may have been much of the Pharisaic spirit of self-complacency among the disciples and some of it even among the Twelve. A Pharisee and a publican went up to the temple to pray. The Pharisee prayed "with himself"; his words can hardly be construed as a prayer to God. That he stood while praying was not an impropriety, for the standing attitude was usual in prayer; the publican also stood. The Pharisee thanked God that he was so much better than other men; he was true to his class, a separatist who looked with disdain upon all who were not like him. That he was not like "this publican" was made a point of special thanksgiving. His boast, that he fasted twice a week and gave tithes of all that he possessed, was a specification of worthiness above what was required by the law as then administered; he thus implied that God was his debtor.[986] The publican, standing afar off, was so oppressed by his consciousness of sin and his absolute need of divine help, that he cast down his eyes and smote upon his breast, craving mercy as a penitent sinner. The Pharisee departed, justified in his own conscience and before man, prouder than ever; the other went down to his house justified before God though still a despised publican. The parable is applicable to all men; its moral was summed up in a repetition of our Lord's words spoken in the house of the chief Pharisee: **"For every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."**[987]

## ON MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE [988]

While wending His way by short stages toward Jerusalem, and while still "beyond" or on "the farther side" of Jordan, and therefore in Perea territory, Jesus was met by a body of Pharisees, who had come with the deliberate purpose of inciting Him to say or do something on which they could base an accusation. The question they had agreed to submit related to marriage and divorce, and no subject had been more vehemently contested in their own schools and among their own rabbis.[989] The crafty questioners may have hoped that Jesus would denounce the adulterous state in which Herod Antipas was then living, and so bring upon Himself the fury of Herodias, to which the Baptist had already died a victim. **"Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?"** they asked. Jesus cited the original and eternal law of God in the matter; and indicated the only rational conclusion to be drawn therefrom: "Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."[990] God had provided for honorable marriage, and had made the relation between husband and wife paramount even to that of children to parents; the severing of such a union was an

invention of man, not a command of God. The Pharisees had a ready rejoinder: "Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?" Be it remembered that Moses had not commanded divorce, but had required that in case a man should separate from his wife he give her a bill of divorcement.[991] Jesus made this fact plain, saying: "Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so."

The higher requirement of the gospel followed: "**And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.**"[992] The Mosaic provision had been but permissive, and was justified only because of existing unrighteousness. Strict compliance with the doctrine enunciated by Jesus Christ is the only means by which a perfect social order can be maintained. It is important to note, however, that in His reply to the casuistical Pharisees, Jesus announced no specific or binding rule as to legal divorces; the putting away of a wife, as contemplated under the Mosaic custom, involved no judicial investigation or action by an established court. In our Lord's day the prevailing laxity in the matter of marital obligation had produced a state of appalling corruption in Israel; and woman, who by the law of God had been made a companion and partner with man, had become his slave. The world's greatest champion of woman and womanhood is Jesus the Christ.[993]

The Pharisees retired foiled in purpose and convicted in conscience. The Lord's strict construction of the marriage bond was startling even to some of the disciples; these came to Him privately, saying that if a man was so bound it would be better not to marry at all. Such a broad generalization the Lord disapproved except so far as it might apply in special cases. True, there were some who were physically incapacitated for marriage; others voluntarily devoted themselves to a celibate life, and some few adopted celibacy "for the kingdom of heaven's sake," that thereby they might be free to render all their time and energy to the Lord's service. But the disciples' conclusion that "it is not good to marry" was true only in the exceptional instances stated. Marriage is honorable;[994] for neither man without woman nor woman without man can be perfect in the Lord's sight.[995]

## **JESUS AND THE LITTLE ONES** [996]

The next event of record is one of surpassing sweetness, rich in precept and invaluable in example. Mothers brought their little children to Jesus, reverently desiring that the lives of those little ones be brightened by a sight of the Master and be blessed by a touch of His hand or a word from His lips. The circumstance appears in appropriate sequence to that of the Lord's instructions concerning the sacredness of marriage and the sanctity of the home. The disciples, zealous that their Master be not troubled unnecessarily, and conscious of the continuous demands on His time and attention, rebuked those who had so ventured to trespass. Even the disciples seem to have been yet under the

influence of the traditional conception that women and children were of inferior status, and that for such to seek the Lord's attention was an act of presumption. Jesus was displeased over the misdirected zeal of His followers, and rebuked them. Then He uttered that memorable sentence of infinite tenderness and divine affection: "*Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.*" Taking the children one by one into His arms, He laid His hands upon them and blessed them.[997] Then said He: "**Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.**"[998]

### "ONE THING THOU LACKEST" [999]

Jesus was accosted on the way by a young man, who came running to meet or overtake Him, and who knelt at His feet, inquiring: "Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" The question was asked in earnestness; the questioner was in very different spirit from that of the lawyer who made a similar inquiry with the purpose of tempting the Master.[1000] Jesus said: "Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God." This remark was no denial of sinlessness on the Savior's part; the young man had called Him "good" by way of polite compliment rather than in recognition of His Godship, and Jesus declined to acknowledge the distinction when applied in that sense. The Lord's remark must have deepened the young man's conception as to the seriousness of his question. Then said Jesus: "**If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.**" To the further inquiry, as to which commandments were meant, Jesus cited the prohibitions against murder, adultery, theft, and the bearing of false witness, and the requirements as to honoring parents, and loving one's neighbor as one's self. In simplicity and without pride or sense of self-righteousness, the young man said: "All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?" His evident sincerity appealed to Jesus, who looked upon him lovingly and said: "One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me."[1001]

The young man was disappointed and saddened. He had probably expected to hear the great Teacher prescribe some one special observance, by which excellence could be achieved. Luke tells us that the young man was a ruler; this may mean that he was a presiding official in the local synagog or possibly a Sanhedrist. He was well versed in the law, and had been strict in obedience thereto. He desired to advance in good works and make clear his title to an eternal heritage. But the Master prescribed what he had least expected; "And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions." In his way, he yearned for the kingdom of God, yet more devotedly he loved his great possessions. To give up wealth, social position, and official distinction, was too great a sacrifice; and the necessary self-denial was a cross too heavy for him to bear, even though treasure in heaven and life eternal were offered him. Love of worldly things was this man's besetting weakness; Jesus diagnosed his case and

prescribed a suitable remedy. We are not warranted in saying that the same treatment would be best in all cases of spiritual defection; but where the symptoms indicate the need, it may be employed with confidence as to the cure.

Gazing sorrowfully upon the retreating figure of the wealthy young ruler Jesus said to the disciples: "**Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.**" To impress the lesson more thoroughly He applied one of the figurative proverbs of the age, and said: "**It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.**"[1002] At this statement the disciples were amazed. "**Who then can be saved?**" they wondered. Jesus understood their perplexity, and encouraged them with the assurance that with God all things are possible. Thus were they given to understand that while wealth is a means of temptation to which many succumb, it is no insuperable obstacle, no insurmountable barrier, in the way of entrance to the kingdom. Had the young ruler followed the advice called forth by his inquiry, his possession of riches would have made possible to him meritorious service such as few are able to render. Willingness to place the kingdom of God above all material possessions was the one thing he lacked.[1003] Everyone of us may pertinently ask, What do I lack?

*What do I lack? I lack doing my best.*

### **THE FIRST MAY BE LAST, AND THE LAST FIRST [1004]**

The sorrowful departure of the rich young ruler, whose great possessions were so much a part of his life that he could not give them up at the time, though we may hope that he afterward did, brought forth from Peter an abrupt question, which revealed the course of his thoughts and aspirations: "**Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?**" Whether he spoke for himself alone, or by his use of the plural "we" meant to include all the Twelve, is uncertain and unimportant. He was thinking of the home and family he had left, and a longing for them was pardonable; he was thinking also of boats and nets, hooks and lines, and the lucrative business for which such things stood. All these he had forsaken; what was to be his reward? Jesus answered: "**Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.**" It is doubtful that Peter or any other of the Twelve had ever conceived of so great a distinction. The day of regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of His glory, as Judge and King, is even yet future; but in that day, those of the Lord's Twelve who endured to the end shall be enthroned as judges in Israel. The further assurance was given that "**every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.**" Rewards of such transcendent worth could scarcely be reckoned or their meaning comprehended. Lest those to whom they were promised might count too

surely upon successful attainment, to the neglect of effort, and become proud withal, the Lord added this profound precept of caution: "But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first."

It was the text of the sermon known to us as the Parable of the Laborers.<sup>[1005]</sup> Hear it:

**"For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the marketplace, and said unto them:**

**"Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way. Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise. And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive. So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first. And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny. And when they had received it, they murmured against the goodman of the house, saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day. But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good? So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen."**

The procedure of a householder going into the marketplace to hire laborers was common to the time and place, and is still an ordinary occurrence in many lands. The first to be hired in the course of the story made a definite bargain as to wages. Those who were employed at nine, twelve, and three o'clock respectively went willingly without agreement as to what they were to receive; so glad were they to find a chance to work that they lost no time in specifying terms. At five o'clock in the afternoon or evening, when but a single hour of the working day remained, the last band of laborers went to work, trusting to the master's word that whatever was right they should receive. That they had not found work earlier in the day was no fault of theirs; they had been ready and willing, and had waited at the place where employment was most likely to be secured. At the close of the day, the laborers came for their wages; this was in accordance with law and custom, for it had been established by statute in Israel that the employer should pay the servant, hired by the day, before the sun went down.<sup>[1006]</sup> Under instructions, the steward who acted as paymaster began with those who had

been engaged at the eleventh hour; and to each of them he gave a denarius, or Roman penny, worth about fifteen cents in our money, and the usual wage for a day's work. This was the amount for which those who began earliest had severally bargained; and as these saw their fellow-workers, who had served but an hour, receive each a penny, they probably exulted in the expectation of receiving a wage proportionately larger, notwithstanding their stipulation. But each of them received a penny and no more. Then they complained; not because they had been underpaid, but because the others had received a full day's pay for but part of a day's work. The master answered in all kindness, reminding them of their agreement. Could he not be just to them and charitable to the rest if he so chose? His money was his own, and he could give of it as he liked. Were those grumblers justified in their evil displeasure because their master was charitable and good? "So," said Jesus, passing directly from the story to one of the lessons it was designed to teach, "**the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.**"[1007]

*A wage is agreed on – one may get more or less or equal as others. It doesn't matter when one was hired. Someone who was hired late in the day may receive the same as someone who was hired early in the day.*

*Someone may be born in the last days. They may receive the same rewards from God as someone born in Moses' day. But some will live a better life in the last days than in the beginning days of time, thus, "the last shall be first, and the first last" and many are called to get a reward but few are chosen to receive a reward because they did not live accordingly.*

The parable was plainly intended for the edification of the Twelve. It was called out by Peter's question, "**What shall we have therefore?**" It stands as truly in force today as when it was delivered by the Master, as a rebuke of the bargaining spirit in the Lord's work. God needs workers, and such as will labor faithfully and effectively are welcomed into the vineyard. If, before beginning they insist on the stipulation of a wage, and this be agreed to, each shall receive his penny provided he has not lost his place through idleness or transgression. But those who diligently labor, knowing that the Master will give to them whatever is right, and with thought for the work rather than for the wage, shall find themselves more bountifully enriched. A man may work for wages and yet not be a hireling. Between the worthy hired servant and the hireling there is the difference that distinguishes the shepherd from the sheep herder.[1008] Was there not a suggestion of the hireling's spirit in the query of even the first of the apostles, "**What shall we have therefore?**" The Twelve had been called into service early in the Savior's ministry; they had responded to the call, without promise of even a penny; they were yet to feel the burden and heat of the day; but they were solemnly cautioned against attempt or desire to fix their reward. The Master shall judge as to the deserts of each servant; the wage at best is a free gift; for on the basis of strict accounting who of us is not in debt to God? The last called is as likely as the first to

prove unworthy. No general reversal is implied whereby all the late comers shall be advanced and all the early workers demoted. "Many that are first shall be last" was the Lord's statement, and by implication we may understand that not all the last, though some of them, may be counted among the first. Of the many called or permitted to labor in the vineyard of the Lord, few may so excel as to be chosen for exaltation above their fellows. Even the call and ordination to the Holy Apostleship is no guarantee of eventual exaltation in the celestial kingdom. Iscariot was so called and placed among the first; now, verily he is far below the last in the kingdom of God.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER 27

**1. Rich Men and Their Stewards** – "A certain rich man had a steward," We learn here, incidentally, how evenly balanced are the various conditions of life in a community, and how little of substantial advantage wealth can confer on its possessor. As your property increases, your personal control over it diminishes; the more you possess the more you must entrust to others. Those who do their own work are not troubled with disobedient servants; those who look after their own affairs, are not troubled with unfaithful overseers." – Arnot's *Parables of our Lord*, p. 454.

**2. The Mammon of Unrighteousness** – The revised version of Luke 16:9, reads: "**And I say unto you, Make to yourself friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness, that, when it shall fail, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles.**" The Lord's counsel to the disciples was to so use worldly wealth as to accomplish good thereby, that when "it," i.e. all earthly possessions, fail, they would have friends to welcome them into "the eternal tabernacles" or heavenly mansions. In studying a parable based on contrasts, such as this one is, care must be exercised not to carry too far any one point of analogy. Thus, we cannot reasonably gather that Jesus intended even to intimate that the prerogative of receiving any soul into the "eternal tabernacles" or excluding therefrom, rests with those who on earth had been benefited or injured through that person's acts, except so far as their witness to his deeds may be taken into account in the final judgment. The whole parable is full of wisdom for him who is in search of such; to the hypercritical mind it may appear inconsistent, as so it did appear to the Pharisees who derided Jesus for the story He had told. Luke 16:14 is rendered in the revised version, "**And the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all these things; and they scoffed at him.**"

**3. Lazarus and Dives** – Of all our Lord's recorded parables this is the only one in which a personal name is applied to any of the characters. The name "Lazarus" used in the parable was also the true name of a man whom Jesus loved, and who, subsequent to the delivery of this parable, was restored to life after he had lain for days in the tomb. The name, a Greek variant of Eleazar, signifies "God is my help." In many theological writings, the rich man of this parable is called Dives, but the name is not of scriptural

usage. "Dives" is a Latin adjective meaning "rich." Lazarus the brother of Martha and Mary (John 11:1, 2, 5) is one of three men mentioned by name as subjects of our Lord's beneficent miracles; the other two are Bartimeus (Mark 10:46) and Malchus (John 18:10). Commenting on the fact that our Lord gave a name to the beggar but left the rich man nameless in the parable, Augustine (in Sermon xli) suggestively asks: "Seems He not to you to have been reading from that book where He found the name of the poor man written, but found not the name of the rich; for that book is the Book of Life?"

**4. Divergent Views Concerning Divorce** – In relation to the different opinions upon this subject among Jewish authorities in the time of Christ, Geikie (vol. ii, p. 347-8) says: "Among the questions of the day fiercely debated between the great rival schools of Hillel and Shammai, no one was more so than that of divorce. The school of Hillel contended that a man had a right to divorce his wife for any cause he might assign, if it were no more than his having ceased to love her, or his having seen one he liked better, or her having cooked a dinner badly. The school of Shammai, on the contrary, held that divorce could be issued only for the crime of adultery, and offences against chastity. If it were possible to get Jesus to pronounce in favor of either school, the hostility of the other would be roused, and hence, it seemed a favorable chance for compromising Him." The following from Dummelow's *Commentary*, dealing with Matt. 5:32, is further illustrative: "Rabbi Akiba (Hillelite) said, 'If a man sees a woman handsomer than his own wife he may put her [his wife] away, because it is said, If she find not favor in his eyes.' The school of Hillel said 'If the wife cook her husband's food ill, by over-salting or over-roasting it, she is to be put away.' On the other hand Rabbi Jochanan (a Shammaite) said 'The putting away of a wife is odious.' Both schools agreed that a divorced wife could not be taken back.... Rabbi Chananiah said 'God has not subscribed His name to divorces, except among Israelites, as if He had said: I have conceded to the Israelites the right of dismissing their wives; but to the Gentiles I have not conceded it.' Jesus retorts that it is not the privilege but the infamy and reproach of Israel, that Moses found it necessary to tolerate divorce."

**5. Jesus the Ennobler of Woman** – Geikie thus paraphrases part of Christ's reply to the Pharisee's question concerning divorce, and comments thereon. "I say, therefore, that whoever puts away his wife, except for fornication, which destroys the very essence of marriage by dissolving the oneness it had formed, and shall marry another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is put away for any other cause commits adultery, because the woman is still, in God's sight, wife of him who had divorced her.' This statement was of far deeper moment than the mere silencing of malignant spies. It was designed to set forth for all ages the law of His New Kingdom in the supreme matter of family life. It swept away forever from His Society the conception of woman as a mere toy or slave of man, and based true relations of the sexes on the eternal foundation of truth, right, honor, and love. To ennoble the House and the Family by raising woman to her true position was essential to the future stability of His Kingdom, as one of purity and spiritual worth. By making marriage indissoluble, He proclaimed

the equal rights of woman and man within the limits of the family, and, in this, gave their charter of nobility to the mothers of the world. For her nobler position in the Christian era, compared with that granted her in antiquity, woman is indebted to Jesus Christ." – *Life and Words of Christ*, vol. ii, p. 349.

**6. The Blessing of Children** – When Christ, a resurrected Being, appeared among the Nephites on the western continent, He took the children, one by one, and blessed them; and the assembled multitude saw the little ones encircled as with fire, while angels ministered unto them. (3 Nephi 17:11-25.) Through modern revelation the Lord has directed that all children born in the Church be brought for blessing to those who are authorized to administer this ordinance of the Holy Priesthood. The commandment is as follows: "**Every member of the church of Christ having children, is to bring them unto the elders before the church, who are to lay their hands upon them in the name of Jesus Christ, and bless them in His name.**" (Doc. and Cov. 20:70.) Accordingly, it is now the custom in the Church to bring the little ones to the Fast-day service in the several wards, at which they are received one by one into the arms of the elders, and blessed, names being given them at the same time. The father of the child, if he be an elder, is expected to participate in the ordinance.

The blessing of children is in no sense analogous to, far less is it a substitution for, the ordinance of baptism, which is to be administered only to those who have come to years of understanding, and who are capable of repentance. As the author has written elsewhere, "Some point to the incident of Christ blessing little children, and rebuking those who would forbid the little ones coming unto Him, (Matt. 19:13; Mark 10:13; Luke 18:15) as an evidence in favor of infant baptism; but, as has been tersely said: – 'From the action of Christ's blessing infants, to infer they are to be baptized, proves nothing so much as that there is a want of better argument; for the conclusion would with more probability be derived thus: Christ blessed infants, and so dismissed them, but baptized them not; therefore infants are not to be baptized.'" – The author, *Articles of Faith*, vi:14. See paragraphs 11-17 in same lecture.

**7. The Camel and the Needle's Eye** – In comparing the difficulty of a rich man entering the kingdom with that of a camel passing through the eye of a needle, Jesus used a rhetorical figure, which, strong and prohibitory as it appears in our translation, was of a type familiar to those who heard the remark. There was a "common Jewish proverb, that a man did not even in his dreams see an elephant pass through the eye of a needle" (Edersheim). Some interpreters insist that a rope, not a camel, was mentioned by Jesus, and these base their contention on the fact that the Greek word *kamelos* (camel) differs in but a single letter from *kamilos* (rope), and that the alleged error of substituting "camel" for "rope" in the scriptural text is chargeable to the early copyists. Farrar rejects this possible interpretation on the ground that proverbs involving comparisons of a kind with that of a camel passing through the eye of a needle are common in the Talmud.

It has been asserted that the term "needle's eye" was applied to a small door or wicket set in or alongside the great gates in the walls of cities; and the assumption has been raised that Jesus had such a wicket in mind when He spoke of the seeming impossibility of a camel passing through a needle's eye. It would be possible though very difficult for a camel to squeeze its way through the little gate, and it could in no wise do so except when relieved of its load and stripped of all its harness. If this conception be correct, we may find additional similitude between the fact that the camel must first be unloaded and stripped, however costly its burden or rich its accoutrement, and the necessity of the rich young ruler, and so of any man, divesting himself of the burden and trappings of wealth, if he would enter by the narrow way that leadeth into the kingdom. The Lord's exposition of His saying is all-sufficient for the purposes of the lesson: "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." (Matt. 19:26.)

**8. Undue Concern as to Wages in the Lord's Service** – The instructive and inspiring Parable of the Laborers was called forth by Peter's question of self-interest – "**What shall we have therefore?**" In tender mercy the Lord refrained from directly rebuking His impulsive servant for undue concern as to the wage to be expected; but He turned the incident to excellent purpose by making it the text of a valuable lesson. The following treatment by Edersheim (vol. ii, p. 416) is worth consideration. "There was here deep danger to the disciples: danger of lapsing into feelings akin to those with which the Pharisees viewed the pardoned publicans, or the elder son in the parable his younger brother; danger of misunderstanding the right relations, and with it the very character of the kingdom, and of work in and for it. It is to this that the Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard refers. The principle which Christ lays down is, that, while nothing done for Him shall lose its reward, yet, from one reason or another, no forecast can be made, no inferences of self-righteousness may be drawn. It does not by any means follow, that most work done – at least, to our seeing and judging – shall entail a greater reward. On the contrary, 'many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first.' Not *all*, nor yet always and necessarily, but 'many.' And in such cases no wrong has been done; there exists no claim, even in view of the promises of due acknowledgment of work. Spiritual pride and self assertion can only be the outcome either of misunderstanding God's relation to us, or else of a wrong state of mind towards others – that is, it betokens mental or moral unfitness. Of this the Parable of the Laborers is an illustration.... But, while illustrating how it may come that some who were first are last, and how utterly mistaken or wrong is the thought that they must necessarily receive more than others, who, seemingly, have done more – how, in short, work for Christ is not a ponderable quantity, so much for so much, nor yet we be the judges of when and why a worker has come – it also conveys much that is new, and, in many respects, most comforting."

## FOOTNOTES

[950] Luke 14:1-24.

[951] The question is identical with that asked of Jesus in the synagog at Capernaum preliminary to the healing of the man with the withered hand (Matt. 12:10).

- [952] Exo. 23:5; Deut. 22:4; Luke 13:15.
- [953] Compare Matt. 23:12; Luke 1:52; 18:14; James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5.
- [954] Compare Matt. 8:11; Rev. 19:9. The expression "eat bread" is a Hebraism, signifying eating in full as at a feast rather than partaking of bread only.
- [955] Luke 14:16-24. Compare the parable relating to the marriage of the king's son (Matt. 22:2-10); study points of resemblance and difference between the two and the distinctive lessons of each. See chapter 30 herein.
- [956] Luke 14:25-35.
- [957] Matt. 8:19, 20; compare Luke 9:57, 58; See chapter 19 herein.
- [958] Compare the requirement under the Mosaic administration, Deut. 13:6-11; and note the application of the principle to the apostles, Matt. 10:37-39.
- [959] Compare Matt. 5:13; Mark 9:50
- [960] Luke 15.
- [961] Matt. 9:10-13; Mark 2:15-17; Luke 5:29-32. See chapter 14 herein.
- [962] Matt. 18:12-14. See chapter 24 herein.
- [963] That the lost piece of silver was a coin, and not a piece of unstamped bullion nor an ornament, is apparent from the original, "drachma," a silver coin. See chapter 24 herein.
- [964] Luke 15:11-32.
- [965] Compare Doc. and Cov. 1:31; B. of M., Alma 45:16.
- [966] Compare Matt. 18:14; P. of G.P., Moses 1:39.
- [967] Luke 16:1-8.
- [968] Note 1, end of chapter.
- [969] Luke 16:9-13.
- [970] Note 2, end of chapter.
- [971] Luke 16:14-31.
- [972] Note 2, end of chapter.
- [973] Revised version, Luke 16:16: "The law and the prophets were until John; from that time the gospel of the kingdom of God is preached, and every man entereth violently into it."
- [974] Compare Matt. 5:18; See chapter 17 herein.
- [975] Luke 16:19-31.
- [976] Note 3, end of chapter.
- [977] Compare B. of M., Alma 40:11-14; see "Articles of Faith," xxi, Note 5. "The Intermediate State of the Soul."
- [978] Rev. 14:13.
- [979] Luke 17:1-10.
- [980] Compare Matt. 17:20; 21:21; Mark 9:23; 11:23; See chapter 24 herein.
- [981] Compare Job 22:3; 35:7.
- [982] Luke 17:11-19. Many writers treat this occurrence as having immediately followed the repulse of Jesus and the apostles in a certain Samaritan village (Luke 9:52-56). We give it place in the order followed by Luke, the sole recorder of the two incidents.
- [983] Compare Lev. 13:2; 14:2; See also chapter 14 herein.
- [984] Compare case of Naaman the Syrian, 2 Kings 5:14.
- [985] Luke 18:9-14. Luke's narrative, the order of which we have followed in the events succeeding Christ's departure from Jerusalem after the Feast of Tabernacles, includes our Lord's reply to the Pharisee's question as to "when the kingdom of God should come," and additions thereto (17:20-37); these matters were afterward treated with greater fullness in a discourse near Jerusalem (Matt. 24) and will be considered in connection with that later event. The Parable of the Importunate Widow (Luke 18:1-7) has already received attention, (See chapter 26 herein).
- [986] Note to what blasphemous extreme the doctrine of supererogation, or excess of merit, was carried by the papacy in the 13th century; see "The Great Apostasy," 913-15.
- [987] Compare Luke 14:11.

[988] Matt. 19:3-12; see also Mark 10:2-12. This subject is introduced by Matthew and Mark directly preceding that of Christ blessing little children; which latter is recorded by Luke next after the Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican. We therefore turn from Luke's record to the accounts given by the other synoptic writers.

[989] Note 4, end of chapter.

[990] Compare Gen. 1:27; 2:24; 5:2; Eph. 5:31.

[991] Deut. 24:1-4.

[992] Compare Matt. 5:32; Luke 16:18; see also 1 Cor. 7:10-13.

[993] Note 5, end of chapter.

[994] Compare Heb. 13:4.

[995] Compare 1 Cor. 11:11.

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

[997] Compare B. of M., 3 Nephi 17:11-25. See Note 6, end of chapter.

[998] See chapter 24 herein.

[999] Matt. 19:16-26; Mark 10:17-27; Luke 18:18-30.

[1000] Luke 10:25; See chapter 26 herein.

[1001] This is Mark's record, (10:21) which is the most detailed of the three accounts.

[1002] Note 7, end of chapter.

[1003] Consider the lessons of the parables of the Hidden Treasure, and the Pearl of Great Price, See chapter 19 herein.

[1004] Matt. 19:27-30; Mark 10:28-31; Luke 18:28-30.

[1005] Matt. 20:1-16. The parable is the outgrowth of the events immediately preceding it. Matt. 19:27-30 should be read as part of the narrative continued in chap. 20. The existing division into chapters is unfortunate.

[1006] Deut. 24:15.

[1007] The concluding clause, "for many be called but few chosen," is omitted from the revised version. Note 8, end of chapter.

[1008] See chapter 25 herein.

# 28

## THE LAST WINTER

### AT THE FEAST OF DEDICATION [1009]

Jesus returned to Jerusalem in time to attend the Feast of Dedication during the last winter of His earthly life. This feast, like that of Tabernacles, was one of national rejoicing, and was celebrated annually for a period of eight days beginning on the 25th of Chislew,[1010] which corresponds in part to our December. It was not one of the great feasts prescribed by Mosaic statute, but had been established in 164 or 163 B.C. at the time of the rededication of the Temple of Zerubbabel following the rehabilitation of the sacred structure after its profane desecration by Antiochus Epiphanes, the pagan king of Syria.[1011] While the festival was in progress, Jesus went to the temple and was seen walking in the part of the enclosure known as Solomon's Porch.[1012] His presence soon became known to the Jews, who came crowding about Him in unfriendly spirit, ostensibly to ask questions. Their inquiry was: "**How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly,**" The mere asking of such a question evidences the deep and disturbing impression which the ministry of Christ had produced among the official classes and the people generally; in their estimation, the works he had wrought appeared as worthy of the Messiah.

The Lord's reply was indirect in form, though in substance and effect incisive and unmistakable. He referred them to His former utterances and to His continued works. "**I told you,**" He said, "**and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one.**" The reference to what had been before told was a reminder of His teachings on the occasion of an earlier sojourn among them, when He had proclaimed Himself as the I AM, who was older and greater than Abraham, and of His other proclamation of Himself as the Good Shepherd.[1013]

He could not well answer their inquiry by a simple unqualified affirmation, for by such He would have been understood as meaning that He claimed to be the Messiah according to their conception, the earthly king and conqueror for whom they professed to be looking. He was no such Christ as they had in mind; yet was He verily Shepherd and King to all who would hear His words and do His works; and to such He renewed

the promise of eternal life and the assurance that no man could pluck them out of His own or the Father's hand. To this doctrine, both exalted and profound in scope, the casuistical Jews could offer no refutation, nor could they find therein the much desired excuse for open accusation; our Lord's concluding sentence, however, stirred the hostile throng to frenzy. **"I and my Father are one"** was His solemn declaration.[1014] In their rage they scrambled for stones wherewith to crush Him. Owing to the unfinished state of the temple buildings, there were probably many blocks and broken fragments of rock at hand; and this was the second murderous attempt upon our Lord's life within the purlieu of His Father's House.[1015]

Fearless, and with the compelling calmness of more than human majesty, Jesus said: **"Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me?"** They angrily retorted: "For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God."[1016] Plainly they had found no ambiguity in His words. He then cited to them the scriptures, wherein even judges empowered by divine authority are called gods,[1017] and asked: **"Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken: say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?"** Then, reverting to the first avouchment that His own commission was of the Father who is greater than all, He added: "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him."[1018] Again the Jews sought to take Him, but were foiled by means not stated; He passed from their reach and departed from the temple.

## **OUR LORD'S RETIREMENT IN PEREA [1019]**

The violent hostility of the Jews in Jerusalem, the headquarters of the theocracy, was such that Jesus withdrew from the city and its neighborhood. The day for His sacrifice had not yet come, and while His enemies could not kill Him until He allowed Himself to be taken into their hands, His work would be retarded by further hostile disturbances. He retired to the place at which John the Baptist had begun his public ministry, which is probably also the place of our Lord's baptism. The exact location is not specified; it was certainly beyond Jordan and therefore in Perea. We read that Jesus abode there, and from this we gather that He remained in one general locality instead of traveling from town to town as had been His custom. People resorted to Him even there, however, and many believed on Him. The place was endeared to those who had gone to hear John and to be baptized by him;[1020] and as these recalled the impassioned call to repentance, the stirring proclamation of the kingdom by the now murdered and lamented Baptist, they remembered his affirmation of One mightier than himself, and saw in Jesus the realization of that testimony. "John," they said, "did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man were true."

The duration of this sojourn in Perea is nowhere recorded in our scriptures. It could not have lasted more than a few weeks at most. Possibly some of the discourses, instructions, and parables already treated as following the Lord's departure from Jerusalem after the Feast of Tabernacles in the preceding autumn, may chronologically belong to this interval. From this retreat of comparative quiet, Jesus returned to Judea in response to an earnest appeal from some whom He loved. He left the Bethany of Perea for the Judean Bethany, where dwelt Martha and Mary.[1021]

## LAZARUS RESTORED TO LIFE [1022]

Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha, lay ill in the family home at Bethany of Judea. His devoted sisters sent a messenger to Jesus, with the simple announcement, in which, however, we cannot fail to recognize a pitiful appeal: "Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick." When Jesus received the message, He remarked: "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby." This was probably the word carried back to the sisters, whom Jesus loved. Lazarus had died in the interval; indeed he must have expired soon after the messenger had started with the tidings of the young man's illness. The Lord knew that Lazarus was dead; yet He tarried where He was for two days after receiving the word; then He surprised the disciples by saying: "Let us go into Judea again." They sought to dissuade the Master by reminding Him of the recent attempt upon His life at Jerusalem, and asked wonderingly, "**Goest thou thither again?**" Jesus made clear to them that He was not to be deterred from duty in the time thereof, nor should others be; for as He illustrated, the working day is twelve hours long; and during that period a man may walk without stumbling, for he walks in the light, but if he let the hours pass and then try to walk or work in darkness, he stumbles. It was then His day to work, and He was making no mistake in returning to Judea.

He added: "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep." The simile between death and sleep was as common among the Jews as with us;[1023] but the disciples construed the saying literally, and remarked that if the sick man was sleeping it would be well with him. Jesus set them right. "Lazarus is dead," He said, and added, "And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him." It is evident that Jesus had already decided to restore Lazarus to life; and, as we shall see, the miracle was to be a testimony of our Lord's Messiahship, convincing to all who would accept it. A return to Judea at that time was viewed by at least some of the apostles with serious apprehension; they feared for their Master's safety, and thought that their own lives would be in peril; nevertheless they did not hesitate to go. Thomas boldly said to the others: "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

Arriving on the outskirts of Bethany, Jesus found that Lazarus "had lain in the grave four days already."[1024] The bereaved sisters were at home, where had gathered, according to custom, friends to console them in their grief. Among these were many prominent people, some of whom had come from Jerusalem. Word of the Master's approach reached Martha first, and she hastened to meet Him. Her first words were: "**Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.**" It was an expression of anguish combined with faith; but, lest it appear as lacking in trust, she hastened to add: "**But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.**" Then said Jesus in words of assuring tenderness: "Thy brother shall rise again." Perhaps some of the Jews who had come to comfort her had said as much, for they, the Sadducees excepted, believed in a resurrection; and Martha failed to find in the Lord's promise anything more than a general assurance that her departed brother should be raised with the rest of the dead. In natural and seemingly casual assent she remarked: "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Then said Jesus: "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?"

The sorrowing woman's faith had to be lifted and centered in the Lord of Life with whom she was speaking. She had before confessed her conviction that whatever Jesus asked of God would be granted; she had to learn that unto Jesus had already been committed power over life and death. She was hopefully expectant of some superhuman interposition by the Lord Jesus in her behalf, yet she knew not what that might be. Apparently at this time she had no well-defined thought or even hope that He would call her brother from the tomb. To the Lord's question as to whether she believed what He had just said, she answered with simple frankness; all of it she was not able to understand; but she believed in the Speaker even while unable to fully comprehend His words. "Yea, Lord," she said, "**I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.**"

*Martha then came to Mary...*

Then she returned to the home, and with precaution of secrecy on account of the presence of some whom she knew to be unfriendly to Jesus, said to Mary: "The Master is come, and calleth for thee." Mary left the house in haste. The Jews who had been with her thought that she had been impelled by a fresh resurgence of grief to go again to the grave, and they followed her. When she reached the Master, she knelt at His feet, and gave expression to her consuming sorrow in the very words Martha had used: "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." We cannot doubt that the conviction so voiced had been the burden of comment and lamentation between the two sisters – if only Jesus had been with them they would not have been bereft of their brother.

The sight of the two women so overcome by grief, and of the people wailing with them, caused Jesus to sorrow, so that He groaned in spirit and was deeply troubled. "**Where have ye laid him?**" He asked; and Jesus wept. As the sorrowing company went toward the tomb, some of the Jews, observing the Lord's emotion and tears, said: "Behold how he loved him!" but others, less sympathetic because of their prejudice against Christ, asked critically and reproachfully: "**Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?**" The miracle by which a man blind from birth had been made to see was very generally known, largely because of the official investigation that had followed the healing.[1025] The Jews had been compelled to admit the actuality of the astounding occurrence; and the question now raised as to whether or why One who could accomplish such a wonder could not have preserved from death a man stricken with an ordinary illness, and that man one whom He seemed to have dearly loved, was an innuendo that the power possessed by Jesus was after all limited, and of uncertain or capricious operation. This manifestation of malignant unbelief caused Jesus again to groan with sorrow if not indignation.[1026]

The body of Lazarus had been interred in a cave, the entrance to which was closed by a great block of stone. Such burial-places were common in that country, natural caves or vaults hewn in the solid rock being used as sepulchres by the better classes of people. Jesus directed that the tomb be opened. Martha, still unprepared for what was to follow, ventured to remonstrate, reminding Jesus that the corpse had been four days immured, and that decomposition must have already set in.[1027] Jesus thus met her objection: "**Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?**" This may have had reference both to His promise spoken to Martha in person – that her brother should rise again – and to the message sent from Perea – that the illness of Lazarus was not unto final death at that time, but for the glory of God and that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.

The stone was removed. Standing before the open portal of the tomb, Jesus looked upward and prayed: "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me." He did not ask the Father for power or authority; such had already been given Him; but He gave thanks, and in the hearing of all who stood by acknowledged the Father and expressed the oneness of His own and the Father's purposes. Then, with a loud voice He cried: "Lazarus, come forth." The dead man heard that voice of authoritative command; the spirit straightway reentered the tabernacle of flesh, the physical processes of life were resumed; and Lazarus, again alive, came forth. His freedom of motion was limited, for the grave clothes hampered his movements, and his face was still bound by the napkin by which the lifeless jaw had been held in place. To those who stood near, Jesus said: "Loose him, and let him go."

The procedure throughout was characterized by deep solemnity and by the entire absence of every element of unnecessary display. Jesus, who when miles away and

without any ordinary means of receiving the information knew that Lazarus was dead, doubtless could have found the tomb; yet He inquired: "Where have ye laid him?" He who could still the waves of the sea by a word could have miraculously effected the removal of the stone that sealed the mouth of the sepulchre; yet He said: "Take ye away the stone." He who could reunite spirit and body could have loosened without hands the cerements by which the reanimated Lazarus was bound; yet He said: "Loose him, and let him go." All that human agency could do was left to man. In no instance do we find that Christ used unnecessarily the superhuman powers of His Godship; the divine energy was never wasted; even the material creation resulting from its exercise was conserved, as witness His instructions regarding the gathering up of the fragments of bread and fish after the multitudes had been miraculously fed.[1028]

The raising of Lazarus stands as the third recorded instance of restoration to life by Jesus.[1029] In each the miracle resulted in a resumption of mortal existence, and was in no sense a resurrection from death to immortality. In the raising of the daughter of Jairus, the spirit was recalled to its tenement within the hour of its quitting; the raising of the widow's son is an instance of restoration when the corpse was ready for the grave; the crowning miracle of the three was the calling of a spirit to reenter its body days after death, and when, by natural processes the corpse would be already in the early stages of decomposition. Lazarus was raised from the dead, not simply to assuage the grief of mourning relatives; myriads have had to mourn over death, and so myriads more shall have to do. One of the Lord's purposes was that of demonstrating the actuality of the power of God as shown forth in the works of Jesus the Christ, and Lazarus was the accepted subject of the manifestation; just as the man afflicted with congenital blindness had been chosen to be the one through whom "the works of God should be made manifest."[1030]

That the Lord's act of restoring Lazarus to life was of effect in testifying to His Messiahship is explicitly stated.[1031] All the circumstances leading up to final culmination in the miracle contributed to its attestation. No question as to the actual death of Lazarus could be raised, for his demise had been witnessed, his body had been prepared and buried in the usual way, and he had lain in the grave four days. At the tomb, when he was called forth, there were many witnesses, some of them prominent Jews, many of whom were unfriendly to Jesus and who would have readily denied the miracle had they been able. God was glorified and the divinity of the Son of Man was vindicated in the result.

*I think if I had been an unbeliever at the time of Christ and witnessed this miracle, I would have either become a believer or I would have run as fast as I could to get away from such a man who could call a dead person to life.*

## THE HIERARCHY GREATLY AGITATED OVER THE MIRACLE [1032]

As in connection with most of our Lord's public acts – while some of those who heard and saw were brought to believe in Him, others rejected the proffered lesson and reviled the Master – so with this mighty work – some were stirred to faith and others went their ways each with mind darkened and spirit more malignant than ever. Some of those who had seen the dead man raised to life went immediately and reported the matter to the rulers, whom they knew to be intensely hostile toward Jesus. In the parable we have recently studied, the spirit of the rich man pleaded from his place of anguish that Lazarus, the once pitiable beggar, be sent from paradise to earth, to warn others of the fate awaiting the wicked, to which appeal Abraham replied: "**If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.**"[1033] Now a Lazarus had been in reality raised from the dead, and many of the Jews rejected the testimony of his return and refused to believe in Christ through whom alone death is overcome. The Jews tried to get Lazarus into their power that they might kill him and, as they hoped, silence forever his testimony of the Lord's power over death.[1034]

The chief priests, who were mostly Sadducees, and the Pharisees with them assembled in council to consider the situation created by this latest of our Lord's great works. The question they discussed was: "**What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.**" As stated by themselves, there was no denying the fact of the many miracles wrought by Jesus; but instead of earnestly and prayerfully investigating as to whether these mighty works were not among the predicted characteristics of the Messiah, they thought only of the possible effect of Christ's influence in alienating the people from the established theocracy, and of the fear that the Romans, taking advantage of the situation, would deprive the hierarchs of their "place" and take from the nation what little semblance of distinct autonomy it still possessed. Caiaphas, the high priest,[1035] cut short the discussion by saying: "Ye know nothing at all." This sweeping assertion of ignorance was most likely addressed to the Pharisees of the Sanhedrin; Caiaphas was a Sadducee. His next utterance was of greater significance than he realized: "**Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.**" John solemnly avers that Caiaphas spake not of himself, but by the spirit of prophecy, which, in spite of his implied unworthiness, came upon him by virtue of his office, and that thus: "**He prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.**" But a few years after Christ had been put to death, for the salvation of the Jews and of all other nations, the very calamities which Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin had hoped to avert befell in full measure; the hierarchy was overthrown, the temple destroyed, Jerusalem demolished and the nation disrupted. From the day of that memorable session of the Sanhedrin, the rulers increased their efforts to bring about the death of

Jesus, by whatever means they might find available. They issued a mandate that whosoever knew of His whereabouts should give the information to the officials, that they might promptly take Him into custody.[1036]

## **JESUS IN RETIREMENT AT EPHRAIM [1037]**

The hostility of the ecclesiastical rulers became so great that Jesus once more sought retirement in a region sufficiently far from Jerusalem to afford Him security from the watchful and malignant eyes of His powerful and openly avowed enemies. But a few weeks of mortal life remained to Him, and the greater part of this brief period had to be devoted to the further instruction of the apostles. He prudently withdrew from the vicinity of Bethany and "**went thence unto a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples.**" Thus did our Lord spend the rest of the winter and probably the early days of the succeeding spring. That His retreat was private if not practically secret is suggested by John's statement that "Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews"; and further indication is found in the fact that although the chief priests and Pharisees had virtually set a price upon His head, no man gave information as to His whereabouts. The place of this last retirement is not definitely known; it is generally thought to be the locality elsewhere called Ephraim and Ephron,[1038] which lay a little less than twenty miles northerly from Jerusalem. Equally uncertain is the duration of our Lord's abode there. When He emerged again into public notice, it was to enter upon His solemn march toward Jerusalem and the cross.

## **NOTES TO CHAPTER 28**

**1. Origin of the Feast of Dedication**—Concerning the second temple, known as the Temple of Zerubbabel, the author has written elsewhere: "Of the later history of this temple the biblical record gives but few details; but from other sources we learn of its vicissitudes. In connection with the Maccabean persecution the House of the Lord was profaned. A Syrian king, Antiochus Epiphanes, captured Jerusalem (168 to 165 B.C.) and perpetrated blasphemous outrage against the religion of the people. He plundered the temple and carried away its golden candlestick, its golden altar of incense, its table of shewbread, and even tore down the sacred veils, which were of fine linen and scarlet. His malignity was carried so far that he purposely desecrated the altar of sacrifice by offering swine thereon, and erected a heathen altar within the sacred enclosure. Not content with the violation of the temple, this wicked monarch had altars erected in the towns, and ordered the offering of unclean beasts upon them. The rite of circumcision was forbidden on pain of death, and the worship of Jehovah was declared a crime. As a result of this persecution many of the Jews apostatized, and declared that they belonged to the Medes and Persians—the nations from whose dominion they had been delivered by the power of God.... Then in the year 163 B.C. the House was rededicated; and the

occasion was remembered in annual festival thereafter under the name of the Feast of Dedication." – *The House of the Lord*, pp. 51-53. According to Josephus (Ant. xii, 7:7) the festival came to be known as The Lights; and brilliant illumination both of the temple and of dwellings, was a feature of the celebration. Traditional accounts say that eight days had been set as the duration of the feast, in commemoration of a legendary miracle by which the consecrated oil in the only jar found intact, and bearing the unbroken seal of the high priest, had been made to serve for temple purposes through eight days, which time was required for the ceremonial preparation of a new supply.

**2. Solomon's Porch** – This name had been applied to the eastern colonnade or row of porticoes within the temple enclosure, in recognition of a tradition that the porch covered and included a portion of the original wall belonging to the Temple of Solomon. See *The House of the Lord*, pp. 55-57.

**3. The Oneness of Christ and the Father** – The revised version gives for John 10:30: "I and the Father are one" instead of "I and my Father are one." By "the Father" the Jews rightly understood the Eternal Father, God. In the original Greek "one" appears in the neuter gender, and therefore expresses oneness in attributes, power, or purpose, and not a oneness of personality which would have required the masculine form. For treatment of the unity of the Godhead, and the separate personality of each Member, see *Articles of Faith*, ii, 20-24.

**4. The Place of our Lord's Retirement** – Jesus went "beyond Jordan into the place where John at first baptized" (John 10:40). This was probably Bethabara (1:28), which is called Bethany in some of the earliest manuscripts and is so designated in the latest revised version. Care must be taken not to confuse this Perea Bethany with the Bethany in Judea, the home of Martha and Mary, which was within two miles of Jerusalem.

**5. Lazarus in the Tomb Four Days** – On the very probable assumption that the journey from Bethany in Judea to the place where Jesus was, in Perea, would require one day, Lazarus must have died on the day of the messenger's departure; for this day and the two days that elapsed before Jesus started toward Judea, and the day required for the return, would no more than cover the four days specified. It was and still is the custom in Palestine as in other oriental countries to bury on the day of death.

It was the popular belief that on the fourth day after death the spirit had finally departed from the vicinity of the corpse, and that thereafter decomposition proceeded unhindered. This may explain Martha's impulsive though gentle objection to having the tomb of her brother opened four days after his death (John 11:39). It is possible that the consent of the next of kin was required for the lawful opening of a grave. Both Martha and Mary were present, and in the presence of many witnesses assented to the opening of the tomb in which their brother lay.

**6. Jesus Groaned in Spirit**—The marginal readings for "**he groaned in the spirit**" (John 11:33) and "**again groaning in himself**" (v. 38), as given in the revised version, are "**was moved with indignation in the spirit**" and "**being moved with indignation in himself.**" All philological authorities agree that the words in the original Greek express sorrowful indignation, or as some aver, anger, and not alone a sympathetic emotion of grief. Any indignation the Lord may have felt, as intimated in verse 33, may be attributed to disapproval of the customary wailing over death, which as vented by the Jews on this occasion, profaned the real and soulful grief of Martha and Mary; and His indignation, expressed by groaning as mentioned in verse 38, may have been due to the carping criticism uttered by some of the Jews as recorded in verse 37.

**7. Caiaphas, High Priest that Year**—John's statement that Caiaphas was high priest "that same year" must not be construed as meaning that the office of high priest was of a single year's tenure. Under Jewish law the presiding priest, who was known as the high priest, would remain in office indefinitely; but the Roman government had arrogated to itself the appointive power as applying to this office; and frequent changes were made. This Caiaphas, whose full name was Josephus Caiaphas, was high priest under Roman appointment during a period of eleven years. To such appointments the Jews had to submit, though they often recognized as the high priest under their law, some other than the "civil high priest" appointed by Roman authority. Thus we find both Annas and Caiaphas exercising the authority of the office at the time of our Lord's arrest and later. (John 18:13, 24; Acts 4:6; compare Luke 3:2.) Farrar says: "Some have seen an open irony in the expression of St. John (11:49) that Caiaphas was high priest 'that same year,' as though the Jews had got into this contemptuous way of speaking during the rapid succession of priests—mere phantoms set up and displaced by the Roman fiat—who had in recent years succeeded each other. There must have been at least five living high priests, and ex-high priests at this council—Annas, Ismael Ben Phabi, Eleazar Ben Haman, Simon Ben Kamhith, and Caiaphas, who had gained his elevation by bribery."

**8. Divinely Appointed Judges Called "gods"**—In Psalm 82:6, judges invested by divine appointment are called "gods." To this scripture the Savior referred in His reply to the Jews in Solomon's Porch. Judges so authorized officiated as the representatives of God and are honored by the exalted title "gods." Compare the similar appellation applied to Moses (Exo. 4:16; 7:1). Jesus Christ possessed divine authorization, not through the word of God transmitted to Him by man, but as an inherent attribute. The inconsistency of calling human judges "gods," and of ascribing blasphemy to the Christ who called Himself the Son of God, would have been apparent to the Jews but for their sin-darkened minds.

## FOOTNOTES

[1009] John 10:22-39.

[1010] Also rendered Kislev, Chisleu, and Cisleu. See Zech. 7:1.

[1011] Josephus, Antiquities, xii, 5:3-5. See Ezra 6:17, 18; also Note 1, end of chapter.

- [1012] Note 2, end of chapter.
- [1013] John 8:58; and 10:11; see chapter 25 herein.
- [1014] Revised version gives "I and the Father." See Note 3, end of chapter.
- [1015] John 8:59. See chapter 25 herein.
- [1016] Concerning blasphemy see chapters 14, 18 and 34 herein.
- [1017] Psa. 82, particularly verses 1 and 6. Note 8, end of chapter.
- [1018] A better rendering of the last verse is: "But if I do them [i.e. the Father's works], though ye believe not me, believe the works; that ye may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father." – (Revised version.)
- [1019] John 10:40-42.
- [1020] See chapter 10 herein.
- [1021] Note 4, end of chapter.
- [1022] John 11:1-46.
- [1023] Compare Matt. 9:24; Mark 5:39; Luke 8:52; Job 14:12; 1 Thess. 4:14.
- [1024] Note 5, end of chapter.
- [1025] John 9; see chapter 25 herein.
- [1026] Note 6, end of chapter.
- [1027] Note 5, end of chapter.
- [1028] John 6:12; Matt. 15:37; see chapter 21 and 22 herein.
- [1029] Matt. 9:23-25; Luke 7:11-17; See chapters 18 and 20 herein.
- [1030] John 9:3.
- [1031] John 12:9-11, 17.
- [1032] John 11:46-54.
- [1033] Luke 16:31; See chapter 27 herein.
- [1034] John 12:10.
- [1035] Note 7, end of chapter.
- [1036] John 11:57.
- [1037] John 11:54.
- [1038] 2 Chron. 13:19; Josh. 15:9.

# 29

## ON TO JERUSALEM

### JESUS AGAIN FORTTELS HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION [1039]

Each of the three synoptic writers has made record of this last journey to Jerusalem and of occurrences connected therewith. The deep solemnity of the developments now so near at hand, and of the fate He was setting out to meet so affected Jesus that even the apostles were amazed at His absorption and evident sadness; they fell behind in amazement and fear. Then He paused, called the Twelve about Him, and in language of absolute plainness, without metaphor or simile, He said: "**Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: And they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again.**"

It is to us an astounding fact that the Twelve failed to comprehend His meaning; yet Luke unqualifiedly affirms: "**And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.**" This avouchment of the Savior's approaching death and resurrection spoken in confidential certainty to the Twelve was the third of its kind; and still they could not bring themselves to accept the awful truth. [1040] According to Matthew's account, they were told of the very manner by which the Lord should die – that the Gentiles should crucify Him; yet they understood not. To them there was some dreadful incongruity, some dire inconsistency or inexplicable contradiction in the sayings of their beloved Master. They knew Him to be the Christ, the Son of the living God; and how could such a One be brought into subjection and be slain? They could not fail to realize that some unprecedented development in His life was impending; this they may have vaguely conceived to be the crisis for which they had been waiting, the open proclamation of His Messianic dignity, His enthronement as Lord and King. And such indeed was to be, though in a manner far different from their anticipations. The culminating prediction – that on the third day He would rise again – seems to have puzzled them the most; and, at the same time, this assurance of ultimate triumph may have made all intermediate occurrences appear as of but secondary and transitory import. They persistently repelled the thought that they were following their Lord to the cross and the sepulchre.

## THE QUESTION OF PRECEDENCE AGAIN [1041]

Notwithstanding all the instructions the apostles had received concerning humility, and though they had before them the supreme example of the Master's life and conduct, in which the fact that service was the only measure of true greatness was abundantly demonstrated, they continued to dream of rank and honor in the kingdom of the Messiah. Perhaps because of the imminence of the Master's triumph, with which they all were particularly impressed at this time though ignorant of its real significance, certain of the Twelve appealed to the Lord in the course of this journey with a most ambitious request. The petitioners were James and John, though according to Matthew's record their mother[1042] was the first to ask. The request was that when Jesus came into possession of His kingdom, He would so signally honor the aspiring pair as to install them in seats of eminence, one on His right hand, the other on His left. Instead of sharply rebuking such presumption, Jesus gently but impressively asked: "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" The answer was full of self-confidence inspired by ignorant misapprehension. "**We are able,**" they replied. Then said Jesus: "**Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.**"

The ten apostles were indignant at the two brothers, possibly less through disapproval of the spirit that had prompted the petition than because the two had forestalled the others in applying for the chief posts of distinction. But Jesus, patiently tolerant of their human weaknesses, drew the Twelve around Him, and taught them as a loving father might instruct and admonish his contentious children. He showed them how earthly rulers, such as princes among the Gentiles, domineer over their subjects, manifesting lordship and arbitrarily exercising the authority of office. But it was not to be so among the Master's servants; whoever of them would be great must be a servant indeed, willingly ministering unto his fellows; the humblest and most willing servant would be the chief of the servants. "**For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.**"[1043]

## SIGHT RESTORED TO THE BLIND NEAR JERICHO [1044]

In the course of His journey Jesus came to Jericho, at or near which city He again exerted His wondrous power in opening the eyes of the blind. Matthew states that two sightless men were made to see, and that the miracle was enacted as Jesus was leaving Jericho; Mark mentions but one blind man, whom he names Bartimeus or the son of Timeus, and agrees with Matthew in saying that the healing was effected when Jesus was departing from the city; Luke specifies but one subject of the Lord's healing mercy, "a certain blind man," and chronicles the miracle as an incident of Christ's approach to Jericho. These slight variations attest the independent authorship of each of the records,

and the apparent discrepancies have no direct bearing upon the main facts, nor do they detract from the instructional value of the Lord's work. As we have found to be the case on an earlier occasion, two men were mentioned though but one figures in the circumstantial accounts.[1045]

The man who is more particularly mentioned, Bartimeus, sat by the wayside, asking alms. Jesus approached, accompanied by the apostles, many other disciples, and a great multitude of people, probably made up largely of travelers on their way to Jerusalem to attend the Passover festival, the time for which was about a week ahead. Hearing the tramp of so great a company the sightless beggar inquired what it all meant, and was answered, "Jesus of Nazareth passeth by." Eager lest the opportunity of gaining the Master's attention be lost, he immediately cried in a loud voice: "Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me." His appeal, and particularly his use of the title, Son of David, show that he knew of the great Teacher, had confidence in His power to heal and faith in Him as the promised King and Deliverer of Israel.[1046] Those who were in advance of Jesus in the company tried to silence the man, but the more they rebuked him the louder and more persistently did he cry: "Thou son of David, have mercy on me." Jesus halted in His course and directed that the man be brought to Him. Those who but a moment before would have stopped the blind man's yearning appeal, now that the Master had noticed him were eager to be of service. To the sightless one they brought the glad word: "**Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee**"; and he, casting aside his outer garment lest it hinder, came in haste to Christ. To the Lord's question, "**What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?**" Bartimeus answered: "Lord, that I may receive my sight." Then Jesus spake the simple words of power and blessing: "Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee." The man, full of gratitude and knowing that nothing short of divine interposition could have opened his eyes, followed his Benefactor, glorifying God in heartfelt prayers of thanksgiving, in which many of those who had witnessed the miracle fervently joined.

## **ZACCHEUS, THE CHIEF AMONG THE PUBLICANS [1047]**

Jericho was a city of considerable importance; among its resident officials was a staff of publicans, or collectors of customs, and of these the chief was Zaccheus,[1048] who had grown rich from the revenues of office. He had doubtless heard of the great Galilean who hesitated not to mingle with publicans, detested though they were by the Jews in general; he may have known, also, that Jesus had placed one of this publican class among the most prominent of the disciples. That Zaccheus was a Jew is indicated by his name, which is a variant of "Zacharias," with a Greek or Latin termination; he must have been particularly obnoxious to his people on account of his advanced status among the publicans, all of whom were in Roman employ. He had a great desire to see Jesus; the feeling was not one of mere curiosity; he had been impressed and set thinking by the things he had heard about this Teacher from Nazareth. But Zaccheus was a little man, and could not ordinarily see over the heads of others; so he ran ahead of the

company and climbed a tree alongside the road. When Jesus reached the place, to the great surprise of the man in the tree He looked up and said: "**Zaccheus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house.**" Zaccheus came down with haste, and joyfully received the Lord as his guest. The multitude by whom Jesus had been accompanied appear to have been generally friendly toward Him; but at this turn of affairs they murmured and criticized, saying that the Master "**was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner**"; for all publicans were sinners in Jewish eyes, and Zaccheus admitted that the opprobrium in his case was possibly deserved. But having seen and conversed with Jesus, this chief among the publicans believed and was converted. As proof of his change of heart Zaccheus then and there voluntarily vowed unto the Lord to make amends and restitution if it were found that he owed such. "**Behold, Lord,**" he said, "**the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.**" These were works meet for repentance. The man realized that he could not change his past; but he knew he could in part at least atone for some of his misdeeds. His pledge to restore in fourfold measure whatever he had wrongfully acquired was in line with the Mosaic law as to restitution, but far in excess of the recompense required.[1049] Jesus accepted the man's profession of repentance, and said: "**This day is salvation come to this house, forso much as he also is a son of Abraham.**" Another stray sheep had been returned to the fold; another lost treasure had been found; another wayward son had come back to the Father's house.[1050] "**For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.**"

#### UNTO EVERY ONE THAT HATH SHALL BE GIVEN [1051]

As the multitude approached Jerusalem, Jesus being in their midst, expectation ran high as to what the Lord would do when He reached the capital of the nation. Many of those with Him were looking for a proclamation of His royal authority and "**they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.**" Jesus told them a story; we call it the Parable of the Pounds:

"**A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us. And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities. And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities. And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin: For I feared thee, because thou art an**

**austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow. And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow: Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury? And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds. (And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.) For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him. But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me."**

Both the circumstances of the story and the application of the parable were more readily apparent to the Jewish multitude than they are to us. The departure of a certain nobleman from a vassal province to the court of the suzerain to seek investiture of kingly authority, and the protest of the citizens over whom he asserted the right to reign, were incidents of Jewish history still fresh in the minds of the people to whom Christ spoke.[1052] The explication of the parable is this: The people were not to look for an immediate establishment of the kingdom in temporal power. He who would be king was pictured as having departed for a far country from which he would assuredly return. Before leaving he had given to each of his servants a definite sum of money; and by their success in using this he would judge of their fitness to serve in offices of trust. When he returned he called for an accounting, in the course of which the cases of three servants are specified as types. One had so used the pound as to gain ten pounds; he was commended and received a reward such as only a sovereign could give, the governorship of ten cities. The second servant, with equal capital had increased it only five fold; he was properly rewarded in proportion by appointment as governor over five cities. The third gave back what he had received, without increase, for he had failed to use it. He had no reason and only a very poor excuse to offer for his dereliction. In justice he was severely reprimanded, and the money was taken from him. When the king directed that the pound so forfeited by the unfaithful servant be given to him who already had ten, some surprise was manifest amongst those who stood by; but the king explained, that "**unto every one that hath shall be given,**" for such a one uses to advantage the means entrusted to his care, while "**from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him**"; for he has demonstrated his utter unfitness to possess and use aright. This part of the parable, while of general application, must have appealed to the apostles as particularly apt; for each of them had received in trust an equal endowment through ordination, and each would be required to account for his administration.

The fact is apparent that Christ was the nobleman who was to be invested with the authority of kingship, and who would return to require the accounting at the hands of His trusted servants.[1053] But many of the citizens hated Him and would protest His investiture, saying they would not have Him to reign over them.[1054] When He does

return in power and authority, these rebellious citizens shall surely receive the punishment they deserve.[1055]

## IN THE HOUSE OF SIMON THE LEPER [1056]

Six days before the Feast of the Passover, that is to say before the day on which the paschal lamb was to be eaten,[1057] Jesus arrived at Bethany, the home town of Martha and Mary, and of Lazarus who had recently died and been restored to life. The chronology of events during the last week of our Lord's life supports the generally accepted belief that in this year, the fourteenth day of Nisan, on which the Passover festival began, fell on Thursday; and this being so, the day on which Jesus reached Bethany was the preceding Friday, the eve of the Jewish Sabbath. Jesus fully realized that this Sabbath was the last He would live to see in mortality. The Gospel-writers have drawn a veil of reverent silence over the events of that day. It appears that Jesus passed His last Sabbath in retirement at Bethany. The journey afoot from Jericho had been no easy walk, for the road ascended to an altitude of nearly three thousand feet, and was withal otherwise a toilsome way.

On Saturday,[1058] probably in the evening after the Sabbath had passed, a supper was spread for Jesus and the Twelve in the house of Simon the leper. No other mention of this man, Simon, appears in scripture. If he was living at the time our Lord was entertained in the house known by his name, and if he was present, he must have been previously healed of his leprosy, as otherwise he could not have been allowed within the town, far less to be one of a festal company. It is reasonable to think that the man had once been a victim of leprosy and had come to be currently known as Simon the leper, and that he was one among the many sufferers from this dread disease who had been healed through the Lord's ministrations.

Martha was in charge of the supper arrangements on this memorable occasion, and her sister Mary was with her, while Lazarus sat at table with Jesus. Many have assumed that the house of Simon the leper was the family home of the two sisters and Lazarus, in which case it is possible that Simon was the father of the three; but of such relationship we have no proof.[1059] There was no attempt to secure unusual privacy at this supper. Such occasions were customarily marked by the presence of many uninvited lookers-on in that time; and we are not surprised to learn, therefore, that many people were there and that they had come "not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead." Lazarus was a subject of much interest and doubtless of curiosity among the people; and at the time of his privileged and intimate association with Jesus in Bethany, the chief priests were plotting to put him to death, on account of the effect his restoration had had upon the people, many of whom believed on Jesus because of the miracle.

That supper in Bethany was an event never to be forgotten. Mary, the more contemplative and spiritually minded of the two sisters, she who loved to sit at the feet of Jesus and listen to His words, and who had been commended for having so chosen the one needful thing, which her more practical sister lacked,[1060] brought from among her treasures an alabaster cruse containing a pound of costly spikenard ointment; she broke the sealed flask[1061] and poured its fragrant contents upon the head and feet of her Lord, and wiped His feet with her loosened tresses.[1062] To anoint the head of a guest with ordinary oil was to do him honor; to anoint his feet also was to show unusual and signal regard; but the anointing of head and feet with spikenard, and in such abundance, was an act of reverential homage rarely rendered even to kings.[1063] Mary's act was an expression of adoration; it was the fragrant outwelling of a heart overflowing with worship and affection.

But this splendid tribute of a devout woman's love was made the cause of disagreeable protest. Judas Iscariot, treasurer of the Twelve, but dishonest, avaricious, and small-souled in character, vented his grumbling complaint, saying: "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?"[1064] His seeming solicitude for the poor was all hypocrisy. He was a thief and lamented that he had not been given the precious ointment to sell, or that the price had not been turned into the bag of which he was the self-interested custodian. Mary's use of the costly unguent had been so lavish that others beside Judas had let their surprise grow into murmuring; but to him is attributed the distinction of being the chief complainer. Mary's sensitive nature was pained by the ungracious words of disapproval; but Jesus interposed, saying: "Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me." Then in further rebuke and by way of solemn instruction He continued; "For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always. For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her."

We are left without certain information as to whether Mary knew that within a few days her beloved Lord would be in the tomb. She may have been so informed in view of the hallowed intimacy between Jesus and the family; or she may have gathered from the remarks of Christ to the apostles that the sacrifice of His life was impending; or perhaps by inspired intuition she was impelled to render the loving tribute by which her memory has been enshrined in the hearts of all who know and love the Christ. John has preserved to us this remark of Jesus in the rebuke called forth by the grumbling Iscariot: "Let her alone; against the day of my burying hath she kept this"; and Mark's version is likewise suggestive of definite and solemn purpose on Mary's part: "She is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying."

## CHRIST'S TRIUMPHAL ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM [1065]

While still in Bethany or in the neighboring village of Bethphage, and according to John's account on the next day after the supper at Simon's house, Jesus directed two of His disciples to go to a certain place, where, He told them, they would find an ass tied, and with her a colt on which no man had ever sat. These they were to bring to Him. If stopped or questioned they were to say the Lord had need of the animals. Matthew alone mentions both ass and colt; the other writers specify the latter only; most likely the mother followed as the foal was led away, and the presence of the dam probably served to keep the colt tractable. The disciples found all to be as the Lord had said. They brought the colt to Jesus, spread their coats on the gentle creature's back, and set the Master thereon. The company started toward Jerusalem, Jesus riding in their midst.

Now, as was usual, great numbers of people had come up to the city many days before the beginning of the Passover rites, in order that they might attend to matters of personal purification, and make good their arrears in the offering of prescribed sacrifices. Though the great day, on which the festival was to be inaugurated, was yet four days ahead, the city was thronged with pilgrim crowds; and among these much questioning had arisen as to whether Jesus would venture to appear publicly in Jerusalem during the feast, in view of the well-known plans of the hierarchy to take Him into custody. The common people were interested in every act and movement of the Master; and word of His departure from Bethany sped ahead of Him; so that by the time He began the descent from the highest part of the road on the flank of the Mount of Olives, great crowds had gathered about Him. The people were jubilant over the spectacle of Jesus riding toward the holy city; they spread out their garments, and cast palm fronds and other foliage in His path, thus carpeting the way as for the passing of a king. For the time being He was their king, and they His adoring subjects. The voices of the multitude sounded in reverberating harmony: "**Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest**"; and again: "**Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.**"[1066]

But amidst all this jubilation, Jesus was sad as He came in sight of the great city wherein stood the House of the Lord; and He wept, because of the wickedness of His people, and of their refusal to accept Him as the Son of God; moreover He foresaw the awful scenes of destruction before which both city and temple were soon to fall. In anguish and tears, He thus apostrophized the doomed city: "**If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.**" The multitude was increased by tributary crowds who fell in with the imposing

procession at every crossway; and the shouts of praise and homage were heard inside the city while the advancing company was yet far from the walls. When the Lord rode through the massive portal and actually entered the capital of the Great King, the whole city was thrilled. To the inquiry of the uninformed, "**Who is this?**" the multitude shouted: "This is Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee." It may be that the Galilean pilgrims were first to answer and loudest in the gladsome proclamation; for the proud Judeans held Galilee in low esteem, and on this day, Jesus of Galilee was the most prominent personage in Jerusalem. The Pharisees, resentful of the honors thus shown to One whom they had long plotted to destroy, impotently condoled with one another over the failure of all their nefarious schemes, saying: "Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him." Unable to check the surging enthusiasm of the multitudes, or to silence the joyous acclamations, some of the Pharisees made their way through the throngs until they reached Jesus, and to Him they appealed, saying: "Master, rebuke thy disciples." But the Lord "answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out"[1067]

Dismounting, He entered afoot the temple enclosure; shouts of adulation greeted Him there. Chief priests, scribes, and Pharisees, the official representatives of the theocracy, the hierarchy of Judaism, were incensed; there was no denying the fact that the people were rendering Messianic honors to this troublesome Nazarene; and that too within the very purlieus of the temple of Jehovah.

The purpose of Christ in thus yielding Himself for the day to the desires of the people and accepting their homage with kingly grace may not be fully comprehended by us of finite mind. That the occasion was no accidental or fortuitous happening, of which He took advantage without preconceived intention, is evident. He knew beforehand what would be, and what He would do. It was no meaningless pageantry; but the actual advent of the King into His royal city, and His entry into the temple, the house of the King of kings. He came riding on an ass, in token of peace, acclaimed by the Hosanna shouts of multitudes; not on a caparisoned steed with the panoply of combat and the accompaniment of bugle blasts and fanfare of trumpets. That the joyous occasion was in no sense suggestive of physical hostility or of seditious disturbance is sufficiently demonstrated by the indulgent unconcern with which it was viewed by the Roman officials, who were usually prompt to send their legionaries swooping down from the fortress of Antonia at the first evidence of an outbreak; and they were particularly vigilant in suppressing all Messianic pretenders, for false Messiahs had arisen already, and much blood had been shed in the forcible dispelling of their delusive claims. But the Romans saw nothing to fear, perhaps much to smile at, in the spectacle of a King mounted upon an ass, and attended by subjects, who, though numerous, brandished no weapons but waved instead palm branches and myrtle sprigs. The ass has been designated in literature as "the ancient symbol of Jewish royalty," and one riding upon an ass as the type of peaceful progress.

Such triumphal entry of Jesus into the chief city of the Jews would have been strikingly inconsistent with the general tenor of His ministry in its early stages. Even the intimation that He was the Christ had been made with guarded care, if at all; and every manifestation of popular regard in which He might have figured as a national leader had been suppressed. Now, however, the hour of the great consummation was near at hand; the public acceptance of the nation's homage, and the acknowledgment of both kingly and Messianic titles, constituted an open and official proclamation of His divine investiture. He had entered city and temple in such royal state as befitted the Prince of Peace. By the rulers of the nation He had been rejected and His claims derided. The manner of His entry should have appealed to the learned teachers of the law and the prophets; for Zechariah's impressive forecast, the fulfillment of which the evangelist, John, finds in the events of this memorable Sunday,[1068] was frequently cited among them: "**Rejoice greatly, O, daughter of Zion; shout, O, daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass.**"[1069]

#### **CERTAIN GREEKS VISIT CHRIST [1070]**

Among the multitudes who came to Jerusalem at the time of the annual Passover were people of many nations. Some of these, though not of Jewish descent, had been converted to Judaism; they were admitted to the temple precincts, but were not allowed to pass beyond the court of the Gentiles.[1071] Sometime during our Lord's last week of mortal life, possibly on the day of His royal entry into the city,[1072] certain Greeks, who were evidently numbered among the proselytes since they had come "to worship at the feast," sought an interview with Jesus. Imbued with a becoming sense of decorum they hesitated to directly approach the Master, and applied instead to Philip, one of the apostles, saying: "Sir, we would see Jesus." Philip consulted with Andrew, and the two then informed Jesus, who, as we may reasonably infer from the context though the fact is not explicitly stated, graciously received the foreign visitors and imparted to them precepts of the utmost worth. It is evident that the desire of these Greeks to meet the Master was not grounded on curiosity or other unworthy impulse; they earnestly wished to see and hear the Teacher whose fame had reached their country, and whose doctrines had impressed them.

To them Jesus testified that the hour of His death was near at hand, the hour in which "the Son of man should be glorified." They were surprised and pained by the Lord's words, and possibly they inquired as to the necessity of such a sacrifice. Jesus explained by citing a striking illustration drawn from nature: "**Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit;**"[1073] The simile is an apt one, — and at once impressively simple and beautiful. A farmer who neglects or refuses to cast his wheat into the earth, because he wants to keep it, can have no increase; but if he sow the wheat in good rich

soil, each living grain may multiply itself many fold, though of necessity the seed must be sacrificed in the process. So, said the Lord, "He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal." The Master's meaning is clear; he that loves his life so well that he will not imperil it, or, if need be, give it up, in the service of God, shall forfeit his opportunity to win the bounteous increase of eternal life; while he who esteems the call of God as so greatly superior to life that his love of life is as hatred in comparison, shall find the life he freely yields or is willing to yield, though for the time being it disappear like the grain buried in the soil; and he shall rejoice in the bounty of eternal development. If such be true of every man's existence, how transcendently so was it of the life of Him who came to die that men may live? Therefore was it necessary that He die, as He had said He was about to do; but His death, far from being life lost, was to be life glorified.

### VOICE FROM HEAVEN [1074]

The realization of the harrowing experiences upon which He was about to enter, and particularly the contemplation of the state of sin, which made His sacrifice imperative, so weighed upon the Savior's mind that He sorrowed deeply. "**Now is my soul troubled,**" He groaned; "**and what shall I say?**" He exclaimed in anguish. Should He say, "**Father, save me from this hour**" when as He knew "**for this cause**" had He come "**unto this hour?**" To His Father alone could He turn for comforting support, not to ask relief from, but strength to endure, what was to come; and He prayed: "Father, glorify thy name." It was the rising of a mighty Soul to meet a supreme issue, which for the moment had seemed to be overwhelming. To that prayer of renewed surrender to the Father's will, "**Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.**"

The voice was real; it was no subjective whisper of comfort to the inner consciousness of Jesus, but an external, objective reality. People who were standing by heard the sound, and interpreted it variously; some said it was thunder; others, of better spiritual discernment, said: "An angel spake to him"; and some may have understood the words as had Jesus. Now fully emerged from the passing cloud of enveloping anguish, the Lord turned to the people, saying: "This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes." And then, with the consciousness of assured triumph over sin and death, He exclaimed in accents of divine jubilation, as though the cross and the sepulchre were already of the past: "**Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.**" Satan, the prince of the world was doomed.[1075] "**And I,**" the Lord continued, "**if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.**" John assures us that this last utterance signified the manner of the Lord's death; the people so understood, and they asked an explanation of what seemed to them an inconsistency, in that the scriptures, as they had been taught to interpret the same, declared that the Christ was to abide forever,[1076] and now He who claimed to be the Messiah, the Son of Man, averred that He must be lifted up. "**Who is this Son of man?**" they asked.

Mindful as ever not to cast pearls where they would not be appreciated, the Lord refrained from a direct avowal, but admonished them to walk in the light while the light was with them, for darkness would surely follow; and as He reminded them, "**he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.**" In conclusion the Lord admonished them thus: "**While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light.**"[1077]

At the close of this discourse Jesus departed from the people "**and did hide himself from them.**" The record of the first day of what has come to be known as the week of our Lord's passion[1078] is thus concluded by Mark: "**And when he had looked round about upon all things, and now the eventide was come, he went out unto Bethany with the twelve.**"[1079]

## NOTES TO CHAPTER 29

**1. The Mother of James and John**— The mother of these two sons of Zebedee (Matt. 20:20; compare 4:21) is generally understood to have been the Salome mentioned as one of the women present at the crucifixion (Mark 15:40; compare Matt. 27:56 in which "the mother of Zebedee's children" is mentioned, and the name "Salome" is omitted), and one of those who arrived first at the tomb on the morning of the resurrection (Mark 16:1). From the fact that John mentions the mother of Jesus and "**his mother's sister**" (19:25) and omits mention of Salome by name, some expositors hold that Salome was the sister of Mary the mother of Jesus; and therefore the Savior's aunt. This relationship would make James and John cousins to Jesus. While the scriptural record does not disprove this alleged kinship, it certainly does not affirm the same.

**2. Jericho**— This was an ancient city, lying north-easterly from Jerusalem, a little less than fifteen miles in a straight line. In the course of the exodus it was captured by the people of Israel through a miraculous interposition of divine power. (Josh. 6). The productiveness of the region is indicated by the descriptive appellation "city of palm trees" (Deut. 34:3; Judg. 1:16; 3:13; 2 Chron. 28:15). The name Jericho means "place of fragrance." Its climate was semi-tropical, a consequence of its low altitude. It lay in a valley several hundred feet below the level of the Mediterranean; this explains Luke's statement (19:28) that after Jesus had spoken the Parable of the Pounds when on the way from Jericho, "he went before, ascending up to Jerusalem." In the time of Christ, Jericho was an important city; and the abundance of its commercial products, particularly balsam and spices, led to the maintenance of a customs office there, over which Zaccheus seems to have presided.

**3. The Nobleman and the Kingdom**— The local setting of the part of the Parable of the Pounds that relates to a certain nobleman going into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, had its parallel in history. Archelaus, who by the will of his father, Herod

the Great, had been named king of the Jews, set out for Rome to ask of the emperor the confirmation of his royal status. He was opposed by a protest from the people. On the utilization of this circumstance in the parable, Farrar says: "A nobleman going into a far country to receive a kingdom would be utterly unintelligible, had we not fortunately known that this was done both by Archelaus and by Antipas (Jos. Ant. xvii, 9:4). And in the case of Archelaus the Jews had actually sent to Augustus a deputation of fifty, to recount his cruelties and oppose his claims, which, though it failed at the time, was subsequently successful (Josephus, Ant. xvii, 13:2). Philipus defended the property of Archelaus, during his absence, from the encroachments of the Proconsul Sabinus. The magnificent palace which Archelaus had built at Jericho (Jos. Ant. xvii, 13:1) would naturally recall these circumstances to the mind of Jesus, and the parable is another striking example of the manner in which He utilized the most ordinary circumstances around Him, and made them the bases of His highest teachings. It is also another unsuspected indication of the authenticity and truthfulness of the Gospels."

**4. "We Will Not Have this Man to Reign Over Us"** – On this phase of the parable, Trench (*Miracles*, p. 390) very aptly remarks: "Twice before He had gone to receive His kingdom, this very declaration found formal utterance from their lips, – once when they cried to Pilate, 'We have no king but Cæsar'; and again when they remonstrated with him, 'Write not, The King of the Jews' (John 19:15, 21; compare Acts 17:7). But the stricter fulfillment of these words is to be found in the demeanor of the Jews after His ascension, their fierce hostility to Christ in His infant Church (Acts 12:3; 13:45; 14:18; 17:5; 18:6; 22:22; 23:12; 1 Thes. 2:15)."

**5. The Day of the Supper at Bethany** – John places this event as having occurred on the day following Christ's arrival in Bethany, for as we see from 12:12, the triumphal entry into Jerusalem took place on the next day after the supper, and, as stated in the text, Jesus most probably reached Bethany on Friday. The joyous processional into Jerusalem did not occur on the day following Friday, for that was the Jewish Sabbath. Matthew (26:2-13) and Mark (14:1-9) give place to the incident of the supper after the record of the triumphal entry and other events, from which some have drawn the inference that these two writers place the supper two days before the Passover. This inference lacks confirmation. In this matter the chronological order given by John appears to be the true one.

**6. The Family Home at Bethany** – The home of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus appears to have been the usual abiding place of Jesus when He was in Bethany. Undoubtedly He was on terms of very close and affectionate acquaintanceship with all members of the family, even before the miraculous raising of Lazarus from the dead, and, this supremely blessed occurrence must have intensified into worshipful reverence the esteem in which our Lord had been held in that household. As to whether this home was identical with the house of Simon the leper, the scriptural record does not state. John, who gives a fairly detailed account of the supper served by Martha, makes no

mention of Simon or his house. It is noticeable that the synoptic writers say very little about this home in Bethany. Farrar has aptly remarked: "We seem to trace in the Synoptists a special reticence about the family at Bethany. The house in which they take a prominent position is called 'the house of Simon the leper'; Mary is called simply 'a woman' by St. Matthew and St. Mark (Matt. 26:6, 7; Mark 14:3); and St. Luke contents himself with calling Bethany 'a certain village' (Luke 10:38), although he was perfectly aware of the name (Luke 19:29)."

**7. Spikenard Ointment**— This was among the most highly prized of oriental unguents. That with which Mary anointed Jesus is described by Matthew and Mark as "very precious," and by John as "very costly." In the original the adjective "pistic" appears; this is translated by some as meaning "liquid," but by others as signifying "genuine." There were many inferior imitations of the real spikenard, or nard; and we are left without a doubt that Mary's precious gift was of the best. The plant from which the fragrant extract is obtained is a species of bearded grass indigenous in India. Spikenard is mentioned in Song of Solomon 1:12; 4:13, 14.

**8. Hosanna!**— "Hosanna" is a Greek form of the Hebrew expression for "Save us now," or "Save, we pray," which occurs in the original of Psalm 118:25. It occurs nowhere in the English Bible except in the acclamations of the people at Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem, and in the joyous shouts of children in the temple (Matt. 21:9, 15). Note the rendering of the "Hosanna Shout" in the restored Church of Christ in the current dispensation on occasions of particular rejoicing before the Lord (see the *House of the Lord*, pp. 120, 150, 210). "**Hallelujah**," literally rendered, means "Praise ye Jehovah." It occurs in the Greek form "**Alleluia**" in Rev. 19:1, 3, 4, 6.

**9. The First Day in Passion Week**— A comparison of the accounts of the Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem, and of certain events following, as recorded by the three synoptists, shows at least a possibility of discrepancy as to sequence. It appears certain that Jesus visited the temple grounds on the day of the royal advent into the city. From Matthew 21:12 and Luke 19:45 and the context preceding these passages, the inference has been drawn that the second clearing of the temple occurred on the day of the processional entry; while others interpret Mark 11:11 and 15 as meaning that the event took place on a later day. The question is admittedly an open one; and the order of presentation followed in the text is one of convenience of treatment based on rational probability.

## FOOTNOTES

[1039] Matt. 20:17-19; Mark 10:32-34; Luke 18:31-34.

[1040] The earlier predictions were: (1) that spoken shortly before the Transfiguration (Matt. 16:21; Mark 8:31), and (2) that which followed, in Galilee, (Matt. 17:22, 23; Mark 9:31; compare Luke 9:44).

[1041] Matt. 20:20-28; Mark 10:35-45.

[1042] Note 1, end of chapter.

[1043] For earlier lessons on the greatness of humility see chapters 24 and 27; for the significance of the title, Son of Man, see chapter 11 herein.

[1044] Matt. 20:30-34; Mark 10:46-52; Luke 18:35-43.

[1045] See account of the two demoniacs, Matt. 8:28, compare Mark 5:1, Luke 8:27. See also chapter 20 herein.

[1046] Compare Matt. 9:27; 15:22; See chapter 7 herein.

[1047] Luke 19:1-10.

[1048] Note 2, end of chapter.

[1049] Exo. 22:1-9.

[1050] See chapters 24 and 27 herein.

[1051] Luke 19:11-27.

[1052] Note 3, end of chapter.

[1053] Compare Mark 13:34.

[1054] Note 4, end of chapter.

[1055] Comparison of similarities and differences between this parable and that of the Talents (Matt. 25:14-30) will be made in chapter 32, see chapter 32 herein.

[1056] John 12:1-8; Matt. 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9.

[1057] See Exo. 12:1-10; also see chapter 9 herein.

[1058] Note 5, end of chapter.

[1059] Note 6, end of chapter.

[1060] Luke 10:40-42; See chapter 26 herein.

[1061] The better rendering is "cruise" or "flask" instead of "box." See revised version.

[1062] This occurrence must not be confused with that of an earlier anointing of Jesus by a penitent sinner in the house of Simon the Pharisee (Luke 7:36-50) in Galilee. See chapter 18 herein.

[1063] Note 7, end of chapter.

[1064] Three hundred pence or Roman denarii would be approximately equal in value to forty-five dollars.

[1065] Matt. 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:29-44; John 12:12-19.

[1066] Note 8, end of chapter.

[1067] Compare Hab. 2:11.

[1068] The Sunday before Easter is annually celebrated by many Christian sects as Palm Sunday, in commemoration of our Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

[1069] Zech. 9:9.

[1070] John 12:20-26.

[1071] See "House of the Lord," pages 56, 57.

[1072] John records this event in immediate sequence to the Lord's triumphal entry, though without any specific indication of the time of its occurrence.

[1073] Compare 1 Cor. 15:36.

[1074] John 12:27-36.

[1075] Compare John 14:30; 16:11.

[1076] See e.g. Isa. 9:7; Dan. 7:14, 27; Ezek. 37:25.

[1077] Compare John 1:9; 3:19; 8:12; 9:5; 12:46; see chapter 25 herein.

[1078] Acts 1:3.

[1079] Mark 11:11. Note 9, end of chapter.