

the fact that Matthew's Gospel is topical, as opposed to the chronological versions of Mark and Luke, does not help. For, even if for sake of brevity, Matthew puts words in Jairus' mouth on one occasion, which he did not say himself but heard from others on a later occasion, what is to keep Matthew from reporting words that *Jesus* did not say? Or facts that He did not do?

2. Or³ Jairus did say it, in which case his words may be interpreted in a sense that permit them to be a faithful description of the facts as he knew them when he left home in search of Jesus. See PARAPHRASE/HARMONY at this point. Barnes (*Matthew-Mark*, 102) observes:

It is likely that a father, in these circumstances, would use a word as nearly expressing actual death as would be consistent with the fact that she was alive . . . 'My daughter was so sick that she must be by this time dead.'

Augustine, cited by Trench (*Miracles*, 108) commented: "For such was his despair that his desire was rather that she should be brought to life, since he did not think it possible she should be found alive, who was dying when he left her."

Bengel, cited by Trench (*op cit.*) thinks that "this he said at a guess." Trench himself concludes:

When the father left his child, she was at the latest gasp; he knew life was ebbing so fast when he quitted her side, that she could scarcely be living still; and yet, having no certain notices of her death, he was perplexed whether to speak of her as departed or not, and thus at one moment would express himself in one language, at the next in another.

With this latter suggested harmonization agree also the latter words of Mark (5:23) "that she may be made well and live." Thus, Mark, while describing the daughter as "at the point of death," also intimates Jairus' anxiety and awareness that perhaps, even as he spoke, his only begotten had passed on. This latter harmonization also leaves Matthew's reporting intact without assuming abbreviation, and reveals even more poignantly the truest psychological expression of the father.* The problem is most easily resolved, therefore, not by examining Matthew's reporting but by insight into the contradictory feelings in the heart of Jairus.

But come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live. How many times had this ruler of the synagogue seen Jesus heal just this way, by putting His hands upon the sick? **She shall live:** he asks for more than the common rabbi's blessing; he demands life! These are words of faith, although not of so great faith as that of the centurion, since Jairus could not conceive of Jesus as being able to speak the word from where He stood, to heal his daughter. (Cf. 8:8) Nor did Jesus require him to accept such a great test of his confidence in His power, as He did of the other Capernaum official (Jn. 4:46b-53) Instead

9:19 Jesus arose, and followed him, and so did His disciples. Imagine the scene: Jesus, having acknowledged the warm reception awaiting Him at the waterfront, was talking with the gathered crowds. Jairus interrupted to make his frantic plea. Now Jesus and the Twelve get moving through the crowds following the lead of Jairus. But the intensely curious people whose chief interest was the Lord do not necessarily open up a path in their midst to permit easy passage for this emergency. By the time the immediate party of Jesus arrive in town it becomes almost impossible to make rapid headway through the people (Cf. Mk. 5:24; Lk. 8:42b especially in Greek: *synéblibon* and *sunépnigon*) crowding the narrow streets.

Why and how such a large crowd could be waiting for Jesus on the beach as He disembarked is easily explained by two facts:

1. They could be easily amassed at the beach long before He arrived, since the familiar boat in which He rode (Peter's) could be seen coming across the lake long before it was pulled up on the western shore.
2. The explanation of the excitement of the people and their desire to welcome Him back is found in the unabated excitement of the preceding day, which, according to Mark and Luke, was a moment of great popularity for Jesus. (See on 8:23) Jesus had literally sailed away to escape this excitement. Now the people wait for Him, gather around Him and welcome His return. No wonder that, upon His first call to go elsewhere, they crowd around Him, reluctant to let Him out of their sight.

But in so doing, they impede His progress and unwittingly frustrate Jairus as much as humanly tolerable!

II. THE ROBE OF JESUS DISCREDITED (9:20-22)

9:20 And behold, a woman, who had an issue of blood twelve years, came behind Him. Here was one person in that

vast throng that was not the least bit curious about what would happen at Jairus' home. Her desperation and determination drove all other considerations from her mind: she was concentrating on her one last chance to be well after years of failure. Her hemorrhage must be seen from the Jewish legal standpoint to be able to appreciate the measures she adopted for her healing here. She was:

1. Banned in a practical way from worship of God in the temple, since the hemorrhage rendered her Levitically unclean (Lev. 15:19-31) and contaminating to all she touched (Num. 19:22). So she dared not venture into the Temple with the other worshippers (Num. 19:20; Lev. 15:31; cf. God's symbolic use of exactly this woman's situation as an expression of His deep disgust for Israel: Ezek. 36:17).
2. Practically excluded from normal marriage relations (Lev. 16:24).
3. She should not even have been in this crowd, for she brought ceremonial uncleanness upon all she touched.
4. Practically penniless (Mk. 5:26) having spent more on medicines and doctors than on essentials. Until medicine was developed into a science, its practice in those days bordered more upon witchcraft, ignorance and superstition than upon knowledge. (See Edersheim's description of typical prescriptions offered for this particular case, *Life*, I, 620) No cure, for which she paid, worked.
5. Decidedly incurable and growing worse (Mk. 5:26; Lk. 8:43).
6. Unbelievably desperate after waging this futile battle for twelve years against an illness that left her without her strength, her social intercourse, her worship.

Is it any surprise then, when we view her plight from this standpoint, that she should approach Jesus this way?

She came behind Him, and touched the border of His garment: for she said within herself, If I do but touch His garment, I shall be made whole. Why would this woman wish to touch just the border of Jesus' garment rather than ask Him directly for help?

1. Having already dealt with so much superstition that passed for medicine, as well as being Jewish, hence, affected by the views Jews held toward the sacred fringe (see below), she may have held a somewhat superstitious view of His clothes. It is presumed she was Jewish, only in the absence of a declaration that she was gentile, something that the gospel writers would probably have not failed to notice.

2. The nature of her illness might cause her in fitting modesty to seek a "private miracle." After all, she could not go to request Jesus' help in the synagogues. And, in private, He was nearly always surrounded by His close men friends, His disciples. She must meet Him somehow while He was going from one place to another. But because of her particular disease, she could hardly force herself to make her need public.
3. But her Jewish background would teach her that she would contaminate everyone she touched, hence she would most naturally try to touch Jesus without making anyone else aware of it. But did she not believe that she would not also render Jesus impure? Had she heard about Jesus' touching the leper without great concern for His own purity? (Mt. 8:3) Or did she even consider these questions? Her understanding is certainly conditioned by precisely what she had heard about Him. (Mk. 5:27)
4. Could it be that her humiliating poverty and ignorance of Jesus' gracious willingness to help without charge, caused her to try to sneak this unpaid blessing away from Him?
5. Could it be that her desperation, brought about by years of semi-invalidism, led her to conclude this method to be the only one she dared risk? It is impossible for us to know perfectly the mental state with which she now approached the Lord.

These questions only superficially examine the woman's situation from the naturalistic point of view. Jesus' words (9:22) are decisive in declaring that her real motive for coming to Him was her faith. These words (9:21), however tinged with ignorance they may seem to us, are the expression of her faith! Jesus respected even this amount of trust she had in Him, in order to bring her to fuller knowledge and more intelligent faith.

The border of His garment. The westerner might ask why not merely touch Jesus while standing erect, or perhaps touch a fold of His robe without stooping to take hold especially of the border? But to the Jews the border of the outer garment was especially meaningful, since God had ordered them to make blue tassels at the four corners of their outer cloak as a reminder to them of their holiness unto God as His people committed to do His will. (Num. 15:37-41; Dt. 22:12) Arndt-Gingrich (449), translating *kráspedon*, put "edge, border, hem of a garment," as first definition, but include the "tassel which the Israelite was obligated to wear," with the proviso: "de-

pending on how strictly Jesus followed the Mosaic law, and also upon the way in which *kráspedon* was understood by the authors and first readers of the gospels." If the tassels are meant, they were fastened at the four corners of a large square of cloth with a hole in the middle for the head. When put on, this was folded over the shoulders with half in front, half in back much like a poncho. With tassels on the two front corners and the two back, it would be easy for anyone to touch one of the back tassels without the wearer feeling the touch. (See Edersheim, *Life*, I, 623; who thinks that exact knowledge about the nature of Jesus' outer garment is not necessary, since the law would be fulfilled when the tassels were attached to the corners of any garment of any design.) Since the Pharisees attached great importance to the tassel by enlarging theirs (probably just another case of ostentation to gain special merit for obvious piety), this woman may have decided that the robe of Jesus possessed special power that she might receive by merely touching it, thus without disturbing Him or rendering public the nature of her affliction.

I shall be made whole. Looking at her actions as the expression of great faith, rather than half-enlightened superstition, Edersheim (*Life*, I, 626) suggests that she had thought about Jesus as One whose word, spoken at a distance had brought healing, and he concludes:

What strong faith to expect that even contact with him, the bare touch of His garment, would carry such Divine Power as to make⁴³ her 'whole' . . . She believed so much in Him, that she felt as if it needed not personal appeal to Him; she felt so deeply the hindrances to her making request of Himself, that believing so strongly in Him, she deemed it sufficient to touch, not even Himself, but that which in itself had no power or value, except as it was in contact with His Divine Person.

9:22 But Jesus turning and seeing her said . . . The process by which Jesus singled her out among the crowd is here greatly abbreviated as Matthew omits what Mark and Luke record as a short conversation noted in the PARAPHRASE-HARMONY.

One problem, noted by many commentators but left unsolved by most and unsatisfactorily handled by the rest, is: did this miracle occur with the foreknowledge and will of Jesus? That is, did Jesus see her coming, perceive her heart and need and deliberately heal her when she touched His

garment? It is easy to assert His omniscience on the basis of other texts, but that would not solve the question raised by this text, since there were certain things Jesus chose not to know, such as the time of His return (Mt. 24:36) and the exact quantity of faith of the centurion (Mt. 8:10 on which see Notes) or the unbelief of the Nazarenes (Mk. 6:6), for by both He was genuinely surprised. Unfortunately, our text does not state when Jesus knew the woman's purpose or whether He exercised His will to heal her. The Evangelists do note clearly that the Lord was immediately aware that power had gone from Him to heal (Mk. 5:30; Lk. 8:46). Further, His deliberate gesture of looking around to see her who (*ideîn tēn*) had done it (Mk. 5:32) and His question: "Who touched me and my garments?" can also be harmonized just as much with a desire to bring this hidden healing before the crowd as with a genuine desire for information. (Other illustrations where Jesus knew the answer to questions He asked in order to teach or clarify an issue: Cf. Lk. 9:47 with Mk. 9:33; Jn. 6:5, 6; Lk. 24:17)

If He asks for information, in which case His personal knowledge and will were not involved in the healing, how then was the woman healed? It is answered by some that God the Father in His absolute omniscience knew the woman's intention and approach, and so healed her by power from Jesus, whose human attention was deliberately concentrated elsewhere, i.e. upon Jairus and his needs. Jesus, then, aware of the healing but not immediately of the identity of the healed, stopped to discern who it was. Turning His divine attention to this question, by omniscience He knows who it was before she came forward.

These suggestions are admittedly not without problems, due both to the deliberate limitation of information shown by the Holy Spirit as well as by our ignorance of the true nature of the God-Man, Jesus of Nazareth.

Jesus' purpose in asking the questions was not to embarrass the poor woman, but to bring to light the facts of her case, her miraculous healing and to correct what misconceptions she had about His willingness to heal her or about the power that accomplished it. His question, asked in masculine gender (Lk. 8:45: *tis ho hapsámenós mou;*), leaves her free to admit what she had done. But her fear and

trembling, noticed by both Mark and Luke, arise perhaps from fear that He was offended by what she had done in secretly taking a blessing while contaminating Him by her touch or that He might take back the blessing, leaving her thus forever hopeless after knowing an instant of perfect health. (Cf. 2 Kg. 5:20-27)

But why did Jesus stop to point her out before the crowd, even though it must certainly embarrass her? The primary motive was His concern for her. He stopped and took time to concentrate all of His precious time, energy and attention upon this one human soul, for this was HER hour of need. Then, He must do this out of concern for the crowd and for His own honor. Her desire to hide the cure was cheating both her and the other people of the joy in knowing what Jesus desired to communicate both to her and all men. Her desire to hide was also withholding the thanks and honor due Him. Superstition could arise from this incident insinuating that Jesus' robe itself possessed magical powers quite independent of His knowledge and will. So several reasons suggest themselves to explain Jesus' actions:

1. Jesus wanted to prevent the misconception that there might be some magic power in His garments. Plummer (*Luke*, 236) summarizes: "It was the grasp of her faith, not of her hand, that wrought the cure." It was her confidence in Him that healed her, not magic or superstitious reverence for a tassell Jesus Himself discredited His own robe, leaving no place for sacred relics to be specially venerated in His religion.

This incident was definitely not Jewish magic. (See Edersheim, *Life*, II, Appendix XVI, 775) Nor was it that practiced by Asians or westerners of a period shortly later when the Apostles in the name of Jesus combatted those very forms of the black arts, condemning those practices in no uncertain terms. However, some of their miracles, comment Conybeare and Howson, (*Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, 372), were accommodated to the peculiar forms of sin, superstition, and ignorance they were required to oppose. The narrative of what was done by St. Paul at Ephesus (Acts 19:11, 12) should be compared with St. Peter's miracles at Jerusalem (Act. 5:12-16). . . . Though the change was usually accomplished on the speaking of a word, intermediate agency was sometimes employed; . . . (Jn. 9:6, 7). The hem of

Christ's garment was made effectual to the healing of a poor sufferer and the conviction of the bystanders. So on this occasion garments were made the means of communication of a healing power to those who were at a distance, whether they were possessed with evil spirits, or afflicted with ordinary diseases. Such effects, thus publicly manifested, were a signal refutation of the charms and amulets and mystic letters of Ephesus. Yet was this no encouragement to blind superstition. When the suffering woman was healed by touching the hem of the garment, the Savior . . . said, 'Virtue is gone out of *me*.' And here at Ephesus we are reminded that it was God who 'wrought miracles by the hands of Paul' (ver. 11), and that 'the name,' not of Paul, but 'of *the Lord Jesus*, was magnified' (ver. 17).

Jesus needed to demonstrate His certain knowledge of the miracle. To Him this was no surprise, even though done by secret, unseen power. He was unsatisfied to appear to have healed her impersonally by His garments. It was as if He said to her: "I want you to see my face."

2. To confirm as hers what she had already taken, Jesus here states His own free, generous giving of it: "Go in peace, and be healed of your disease." (Mk. 5:34b). By so doing He removes any doubt in her mind about His willingness to heal and forgive her of any offense she may have caused Him by using the approach she did.
3. By lovingly restoring her to fellowship, love and usefulness, He opens the door for her to leave her secret admiration and become His disciple openly. Edersheim (*Life*, I, 627) remarks approvingly: "The Lord did not, as Pseudo-orthodoxy would prescribe it, disappoint her faith for the weakness of its manifestation. To have disappointed her faith, which was born of such high thought of Him, would have been to deny Himself." By addressing her, "**Daughter,**" He renders this stranger, alone in the crowd, a member of His own spiritual family in fellowship with God (cf. Mt. 12:46-50). This tender, endearing term does not indicate whether she were older or younger than Jesus. It could be justly a friendly greeting by which He assures her of His own love and concern for her in contrast to her fear of His reproof.

Your faith has made you whole. (Other examples: Lk. 7:50; 17:19; 18:42; Ac. 3:16; 14:9) McGarvey (*Matthew-Mark*, 295) repeats what should be axiomatic in Christianity: that faith saves a man "not by the mere fact that he believes, but by that which it leads him to do." This woman, going only on what she had heard of Jesus, formulated this plan and carried it out, even though it involved great ignorance on her part about His mercy and willingness to help. But, even as Jesus clarified the issue, it was not her plan that saved her, but it was her plan that brought her to Jesus, who, on the basis of her faith, saved her. How much more can our faith save us as we follow Jesus' clearly revealed plan of salvation whereby we come to Him to be saved? Praise God for His mercy in not leaving us to formulate our own plans out of ignorance! Now we can mold our plans according to His gracious revelation.

How had her faith made her whole? Her subjective trust in an objective supernatural power caused her to bring herself into contact with that power. Many had touched Jesus that day (Mk. 5:31), but nothing happened to them, even though many had diseases just as obstinate and needing miraculous help as hers. Her faith and determination to express it singled her out, so Jesus healed her only. Other days there would be other people (Mt. 14:36), but this day there was but one woman who showed this faith.

Hē pistis sou sēsōkēn se is ambiguous. See the examples above cited in which this phrase ("Your faith has saved you.") is sometimes used with those whom Jesus had healed; at other times He says it to healthy, forgiven sinners. Perhaps Jesus deliberately chose this expression to convey two ideas instead of one: "Your faith has brought you both healing and forgiveness." Whatever offense she might have brought Jesus by secretly trying to take a blessing without His express approval or by defiling Him by her touch (according to her view of defilement), is all forgiven. But the emphasis here is on the healing, since the lady thought, "I shall be made well" (*sōthēsomai* is the same verb, *sōzein*, Jesus used to declare her salvation, *sēsōken*).

And the woman was made whole from that hour. Mark and Luke time her healing as taking place when she touched His robe, since she immediately felt the change in her body that the healing produced, a fact which she apparently related later (Lk. 8:47). Matthew's general statement (*apò tēs hōras ekeinēs*) must not be interpreted so as to contradict the others, as if the healing depended upon Jesus' words here related and not upon the release of healing power Jesus Himself noticed earlier (Lk. 8:46; Mk. 5:30), an impression

however distinctly conveyed by the RSV in that committee's choice of the word "instantly."

III. THE ROLE OF JESUS DECIDED

Jesus' journey, interrupted by the healing of the woman, was filled with delay that must have been agonizing to this father who "just knew" that every second counted. His understanding and faith could not rise to the challenge imposed by the many hindrances these must overcome. Just then, right at this extremely tense moment for Jairus, when the hurrying procession, bringing the Master to heal his daughter, had ground to a halt by seemingly endless delays, is about to get started again, right at that moment, the word came from his house that his worst fears are now reality: they are too late! (Mk. 5:35; Lk. 8:49) It would have taken almost superhuman effort to keep him from going into shock there, but Jesus' words provided just the needed psychological power to balance the effect of that crushing message and give him hope: "Do not fear; only believe and she shall be well" (Lk. 8:50; note here again *sōthēsetai*). Feel the irony of the situation revealed by the words of the messenger: "Your daughter is dead: why trouble the Teacher any further?" They had had faith enough to believe Jesus could heal the sick, but not enough to believe He could raise the dead. This practical unbelief on their part could become contagious, infecting also the ruler himself. This news drove his crisis of faith to the very limit. Perhaps the very confidence of Jesus' manner when He encouraged Jairus to believe, plus the fact that Jesus calmly resumed His journey to Jairus' house, gave the man respite from the pressure of the immediate disaster of the apparently unchangeable fact of his daughter's death. Edersheim (*Life*, I, 630) notes accurately the completely passive role that Jairus now plays from this point to the end. Whereas before, he had led Jesus toward the house, now Jesus takes complete charge of the whole scene, making on-the-spot decisions and giving orders. (Mk. 5:37-40; Lk. 8:51) Jairus' faith was threatened for its very existence, but Jesus would not despise or quench it. He was ministering also to Jairus in his greatest moment of need.

Jesus' role in the picture is no longer that of a Healer. If He continues another step further toward Jairus' house, He must do so as Victor over death itself. If He admits that the common sense course for Jairus is to cease troubling the Teacher, to let Him go His way, then Jesus will have quailed in face of death. His human contemporaries could have excused Him, for what other rabbi could challenge Death? However much we may have loved Him and honored His message,

we could never worship Him as complete Master over all problems that it is our lot as human beings to suffer. (Cf. Heb. 2:9, 14-18) The death notice was for Jairus a crisis in faith, but the somber message was even more for Jesus a crisis in His self-revelation.

IV. REASON FOR JOY DISPUTED (9:23, 24)

9:23 **And when Jesus came into the ruler's house**, He had already commanded nine of the Apostles to remain behind, bringing with Him only Peter, John and James. His purpose was obviously to keep the crowd under control and out of His way, since "He allowed no one to follow Him" (Mk. 5:37) or when He got to the house, "He permitted no one to enter with Him, except Peter, John and James and the father and mother of the maiden." (Lk. 8:51) His choice of the nine Apostles to remain with the crowd was perhaps to serve as an example of self-discipline. Physically, the nine men just by standing still easily blocked the passage to all who tried to follow Jesus. This first step was necessary in order for Jesus to secure the quiet and dignity He desired to surround the resurrection of Jairus' daughter.

When Jesus came into the ruler's house, He saw the flute-players and the crowd making a tumult. The funeral began even the same day as the death. The **flute-players** and **tumult** represent a different custom of mourning the dead than ours. Our custom demands silence of respect for the dead; theirs calls for release of pent-up emotions through loud mourning. This led naturally to the attitude that considered mourning more genuine, more deeply felt, the louder and more prolonged it was continued. But even human grief knows its natural limits unless it is artificially bolstered by sentimental music of hired musicians, as the flute-players here, or by the emotional reminiscences skillfully repeated by the semi-professional "wailing women." (Cf. 2 Chron. 35:25; Jer. 9:17-22; 16:5-9; Ezek. 24:15-24; Amos 5:16, 17 and perhaps also Acts 9:37-39) So when Matthew describes the funeral as a **tumult**, he is merely saying that it was a good funeral proceeding in good order according to the custom of the day. Mark and Luke describe the tumult as consisting of "weeping and loud wailing."

9:24 **He said, Give place.** (*anachōreite*). This command may be taken in two different ways, both of which could be Jesus' meaning:

1. "Stand back, make room!" This then is Jesus' request merely to pass through the crowd that simply by their presence now blocked the entrance to the room where Jairus' daughter lay.

2. But taken in its stronger sense "to leave, to withdraw," Jesus is saying nothing less than "You may leave now, folks: the funeral's over!" These shocking words call dramatic attention to what He is about to do.

Naturally, at this time all attention would be drawn from the mourning to the sudden return of the master of the house, Jairus, and the precipitate entrance of Jesus, for many in the house knew that Jesus had been sent for. They also knew that other messengers had been dispatched to Jairus to inform him of the death of the daughter, counselling him not to bother Jesus further. Now Jesus enters the room and literally takes over. The seeming imperiousness of His manner is only apparent because, besides this brusque command ("Depart"), He intentionally began speaking by pricking their curiosity: "Why do you make a tumult and weep? Do not weep; the child is not dead but sleeping." (Mk. 5:39; Lk. 8:52)

For the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth. Patient with their ignorance of His power and His plans, He is giving them opportunity to react in quite another manner than they do. His enigmatic declaration was intended to stir them to reflection about His meaning. Thus, if they were disposed to respectful attention to Him and His purposes, they were about to become the witnesses of a resurrection from the dead. Instead they responded stupidly with scorn and insults, unable to see in His words anything more than obvious insensibility to the parents' tragedy in this moment of loss.

These words, however, morally commit Jesus to a position of gross imposture or else to one of highest integrity. For if the little girl were not really, literally dead, then Jesus must be charged with imposture, allowing to be believed what never occurred. The parents and disciples believed the daughter to be dead (Lk. 8:49; Mk. 5:35), but Jesus did nothing to correct that impression except to assert that she slept. Then upon raising her, He said nothing that would correct the distinct impression that He had just brought a person once actually dead, back to life.

Not dead but sleepeth are words, then, not intended to contradict the literal state of the little girl, but to correct the common view these people had of death. They had perhaps viewed her death as a cessation of existence for both body and soul (a view not unlike that held by the Sadducees), whereas Jesus affirms, contrarily, that she is very much alive elsewhere and can be recalled as easily as one is awakened out of sleep. Or perhaps they held that she was permanently dead—at least until the resurrection (a more Pharisean view)

and there was nothing now to do but resign oneself to that fact and mourn her loss. But Jesus is objecting that she is NOT dead permanently so much as asleep in death from which He shall wake her, (Other illustrations of death described as a sleep: Jn. 11:11-14; Ac. 7:60; I Cor. 15:6, 18; I Th. 4:13-17; 2 Pe. 3:4)

They laughed Him to scorn. This sentence has the greatest value as circumstantial evidence for the reality of the miracle that follows, since they evince the true psychological reaction of a qualified group of people sure both of the purpose of their wailing and of the apparent inappropriateness of Jesus' claim that the damsel was not dead. They were all more than sure that she was dead. (Lk. 8:53) This psychological reaction, though blamable from one standpoint (see above), is exactly what one would expect under the circumstances. The presence of the parents, who would be the last to surrender to the heart-rending conclusion that their only little lamb had gone, are proof against any supposition that she was in any state other than literal, physical death. (But even if it were a deep coma after whatever disease had so reduced the girl, as Barclay [*Matthew* I, 353] suggests, would she have been so quickly revived to full vigor and health? So it is impossible to remove the supernatural from this event.) No, her death was a fact the certainty of which these friends and neighbors thought it madness to doubt!

McGarvey (*Matthew-Mark*, 85) with his usual clear insight, detects in this phrase one of the best evidences for the authenticity of the entire account:

If it were a pretended death and revival, we would expect to see an anxiety on the part of Jesus to make it appear that the girl was dead, and a disposition on the part of the unbelievers present to question this fact. But the reverse is true: it is the unbelievers who insist that the girl is dead, while Jesus alone raises a question about it. Perhaps the chief object of the remark "She is not dead, but sleepeth," was to bring forth from the inmates of the house, who had the best opportunity to know the fact, a more emphatic affirmation that she was certainly dead.

Without intending to do so, then, these scorers among the mourners established this fact of a real resurrection from the dead beyond all doubt. By their scorn, in retrospect after the resurrection, they had shut their own mouths and, as a result, really shut the mouths of all future doubters of the reality of this marvellous resurrection.

Not dead but sleepeth. These words, that were intended to

stimulate joy and eager anticipation of the mighty act of God through the resurrection of Jairus' daughter, were disputed, scorned and rejected. Jesus had tried to communicate this hope to all in Jairus' house that day, but they failed to grasp it. This is fatal, for they missed seeing the great event that all mankind has longed to look into: *real resurrection from the dead*. They failed because Jesus' words were a bit difficult and they refused to rise to the challenge of understanding Him. They thought they were justly condemning Him, but by His choice of words, He had already let them judge and condemn themselves. He was not on trial: they were. (Study this same psychology of Jesus, Jn. 6:25-69.)

V. THE RESURRECTION OF JAIRUS' DAUGHTER (9:25, 26)

9:25 **The crowd was put forth** not only for the reasons suggested above, but also for the following:

1. Scorn and criticism sterilize the attention, drawing it away from the Father onto self-defense. Perhaps Jesus wanted to concentrate His own heart upon God who raises the dead, rather than waste time and dissipate energy in defending Himself or arguing further.
2. He desired not credulity, but quiet. Faith could come later on the basis of the evidence here produced, but people must be in a proper spirit to observe what he does. This calls for the dignity of silence, not the confusion and tumult of mourning. Jesus put the crowd outside (Mk. 5:40), not because He wanted an indispensable atmosphere of faith, as if disbelief could hinder the miracle.
3. He did not desire the publicity that would be certain to follow. The larger the group, the more difficult it would be to keep the matter quiet. For reasons for this attitude, see below on 9:26. This harmonizes perfectly with the strict injunction given the parents not to publish this miracle.
4. Perhaps the large group of professional mourners, some of them perhaps objecting out of self-interest, having been hired for the occasion, would have actually, physically hindered Jesus from, as they put it, "imposing upon the parents, since no one can raise the dead!" But, this suggestion is weak, since Jesus could have overpowered them by any manner He chose, had they attempted to stop Him.
5. Considering the temper of the crowd, Jesus' action assured the few chosen witnesses the best opportunity to observe what actually took place. This quiet enabled them to hear what

was said, so that they would know that what He did, He did not by magic but by authority. So doing, Jesus avoided misconceptions circulated by means of wild stories started by a mob of half-hysterical people who only thought they saw or heard this or that.

He entered in, i.e. into the room where the child was, taking five unimpeachable witnesses (Mk. 5:40; Lk. 8:51) These future Apostles needed to witness the fact in order to give a careful account of it later to the world. (Compare the account of Peter's raising Dorcas from the dead, Ac. 9:36-42, wondering what effect this resurrection had on Peter as he walked alone into the room where Dorcas lay dead!) The parents of all people could not be deceived or bribed to promote the publication of a falsehood regarding a matter that touched them so closely and so intimately.

He took her by the hand. To touch a corpse or be touched by a woman afflicted with a hemorrhage or to touch a leper (see on 8:3) would have involved Jesus in ceremonial defilement. But here, as always, He imparted cleansing, healing and life by His touch, removing all cause of defilement in the person He touched. He was the one true exception to the Law of defilement, that was written only for people without such supernatural powers, who, rather than helping those they touched, only became defiled themselves, leaving two defiled persons. Jesus always left two clean persons, whole, cleansed and alive.

The damsel arose when Jesus took her by the hand and called to her, just as He would if He were waking her up from sleep. But this was not sleep: "her spirit returned." (Lk. 8:55) On the basis of the above considerations, we have to conclude that this is a real resurrection. For Jesus, Lord of both nature and miracles, both sleep and death are no mysteries, for He has experienced both. As simply as Jairus had for twelve years gone in to awaken his daughter out of sleep, so Jesus instantly raised her out of death. For to Jesus, both the sleeping and the dead can be awakened. Who then is this who calls the dead to life? But no sooner had this twelve year old, now full of all the life and vigor, bounced out of bed and walked over to her amazed mother and daddy, than Jesus commanded them to provide her something to eat. (Mk. 5:43; Lk. 8:55). Why?

1. Jesus is so reasonable. He ordered her parents to give her, not the Law and the prophets, but food. "Jairus, here is your little sweetheart, now you take care of her: give her something to eat!" This marvelous Jesus has just robbed Death of its victim and yet still thinks about a meal for the little girl.

2. Seeing the parents overcome with amazement, Jesus may have commanded that bread be given her also to demonstrate that they were beholding no ghost, no apparition, but a real person, once dead, now returned to the concrete reality of human existence. (Cf. Lk. 24:41-43 and perhaps Ac. 10:41) Thus, this simple demand breaks the stunned, awed silence caused by this direct contact with the supernatural, bringing the on-lookers back down to the natural. Jesus could have provided miraculous bread too, but He required the parents to do their part by using natural means they had at hand.

9:26 And the fame hereof went forth into all that land despite all Jesus could do to keep this from happening. Some might wonder how He could have expected otherwise by the incredible tactics He used: He stopped a funeral, drove out the mourners, while His nine disciples kept another great crowd waiting for Him to return from the funeral at Jairus' house. (Mk. 5:24, 37) Human curiosity, about what took place in that bed room, could know no bounds, especially when Jairus' daughter reappeared later, alive and healthy! But Jesus forbade only Jairus and his wife to publish the story (Mk. 5:42; Lk. 8:56), since they especially were in positions of authority as eye-witnesses of good repute and would have been only too willing to spread the joyful tidings far and wide. What the other neighbors and bystanders do is no concern of Jesus, for He knows that if His own disciples and the parents do not spread the story, the sensation reported here by Matthew will die out. Some might object: Why bother to hush the story when it represents so powerful an evidence of Jesus' authority over death itself?

1. Because, unless the news is quieted, people could conceivably begin bringing Jesus requests for resurrection for all their dead. This would not only be unwise on their part, but it would further hinder Jesus' real ministry to earth. Men too often tried to use Jesus for selfish motives. He had not come to build up a healing ministry or raise all earth's dead yet, but to reveal God. His miracles of healing were to demonstrate God's compassion and identify Himself as God's Revealer. McGarvey (*Matthew-Mark*, 297) makes the interesting observation about how remarkable it is "that we read not of a single instance in which Jesus was requested to raise the dead: and the fact may be accounted for in part by this charge of privacy, indicating he did not wish to be importuned for this exercise of His power."

2. Because, unless the story is suppressed, political excitement could reach a fever pitch, since mistaken views of worldly messiahs would be attached to Jesus' name, blocking all progress for His spiritual work. Worse still, bloody riots could result as the patriots, primarily the Zealots, tried to force Jesus to be their king and lead them against the Romans.
3. Plummer (*Luke*, 238) suggests another reason: "It was given more probably for the parents' sake, to keep them from letting the effect of this great blessing evaporate in vain-glorious gossip. To thank God for it at home would be far more profitable than talking about it abroad."

Trench (*Miracles*, 113) sees an ascending scale in the glory of the three records of resurrection from the dead: here a girl just died; the son of the widow of Nain on the road for burial; then Lazarus already dead for four days. Then he continues: "Immeasurably more stupendous than all these, will be the wonder of that hour, when all the dead of old, who will have lain, some of them for many thousand years, in the dust of death, shall be summoned from and shall leave their graves at the same quickening voice (John 5:28, 29)."

FACT QUESTIONS

1. To what city did Jesus return from the freeing of the Gadarene demoniacs across the Sea of Galilee? How do you know this?
2. What was the position in the Jewish community occupied by Jairus?
3. Harmonize the accounts of Mark and Luke with that of Matthew in regard to the actual request of Jairus in relationship to the actual state of the little girl: was she living or dead? Did Jairus want Jesus to come to heal or to raise her?
4. List several other miracles that Jesus had accomplished in this city prior to this time which may have brought Jairus and the sick woman to their position of dependence upon Jesus to help them in this their critical hour.
5. Explain how the woman's faith healed her, showing how this harmonizes with the fact that it was Jesus' power that did it.
6. How did Jesus address the woman?
7. Describe the desperate case presented to Jesus by this woman, not only the physical malady but also the social, personal, religious and economic effects of her disease.
8. Describe her plan borne of desperation by which she hoped to be healed and how she carried it out.

9. Describe the scene changes from the first request of Jairus until Jesus actually arrived at Jairus' house.
10. Explain the presence of the flute players and the mourners so soon after the death of the maiden.
11. Explain the words of Jesus: "The little girl is not dead, just sleeping."
12. Was the little girl really dead? On what basis do you answer as you do?
13. How many persons actually witnessed the resurrection of Jairus' daughter? Name them.
14. Explain how it was possible for people actually to be expecting Jesus' return from Gergesa so as to be crowding around on the beach as He landed.
15. Describe the political situation in Galilee that renders comprehensible Jesus' requirement that people not tell others about His miracles.

Section 21

JESUS GIVES SIGHT TO TWO BLIND MEN AND FREES A DUMB DEMONIAK

TEXT: 9:27-34

27. And as Jesus passed by from thence, two blind men followed him, crying out, and saying, Have mercy on us, thou son of David.
28. And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They say unto him, Yea, Lord.
29. Then he touched their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it done unto you.
30. And their eyes were opened. And Jesus strictly charged them, saying, See that no man know it.
31. But they went forth, and spread abroad his fame in all that land.
32. And as they went forth, behold, there was brought to him a dumb man possessed with a demon.
33. And when the demon was cast out, the dumb man spake: and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel.
34. But the Pharisees said, By the prince of the demons casteth he out demons.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- a. Why did these two blind men address Jesus as "Son of David"? What do you think they mean to imply by using the expression? Why not just call Him "Jesus of Nazareth" or something similar?
- b. Why did Jesus ask the blind men if they believed He was able to give them their sight? Would it have not been simpler just to heal them without this questioning?
- c. Why would Jesus forbid these men to tell of their healing?
- d. What do you suppose was the justification these men used for disobeying Jesus' clear orders?
- e. To what would you attribute the fact that Jesus' ministry appealed to a pair of old blind men here, some sick folk there, publicans and other sinners elsewhere, but was not received by the Pharisees? Was it because His evidence did not meet the critical investigation of these erudite scholars?
- f. Why did the Pharisees make such a violent charge as this statement that Jesus' power is attributable to some secret league with Satan? What motivated the charge? What could they have hoped to accomplish by voicing it?
- g. Why could not the Pharisees criticize Jesus' other miracles on the same basis, crediting them to the same satanic power?

PARAPHRASE AND HARMONY

As Jesus was on His way somewhere else, two blind men following along behind Him, shouting, "Take pity on us, Son of David!"

When Jesus had entered a house, these two came indoors too and approached Him. Jesus asked them, "Do you men believe that I have the power to make you see?"

"Yes, Lord," they said, "We do."

Then He touched their eyes with His fingers, saying as He did, "On the basis of your trust, the miracle will be done for you."

And suddenly their sight was restored. Then Jesus sternly warned them, "See that no one hears about this!"

But as soon as they went outside, they spread this all over the countryside!

Later, as Jesus and His group were leaving, some people brought Him a dumb man who was demon-possessed. Jesus evicted the demon and immediately the man recovered his speech. Simply amazed, the onlookers remarked, "We have never seen anything like it in Israel!"

But the Pharisees growled, "He throws out these demons by secret agreement with Satan himself, the demons' leader!"

SUMMARY

En route somewhere Jesus encountered two blind men who sought healing. Seemingly ignoring their request, Jesus entered a house. Persistently, the two came in also. Jesus challenged their faith. Receiving a positive response, Jesus healed them and ordered secrecy. However they disobeyed by telling it everywhere. On another occasion Jesus cast out the demon from a dumb man, freeing him thus to speak. The crowds responded with amazed praise; the Pharisees responded by attributing Jesus' power to Satan's permission.

NOTES

9:27 **And as Jesus passed by from thence**, i.e. coming away from Jairus' house. **Two blind men followed him** as well as men deprived of their sight can follow. Perhaps they were led by friends as they make their appeal. This is one of several such requests made of Jesus (see Mt. 12:22; 20:30; 21:14; Jn. 9) among many alluded to (Lk. 4:18; 7:21, 22). Matthew's narrative of this and the following incidents seem almost devoid of color and significance, being related only in the barest of factual detail. But his purpose is very clear when this section is viewed in the context of the entire ninth chapter, in which he describes how opposition began to mount to Jesus' ministry.

1. Jesus was accused of blasphemy (9:2-8)
2. Then He was accused of immorality for receiving as intimate friends those whom no respected person would consider as intimate companions (9:9-13)
3. Thereafter the Lord was subtly accused of not being holy enough, since His disciples apparently with His approval did not follow those forms that expressed holiness (9:14-17)
4. When He tried to comfort the mourners, family and friends in Jairus' house, telling them the little girl was not dead, but sleeping, people accused Him of madness by scorning His revelation. (9:24)
5. Here, in an accusation less obvious, and certainly more subtle than the out-spoken remarks of others, is the attitude of the two blind men, when healed, that regards Jesus as anything less than a real Lord. They disobey His clear command. (See on 9:30)
6. Last, the Pharisees take up the jealous cry, accusing Jesus of being Satan's ally. (9:34)

In each case, Matthew has shown Jesus' masterful response to the accusations, except in these last two, unless verses 35-38 be so con-

strued. In the case of the unwanted publicity created by the healed blind men, there was little Jesus could do or say to deal with it, except plunge into more vigorous work to meet the needs of the people who came to Him as a result of His fame, which, in fact, He did (Mt. 9:35-38). In the case of the calumny raised by the Pharisees, Matthew has reserved a full and final answer for a later section (12:22-37), so he did not record any answer Jesus might have given here.

Crying out and saying, Have mercy on us, thou son of David. Although **Son of David**, taken as a title, was a then-current expression for the Christ, since the Messiah was to be **THE Son of David** *par excellence* (See Notes on 1:1; 12:23; 21:9, 15; 22:41-45), it may be fairly asked why, in light of the revolution-breeding implications of its use in that particular historic period, should Jesus permit these two blind men to follow Him crying out this obvious advertisement of His true identity. It may be that Jesus half hides, half reveals the exciting truth by not rebuking these men on the spot:

1. He permits the blind men to advertise His identity for Him, so as to suggest to all who hear them the conclusion to which all His life and preaching led.
2. But since He does not publicly accept this title as pronounced by them, rather forcing them to follow into private quarters, He did not here decide the issue. As a result, those, who would have been willing to start a bloody nationalistic revolution at the drop of a suggestion that He were the long-awaited Messiah, could not move into action. This is Galilee, hot-bed of the Zealots' movement (See Josephus, *Ant.* I, 1, 1 and 6; IV, 3, 9; 5, 1; *Wars*, VII, 8, 1 and Edersheim, *Life*, I, 237-242) Jesus could accept the title openly elsewhere away from Galilee and later on, as His life and ministry had already run its course. (See Mt. 15:22; 20:29-34 and parallels; 21:9, 15 as over against 12:23).

Leaving the question thus unresolved, the Lord gives Himself time and opportunity to reveal what kind of "Son of David" He really intended to be.

But the fact that these two blind men, who would presumably have lived outside the general circle of public activity, should make this appeal to Jesus as Messiah, certainly strongly suggests that the public sentiment is growing that Jesus may well be the great Son of David.

How correct a concept of Jesus' Messiahship did these men have in order to dare address Him in these terms? Barclay (*Matthew*, I, 358) observes that the usual occurrences of this title within the gospels as almost always by crowds or by people "who knew Jesus only, as it were, at a distance (Mt. 15:22; 20:30, 31; Mk. 10:47; 12:35, 36, 37)" This is so strongly felt by Edersheim (*Life*, II, 48, 49) that he felt constrained to regard this incident as having taken place in Gentile territory and at a much later period. It is true that, in the popular mind, this messianic title conjured up the great commander who would bring national glory, power, wealth and freedom to Israel. And, just as deeply implanted in the national consciousness of Israel was this hope of national greatness, just so far from their popular hopes was the opinion that the Messiah was to be King over a spiritual reign in men's hearts. How far these blind men shared these views cannot be known. One thing is known from the available information recorded by Matthew: Jesus did NOT praise them for their great insight into His identity. They probably came to Him with a very inadequate concept of who He was and what He intended to tell the world, and YET He helped them. **Have mercy on us, thou Son of David**, is still their expression of trust in Him as Messiah and that He, as Christ, could restore their sight.

Have mercy on us is all that is written down of their appeal, a fact which suggests that they humbly left to Jesus the complete right to bless them as He chose, even as the leper. (8:2-4)

9:28 **And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him.** Jesus' apparently indifference to their pleas puts their faith in Him to several rigorous tests: they must, by some means, follow Him if they are to have the answer to their prayers. In forcing the blind men into a private, face-to-face confrontation with Him, the Lord made them confront a personal decision about Him they perhaps had not yet made, even though their desire for sight had already caused them to hurdle other difficulties. Barclay (*Matthew*, I, 359) comments:

It is the law of the spiritual life that sooner or later a man must confront Jesus alone. It is all very well to take a decision for Jesus on the flood tide of emotion of some great gathering, or in some little group which is charged with spiritual power. But after the crowd, a man must go home and be alone; after the fellowship he must go back to the essential isolation of every human soul; and what really

matters is not what a man does in the crowd, but what he does when he is alone with Christ.

Does Jesus foresee that they will disobey Him when once He grants their request? Their subsequent actions show that He was fully justified in testing them even further than He did.

Into the house causes us instinctively to ask, which house, since no special house has been mentioned since Jesus left that of Jairus. Why the article, **the** house? (Cf. Mk. 7:24 without the article.) Is it the house where Jesus normally resided in Capernaum when at home (Mk. 2:1)? It may be that Matthew does not regard the identification of the house as important, since his emphasis is to show the blind men's determination to get to Jesus despite the opposition of their own blindness and the obstacle of Jesus' not helping them by His not letting them catch up with Him on the road. (Cf. Mt. 20:32).

Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? Why ask a question which has so obvious an answer?

1. Because the Lord probably suspects the depth of information that represents the foundation of their acclamation of Him as Messiah. It may well be that these blind men had taken up a popular opinion about Him, simply because everyone had begun to think it. In this case, He demands that they sound the depth of their personal understanding and the genuineness of their own dependence upon Him as Messiah.
2. This question could almost be an exclamation of surprise and wonder, since these two blind men, unable to see the miracles for themselves, must necessarily depend upon the eye-witness reports of others. In a sense, then, they stand in the same relationship to the miracles of Jesus as all whom Jesus blessed who "have not seen, and yet believed." (Jn. 20:29) We stand in our own century, blinded by the intervening centuries necessarily relying upon the evidence provided us by those who saw Him. (1 Jn. 1:1-4; 2 Pe. 1:16) If these blind men believed, who had so little opportunity to know the evidence at first-hand, then this consideration, as McGarvey (*Matthew-Mark*, 85) notes, "shows, on the one hand, the abundance of the evidence, and on the other, the obduracy of those who could see and still would not believe."
3. Lenski (*Matthew*, 378) affirms another purpose behind Jesus' question:

to turn the thoughts of these blind men away from any political Messianic ideas regarding Jesus and to direct them to the divine power and grace found in him. The emphasis is not merely on "do you believe" but equally on the object clause, "that I am able to do this." One who is able to restore sight by means of a touch and a word is far greater than any national king, however grand his reign may be.

4. Jesus had already given many evidences of His divine identity through His miracles, proofs upon which sturdy faith could be founded. With this progress in the development of His public image, He could begin to demand that that trust in Him be confessed.

They say unto him, Yea, Lord. They had already shown great faith and determination just to address Him as the Christ and persist in following this far. They had also shown great courage so openly to approach Him in these terms, since not everyone at this time acknowledged Jesus as Messiah and many never would. So it took great boldness of spirit to speak out and risk their future happiness with this Son of David. They may have been blind to this world, but they were not blind to spiritual reality. Now that Jesus puts this direct question to them regarding their personal conviction, they confess the persuasion of their heart.

9:29 Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it done unto you. Jesus is saying: "Since your confidence in my power to give you sight is unreserved, I will exert that power unreservedly and restore your vision! I will match your great faith with great power." **He touched their eyes,** not because this contact was necessary, since He had used other methods on other occasions. (Cf. Mk. 8:23, 25; Jn. 9:6, 7; sometimes on other sicknesses, He spoke a word at a distance and made no gesture whatever) These blind men, who could see no other gesture of Jesus, can feel this touch and know that the power actually came from the Lord Himself. He permitted them to feel the surge of power that His will exerted: what a wonderful revelation of His identity so well suited to blind men!

9:30 And their eyes were opened and the first person they saw was Jesus! In this splendid double blessing is revealed Jesus' mercy that removes from their hearts the effects of what had probably seemed to these men an unyielding denial of their earlier pleas. In that instant of immediate, perfect sight, these two men now see

justified all they had ever thought and said about Jesus: He is truly the Christ. But what are they to do about this new-found knowledge of which they themselves are now the witnesses? How can they show their gratitude enough?

And Jesus strictly charged them. The verb *embrimáomai*, here translated "strictly charged," is an intriguing word which conjures up a surprising picture of Jesus at this point. Arndt and Gingrich (254) discuss the word:

In Aeschylus and others in the sense "to snort." As an expression of anger and displeasure in Lucian . . . In Aquila's translation of Psa. 7:12(11); Symmachus on Is. 17:13; LXX on Lam. 2:6. With the dative of person: "to scold, censure" . . . Mk. 14:5; "warn sternly" Mk. 1:43; Mt. 9:30.

See also Hendriksen, *John* on Jn. 11:33. Since hardly anyone Jesus warned ever obeyed Him, He had good reason to be severe! Why should He begin so immediately and so vehemently to warn them? Could the Master see already rising in their breast that exuberance of praise that defied being limited?

See that no man know it. This is their only commission from Him who had restored them light and life, joy and usefulness, taken them from their dark world to revel in the color and beauty of all that pleases on this earth. Jesus could have required so much more of them, but He did not charge them a thing but their silence. (See on 8:4 and 9:27; other instances: Mt. 12:16; Mk. 3:12; 5:43; 7:36; 8:26, all of which occurred in Galilee or in Decapolis near the Lake of Galilee. As in the former instances (8:4 and 9:26), Jesus' words are directed to the persons principally involved. These men, then, are not to go around proclaiming the news of their healing. This is not a command for them to go into hiding, so that the facts could not be absolutely known, since, it is presumed, the family and immediate acquaintances would come to know what had been done for them. All that Jesus intended was the opposite of what the men eventually did!

The Lord wisely forbade them to speak openly about their marvellous cure, since He must keep His own movement well in hand. Should these healed men now begin broadcasting His excellencies, even as they had arrested attention by addressing Him as the long-expected Messiah, popular excitement could grow into a bloody uprising of nationalistic Judaism against Rome. Other reasons may have been:

1. Their ignorant concept of the Messiah, if broadcast, would stimulate others who shared that concept to try to force Him

into their mold without ever understanding what kind of Christ He was. These "busy babblers" proved how little they really knew about the Christ whose Word is law! While walking the tight-rope between the various mistaken views of His ministry held by all who knew Him, Jesus knew that this was not the moment to proclaim His Messiahship openly, nor was it the moment to explain in detail to these beginners in faith the true nature of His Messiahship. It would but bring them more confusion. Hence, silence on their part was the only alternative open to them. If they really accepted Him as the mighty Son of David, they would have to trust Him to know what He was doing by requiring silence, where they certainly felt publicity to be in order.

2. A second reason for Jesus' prohibition so passionately expressed here was the fear, fully justified by the subsequent events, that His ministry should be hindered and frustrated by excited crowds, spiritually unable or unwilling to grasp what He must reveal to them about the REAL Kingdom of the Son of David.
3. A third reason lay in the insight of Jesus Himself into His own capacity for temptation: few men can live with success. What a truly human temptation to bow the knee before Satan, in order to be able to claim even just this one kingdom of the world, over which He could be "the Son of David" (cf. 4:10; 16:23). The indignant earnestness with which He warns these blind men, then, means "If you really respect me and appreciate what I have done for you, then do not destroy me by praising me." Praise is next to impossible to fight; accusations, yes, attacks, certainly, but sincerely meant adoration based on good evidence is useless to combat. But praise can destroy, however honestly meant, when it leads the person, who is the object of its worship, to be anything other than what is his best, his highest. Yes, Jesus had a superior character because He did not seek men's praise, but He also took pains to remove the temptation to enjoy it whenever it led Him away from that one goal, that one duty to establish David's Kingdom by way of the cross.

9:31.—But they went forth and spread his fame in all that land. But they (*hoi dé*) is an express contrast to the strict prohibition of Jesus, that preceeds this sentence. Matthew sees their action as contrary to what Jesus had told them to do. This action

of theirs is disobedience for which they are greatly to blame. If they had had real respect for Jesus, as much as they had faith to be healed by Him, they should have respected His will in the matter. Despite their joy and devotion and perfectly understandable desire to praise Jesus before men, yet He had strictly warned them to be silent. The seeming unreasonableness of Jesus' commands or statements, as man looks at them, can never be argued as a reason for refusing to render whole-hearted submission. That enthusiasm that bleats, "But Jesus could not have meant what He said . . ." is SIN! This is further proof of the fallacy of following the leadership of one's emotions entirely in reference to one's obedience to God. These blind men were much too exhilarated by their healing to believe Jesus had meant what He said. Joy felt because of God's gracious blessing does not ever exempt anyone from obedience. (See Ro. 2:4-6; Lk. 6:35; notes on Mt. 5:45)

The fame that spread in all that land was shallow, ignorant praise for which neither Jesus nor those who understand Him could rejoice. Edersheim sagely sees that (*Life*, II, 50)

The acclamations of an excited Jewish crowd were as incongruous to the real Character of the Christ, and as obstructive to the progress of His Kingdom, as is the outward homage of a world which has not heart-belief in His power, nor heart-experience of His ability and willingness to cleanse the leper and to open the eyes of the blind.

Even, as then, to call Jesus "the Son of David" with the inadequate or entirely wrong meaning behind those words was "damning Him with faint praise," so now, those, who praise Jesus without surrendering their hearts to Him, are but deceiving themselves, hoping to be part of His eternal kingdom, which, when viewed according to their concept, does not exist, any more than the kingdom of David as the Jews thought of it ever existed beyond the popular Jewish imagination of that era.

9:32 And as they went forth, i.e. just as the two formerly blind men left the house in which Jesus had healed them. **Behold, there was brought to him a dumb man possessed with a demon.** Is there any connection between this latter appeal to Jesus and the case of the blind men? It may well be that these formerly blind men began to proclaim their healing right among the people standing around in the streets (cf. 9:33b). Had the multitudes heard what the two blind men had called Jesus before their marvellous healing? Did these two men, now healed, and more convinced than ever that Jesus is truly "the Son of David," repeat this wonderful title in

their recitation of their healing? It might just well be that the solicitous friends of the dumb demoniac are among the first to begin making appeal to Jesus, having been excited to action by the joyous exclamations of the formerly blind.

A dumb man possessed with a demon. It is usually assumed by most commentators that the man was speechless because the demon had made him dumb, an assumption based on the observation that when the demon was cast out, the man regained the use of his speech. This conclusion is further strengthened by the fact that the effect of demon-possession was not always the same (See on 8:28—9:1). The evidences for the reality of this demon-possession as a real, supernatural cause for the phenomenon, mentioned by Lewis and Booth (*PHC*, XXII, 236, 237), are:

1. Something in the evident sense of oppression on the part of the sufferer that could not be classed as madness;
2. Something about the strange persistency of his inability to speak inexplicable on other grounds;
3. Something in the complete absence of anything in his physical makeup that would suggest failure there;
4. Something in the utter absence of failure in his mental faculties that could account for his condition.
5. There were none present who doubted the cause as being supernatural:
 - a. The multitudes accepted it as demon-possession, since they are recorded as being so greatly impressed with the casting out of the demon by Jesus.
 - b. These critical cynics, the Pharisees, did not doubt it, rather, they would have been only too glad to have been able to ascribe the poor victim's condition to anything else than demonic possession, had they thought that they could have sustained their case. Rather than deny by superior evidence what the people commonly regarded as demon-possession, the Pharisees could only admit the facts as stated and deny the implication that Jesus was Master of Satan.
 - c. So all eye-witnesses concur that this was a true, significant case of demon-possession.

9:33 And when the demon was cast out, the dumb man spake. It is easy to imagine the tension as Jesus commanded the demon to depart. All ears would be listening for the first words of this victim. Perhaps as he began talking, he alone spoke, since all would be listening to hear that voice so long silent. It was not long,

however, that all remained silent, as their surprise, wonder and conviction drew forth from them shouts of praise and admiration for Jesus.

And the multitudes marveled, saying, It was never seen in Israel. This was probably not all that they were saying either. Were the crowds beginning to echo the words of the former blind men: "Can this be the Son of David" (Cf. 12:23 and the notes there; Jn. 7:31) Or are these words, the only ones written down, merely the reflection of discretion felt necessary by the multitudes in view of the menacing presence of the Pharisees? It would not do, after all, to offend these august gentlemen! But, as Matthew notes below, no discretion could hide this honest admiration nor prevent offense to the religious leaders.

It was never so seen in Israel. This was literally true, since there had never been in Israel's long history such a vast collection of wonderful evidences of the presence of God with His people. This appraisal of this continuous succession of miracles is not only that of the crowds: it is the conclusion of Matthew too. He has been patiently recording one striking miracle after another (chapters 8, 9). But rather than cumber or mar his writing with his own views, he lets the spontaneous praise of these bystanders express the joy of HIS heart and pride in His Savior.

But even with this remarkable expression of astonishment of the multitudes, let it not be forgotten that even they too grew accustomed to them. McGarvey (*Matthew-Mark*, 86) is right to point out that

With every new variety of miracles there came fresh surprise among the people. After seeing a few sick persons cured, they naturally ceased being surprised at cures of sickness; but when they saw this dumb man restored to speech, they were almost as much surprised as if they had seen no previous miracles. The range of fresh miracles, however, necessarily had a limit, and therefore miracle working, as a means of impressing men, had to be of temporary duration. A permanent continuation of miracles would have robbed them of their value by making them common.

9:34 But the Pharisees said, By the prince of the demons casteth he out demons. But the Pharisees as a phrase, stands in direct opposition to the response of the multitudes. Is it possible that Matthew is summarizing the general effect of these miracles of chapters eight and nine, and not merely the immediate effect wrought by the casting out of the demon? The striking similarity between the report of these two responses and the report

later given (12:22-24) would lead us to think that Matthew's inclusion here refers only to this last section and not to the whole of the larger section. Be that as it may, it is nevertheless interesting that our author should conclude these two chapters with the polarizing of opinions into two fundamental groups; the multitudes of common people and those pillars of Jewish orthodoxy, the Pharisees. Why he should single out these latter, over against all other sects or groups in Judaism, is explicable since:

1. The Pharisees' attitude toward Jesus was more pronounced: they busied themselves the most to frustrate the progress of His movement.
2. The Herodians could not be too excited about Jesus, since He had deliberately ignored the Herods, neither praising nor censuring them.
3. The Sadducees were too much interested in political maneuverings at Jerusalem to disturb themselves greatly about the spiritual emphasis of Jesus.
4. Why not the Zealots? Perhaps, they hoped yet to find in Jesus their revolutionary hero and leader, hence they too would not so accuse Him.

By the prince of demons casteth he out demons. This charge is almost funny, since it represents the best efforts of the concentrated attention of the Pharisees to arrive at an answer regarding Jesus' miracles. These frustrated sectarians answered only the miracles connected with demon-possession, since they could not reply to any of the others. This charge arises out of sheer spite and jealousy. It had probably been years since multitudes of people had ever gotten this stirred up about a Rabbi and **THIS** Rabbi was no Pharisee!

In this age of scientific inquiry, it is well to ask why Jesus' ministry appealed to a couple of old blind men, a few infirm people, some fishermen, tax-collectors and harlots, but was not received by the great body of religious authorities and acknowledged scholars in Israel, especially the Pharisees. Was it because His evidence did not meet the critical investigation of these erudite and reverend doctors? On the contrary, for in their own words of this text, they confess: **He casts out demons.** The FACT they could not deny upon the most minute investigation. Their only objection lay in the INTERPRETATION of the meaning of the phenomenon observed as fact. Why did they then attribute a different interpretation to the facts than did the common people?

They had a philosophical system that boxed God into dimensions they could control by manipulation of their theology. But Jesus brought Israel a picture of God that was larger than their system, unhampered by their theology, free of their prejudices. And worse yet, for them, His credentials were impeccable—just a little too perfect, since if He were right about God—if His religion were the only real one—then they were wrong and had been wrong for centuries. There could be only one who could produce such wonderful signs whereby "the very elect themselves" could be deceived into leaving the carefully handed-down traditions: Satan. These Pharisees could see clearly, as many church members unfortunately have never learned, that to come to God through Jesus Christ meant to confess their sins, their false theology, their selfish pride, their hypocrisy exactly as Jesus exposes them for what they really are. If Jesus is right, then all their righteousness is sin, their theology false, their pride unwarranted and their hypocrisy exposed. But these men had not the slightest intention to change or be changed: it was much easier to retaliate than repent!

The great guilt of this accusation lies in its typically Pharisaic attitude: there is no evidence here of any sympathy for the freed victim, no word of praise or thankfulness to God. We see only a determination not to admit the true force of Jesus' miracles, if possible, even while admitting the facts of the case. Any conclusion is better than that which would glorify Jesus or support His movement!

Matthew, whose Gospel contains one of the finest refutations of this slander, must have included this incident without comment here to show how early the storm-clouds began to gather on the horizon of Jesus' career. Jesus' refusal to answer this calumny on this occasion may be interpreted as a tactic whereby He chose not to dignify their lie to the level of a serious charge that even needed refutation. Instead of accepting the obvious implications of His divine credentials, the Pharisees, emboldened by His meekness in refusing to defend Himself against defamation of this charge, and having nothing of real substance to urge against Him, repeated this libel until He had to answer it or default to them. For that fuller discussion of this charge and Jesus' answers, see on 12:22-37.

This amazed wonder on the part of the common people, as well as the maliciousness of the Pharisees, is not so surprising, after all. This difference in reactions towards Jesus is perfectly to be expected due to the measurable difference in their sense of need. The deeper this sense of need is felt, the more appreciative the people felt toward Jesus. The more self-sufficient the beholder, the less Jesus would

be needed or wanted. Woe to him who no longer feels his need for Jesus!

Matthew's report of this contrast (9:33, 34) throws into crisis OUR conscience. As we serve Him our wills remain free, since even His message carried no conviction to the prejudiced mind. With Morgan (*Matthew*, 98) let us zealously inquire with what attitude we listen and study Jesus' word, for it is very possible for prejudice and pride to blind us to the meaning of our King.

FACT QUESTIONS

1. In what general area did these two blind men live? Connect this section with what immediately precedes, showing where they probably lived.
2. What did the blind men call Jesus? Why use this term?
3. Describe Jesus' method in dealing with these two blind men.
4. What had made the man, who appears in the second part of the text, dumb?
5. State what the Bible actually reveals about demon-possession.
6. What was the reaction of the crowds when Jesus evicted the demon? What were their actual words?
7. What explanation did the religious leaders give for Jesus' power to cast demons out?
8. Although Jesus later gave full, detailed rebuttal of this charge made by the Pharisees, how did Jesus respond to the slander at the time?
9. What kind of opposition had the Pharisees brought Jesus during His ministry up to this time?
10. What is proved about Jesus by the fact that He can heal the sick and cast out demons?
11. State at least two good reasons why Jesus required the blind men to be silent about their healing.

Section 22

JESUS EVANGELIZES GALILEE AND SHARES HIS VISION WITH HIS DISCIPLES

(Parallel: Mark 6:6b)

TEXT: 9:35-38

35. And Jesus went about all the cities and the villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness.
36. And when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion for them, because they were distressed and scattered, as sheep not having a shepherd.
37. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest indeed is plenteous, but the laborers are few.
38. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth laborers into his harvest.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- a. Have you ever been frustrated in your Christian work by the fact that there is too much to be done but too few workers? What did you do about it?
- b. Is there any advice that can be drawn from this text, by way of application, that would clarify the mission of the Church today? If so, what advice do you see there?
- c. In what way are the people in Galilee—yes, even the people of our world—like so many “sheep without a Shepherd”?
- d. How long do you think we ought to continue to pray for more workers?
- e. Do you believe that Jesus’ command to pray for more workers, originally required of the Apostles, should be obeyed by His followers today? If so, on what basis? If not, why not?
- f. What do you see as the strategy behind Jesus’ actions revealed in this text? Or, how does Jesus reveal Himself in this Scripture as the Master Strategist? What is that strategy?
- g. If you conclude that we should pray this prayer that Jesus required of his followers during His earthly ministry, then how far should we go in helping God to answer our prayers by preparing workers ourselves?
- h. If we pray for workers to be sent out to work for God, what is apt to happen? Can you conscientiously pray a prayer in the realization of which you are unwilling to participate?

PARAPHRASE AND HARMONY

Jesus traveled about Galilee, stopping in all the cities and villages. There He taught in their synagogues and announced the good news about God’s Kingdom. He also healed people who had all kinds of

illnesses. The sight of the crowds who came to Him filled Him with compassion for them. They reminded Him of sheep without a shepherd.

Then He challenged His disciples, "This harvest is plentiful enough; the problem is that the laborers are scarce. So, you must pray to the Lord, whose harvest it is, asking Him to send out more workers into His fields to work!

SUMMARY

Jesus toured Galilee making stops to teach in all the cities and villages. He healed all kinds of sick folk. He was motivated by His compassion to help them, because they were lost sheep—everyone of them. Then He engaged His Apostles in a prayer offensive to tackle the problem of too much work to be done by too few workers.

NOTES

I. A REVIEW OF THE REMARKABLE, RAPID REACHING OF THAT REGION (9:35)

9:35 And Jesus went about all the cities and the villages. Is this a third missionary tour of Galilee, as many harmonists suppose, or is this Matthew's rhetorical device for recalling to the mind of the reader the principle point he has been making since 4:23? In the intervening chapters he has given magnificent illustrations of what he meant exactly by preaching, i.e. the Sermon on the mount (chaps. 5-7) and representative miracles (chaps. 8 and 9). He has now finished these examples, so summarizes this Galilean ministry again in the same terms.

The only verbal differences in Greek between Mt. 4:23 and 9:35 are two:

1. *tàs póleis pásas kai tàs kómas for en hólē tē Galiláia*
2. The addition of *en tō laō* in 4:23, which even some late MSS have also in 9:35. Otherwise these two passages are verbally identical in every respect, even to the significant use of the imperfect tense in the principle verb *periegen*, "he was in the process of going around," and the present participles for all other verbs dependent upon the principal verb. The usual chronological representations of Jesus' various evangelistic tours divide them thus: the first, Mt. 4:23-25; Mk. 1:35-39; Lk. 4:42-44; the second, Lk. 8:1-3; the third, this one here, Mt. 9:35; Mk. 6:6b. However, in every case but one (Mk. 1:39 about which there is even some doubt in the MSS) the authors

all use the imperfect tense, a phenomenon which suggests that they merely intend to picture Jesus as constantly on the move and that His one, continuous tour of Galilee was either illustrated or else interspersed by the particular incidents narrated throughout this general period. This continuity, then, is to be interpreted as "the Great Galilean Campaign" divided up into successive journeys by returns to Capernaum or by trips to Jerusalem for the feast. This sense of continuity is probably what induces Matthew to use almost verbally identical expressions to describe what should probably be thought of as two separate journeys. Thus, this is both a third tour of Galilee as well as his rhetorical device for signalling a change, from the material that he has just concluded, to a new development in Jesus' ministry: the preparation and commission of the Twelve to labor in evangelism.

All the cities and the villages, i.e. of Galilee. Not only is this a picture of Jesus' personal evangelistic labors, but also as Morgan (*Matthew*, 100) paints it, "this picture of God is that of a Man Who went . . . and looked at the people; and what He saw made His whole inner physical life . . . move and burn." He did not merely demand that people come to Him during certain office hours; He went to them. **Teaching in their synagogues**, because there would be a ready-made audience available to Him. (Cf. Illustrations in Lk. 4:16-37 and notes on 4:23.) **Preaching the gospel of the Kingdom** speaks of the content of His proclamation: "God is still on the throne, but His Kingdom to come is different than you suspect!" It is not reasonable to suppose that Jesus even once announced Himself as Heaven's King or heralded the beginning of God's Messianic Reign, due to the complete misunderstanding people had of these grand truths. What is more likely is the supposition that Jesus hammered away at the true character—spiritual, not national,—of God's Kingdom. To those who awaited the redemption of Israel on spiritual terms (cf. Lk. 2:25, 38; 23:51), Jesus' announcement of the Kingdom's soon arrival would be "gospel" in its best sense, good news. To those who hoped only for the restoration of materialistic national glory, Jesus' message, however exciting at first, could not but prove disappointing as people began to understand that He had no plans that harmonized with their selfish dreams. **Healing all kinds of disease and sickness** summarizes the evidences He offered of His divine identity and consequent authority. His miracles were evidence that God's kingdom had arrived in this respect also, since the presence of sickness and disease is

contrary to normality. Jesus' control over these abnormalities, then, proclaimed God's control in the natural world at any moment He cared to exercise that dominion.

This intensive activity is Jesus' counterattack mounted against all the opposition to His claims drawn in sharp relief by Matthew in chapter nine. Rather than be cowed by the opposition, Jesus plunged into more vigorous evangelistic activity. He had been accused of blasphemy (9:2-8), of hob-nobbing with the scum of society (9:13), of not being holy enough (9:14-17), of folly (9:24), of being less than a real Master (9:31) and of being in league with Satan (9:34). He had answered all of the accusations brilliantly and with power. But He knows that the slight opposition He had then faced must necessarily grow. He knew also that He must gain as much time as possible, bringing as many people as possible to firm confidence in Him, before that inevitable showdown with the religious leaders which must conclude with the cross. This intensive one-man ministry resulted in great crowds deeply aroused: the attention of all northern Israel, at least, is focused upon Jesus of Nazareth. He has succeeded in getting a hearing.

II. THE RATIONALE OF A RESTLESS REDEEMER WHO REALISTICALLY RECOGNIZES THE REASON FOR THIS RECEPTION (9:36)

9:36 **But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion for them, because they were distressed and scattered, as sheep not having a shepherd.** The people crowding around Jesus are the natural result of His evangelistic work which promoted wide-spread popular interest in His ministry. What Matthew repeats here, he has already noticed earlier, i.e. the growing evidence of success Jesus is enjoying in His effort to call national attention to Himself and His message. (Cf. 4:25; 8:18) But getting a hearing only is never sufficient, as important as that may be. One must get His message across convincingly to those ready to hear. And Jesus knows that these multitudes probably have not the slightest idea what He is trying so desperately to say to them. He knows that their prejudices, their ignorance, their background and training, their mistaken longings and selfish desires will shut out much of His message. Thus the Lord faces the greater necessity now of multiplying the efficiency of His means of communication, in order by all means to communicate His message more often and in more different ways. This would result in the dissemination of His information about the kingdom in

ways that would succeed in getting past some of the closed doors of prejudice and ignorance of people too far away to be helped personally. This necessity to render His ministry more efficient is required not only because of the multiplying numbers of people with whom He must talk, but more especially due to their condition.

But when we talk of Jesus' increasing the efficiency of His ministry, we imply that there was something lacking, inadequate or inefficient about it. But this very presence of the crowds raises a problem of tactics for the Lord, since He had already chosen, by virtue of the incarnation, to be just one Man in one place at a time. Though He was the great God, yet when He humbled Himself to be born as a little Jewish baby in Bethlehem, He whom the heaven of heavens could not contain, was deliberately limiting Himself to be just one Man in one place. But the obvious application of a principle of natural physics, He could not be in two places at the same time, much less in seven cities simultaneously evangelizing each one. But, by simply multiplying Himself, through the sharing of His vision, His authority and His message with His Apostles, He could accomplish seven times the work He was then accomplishing. (See on 10:1; 11:1 and compare Mk. 6:7).

But who were these **multitudes**? They consisted not only of the lonely, distressed, sick, poor common people for whom any generous soul could have a place in his heart. Also in that crowd were suspicious Herodians, hypocritical Pharisees, wealthy Sadducees, monkish Essenes, greedy, grasping publicans, perhaps spies of Herod and informers for Pilate, prostitutes and other sinners—sinners for whom the average person would probably have a trace of contempt, for whom **NONE** would willingly give his life on a cross! (Cf. Ro. 5:6-11) Here we feel the striking difference between Jesus of Nazareth and any other man or angel: He feels deeply, even though He sees clearly, the weakness and failure and consequent need of every man. He understands that all that is unlovely, despicable or revolting in any person, is but a good reason for His helping that man. It is comparatively easy for any normal humanitarian to feel compassion for certain classes of sufferers, like mothers or children, the poor or the homeless. But to be moved to action with compassion for heterogeneous humanity with its vast mixture of loves and hates, its diversified backgrounds, its wealth and poverty, its conflicting sentiments, its tensions, its joys, its opposite ideas about God and truth, is to be a Jesus. But is it not to become a Jesus that He came to call us? (Cf. Ro. 8:29; Phil. 2:1-5) **He saw the multitudes** for what they really were and **YET** He

felt a strong desire to relieve them from all that they suffered. A superficial observer, looking at the crowds, would never have seen what Jesus saw. One might have seen those people as irresponsible sheep who have gotten themselves lost and deserve whatever fate awaited them or perhaps just a frustrating lot of tiring field work, but not so Jesus. The difference? He had a Shepherd's heart: the harvest was His.

He was moved with compassion, as Barclay (*Matthew*, I, 363f) puts it, by our pain and sickness (Mt. 14:14), our blindness (Mt. 20:34), by our sorrow (Lk. 7:13), by our hunger (Mt. 15:32), by our loneliness (Mk. 1:41), by our bewilderment (here, also Mk. 6:34). **Compassion** means mercy, since, in strict justice, "there is no reason in man that God should save; the need is born of His own compassion. No man has any claim upon God. Why, then, should men be cared for? Why should they not become the prey of the ravening wolf, having wandered from the fold?" (Morgan, *Matthew*, 99)

Because they were distressed (*eskylménōi*; Arndt-Gingrich, 765: "wearied, harassed, troubled, bothered, annoyed;" cf. Lk. 7:6; 8:49; Mk. 5:35) **and scattered** (*erimménōi* from *rhíptō*. Arndt-Gingrich, 744: "1. *throw* in a manner suited to each special situation . . . 2. With no connotation of violence: *put* or *lay down*, lying down, lying on the ground or floor . . . of the crowds of people, Mt. 9:36, of animals lying on the ground.") **Scattered** sums up graphically the picture of shepherdless sheep lying here and there, having been thrown about by many diverse forces. This is their condition that moved the compassion of Jesus: their very weakness, their unworthiness, their unreadiness to meet God. What Matthew fairly shouts to any Jewish heart (and to any Gentile who has looked into the Jewish Bible!) is this: "Jesus has the heart of the great, long-awaited David, the great Shepherd!" (Cf. Isa. 40:10, 11; Jer. 23:3-8; 31:10; Ezek. 34:11-31; 37:24) **Harassed and helpless** is the picture of people perplexed, oppressed and troubled by the impossible obligations of current Judaism, confused by the contradictory claims of the various theological debating societies that left them groaning under the weight of restraints and duties of "religion." These are people who hold confused ideas about the Kingdom of God, the King and their duty. They have vague longings, aroused by the prophets, John the Baptist and now by Jesus Himself, yet they are ignorant about how or where they can satisfy this yearning. Even this self-inflicted anguish, for which Israel was personally responsible, excited Jesus' pity. Were the paradoxical words

of Isaiah (53:6) in Jesus' mind as He looked at these lost human beings?

All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have turned every one to his own way.

Each one thinks his case is peculiar; all however are getting lost in droves!

As sheep not having a shepherd. But had they no shepherds? Rather, had they not HUNDREDS of them? Historically, yes, and good ones too! Moses, the prophets and many righteous men had ministered to Israel, given their witness and challenged them to leave their sins. (Nu. 27:17; Ps. 77:20; Isa. 63:11) But just as recently as the later prophets, Israel had been willingly misguided, deceived and betrayed by men who served their own interest. (Jer. 23:1-40; 50:6ff.; Ezek. 34:1-10; Zech. 10:2, 3) Then when the true prophetic voice was finally silenced by the rejection and murder of the last of God's servants, Israel was left to her fate under the shepherding of thieves, robbers and hirelings. (Cf. Jn. 10:1, 8-13) Barclay (*Matthew*, I, 364ff.) summarizes this tragedy,

They were shepherds that had nothing to offer the common people longing for truth. The Scribes and Pharisees, the Sadducees and priests, who should have been giving men strength to live, were bewildering men with subtle arguments about the Law, which had no help and comfort in them. These orthodox teachers had neither guidance, comfort nor strength to give. When they should have been helping men to stand upright, they were bowing them down under the intolerable burden of the Scribal Law.

This deeply felt compassion of Jesus is born of His great vision: tired lost sheep; the waiting harvest. But He is not lost in visions and dreaming. These tensions must be resolved: there must be shepherds! He must call reapers! But these two colossal visions are not exactly parallel but two halves of the same truth. If there is any certain emphasis to each, it is this: the vision of the sheep without a Shepherd is the image of man's need met by God, while the vision of the waiting harvest require that God's need for reapers be met by men.

Another interesting thought suggested by Lewis and Booth (*PHC*, XXII, 239), that is impossible to check out, is that in these two figures, Jesus intended to describe the two-fold work

of the Church. In the sheep to be shepherded are seen those disciples just won who need so much help to grow. The waiting harvest, according to this view, signifies those souls whose interest in Jesus was greatly aroused and who could be won, were there but evangelists to reach them in time. The waiting harvest required reapers rather than shepherds, "the men of the sickle, rather than those of the crook." So saying, the two-fold outreach of the Church is pictured rising in the heart of Jesus. This view, while interesting, is impossible to establish, since it cannot be proved that Jesus had such a neat distinction in view between those described as sheep and those meant by the harvest, for He may well have considered them but parallel images of the same idea seen from two angles.

III. THE REQUIREMENT TO REQUEST AND RECRUIT REAPERS (9:37, 38)

9:37 Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest indeed is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Even though these men have been with Jesus as personal companions for considerable time now, still Jesus does not presume to command them to take up this task upon which the success of His whole mission to earth depends. In His wisdom He involves first their conscience in a moral decision that something must be done about this great need. They must be as motivated as Him. They too must see what He sees, feel what He feels, if they are to share His ministry. To evangelize mechanically, without the spirit and motivation of Jesus, is worse than hypocrisy; it is impossible! In light of the commission He will give the Twelve in the next chapter, note how He first engages their deep concern over these souls, their concern about the paucity of workers in distressing contrast to the magnitude of the task. He then involves them in beseeching God for more workers. Before long, almost before they will have been able to analyze the excellent psychology of His approach, they will actually find themselves spontaneously sharing His vision and His anxiety, and enthusiastically arming themselves to reach out in mercy to help meet the needs of these multitudes.

The harvest, thinks Lenski (*Matthew*, 384) cannot be the multitudes Jesus saw coming to Him, since "some of these people would not be gathered into the heavenly garner." But he sees only half of the harvest work! (Mt. 3:12) The announcement of those

principles upon which the final judgment and separation will be made, is also evangelism. No, **the harvest**, for Jesus, means that the prime moment to begin the work of proclaiming God's kingdom has arrived (cf. Jn. 4:35), and that this work involves telling people in no uncertain terms what God's judgment means. By reaping those who accept the message, the reapers leave to God the disposal of those who judge themselves chaff. But we must not push this figure too far, since human beings are different from chaff, because they must be regarded as a harvest to be reaped, until God calls a halt to this age. (cf. Mt. 13:39-43)

The harvest . . . laborers. Jesus is about to select, challenge and send forth His own personal emissaries. But they must understand their work and share His spirit, as well as express His power and authority. He begins at once to describe the kind of helpers He must have: **laborers**, not princes arrayed in soft robes living in kings' houses, not men with soft hands unaccustomed to the toil of harvest-hands laboring out in the harvest fields.

9:38 Pray ye therefore. Not only must these men share Jesus' vision; they must share also His prayers. Instead of merely lamenting the deplorable condition of Israel as scattered, harassed sheep or as a harvest too great for the number of available workers, Jesus' first response is to engage God-fearing men in PRAYER. How often have we encouraged some fainting heart, in anguish under some crushing problem, to pray for God's solution, when, at the same time, we continued wringing our hands about the frustrating enormity of the task of reaching the world without seeing our Lord's wisdom in this text! Jesus was not satisfied simply to load His disciples' minds with the burden of lost souls. He opens up to them also the secret of relief and reinforcements: "Pray for more helpers to face this gigantic task!" How long and how often had the Master Himself been uttering this same cry in His own lonely night vigils? (cf. Lk. 6:12) How fervently had He hoped that these very Twelve would respond positively to His teaching, His shared views, His companionship? These very men were the laborers for the harvest that the Father had given Him and for them He gave thanks and expended every effort to encourage them to be all that an excellent reaper must be. (Jn. 17:6-26; cf. 17:6 with 6:70 and 15:16) He also prayed that the laborers God raised up might not be lost to His service. (cf. Lk. 22:31, 32)

Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth laborers into his harvest. We may well ask our-

selves, if this harvest belongs to the Lord, how would our puny prayers help Him?

1. Lewis and Booth (*PHC*, XXII, 240) answer well:

Why go to prayer first? Because it takes us at once to the right quarters. Who so certain to know about the harvest and all its needs as the Lord of the harvest? Who so likely to be interested in them? Who so able to help? Who so able, especially in this case where the need of help is extreme; where labourers have to be even "thrust forth" (ver. 38) to this work? Who so able to do this as He who sent Saul of Tarsus into His harvest?

2. "It is not only worse than idle to begin anywhere else, but self-sufficient and presumptuous and distrustful also in an equal degree." (*ibid.*)
3. Our praying this way unites our concern and will with God's, making us useful as laborers whenever it please Him to use us. Since the harvest is all around us, in all of our social contacts, we need merely to be transformed into laborers. Can any man honestly pray this prayer without involving himself emotionally in the very activity which has become the burden of his concern? Can anyone pray that God send laborers and not send those whom God makes willing to go?
4. Such praying would keep us and our hindering prejudices out of God's way! While praying like this, can any man at the same time stand around arguing whether the need is great, or whether the souls are lost or not, or whether the people of God should involve themselves in such work, etc?

The Master knew what He was doing when He commanded His men to pray like this! The glorious wonder of this prayer is that Jesus definitely ordered His Apostles to beseech God to provide workers. God obviously cares enough about their prayers to answer them in accomplishing that work which He had already spent thousands of years of patient, careful preparation to do! The great, supreme challenge facing Christianity is that the entire world is to be reached. But the greater surprise of Jesus' message is that God actually needs men to reach that world. He has chosen "truth in the flesh," the living gospel vividly expressed in human personality, to save men. God has deliberately decided that the harvest will not be reaped unless there are human laborers to harvest it. Whether we understand His choice

or not, there is no doubting either the fact that He has so decided or the need to pray for the needed laborers.

IV. RAMIFICATIONS AND REFLECTIONS

Barclay is right to teach (*Matthew*, I, 366) that

It is the dream of Christ that every man should be a missionary and a reaper. There are those who cannot do other than pray, for life has laid them helpless, and their prayers are indeed the strength of the laborers. But that is not the way for most of us, for those of us who have strength of body and health of mind. Not even the giving of our money is enough. If the harvest of men is ever to be reaped, then every one of us must be a reaper, for there is someone whom each of us could—and must—bring to God.

But what hinders our efforts and strangles our effectiveness? Is it that we do not share Jesus' vision of the task? When we look at the mobs of people crowding their way through life, with little or no passing thought for their comrades on the journey, what do we think? When we are frustrated by the thoughtlessness of selfish individuals, whose unwillingness to help, irks us to the limit, what do we see? Do we see these people as hindrances which we must destroy, since they obstruct our hurried pace? Or do we see them through the eyes of the Lord: lost souls, whose very sins bar our path and frustrate our progress and mar our happiness, yet cry for our help?

Let me look at the scattered crowds

Till my eyes with tears grow dim—

Let me look at the crowds as my Savior did

And love them for love of Him!

—Author unknown

How long should we pray this prayer for reapers? Only so long as there remain sheep without the Shepherd—only so long as there is more harvest than laborers to gather it. Even as those candidates for Apostleship joined their voices in prayer, let us add our voices: "Lord of harvest, send forth reapers! Hear us, Lord, to Thee we cry; Send them now the sheaves to gather, Ere the harvest time pass by."

—J. O. Thompson

FACT QUESTIONS

1. Show the connections between this section and the one which immediately follows in chapter ten.

2. Describe the general situation in Galilee that renders this picture presented by Matthew not only plausible but to be expected.
3. What is the larger role in Matthew's apparent outline that this section plays? Remember that Matthew seems to be following a topical, rather than a strictly chronological, outline.
4. Explain the figure of "sheep without a shepherd." Tell it in literal language.
5. Explain the figure of "the harvest." Tell it in literal language.
6. Describe the motivation that moved Jesus to share His vision with His disciples.
7. How should this vision of Jesus and challenge to His followers be interpreted in the life of the Church today?
8. Whom does Jesus hold responsible for sending workers into the world to labor for God? Whom does Jesus hold responsible for requesting more help? What did Jesus do to answer the prayers of His disciples, i.e. what did Jesus do to make more workers possible? (See Mt. 10)

DO YOU HAVE THE WORD IN YOUR HEART?

Matthew 8, 9

Where are these passages found? Who said it? On what occasion? To whom was it said? Why? What does it mean? Are there parallel passages? variant manuscript readings? important other translations of the verse? Are there problems of interpreting it? How shall we apply it to our lives?

1. "See thou tell no man; but go, show thyself to the priests . . ."
2. "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel."
3. "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our diseases."
4. "But the sons of the kingdom shall be cast forth into the outer darkness: . . ."
5. ". . . leave the dead to bury their own dead."
6. ". . . thy faith hath made thee whole . . ."
7. ". . . for I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."
8. "No man putteth a piece of undressed cloth upon an old garment; for that which should fill it up taketh from the garment, and a worse rent is made."
9. "Go ye and learn what this meaneth, I desire mercy, and not sacrifice."
10. "But that ye may know that the Son of man hath authority on earth to forgive sins . . ."

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11. "They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick."
12. "Have mercy on us, thou son of David."
13. "And Jesus went about . . . preaching the gospel of the kingdom . . ."

SPECIAL STUDY: MIRACLES

The fundamental conflict in which Christianity is engaged today, in the intellectual sphere, is between *Naturalism* and *Supernaturalism*. Beneath all the attacks of scientists and philosophers, scholars and theologians upon Christianity lies an undercurrent of naturalism, more or less concealed, according as the opponent of supernaturalism is within the ranks of professing Christians or not.¹

Miracles, as phenomena in historic Christianity, have posed no small problem to every age of the church's existence. Any search into the early years of the Christian religion will reveal the intense, tenacious conviction that the supernatural intervention into human history which we call "miracle" really occurred. The word itself might be defined:

A miracle is an event occurring in the natural world, observed by the senses, produced by divine power, without and adequate human or natural cause, the purpose of which is to reveal the will of God and do good to man.²

The question of miracle revolves around one central historic figure: Jesus Christ. Did Jesus really work miracles? This is a far greater question than just a decision as to whether Jesus worked miracles or not. It is more than simply deciding whether He fed the 5000, healed the blind, cast out demons, and raised people from the dead. It is deciding whether there be a Christ at all. There is no Christ but the Christ of miracle! It is deciding whether there is a God or not. He is morally perverse or intellectually blind who concludes that a religion can be ethically true and historically false. An ethic predicated upon a lie, by the very nature of its case, warns the world against its own truth.

Further, there is no Christ but a supernatural Christ, if any credence be allowed the claims of those writers who furnish the only

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reliable history of His life. There is no supernatural Christ if there is no resurrected Christ. Truly,

"if the resurrection of Jesus was not a reality, all the other miracles would be valueless even if real, and all effort to establish their reality would be abandoned."⁸

Miracles have a way of smashing our neatly-arranged systems of thought. The miraculous commands our attention and threatens to undo our uniformities not only in nature but in religion. If there is no miracle, no trumpet-call from beyond the natural or the earthly, we can settle down into our comfortable self-pleasure and drink long draughts from the cool glass of self-satisfaction, rousing only to change the record on our philosophic stereo to the soothing, mellow voice suggesting, "Enjoy yourself while you're still in the pink." Suddenly, into our picture of peaceful self-complacency storms a miracle, a fact—stubborn and real—that can not be dismissed. The out-of-the-ordinary has just startled our ordinary and we must react. It is this very feature of the miraculous that leads us to see

THE NATURE OF MIRACLES

Just what occurred back there in that age of "unenlightenment"? Indubitable is the fact that Jesus of Nazareth was reputed to have super-human abilities which He manifested through His short but meteoric rise to the limited public prominence of His country. To appreciate rightly the nature of His supernatural activities we must not view miracles as isolated facts, but in their actual relations to the life of the Man who accomplished them. Any exception is so rare that it is a safe observation that Jesus did not perform the miraculous needlessly. The need for the supernatural acts grew out of the situation and must not be considered independent of that situation. His miracles might be classified thus:

A. POWER OVER NATURE:

At a wedding feast Jesus turned water into wine.

Seeing His disciples distressed in rowing against a stormy lake, Jesus walked across the lake to them, defying gravity. On another occasion Jesus spoke the word and the sea immediately became calm.

One morning at breakfast time He cursed a fig tree and it withered.

By supernatural knowledge He informed Peter that in the mouth of the first fish Peter hauled in would be tribute money.

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B. POWER OVER DISEASE AND DEMONS:

Paralytics, impotent men, women with hemorrhages, sight to blind men, hearing to deaf and speech to dumb, lepers, withered limbs restored to normalcy, wounded ears replaced—all these and many more Jesus did! No weeks or day of anxious waiting, no returns, no incurable cases when Jesus healed a body!

C. POWER OVER DEATH:

Death in others was no problem to this Jesus of Nazareth. He stopped a funeral procession to raise the widow's son; He broke up the funeral to raise Jairus' daughter. He walked nearly 40 miles to raise Lazarus from the grave.

Death in Himself was nothing to fear for He calmly predicted His own death and resurrection with frightening regularity:

Therefore doth the Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No one taketh it away from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. (John 10:17, 18)

Many passages could be cited in which Jesus foretold in detail the various features of His passion. Here again we could marvel at the supreme fact—His own resurrection itself.⁴

At this point, our attention has been arrested by the extraordinary nature of Jesus' deeds but for what? Like Moses, the flame of the unusual has attracted our attention and we have turned aside to see why.

THE PURPOSE OF MIRACLES

Bible miracles are supernatural phenomena in the realm of human experience WITH A MESSAGE. Why bring up miracles if the one doing them does not have something to say for himself? Such questions are most appropriate. The Jews of Jesus' day could have asked these questions: "Immediately we become interested when we learn that a man can supply a sumptuous meal to 5000 men on ridiculously insignificant rations. We want to know if He will provide battle rations for our national army we are raising. One who is reputed to be able to heal all manner of disease could be very useful to our purposes as we strike out against Rome. Do you suppose He would consent to being our king? What is He saying for Himself? Where is He going? What is He trying to accomplish by these miracles?" So the message is all-important.

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Probably the most significant utterance of Jesus ever recorded was His claim to unique knowledge of God:

All things have been delivered unto me of my Father; and no one knoweth who the Son is, save the Father; and who the Father is, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him. (Matt. 11:27; Luke 10:22)

Or another claim:

For I am come down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me. And this is the will of him that sent me, that of all that which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that every one that be- holdeth the Son, and believeth on him, should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. (John 6:38-40)

My teaching is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself. (John 7:16, 17)

I speak the things which I have seen with my Father . . . (John 8:38)

But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I heard from God . . . If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I came forth and am come from God; for neither have I come of myself, but he sent me . . . But because I say the truth, ye believe me not. Which of you convicteth me of sin? If I say truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth the words of God. (John 8:40-47)

Obviously, throughout His teaching Jesus is claiming to be a very revelation of God. He comes not as a supreme teacher of an exalted ethical system or a propounder of new moral philosophy but as one who comes from God to reveal God's mind to man. In other messages Jesus asserted that He entered the world to "seek and save the lost" (Luke 19:10) and "to give his life a ransom for many." (Matt. 20:28) It is clear that Jesus intended to reveal God and ransom man but how do we know He is God's emissary? His "mighty works" hold our attention and most of His doctrine we cannot verify. What is the connection between miracle and message?

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It is perfectly plain that such a revelation would need to be tested and accredited, for unless it were, men would **never** believe that the revelation was from God Himself . . . **man** would have a right to demand of anyone claiming to have a revelation from God, that he show his credentials . . . showing that there is no question but that he is the authorized representative of God. Man has a right to demand these credentials, and by the very nature of the case, they must **be** of a kind that could not possibly be duplicated by man, for if they could be, they would lose all value as accrediting the message from God.⁵

Thus, not only the possibility of miracle is justified but also the probability. How else would God remind people down through the ages saying, "Lo, I am here"? It is the miracle, the departure from the observed uniformity of nature, that arrests the attention of man and makes him realize that a higher person and a higher power is at work. The miracle is the majestic seal that God has affixed to the revelation which He gives us. The Bible is God's Word. An integral part of the Bible record is *miracle*, for the specific purpose of showing it to be God's Word. Except for miracles, how could we know it to be a revelation of God? With no miracle, there is no evidence of deity. Miracles, then, authenticate the Christian message: (1) Jesus Christ appeals to His miracles as His divine authentication.

I told you, and ye believe not: the works that I do in my Father's name, these bear witness of me . . . If I do not the works of my father, believe me not. But if I do them, 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. (John 10:25, 37, 38)

Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I say unto you I speak not from myself: but the Father abiding in me doeth his works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake. (John 14:10, 11)

(2) Thus, miracles are an integral part of the record which would become meaningless without the miracle. Remove, if possible, the account of miracle from the book of John and observe how much wasted breath is left in the controversies between Jesus and the Pharisees concerning miracles, which, according to the naturalists, He did not do. Most of Jesus' "Sabbath Controversies" had to do with

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miracles done on the Sabbath. Most of Jesus' most magnificent claims were made in agreement with and in company with some of His most astounding wonder-works. A clear case in point is given in Mark 2 (Matt. 9 and Luke 5) where a paralytic is lowered through the roof into the presence of Jesus and a "congressional investigating committee." Jesus said simply, "My son, your sins are forgiven." The scribes and Pharisees who were in the crowded house immediately considered this statement as blasphemy. Jesus answered their thoughts, "Why do you question thus in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven'; or to say 'Rise, take up your pallet and walk? But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—he said to the paralytic—"I say unto you, Rise, take up your pallet and go home." And he did! We can conclude that (3) The miracles and the words of Christ are wonderful and perfect counterparts. Miracles do not make the claims of Jesus or His doctrines true, but they are the attestation of God that His claims are well-founded and His teaching God's. The power of the miracle taken by itself does not assure me of the truthfulness of the claims set forth, or of the doctrines taught, alone, but of Him through whose instrumentality they are performed. May we conclude then that the primary purpose of the miraculous deeds recorded in scripture is to attest the revelation given as from God? This great salvation which is thus taught

having at the first been spoken through the Lord, was confirmed unto us by them that heard; God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders, and by manifold powers, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will. (Hebrews 2:3, 4)

What was true of the Lord in those days was true in regard to His servants the apostles. The miracles also attested their message as from God. It was the miracles that made the disciples believe in Jesus, and they, in turn, made the world believe in Christ.

A secondary purpose of miracles (and it is clearly secondary) was to demonstrate the mercifulness of God in the case of individual men. The miracles illustrate and explain the teaching of Jesus on the love and mercy of God. It is one thing to hear Jesus talk; it is another thing to see Him in action. In the miracles, we see Christ dealing tenderly and yet majestically with our human lives and their sins and burdens and sorrows and fears. The apostles were no less spectacular in calling attention to God's revelation.⁶

A tertiary object of miraculous deeds was to wreak vengeance

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upon objects unworthy of God's continued grace.⁷ To the mind comes immediately Jesus' cursing the fig tree (Mt. 21:18, 19), the blinding of Elymas (Acts 13:11), the sudden death of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:5, 10). Bible miracles taught not only God's love and goodness but also His power and authority, and sometimes His righteous and fearful judgments.

A fourth purpose of God in the giving supernatural demonstrations of His presence among men is negative in nature: Miracles are not universal in nature. If they ever were or should ever become so, they would lose their value as deeds of a supernatural character for if universal, they would cease calling attention to God's message and become the norm. Bible miracles were never either (1) universal in extent for they have always been limited to few and special cases. Never have they been used to relieve suffering or prolong this life for all of God's people impartially. Some received no miraculous deliverance here, but a better resurrection for the life hereafter (Heb. 11:35-40). John the Immerser, greatest of the prophets, worked no miracles, nor was he miraculously delivered from prison and death (Matt. 11:7-11; John 10:41). Jesus could have healed all the sick or raised all the dead. But He did not and would not. Many were healed by Paul, but Trophimus and Timothy were not (II Tim. 4:20; I Tim. 5:23). A multitude of sick and afflicted lay by the pool at Jerusalem, but Jesus healed only one man (who did not know Him or ask Him to) and then hid Himself from the others. But later He sought the healed man again to teach him and to meet the debate which the Sabbath miracle had aroused with the Pharisees. Nor were the miracles (2) universal in their result: All who were delivered from sickness or affliction had other times to suffer and to die. All who were raised from the dead had to die again. Once and again Peter was delivered from prison and from persecutors but another time he was left to die, when God was no less compassionate and Peter was no less believing. So it was with Paul.⁸

THE REALITY OF MIRACLES

We are standing on the battleground here where naturalism and supernaturalism meet and the war is not over. The question facing this age (and all ages, for that matter) which demands historical certitude, is the decision of the factuality of miracles. Indeed, the establishing of Christianity as a coherent system without historic foundation in supernatural fact can be the employment of some shadow-boxing theologians who make their living striving after wind but this cannot assuage grief, forgive sin, enable men to live in peace with

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each other, or prepare them for eternity. Let not him that girds on his armor boast himself as he that puts it off. The barrage begins: "Intervention of a supernatural character within the universe is impossible because of

A. "THE UNIFORMITY OF THE ORDERLY GOVERNMENT OF NATURE."

Miracles are antecedently possible. There can be no doubt that such a thing as a miracle is a reasonable possibility, 'whether we ever saw one, or believed that other men had seen one, or not. We cannot be dogmatic about what may have happened, or what can happen beyond our field of observation.

It is objected that a miracle is a violation of law, or God, as He reveals Himself in nature. God, it is said, would contradict Himself if He did anything in another way. But this implies that we know all about God and His ways. Instead of that being so, how small a portion we have seen! The general uniformity of nature to which deniers of the miracles appeal is a blessing to man. It would be a terrible world in which to live if we could not count on the operation of gravity, of heat and cold, of summer and winter, of seed-time and harvest. But this uniformity is consistent with voluntary control, and therefore, for good and sufficient reasons, as the Bible tells us it has been, could be "interrupted." When we speak of the uniform type of nature all we mean is that an effect is something produced by a cause, and that all the effects we see are produced by natural causes. But we have no right to conclude that therefore a miracle is impossible, for belief in miracles does not imply that an effect took place with no adequate cause, but that an effect was produced by the immediate act or will of God who ordinarily works through second causes, but sometimes, if the Bible be true, through an immediate act. Instead of being a denial of the law of cause and effect, a miracle is its highest illustration.

A God who made a world and then shut Himself out of it so that He could never enter it again, never arrest, regulate, add to its laws of working, would be no God at all. He would be like a man who made a machine with whose law of operation he could never interfere. What we call "interference, arresting or changing of laws" may not really be such at all, but part of the great plan of God. To man it is a miracle, but not to God.

True enough, nature seems to be working under a system of natural laws, which as far as scientific observation can tell, seem to be invariable in their application. But what are natural laws?

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From scientific point of view, are they anything more than the way the phenomena of nature have been observed to happen within the time range of experience? The natural laws are not the forces themselves which they describe, but only the scientific formulation of the way in which the forces act. Natural laws are not to be confounded with the forces of nature which they describe. They have no control whatever over the forces themselves. Are these forces of nature eternal? They are only the power of God *in action*. If this is the cause, they are governed and controlled by God Himself . . . God is under no compulsory necessity to keep them uniform in their action . . . Now suppose it is part of God's eternal plan that for some great purpose of His own He will intervene in these forces and cause a break in their uniformity and in variability. What is to prevent such an interruption from occurring? Nothing! . . . The only question that may arise is whether God desires the changes to occur. The question that becomes one merely of fact, . . . whether there is any evidence to show that He has intervened. . . . The fact of present uniformity of nature is no barrier whatever to the intervention of God in the past.⁹

David Hume argues that miracles, as such, cannot occur:

A miracle is a violation of the laws of nature, and as a firm and unalterable experience has established these laws, the proof against a miracle, from the very nature of the case, is as entire as any argument from experience can possibly be imagined, and if so, it is an undeniable consequence that it cannot be surmounted by any proof whatever from testimony.¹⁰

Our question to him would be this: How do we get to know what the general experience of men in respect to the course of nature is? Our own personal experience, indeed, comes from personal observation, but, as we have just seen, our individual experience has little bearing on the case and for our knowledge of experience of men in general we have to depend on human testimony. So the whole force of the argument amounts to this: we must investigate the testimony of those who bear witness to the genuineness of the miracles of Jesus as having been performed before their own observation. The proof of miracles is based on testimony and when coming right down to the question at hand, it simply puts testimony against testimony: the

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testimony of those who were present and observed and affirmed what they saw—these miracles; and that of those who were not present and who declare that in all their experience they never saw such wonders wrought by anyone. David Hume's notorious argument attempts to show that no amount of evidence can establish the truth of a miracle:

When the experience of millions of people can be said to contain nothing miraculous, that is, a raising of the dead, or the sudden stilling of a storm on the lake, then the testimony of one or three people to some such miraculous event must be considered definitely of no historical value, because the testimony of millions of other people has a greater power than the testimony of, say, two or three men, for convincing us of the actuality or nonactuality of some miracle.¹¹

The fallacy of this argument is again exposed by the questions, "*Whose* experience? *Whose* testimony?" He starts by stating as fact something he cannot prove—"It is a miracle that a dead man should come to life: because that has never been observed in any age or country."¹² In support of this he would have to prove the gospels historically untrustworthy and he does not attempt to do so. He admits that no testimony is sufficient to establish a miracle unless the testimony be of such a kind, that its falsehood would be more miraculous than the fact which it endeavors to establish. If the testimony of the gospel writers concerning Jesus' miracles is false—then their falsehood is indeed a greater miracle than the miracles which they describe. But this is mere logomachy.

He also argues that miracles are seen mostly among ignorant and barbarous nations. The people of Jesus' day can hardly be described in so sweeping and so hasty a generalization. It is based on too few samples of the class under investigation!

He argues that if the event harmonizes with what men normally experience, it can be believed if the evidence is sufficient; but if contrary to man's ordinary experience, it cannot be believed. If this is true, can there be such a thing as reporting advances in scientific research and discovery? I wonder if Hume would be so smug as to deny the unique experience of the American astronaut, his view, his reaction, his gathering of real though previously unknown facts.

"Ah yes," says the ghost of Hume, "but millions of people the world around shared vicariously in the experience of the astronaut being informed of his actions every minute by radio and television."

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Tugging the coat-tail of the speculating spectre, we urge, "Mr. Hume, this 'vicarious experience,' as you call it, was shared by the millions because of the reliable, competent, sincere, honest testimony, but since nothing contrary to the general experience of millions of people can be admitted as having historical value on the basis of the testimony of a few, then the testimony of such a small segment of humanity cannot be admitted. Turn back over in your grave and we apologize for the intrusion."

Concluding then, it is said that since natural laws have been determined by God, then He can never exercise His power in any way as to contradict these natural laws. But God is so omnipotent and omniscient that He has the right at any time to do anything He pleases, according to His will, whether it be exactly within the limits of WHAT WE CALL "natural law" or not. In our ignorance of many uncertainties involved in our universe we cannot dogmatize that God cannot work a miracle "contrary to natural law without violating His own character."

B. IGNORANT AUTHORITARIANISM.

One reason why many educated men take a negative attitude toward the Bible miracles is because of pure ignorance of the actual content of the Bible itself, and especially of the evidence in support of its historicity. (We should not be surprised at the ignorance when we remember the great lack of Bible study in the early training of university graduates. True enough, the study of all the evidence in support of the historicity of the Bible is a science in itself and requires diligent preparation as such.

But what is both surprising and reprehensible is to find an educated man who is an authority in some other line, setting himself up as an authority on Biblical criticism without having ever given more than the most cursory study to the subject beyond swallowing whole what some destructive critic, whose own opinions are based on naturalistic premises, says about the Bible . . . The saddest part of it all is that such men, because of the respect and reputation which they have rightly gained in their own line of study, received a welcome hearing on the part of hundreds, to which hearing they are in no ways entitled, and lead many astray because their hearers think that they are speaking with equal authority about the Bible as when they speak on subjects in their own line of study.¹³

It may well be that some brilliant minds have read nothing but the distorted religious views of other ignorant religionists whose very

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teaching, not being founded in truth, become the very cause of all religion's overthrow through the brilliant but mistaken writing of the mentally acute specialists in some other field.

Some would say, "Supernatural intervention is very improbable because of

C. "THE PROBABILITY OF FRAUD."

This philosophy makes the claim that Jesus got caught up in playing the part of Messiah and to keep this popularity maintained He hired people to play blind, lame, dumb, insane, or dead so He could appear to people to heal or raise them. They even claim that the resurrection of Jesus from the dead was a fixed job! Again we have the impossible dilemma of a supreme ethical teacher violating His own ethic (practicing deliberate fraud) in which case He is nothing but a bold, bare-faced liar; or we impugn the witnesses who testify to the veracity of His miracles which they did not, in fact, ever see.

At this point we have to take a choice! We find it impossible to admire as "divine" a Christ about whom there is only falsified, or at best, deluded testimony. We cannot have our Christ and deny some of the history from which we originally learned about Him! Either we accept the witnesses as reliable and believe their testimony or else deny all of Christ and go write our own religion, for God has not spoken in human history clearly enough for all to hear.

Still others would object to miracles on the basis of

D. THE PREVALENCE OF MYTH IN ANCIENT RECORDS.

This theory would suggest that many, many years after the original witnesses were passed off the scene, mythical accounts began to arise, clothing the "historical Jesus" with a garb of miraculous deeds about which He knew nothing. These myths became part of the later oral traditions which were collected and recorded in the late second and third centuries in essentially the form evolved in our current New Testaments. Thus, according to these theologians, it is our responsibility to extract these mythical elements from the ethics of the "historical Jesus" and in this way be able to accept Jesus without these "hindrances" to rational minds. The attempt to reduce the supernatural acts of Jesus to myth cannot command much attention because (1) If during His life Jesus worked no miracles, the insoluble problem arises how He came to be known as the Messiah by those who looked for a miracle-working Messiah. (2) On what grounds can it be successfully denied that Jesus claimed to work

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miracles? (3) Formation of myths takes time not historically available from Jesus' death to the earliest accounts of His earthly ministry. Recent critical research demands the writing of the original manuscripts of the witnesses well within the first century and not during the late second or early third centuries, as this theory demands.

Other opponents of the supernatural miracles dismiss them as

E. THE DELUSION OF THE WITNESSES.

This is the idea that the apostles thought certain acts of Christ were miracles because they could not account for them by the natural causes which were hidden from them. Proponents of this theory claim that the miracles were made to appear as such by the influence of spiritual power on the nervous system or by medicine or secret remedies. The major fault of this theory lies in the failure to explain the acceptance of Jesus' enemies of the concrete and objective fact of the miracles. True enough, they did not accept the implications of the facts, but there was no denying the facts! Where is the "medicine, magic, or influence of spiritual power" which convinces centurions, high priests, Sadducees and those critical analysts, the Pharisees? These had everything to gain by denying the miracles; the apostles had nothing to gain by affirming them in face of death, privations, maltreatment of all varieties, and social stigmatization. And yet these enemies of Jesus, when they speak, are just as agreed that the miracles of Jesus are fact, as are those witnesses favorable to Him.

Some suggest that miracles of healing were due to some practice of

F. AUTO-SUGGESTION.

The theory would explain healing miracles by the power of Christ's mind acting upon the mind and then the body of the patient through a psycho-therapeutic idea. However,

It is the clear verdict of medical science that suggestion is incapable of removing any medical malady whatever and that its curative effects are restricted to functional disorders. Only what has come into existence through an idea can be removed by an idea.¹⁴

Jesus' healings were instant, not the result of extensive long-process treatment. Can men today instantly make a man walk who has been lame from his mother's womb and open the eyes of one congenitally blind? Can medical science create new arms or legs precisely like the originals instantly for the maimed? This Jesus did. Jesus was unique in this ability.

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G. EXTREME CREDULITY.

has been employed as a charge levelled against the age in which Christ worked, a time when all men looked for and believed in supernatural manifestations. Jesus' age was not any more an age of credulity than the age of our fathers. It was an age of genuine skepticism. True, they were deceived, worshipping gods that were non-existent, but what age has not done that? Study current news events and decide how rational creatures can be so gullible as to swallow the torrent of lies told by world communism. We cannot label any one age as a time of great credulity. The whole of the New Testament itself manifests an age of skepticism. Thomas doubted the resurrection and demanded an empirical basis for his faith. See Matthew 11:21-23 and John 8:46. Is it reasonable to say that the men who wrote the four gospels, that have amazed men down through the ages, were easy dupes whose minds were so childish and under-developed as not to be able to discern between astonishing feats and supernatural miracles? The charge reduced to its simplest form is this: the miracles, having been wrought or supposed to have been wrought in an age fond of believing such events, were received as real without the application of the tests by which their reality could be demonstrated. In other words, it is claimed that they were not worked under scientific conditions.

First, we remark that, whatever may have been the habit of the age in which Jesus and the Apostles lived with respect to miracles in general, and those of these men in particular, there was certainly a large class of persons, including the most acute and intelligent of the Jews, who most persistently refused to credit them; and these men were sufficient in number and in influence to check any disposition on the part of the masses to receive them without question. Second, we have a detailed account of the way in which the miracles were tested by this class of men, and by a comparison of that with which would be applied by scientific men of our own day, we can determine how much credence we should give to the assertion in question.¹⁵

The notable case in point is the healing of the man born blind by Jesus (John 9). The process of investigation, reduced to the simplest statement, was this: they first ascertained that the man could see; they next inquired what Jesus had done to him; and seeing that what He had done was only to put moistened clay on his eyes and require him to wash it off, they next inquired as to the certainty of his

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having been born blind, and they close this inquiry with the testimony of his parents.

Let us now suppose that, instead of the Pharisees who tested this miracle, it had been done by a "commission composed of physiologists, physicians, chemists and persons experienced in historical criticism" as is demanded by M. Renan. What advantage would they have had over the Pharisees in determining whether the man, when first brought before them, could see? It is clear that no knowledge of physiology, or chemistry, or medicine, or historical criticism, could help them in this. The most stupid . . . could settle the question at once by striking with his hand toward the man's face and seeing whether he winked. When it was settled that the man could see and the question was raised, What had Jesus done to give his sight?, the commission would have an advantage over the Pharisees, in that they would know more certainly, on account of their scientific attainments, that merely putting clay on a blind man's eyes and washing it off could not give him sight. Uneducated and superstitious men might imagine that the clay had some mystic power; but scientific man would know better. On this point of inquiry, then, the advantage would be with the commission, but the advantage would be in favor of the miracle. As to the next question, whether the man said to have thus received sight was born blind, what more conclusive testimony could the commission obtain, or what more could they wish, than, first, that of the neighbors who had known the man as a blind beggar; and, secondly, that of his own father and mother? Who, indeed, could be so good witnesses that a child was born blind as the father and mother for they always exhaust every possible means of testing the question before they yield to the sad conviction that their child is blind?¹⁶

Obviously, in testing such a miracle there could be no use made of scientific knowledge; and the same is true of Jesus' miracles in general. The most unscientific men of common sense can know when a man is dead; when he is alive and active; when he has a high fever; is a cripple; is paralyzed, as well as the greatest scientist. The cry, then, that the miracles of the New Testament were not done under "scientific conditions", is totally irrelevant, and can mislead only those who do not pause to think.

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Some moderns who have too much reverence (or too little, depending on your point of view) for the gospels to allow themselves to deny the miracles claim that those events in Jesus' life are not to be used for

H. TEACHING "SPIRITUAL" TRUTHS.

Rather, it is said, these narratives are to be given a "spiritual" interpretation. If these miracles did not take place, what did? The writers gave the impression that it was a distinct and remarkable miracle and they knew that they were giving this impression.¹⁷

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No matter how strong the evidence may be that the supernatural *has* occurred, since these scholars start with the premise that the supernatural can't occur, all evidence for its occurrence is ruled out of court without examination. Now I submit that even from a scientific point of view such a procedure is unwarranted. Questions of fact are not to be decided by any *a priori* principle laid down by any scientists, however erudite they may be! If facts and principles are at odds, so much the worse for the principles! The only thing we must be sure of is our facts. Facts are decided by *evidence*, and by *evidence alone*.¹⁸

The only way we can decide whether or not God has given a revelation of Himself in human history, is by an examination of the evidence tending to show that such revelation has been given. Since the matter is one purely of fact and of fact alone, it can be decided by the evidence. If God *has* given a revelation, no amount of theorizing to the contrary can change the fact.

The force of human testimony depends on three things: first, the honesty of the witnesses; second, their competency; and third, their number.¹⁹

That these qualities obtain in the witnesses of the miracles who record them for posterity is, in my opinion, demonstrated.²⁰ The writers of the gospels that record the miracles of Jesus did not consciously deceive or lie. These men were hard-headed, practical men who, even when Jesus was resurrected, had to be rebuked for their unwillingness to believe that He had, in point of fact, risen from the dead. Neither were the miraculous events that they record the kind that men readily imagine to have taken place. The writers of the gospels that picture Jesus as the miracle-working teacher were with Him

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day in and day out while Jesus walked the dusty trails of Palestine. There was nothing secret about His working of miracles. These men were competent to pronounce judgment upon the miracles. If they knew they were false, why should they declare them to be true fact, not merely supposed fact? What did they have to gain?

All evidence of Christ's miracles is contained in the New Testament. There can be no doubt as to the meaning of the evidence or the nature of the events witnessed to. The men who wrote about these miracles are either deceivers or deceived or else telling the sober truth. If they were conscienceless fabricators, how was it that such men produced that picture of moral excellence before which all the ages have fallen down in the reverent admiration? How could men who lied about the facts of Christ's life have produced so marvelous a character? Of this we can be sure, the men who relate the miracles of Jesus were not conscious deceivers and liars.

JESUS CLAIMED TO WORK MIRACLES

Jesus answered the disciples of John the Baptist:

Go and tell John the things which ye have seen and heard; the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have good tidings preached to them. (Luke 19:22)

Earlier Jesus had said to the Jews:

But the witness which I have is greater than that of John; for the works which the Father hath given me to accomplish, the very works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me. And the Father that sent me, he hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his form. And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he sent, him ye believe not. Ye search the scriptures because ye think that in them ye have eternal life: and these are they which bear witness of me. (John 5:36-38)

Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake. (John 14:11)

How can we believe in Jesus if we do not accept His own testimony that He worked miracles? People say that Jesus was the greatest of moral teachers of all time and His ethical standard amounts to absolute perfection. Some will even claim for Him that He lived His own supreme ethic which He taught! Yet how can they think

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this and still say He did not work miracles when He claimed to have done so? It gets down to the foundational question: Is Jesus telling us the truth when He claims to work miracles? Did Jesus lie or falsify His credentials? If we say that Jesus was somehow the world's greatest teacher and yet was deluded into thinking He was working superhuman acts (when in fact He did no such thing) we have little more than a self-deceived imposter. There is no middle ground. Do we reject so easily Jesus' moral integrity, or His intellectual soundness?

PROBABILITY FACTORS

By examination of the gospels, the following reasons may be employed to prove to us that the miracles are the subject of adequate and reliable testimony:

A. THERE WERE MANY MIRACLES PERFORMED BEFORE THE PUBLIC EYE.

Jesus healed in the cities, at the busy corners, when surrounded by a mob, when speaking before multitudes in the open or in a house. They were for the most part not done in secret or seclusion or before a select few. Most of them were public property, as it were. There was every occasion and opportunity to investigate the miracle right there. Such clear, open, above-board activity is good evidence of the actual occurrence.

B. SOME MIRACLES WERE PERFORMED IN THE COMPANY OF UNBELIEVERS. Miracles are always popping up in cults that believe in miracles. But when the critics are present the miracle does not seem to want to occur. But the presence of opposition or of critics had no influence on Jesus' power to perform miracles. More than once, right before the very eyes of His severest critics Jesus performed miracles. Now certainly, to be able to do the miraculous when surrounded by critics is a substantial token of their actual occurrence.

C. JESUS PERFORMED HIS MIRACLES OVER A PERIOD OF TIME AND IN GREAT VARIETY.

The imposter always has a limited repertoire and his miracles are sporadic in occurrence. Not so with Jesus. His miracles were performed all the time of His public ministry from the turning of water into wine in Cana to the raising of Lazarus. Further, He was not limited to any special type of miracle. Sometimes He showed supernatural powers of knowledge, such as knowing that Nathanael was

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hid in a fig tree; or He showed power over a great host of physical diseases: blindness, leprosy, paralysis, fever, demons, and death itself; or He was able to quell the elements at a command as He did in stilling the waves and the wind; or He could perform acts of sheer creation as when He fed thousands of people from very meager resources.

Imposture on this scale is impossible. The more times He healed, the more impossible it would be if He were an imposter. Further, it is incredible to think that for three and one-half years He maintained one consistent imposture. The number of miracles, their great variety, and their occurrence during all His public ministry are excellent evidence that Jesus actually performed the miracles the gospel writers record.

D. WE HAVE THE TESTIMONY OF THE CURED.

Many times when Jesus healed, it is recorded that the healed person went broadcasting far and wide that he had been healed, even in those cases where Jesus cautioned the person or persons against it. Certainly the report of His miracles found their way all through the hamlets and villages of Palestine. Consider too, that two of the gospels were written by men who were not eye witnesses, so available was the data of the life of Christ. Thus, part of the reason for the sudden and energetic growth of the church in Acts was the memory of the marvelous life and miracles of Jesus Christ. The result of the personal testimony of the many who were healed, as they spoke to their loved ones, their relatives near and distant, and their townspeople, cannot be ignored in accounting for the great success of the preaching of the gospel in the book of Acts.

E. THE EVIDENCE FROM THE GOSPELS CANNOT BE UNDONE BY APPEALING TO THE PAGAN MIRACLES. Miracles are believed in non-Christian religions because the religion is already believed, but in Biblical religion, miracles are part of the means of establishing the true religion. This distinction is of immense importance. Israel was brought into existence by a series of miracles; the law was given surrounded by supernatural wonders; and many of the prophets were so indicated as God's spokesmen by their power to perform miracles; and the Apostles from time to time were able to work wonders. It was the miracle authenticating the religion at every point.

Pagan miracles lack the dignity of Biblical miracles. They are frequently grotesque and done for very selfish reasons. They are seldom ethical or redemptive and stand in marked contrast to the

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chaste, ethical, and redemptive nature of the miracles of Christ. Nor do they have the genuine attestation that Bible miracles have. Therefore, to examine some pagan miracles and show their great improbability, and then to reject all miracles on that ground is not fair to Biblical miracles or to the science of historical research.

THEREFORE?

Jesus from the commencement to the end of His public ministry wrought many miracles. Christianity claims to be a revelation from God confirmed and vindicated by mighty signs and wonders. The miracles are a strand woven into the fabric of the garment of Christ's personality, and you cannot tear them out without destroying the fabric itself. THE ONLY CHRIST IS THE CHRIST WHO WALKED ON THE SEA, RAISED THE DISEASED TO HEALTH AND CALLED THE DEAD OUT OF THEIR DEATH CHAMBER!

Miracles form part of the foundation of our faith, being divine demonstrations witnessing to the origin of the message we have believed. But they are not part of the faith or part of its practice in the lives of obedient believers. The miracles wrought by the messengers of God while the faith was "once for all delivered to the saints" are still effective evidences to establish the truth and authority of that faith.²¹

Finally, whether we believe that miracles happen or not depends on our attitude toward historic testimony to their reality.

And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name. (John 20:30, 31)

1. Floyd E. Hamilton, *The Basis of Christian Faith*, (3rd rev. ed.; New York: Harper Brothers Publishers, 1946); p. 87.

2. Clarence E. McCartney, *Twelve Great Questions About Christ*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1956), p. 70.

3. J. W. McGarvey, *Evidences of Christianity*, (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Company, 1891), Part III, p. 116.

4. For a very clear discussion of the direct evidence for the resurrection of Jesus see J. W. McGarvey's, *Evidences of Christianity*, Cincinnati: Standard Publishing, 1891), Part III, Chpt. X. Also see Wilbur Smith's, *Therefore Stand*, (Natick, Mass.: W. A. Wilde Company, 1959), Chap. VIII.

5. Hamilton, p. 95, 96.

6. They had power to bless; healing sick (Acts 3:6-9); raising the dead (Acts 9:37-42; 20:9, 10); power to grant miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:14-17); power to curse (Acts 13:11).

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7. For Old Testament examples, consider the death of Uzzah (II Sam. 6:6, 7); Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10:1, 2); the leprosy of Gehazi (II Kings 5:27) and of Miriam (Num. 12:9-14); the blindness of the Syrian band (II Kings 6:18-20); the destruction of army (II Kings 19:35).

8. Seth Wilson, *"The Purpose of Miracles"*, Christian Standard, Nov. 2, 1957.

9. Hamilton, pp. 89, 90.

10. Wilbur Smith, *The Supernaturalness of Christ*, (Boston: The W. A. Wilde Co., 1958), pp. 142-150, 158.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 145.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 147.

13. Hamilton, pp. 90, 91.

14. Smith, *Ibid.*, p. 133.

15. McGarvey, *Ibid.*, p. 112.

16. *Ibid.*, pp. 112-114.

17. See John 20:30, 31; 2:11, 23; 3:2; 4:45, 54; 5:1-36.

18. Hamilton, *Ibid.*, p. 92.

19. McGarvey, *op cit.*, p. 146.

20. See MacGarvey, *Evidences*, Part III, chapter XII, p. 146ff. Also Wilbur Smith, *Therefore Stand*, chapter VIII, especially p. 422ff.

21. Wilson, *Ibid.*

INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER TEN

IS THIS SERMON OF WHOLE CLOTH, OR PATCHWORK?

On first reading this entire chapter it has the appearance of uniform wholeness. It requires only a glance at other Gospels, however, to cause the reader to realize at once that he has encountered some of this same material in quite different places and connections. A bit of first-hand familiarity with Matthew's neat organization of his materials according to topical, rather than strictly chronological, considerations, is almost sufficient to tip the balance in favor of the conclusion that the publican-Apostle is again organizing by collecting materials out of other discourses given on other occasions.

The modern Christian, hurried by immediate, practical concerns, is tempted to ask, almost with impatience: "Why bother to dig into this old question? After all, the chapter has come down to us all in one piece. What is there to gain by puzzling over the problem?" The seriousness of this problem lies in two directions: (1) Matthew's good judgment is placed in doubt, since he seems to ignore propriety by setting down in this place admonitions and predictions that not only were not given so early in the Apostle's training, but would have no connection with their immediate work, necessities or understanding.

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(2) If the material, however, is set forth in its proper place in the self-revelation of Jesus to His disciples, then there is much to gain from this vision of Him as Prophet of the finest order, as General briefing His staff, and as Supreme Lord demanding loyalty due only to God. So, what are the evidences?

A. Arguments offered against the unity of the discourse:

1. Matthew stands alone giving this message in relation to the limited mission of the Apostles in Galilee, whereas the other Synoptic writers include large parts of this discourse in different contexts as messages preached much later on other occasions. (See, for example, Mk. 13:9-13; Lk. 12:4-9, 11, 12, 49-53; 21:12-19) Moreover, in his version of the great sermon on the end of the Jewish nation and of the world, Matthew seems deliberately to omit most of those statements of Jesus he has already included in his report of the Apostolic Commission (Mt. 10), though Mark and Luke both include them in the great eschatological message.

2. In the Lord's farewell address to the apostles during the Last Supper, Jesus specifically remarked, (Jn. 16:1-4)

I have said all this to you to keep you from falling away. They will put you out of the synagogues; indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God. And they will do this because they have not known the Father, nor me. But I have said these things to you, that when their hour comes you may remember that I told you of them. I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you.

So it would seem to some that this obvious declaration eliminates categorically any predictions of persecution, prior to the discourses of the Last Week. Consequently, Matthew has placed the material describing persecutions in quite the wrong place.

3. Considering the immaturity and inexperience of the Apostles, it is thought quite unlikely that Jesus would disturb His yet untried warriors by making allusions to perils not likely to menace their simple, limited labors in Galilee.

B. Considerations strongly recommending the unity of the section:

1. The first and most obvious factor that argues the unity of

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this discourse is the fact that Matthew intends to give the clear impression that he is signalling both the beginning and the end of one discourse.

10:5

These twelve Jesus sent out,
charging them, . . .

11:1

And when Jesus had finished
instructing His twelve dis-
ciples, He went on from
there to teach and preach...

2. The mere fact, that Matthew omits from his report of the great sermon on the fall of Jerusalem and the end of the world (Mt. 24) some materials which he already used earlier (Mt. 10), is no indication that he was ignorant of the fact that Jesus made the declarations reported by Mark and Luke in that great eschatological pronouncement. His deliberateness, rather, is evidence that he DID know about those Last Week statements and chose not to use them again. The inclusion of those remarks by Mark and Luke, on the other hand, does not prove that these sayings were exclusively said by Jesus during the great discussion of Jerusalem's fall and could not have been repeated often earlier. The very sayings themselves are of such nature that they conflict deeply with the then-popular notions about the Messianic Kingdom, held even by the Apostles themselves. So it would not be at all surprising if Jesus had to repeat in similar language on several occasions the very same warnings and the same instructions about how to react.
3. A misplaced emphasis in the reading of John 16:4 can give the impression that Jesus had never before prophesied persecutions, a view which would of course leave Matthew's record under suspicion of forgery or, at least, of improper appropriation of materials, if not outright contradiction. The case stands, however, as Hendriksen, (*John*, II, 322) puts it.

To be sure, there had been predictions of coming persecution (Matt. 5:10-12; 10:16-39). But *these things* (15:18—16:3)—the fact that the world hates the disciples because Jesus has chosen them out of the world; that this hatred was in reality directed against Jesus *and against the*

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Father, that it was absolutely inexcusable and was rooted in the sinister condition of the heart which deliberately refused to acknowledge the true God, that the time was actually coming when men would regard the putting to death of Christ's followers to be tantamount to an act of worship altogether pleasing to God—*these* things, with *that* emphasis and in *that* forthright manner, had never been revealed before. One does not find "these things" in Matt. 5:10-12, which speaks only of persecution in general and of slander in particular—, nor in Matt. 10:16-29, which describes the outward forms of persecution (arrest, flogging, death, name-calling), but says very little about the hidden root from which this persecution springs (only Matt. 10:22, 24, 25, 40; cf. Jn. 15:20, 21). The reason why Jesus had not said these things from the beginning was that it had not been necessary then, because he was still with them. As long as he was physically present, the brunt of the attack was directed against *him*, not against his disciples.

4. It is a false assumption that the allusions to persecutions had no potential connection with realities involved in the Apostles' first, limited evangelistic activity in Galilee. Jesus was about to dispatch His missionaries right in the very bailiwick of that treacherous king whose command would shortly bring about the brutal murder of John the Baptist. The Twelve, commissioned especially to proclaim the identical message of that wilderness voice, must certainly come under the surveillance of that suspicious, testy old king.
5. Objections to Matthew's recording of the latter portion of this sermon (Mt. 10:16-42) disregard the obvious desire of the Lord to charge the minds of His Apostles on the occasion of their commission with a long-range, perspective view of the issues, conflicts and consequences of their ministry. His purpose is not, as is assumed by those who see this chapter as patchwork, merely to prepare His servants to experiment with their abilities in a county-wide campaign in tiny Galilee. No, it is as Bruce (*Training*, 106ff) thinks:

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This Galilean mission, though humble and limited compared with the great undertaking of after years, was really a solemn event. It was the beginning of that vast work for which the twelve had been chosen, which embraced the world in its scope, and aimed at setting up on earth the kingdom of God.

G. C. Morgan (*Matthew*, 102, 103) agrees:

As the King stood in the midst of the twelve, He looked at them and at the immediate present; but He also looked with those clear, far-seeing eyes into the near decades; and still further He looked down all the centuries; and speaking to the first apostles, He delivered a charge which in its comprehensiveness and finality is applicable to the whole movement of His enterprise, until His second advent. He declared the abiding principles, which must obtain through all the ages; and He described the changing conditions which necessitate changing methods.

So it is of real value to His Apostles, that Jesus should lay before them from the first moment of their commission in no uncertain terms the duties, dangers, instructions and encouragements in His description of the complete apostolic mission. From that moment on no disciple could complain, "Why didn't Jesus tell us this was going to happen?" Any repetition of portions of this charge on later occasions is naturally to be expected due to their importance.

6. Objections based upon "allusions to distant dangers" are groundless, since upon closer reflection even these warnings are reassuring and timely, with the result that the disciples, far from being frightened by them, could draw great strength from their memory of Jesus' words. Since they had been warned beforehand, their very suffering when it came would serve to justify and strengthen their faith in Jesus. Further, who can demonstrate it mathematically certain that the Apostles did not in fact encounter much on their first tour that tried their souls? Granted the almost certain probability that whatever they encountered was very light in comparison to later opposition, yet Jesus'

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forwarning them, and their own success in overcoming, was excellent training to endure even greater obstacles later.

C. Conclusions assuming the unity of the passage:

1. Edersheim (*Life*, I, 640f) decides:

It is evident, that the Discourse reported by St. Matthew goes far beyond that Mission of the Twelve, beyond even that of the early Church, indeed sketches the history of the Church's Mission in a hostile world, 'up to the end.'

2. Morgan's thinking (*Matthew*, 102ff) suggests the following comparative outlines of the three fundamental portions of the message, as if Jesus has three clearly distinct periods in view. The division into different periods comes, not out of textual exegesis only, but also from the fulfilment of these words of Jesus in the history of the Church.

THE ENTIRE APOSTOLIC MISSION

a. <i>First Galilean Tour</i> (10:5-15)	b. <i>The Apostolic Church</i> (10:16-23)	c. <i>The Whole Church</i> (10:24-42)
(1) From the Apostles' ordination until the beginning of the Church.	(1) From the beginning of the Church until the end of the Jewish state and Jerusalem.	(1) From the fall of Jerusalem to the end of the world.
(2) Period of relative popularity, no serious persecution.	(2) Period of Jewish persecution from Pentecost till fall of Jerusalem.	(2) Period of general difficulty, rejection, death.
(3) Particular zone of operation only among Jewish people.	(3) Wider sphere of influence even among Gentiles.	(3) General work: Confession of Jesus by ALL slaves and disciples of Jesus.
(4) Particular preparation: light equipment, dependence on Jewish hospitality.	(4) More thorough preparation and equipment, not based on hospitality. (Lk. 22:35, 36)]	(4) Emphasis on moral preparation, less on mechanical.
(5) Particular message: coming messianic kingdom.	(5) Open proclamation of accomplished facts; special help of the Spirit.	(5) Widest possible proclamation of Jesus' message.
(6) Particular credential: miracles as identification with Jesus.	(6) General credential: immediate inspiration as identification.	(6) Moral credential: suffering as identification.

But after making such a neat outline of this chapter, which upon first, even on the second, reading of the discourse, is perhaps not so obvious as the neat rows of the outline would suggest, we might well ask ourselves if this outline is so important and necessary to

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the communication Jesus intended. For example, why did not Jesus come right out and identify the precise time periods to which each portion of instruction belongs? This would eliminate our having to guess at the applications. But this very observation may be the key: He did not wish His Apostles to concern themselves with a misplaced emphasis on apocalyptic times and seasons or to apply general principles only to particular periods and not to the whole of their ministry. As Edersheim (*Life*, I, 640f) has it:

At the same time it is equally evident, that the predictions, warnings and promises applicable to a later period in the Church's history, hold equally true in principle in reference to the first Mission of the Twelve; and conversely, that what specially applied to it, also holds true in principle of the whole subsequent history of the Church in its relation to a hostile world. Thus, what was specially spoken at this time to the Twelve, has ever since, and rightly, been applied to the Church; while that in it, which specially refers to the Church of the future, would in principle apply also to the Twelve.

If the outline suggested above has value, it is because we, who have appeared on the scene in our historic time period, have the distinct advantage of historical perspective, which the Apostles themselves, as men, standing there before Jesus, prior to the fulfilment, did not have. Even with the haunting spectre of reading into Jesus' words ideas that are not there, we believe we can make out in this sermon the prophetic foresight of the Master as He describes with unerring precision the pattern, problems and progress of the entire Apostolic mission. If it be objected that with the death of the Apostles themselves their mission ceased, then let it be said that if the Church exists today, it does so in direct proportion to its recognition and acceptance of the Apostles' mission. No, the Apostles' mission is not, and will not be, completed until Jesus comes again to call a halt to the Apostles' work. No, the Apostles are not through working, for they "though dead, yet speak" through that permanent teaching medium they prepared for areas and eras where they personally could not labor: the Scriptures. Any Church today may judge itself truly apostolic by its fidelity to that message which the Apostles taught and recorded for all ages.

Returning to the question of this study, we conclude that this sermon of Jesus is all of a piece, a fitting charge given to the

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Apostles on the occasion of their entering upon the very work to which they had been earlier called, in the same way that the Sermon on the Mount was a fitting message of ordination for the occasion of their calling to the Apostleship. (Cf. Lk. 6:12-49)

One final word is in order about Matthew's orderly argument which this entire chapter exemplifies. Note how this section beautifully carries forward his presentation of the ministry of Jesus the Messiah:

1. Jesus the Messiah as proclaimer of the Kingdom of God (chap. 5, 6, 7). In that message typical of Jesus' preaching, the Master describes the Kingdom of God. He is elaborating His edicts.
2. Jesus the Messiah supernaturally accredited by miracle-working power (chap. 8, 9). In this section presenting a collection of miracles typical of Jesus' power, the Master proves His right to say the things He is. He is exhibiting His evidence.
3. Jesus the Messiah expanding His effort, multiplying His ministry and enlarging His effectiveness. (chap. 10)

SPECIAL STUDY

THE AUTHORITY OF THE APOSTLES

Many self-appointed theologians still echo the ancient lie of Satan asking, "Yea, hath God said thus and so?" hardly comprehending that to pose such a question is to question and quibble the eternal authority of the Author of their salvation. It is one thing to seek the clear evidences which would point to the revelation of God in human history, and quite another to seek, by feigned wisdom, to evade its message. Jesus clearly declares in this section that God will be revealing Himself through Jesus' twelve appointed and empowered ambassadors. It is sufficient to investigate with a true and honest heart whether God has truly spoken in human history. But, having discerned this, it is sufficient to obey.

The question of this study is not, then, why or how or should God speak through human messengers, but did He, in fact do so? Since we have the accurate message of Jesus recorded by honest, competent, reliable witnesses, we may assume that God's Son is competent to empower His rather ordinary disciples, thereby enabling them to speak extra-ordinarily the very word of the Almighty. Study these four major points of proof that the Apostles' ministry at this time was but the extension of Jesus' own:

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- I. God would verify their message as God's own by supernatural demonstrations of His presence and approval (Matthew 10:7, 8; compare Hebrews 2:3, 4; Mark 6:12, 13; Luke 9:6).
- II. Jesus declared that those who would reject His Apostles' message would surely receive heavier condemnation than the wickedest of Sodom and Gomorrah (Matthew 10:14, 15).
- III. Jesus promised that God's Spirit would speak directly in those human messengers in the hour of trial (Matthew 10:19, 20)
- IV. Jesus concludes His charge by asserting that to receive and hearken to the words of the Apostles is precisely equivalent to receiving Jesus Himself and the God who sent Him. (Matthew 10:40)

It was perfectly legitimate for every devout son of Abraham to require the credentials of those who claimed to speak for God. But, having received them, he must obey.

How often do we refuse God's proffered mercies merely because we reject the instrument through which He would make them available to us? Some would rather be accursed from God than receive God's bounties at the hands of Judas, who later betrayed Jesus! But in this ministry Judas assisted Jesus. Judas worked miracles probably along with the other Apostles. At this time all Twelve Apostles are but the multiplication of Jesus' personal ministry, even though these men were largely ignorant of Jesus' deeper meaning behind His messages, largely unaware of the necessity of the cross and deeply in need of further training. But they were nonetheless messengers of Jesus, hence, sent by the living God! Woe to that individual or city that rejects them! How blessed is that village or people that heard the voice of God in the Galilean accent of these simple men sent out by Jesus!

It should not be at all surprising, therefore, to see develop in the continuing revelation of Jesus, the Apostolic office, endowed with all the authority of the Holy Spirit. But now they are in training. Let us hear Jesus as He prepares them for this first task on their own.

WHY TWELVE APOSTLES?

It is obvious, from the emphasis Matthew gives to it, that this commission given to the Twelve represents an important advance in the progress of Jesus' self-revelation, but what is its exact meaning? Mechanically, the number twelve represents a group of men small enough to be able to teach effectively and large enough to get the

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work done. But in reference to the mission they were to accomplish, what moved Jesus to set apart these twelve as APOSTLES?

- I. Jesus desired to multiply the effectiveness of His own ministry.
 - A. A. B. Bruce (*Training*, 96) thinks that "this mission of the disciples as evangelists or miniature apostles was partly without doubt, an educational experiment for their own benefit; but its direct design was to meet the spiritual necessities of the people, whose neglected condition lay heavy on Christ's heart."
 - B. Reed (*PHC*, 248) observes astutely: "The man who seeks to do the largest amount of good will recognize that far higher results may be attained by instructing a few persons of influence 'who shall be able to teach others also,' than by working always upon an inert mass, destitute of life and reproductive energy."
 - C. As this chapter shows, Jesus conferred upon His Apostles:
 1. His own mission: "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (Cf. 15:24)
 2. His own message: "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Cf. Mt. 4:17)
 3. His own miracles: cf. 10:1, 8 with 9:35.
 4. His own miseries: "A disciple is not above his Teacher". (10:24, 25)
 5. His own mastery: "He who receives you, receives me." (10:40)
 - D. The result of this commission was that it turned the Twelve into just that many more Jesus Christs to reach out into those areas of needy humanity where Jesus Himself could not go.
- II. Jesus planned that the Apostles become personal eye-witnesses of all that transpired while they were with Him.
 - A. While their very title signifies that they were to be *men sent forth* on special missions for the Master, yet they were specifically called to "be with Jesus," to be His companions (Mk. 3:14; cf. Lk. 8:1 later)
 - B. In fact, as McGarvey (*Fourfold*, 221) judges: (contrary to the opinion of Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 92f and Lambert, *ISBE*, 202f):

A necessary condition of their apostleship was this seeing of Jesus and the consequent ability to testify as to his actions, especially as to his resurrection (Ac.

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1:8, 21, 22; 1 Cor. 9:1; Ac. 22:14, 15). They could therefore have no successors.

- C. Reed (PHC, 247) asks: "But granted the need for witnesses, were the men upon whom the solemn choice fell, competent for the discharge of so grave a function?" He then answers:
1. "The miracles of Jesus were of a kind which the humblest observer could judge, and perhaps judge even better than his superiors in rank.
 2. . . . even if the Twelve were in any measure disqualified in inferior station from bearing trustworthy evidence, they were thereby just as much incapacitated for the concoction of a clever forgery," and, of course, their writings must be explained in some reasonable manner.
 3. Barnes (*Matthew-Mark*, 107) adds that they were not especially learned men, who could spread Christianity by their erudition;
 4. They were not wealthy men who could bribe others to join their movement by offers of wealth or worldly advancement;
 5. They were not men of positions of authority who could compel others to believe.
 6. They were just good men who make the best witnesses in a court of law: plain men of good sense, fair character, of great honesty with a favorable opportunity to ascertain the facts to which they bear witness. They were the kind of men everybody believes and especially when they are willing to lay down their lives to prove their sincerity.
- D. R. C. Foster's splendid description (*Standard Lesson Commentary* 1957, 44) deserves wider hearing:

The roster of the leaders whom Jesus had assembled to assist Him in His campaign and to receive intensified training from Him is given just before this commission is recorded. The list starts the reader into meditation upon the known and the unknown in their lives. But little is known beyond the name of most of these men. Yet how many significant accounts of their heroic faith and consistent victories might have been written! . . .

We are immediately impressed by the fact that these were what the intelligentsia of that day called "ignorant and unlearned men." Good and honest

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hearts constituted the first prerequisite. The simplicity, humility, teachableness, and burning devotion of these men made them choice material for the Son of God to fashion into noble leaders of the church. Some who read the historical accounts of the New Testament are prone to magnify the mistakes of these apostles and to sneer at their slow comprehension. Such hypercriticism needs to be reminded how much more rapidly the apostles apprehended the truth about Jesus than did the college trained scholars, the scribes and Pharisees from Jerusalem. The apostles heard and saw much more of the revelation Jesus presented than did these scholars, but the latter saw and heard enough to prove their unwillingness or their inability to learn and accept the truth which threatened their wicked way of life and their false leadership over the people.

The apostles lacked the formal training which the scribes possessed, but they were free from all the excess baggage of false ideas and ideals which overloaded the scholars. When Saul of Tarsus met Jesus and gave his life to Christ, he became the great apostle, for he had the natural ability, the intellectual discipline which men could give, plus God's divine revelation to him and a flaming faith and courage which enabled him to turn the world upside down. But Paul had a desperate time recovering from the false conceptions which the scribes had given him. It took a face-to-face meeting with the risen Christ before he was able to rise above the handicap of a false education.

The apostles came from different walks of life with the advantage of varied backgrounds giving peculiar points of contact with different people they met and peculiar power to their testimony as it was reflected against their own personal background. Being experienced in hardships, privation, and burdensome toil, they were qualified to become veterans in such strenuous campaigns as Jesus carried on. They could make long, forced marches; they could listen or proclaim; they could lend the helping hand in public ministry or in necessary arrangements for the physical

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necessities of their journeys; they could lie down on the hard cold ground at night for rest if no home opened a welcome to the divine One who had no place to lay his head. In less than four years they reached the heights: they could 'walk with crowds and keep their virtue, or talk with kings, nor lost the common touch.' They could stand unafraid in the midst of the high tribunals of state and under threat of death proclaim, with the utter simplicity of the truth, their testimony to the facts of the gospel and the divine revelation which Christ had committed to them. What a moving example they have set before us!

- III. Jesus intended for the Twelve to learn evangelism, share in His own service and then continue His work in the world after His ascension.
- A. On this staff of co-workers depended the immediate effect, as well as the long-range future success, of His mission to earth.
 - B. This is why He *chose* them from among the disciples, the "learners," from among men whose minds were open. (Cf. Lk. 6:13) Barclay (*Matthew*, I, 370) quips: "The shut mind cannot serve Jesus Christ."
 - C. He *called* them, but they could accept or refuse that summons: they were present because they chose to be with Him. (Cf. Mk. 3:14) Their acceptance of His calling to be with Him was extremely important, for, before they had anything worthwhile to say to men, they must learn to live in His presence, imbibe of His Spirit, think His thoughts after Him.
 - D. He *appointed* them (Mk. 3:14). This officially set them apart as "The Twelve," as Apostles. Barclay (*Matthew*, I, 370) thinks that "it was not a case of drifting unconsciously into the service of Jesus Christ; it was a case of definitely being appointed to it."
 - E. He *sent them forth* (Lk. 9:2): their lives were not meant to be spent in contemplation and study, even though, until they had done this, they had little to say. They must begin their service.
 - F. He commanded them to herald His message, not their own views or traditions, as Barclay (*Matthew*, I, 371) writes: "The Christian is not meant to bring to men his own opinions or

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his views; he brings a message of divine certainties from Jesus Christ."

Section 23

JESUS COMMISSIONS TWELVE APOSTLES TO EVANGELIZE GALILEE

(Parallels: Mark 6:7-13; Luke 9:1-6)

PREVIEWING IN OUTLINE FORM

- I. Jesus Calls the Twelve and Empowers Them For Special Service (Mt. 10:1-4; Mk. 6:7; Lk. 9:1)
- II. Jesus Instructs and Charges the Twelve How to Proceed (Mt. 10:5-15; Mk. 6:8-11; Lk. 9:2-5)
 - A. Their Words and Works (Mt. 10:5-8; Lk. 9:2)
 - B. Their Equipment and Conduct (Mt. 10:9-15; Mk. 6:8-11; Lk. 9:3-5)
- III. Jesus Challenges and Warns the Twelve of the Dangers and Difficulties That Lie Ahead (Mt. 10:16-31)
 - A. General Warning (Mt. 10:16)
 - B. Persecution by the State "Church" (Mt. 10:17)
 - C. Persecution by the State Government (Mt. 10:18)
 - D. Promise of Power in the Hour of Peril (Mt. 10:19, 20)
 - E. Persecution by Their Own Families (Mt. 10:21, 22)
 - F. Prudence in Persecution (Mt. 10:23)
 - G. Suffering of the Savior and His Servants (Mt. 10:24, 25)
 - H. Freedom From Fear (Mt. 10:26-31)
 1. The Triumph of Truth (Mt. 10:26, 27)
 2. The Right Reverence (Mt. 10:28)
 3. The Care of the Creator (Mt. 10:29-31)
- IV. Jesus Requires and Rewards Loyalty of His Servants (Mt. 10:32-39)
 - A. The Supreme Honor For Loyalty (Mt. 10:32)
 - B. The Supreme Disgrace For Disloyalty or Cowardice (Mt. 10:33)
 - C. The Inevitable Enmities in Loyalty to Jesus (Mt. 10:34-36)
 - D. The Secret of Success Through Sacrifice and Surrender (Mt. 10:37-39)

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- V. Jesus Rewards Those Who Welcome His Servants (Mt. 10:40-42)
 - A. The Authority of His Messengers (Mt. 10:40)
 - B. The Reward of Those Who Help His Messengers (Mt. 10:41, 42)
- VI. The Twelve Apostles Depart to Evangelize (Mk. 6:12, 13; Lk. 9:6)
- VII. Jesus Also Goes to Evangelize Galilee (Mt. 11:1)

Section 23

JESUS COMMISSIONS TWELVE APOSTLES TO EVANGELIZE GALILEE

I. JESUS CALLS THE TWELVE AND EMPOWERS THEM FOR SPECIAL SERVICE

(Parallels: Mark 6:7; Luke 9:1)

TEXT: 10:1-4

1. And he called unto him his twelve disciples, and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of disease and all manner of sickness.
2. Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the *son* of Zebedee, and John his brother;
3. Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James the *son* of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus;
4. Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- a. Have you any idea why Jesus chose exactly twelve to be apostles, no more and no less?
- b. Why would Jesus, God's Son, need to spend the night in prayer prior to the selection of His Apostles? What do you think He prayed about?
- c. Do you think Jesus knew before He chose them what each of the Apostles would become? If so, why did Jesus choose Judas? If you had been Jesus and could read Judas' future clearer than most people understand their own past, would you have gone ahead and chosen Judas, fully aware that your best attempts to win him over

to true discipleship would be in vain? Or do you think Jesus knew all this at the beginning?

- d. What is your opinion: was Judas evil when Jesus called him to be an Apostle? Or did he go bad during his associations with Jesus? If you conclude the latter to be the case, how do you explain this phenomenon of a man who in the best of environment with the finest of human association still being lost as a sinner in the end?
- e. If Matthias (Acts 1:15-26) were also a companion of Jesus at this time, what explanation can you give for Jesus' not having chosen HIM instead of Judas? Or even in place of some other?
- f. Why does Matthew begin the list of the Apostles' names by saying, "First, Peter . . ." ? In light of the seemingly incurable tendency in the human race to worship heroes and in the light of all Church history, we ask why should Matthew adopt so tendentious a beginning? Could the Holy Spirit, who inspired Matthew, not have foreseen the future developments in Church history and thus been able to forestall that adoration of Peter as the chief of the apostles? What do you think?

PARAPHRASE AND HARMONY

Jesus called to Him His twelve disciples, and began to send them out two by two.

(Here follows a flashback to their actual call to Apostleship:

During that earlier period, Jesus, seeing the crowds, went up into the hills to a particular mountain to pray. All night long He continued in prayer to God. In the morning He called to Him His disciples, those whom He desired, and they came to Him. From this group Jesus selected twelve, appointing them to be with Him and to be sent out to preach and have authority to cast out demons. These He named to be Apostles:

1. Simon Peter (Bar-Jonah)
2. Andrew (Bar-Jonah), Peter's brother
3. James (Bar-Zebedee), John's brother
4. John (Bar-Zebedee). These last two Jesus surnamed "Boanerges", an Aramaic word meaning "Sons of Thunder".
5. Philip
6. Nathanael (Bar-Tholomew or Bar Tolmai)
7. Thomas Didymus ("the Twin")
8. Matthew Levi, the tax collector (Bar-Alphaeus)
9. James (Bar-Alphaeus)

10. Judas Thaddaeus, of James
11. Simon the Cananean, who was called "the Zealot."
12. Judas Iscariot (Bar-Simon), who became a traitor and betrayed Him.

Then Jesus came down with them and stood on a level place with a great crowd of His disciples. There He preached the Sermon on the Mount as an ordination message.)

Jesus gave them power and authority over all demons and unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and heal every infirmity.

SUMMARY

In relation to the great popularity of Jesus' ministry, He feels the great urgency to multiply the effectiveness of His own work, as well as the pressing necessity to train His Apostles in practical ways to carry out His ministry. So He collected together the Twelve Apostles, who had been ordained earlier, and commissioned them with this specific, limited ministry.

NOTES

10:1 **And He called unto Him His twelve disciples.** In order better to understand this call it would be helpful to see the various "calls" of Jesus, to which the Apostles had responded.

1. Their first invitation to become disciples (cf. Jn. 1:35—2:2)
2. His call to become intimate companions in travel with Him with more specific purpose to learn evangelism (cf. Mt. 4:18-22; 9:9). It is presumed that the original call to become collaborators of Jesus, directed to each man, individually, occurred early in the first year. (Cf. Ac. 1:21, 22)
3. Their election to Apostleship (Mk. 3:13-19; Lk. 6:12-17).
4. Now, this first specific mission as Apostles. (Matthew 10).

When one follows the more strictly chronological narratives of Mark or Luke, he sees a vigorous popular ministry in Galilee following the original call to learn evangelism. During that period there also occurs a series of hot controversies as well as wide-spread fame for Jesus and growing interest among the people, including the ordination of the Apostles. Thus this call (Mt. 10:1) arises out of this context and is intended to give them the commission which follows and the instructions for carrying it out. These men had thus advanced in their growth of faith and understanding of Jesus' mission, from being

simple disciples to intimate understudies, then, here, to being Apostles at work under Jesus' personal direction. Later, they will function entirely on their own, when He would have returned to the Father; but now they are given limited work balanced with their present capacity.

Reasoning in reverse from a fixed point of time relatively certain, we can determine the general time in which this commission was given and executed.

1. The Passover was at hand when Jesus fed the 5000. (Jn. 6:4) This passover may well have been the beginning of the third year of Jesus' ministry.
2. Jesus fed the 5000, although He really intended to escape the notice of Herod (Mt. 14:1, 13; Mk. 6:14; Lk. 9:7-9).
3. Herod's attention was turned to Jesus, because of the vigorous, multiple ministry of the Apostles on the very mission recorded in this chapter. (Cf. Mk. 6:12, 13; Lk. 9:6-9)

The actual time, then, of this commission is toward the close of the second year of Jesus' ministry.

What is the connection between the great challenge laid before the Apostles (Mt. 9:35-38) and the commission contained in this chapter? That there is a connection is clear, since the psychological connection is perfect: Jesus lays on the hearts of His men the great, pressing need for laborers, urging them to make it the burden of their prayers. He makes sure that they see the great vision of lost souls that moved Him, in order that they might sense their lostness and be moved by the same compassion that drove Him. At the same time, however, it is obvious that the Lord is not calling around Him (Mt. 10:1) the very men to whom He had just spoken (9:35-38), unless we are witnessing a narrowing process by which Jesus individuates the Twelve out of a larger group of disciples who had been so challenged. It may well be that this is the first step in preparing larger groups, like the Seventy (Lk. 10). This is beautiful strategy! He sends out a small, well-trained, trustworthy group to succeed on a first mission with limited objectives. Later, Jesus can enlarge the group, using the Twelve as the basic nucleus of experienced evangelists, who are able to train others also. This is workable strategy, even though He has higher goals and a loftier position for the Twelve themselves. (Cf. Mt. 19:27, 28) As a psychological master-stroke, this narrowing process is priceless, since the larger band of disciples who are not immediately chosen, both see the choice of the Twelve, hear the terms of their commission and then are permitted to

study the problems of the Apostles' ministry. Then, seeing that common men like themselves can be trusted to carry out Jesus' missions, more disciples are thereby encouraged to tackle the task of evangelism. It would seem, therefore, that, psychologically speaking, the mission of the Seventy naturally follows the mission of the Twelve, just as Luke (9:1-10; 10:1-20) arranges it.

He gave them authority: here is a tacit declaration of deity! This Nazarene can share the very authority and power of God without any apparent relationship to the Holy Spirit or of any prayers to God that He grant this to them. How Jesus did this is not part of the text, but the unquestionable fact is that He did. It is not known whether this sharing of authority was given by the laying on of Jesus' hands accompanied by the prayers and fasting of the Apostles, or by His simple declaration that they were now the stewards of that power which the Apostles had earlier recognized as God's power in Jesus. Certainly, this solemn, impressive giving of power was neither lightly given nor received.

Authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of disease and all manner of sickness. This quick summary of the work of the Apostles serves only to introduce the chapter, not limit what they were to do, inasmuch as their specific instructions actually included more than these two types of miracles. (See on 10:7, 8)

Notice the difference between **authority** (*exousia*) and power (*dynamis*: Lk. 9:1). The former word gives the right to the Apostles to command that demons obey them, while the latter provides the miraculous supernatural force to enforce the order. These Jesus' men are pitted against Satan's finest, and consequently, against Satan himself, for they will be attacking his house, binding him and seize those his victims. (See on 12:29) Plummer (*Luke*, 239) remarks that "the Jewish exorcists had neither *dynamis* nor *exousia*, and made elaborate and painful efforts, which commonly failed." This very possession and use of power and authority would be the obvious signal to all Galilee that these Apostles are not magicians or common exorcists, but men from God! That they actually exercised this power is demonstrated in Mk. 6:12, 13; Lk. 9:6 (See under VI). Not only so, but Jesus later empowered the Seventy to do the same (Lk. 10:17). But by making this statement, Matthew intimates that the Apostles had not worked any miracles before this moment. Until this moment, they were but assistants to Jesus; henceforth they labor alongside Him, working miracles as does He; however, always in dependence upon

Him as the giver of the power and because of their trust. (See on 17:19, 20)

10:2 Now the names of the twelve apostles are these. Why this apparent emphasis on "twelve"? This is now the second time in two verses that Matthew brings this number to light. Is he trying to say something special to his Jewish audience? McGarvey (*Fourfold Gospel*, 220) is probably on the track of the answer to this unquestionably symbolic choice of exactly twelve—not eleven nor thirteen—Apostles:

We cannot think that the number twelve was adopted carelessly. It unquestionably had reference to the twelve tribes of Israel, over whom the apostles were to be tribal judges or viceroys (Lk. 22:30), and we find the tribes and apostles associated together in the structure of the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:12-14). Moreover, Paul seems to regard the twelve as ministers to the twelve tribes or to the circumcision, rather than as ministers to the Gentiles or the world in general (Gal. 2:7-9). See also Jas. 1:1; 1 Pet. 1:1. This tribal reference was doubtless preserved to indicate that the church would be God's new Israel.

Anyone who has studied the scanty notices of the individual Apostles in the Gospel records must soon despair of knowing very much about each man. And it is no little temptation to start writing Apocryphal Gospels that fill in the missing information that surrounded the lives of these men. Even the best attempts of men not saturated with Ebionite or Gnostic views are not much better at satisfying human curiosity to know these heroic giants of the faith, than were the distorted views pictured in the Apocryphal Gospels, Acts, Epistles and Apocalypses. Character studies are simply unfair when based on so slight information, since they become hasty generalizations founded on too few samplings taken from the lives of the men themselves.

But this scarcity of information on the Apostles has great value apologetically, since our records are not the Gospel of Peter, Paul and Mary, but the Gospel of Jesus. Much as we would like to pry into the personality of major figures in the New Testament, these very people themselves indicate the role they play: they are "onstage" only as secondary characters against which the majesty of Jesus Christ is seen in greater relief. Hence, the New Testament authors were not writing to satisfy our intense curiosity to know the details of the lives of anyone else but Jesus. Though this curiosity is perfectly

normal psychologically—as is evidenced by the flurry of Apocryphal books that deal in this very merchandise—yet the inspired authors stuck to the bare essentials. The Apocryphals cater to our curiosity and show what human inspiration can produce; the genuine, canonical Gospels speak to our need to know Jesus, and show what divine inspiration produces. So we must resign ourselves with Edersheim (*Life*, I, 521): “The difficulties connected with tracing the family descent or possible relationship between the Apostles are so great,” as well as almost all other details associated with the lives of these men, “that we must forego all hope of arriving at any certain conclusion.”

LISTS OF THE APOSTLES

Mt. 10:2-4	Mk. 3:13-19	Lk. 6:12-16	Ac. 1:13
<i>Simon Peter</i>	<i>Simon Peter</i>	<i>Simon Peter</i>	<i>Peter</i>
Andrew his brother	James of Zebedee	Andrew his brother	John
James of Zebedee	John his brother	James	James
John his brother	Andrew	John	Andrew
<i>Philip</i>	<i>Philip</i>	<i>Philip</i>	<i>Philip</i>
Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Thomas
Thomas	Matthew	Matthew	Bartholomew
Matthew, publican	Thomas	Thomas	Matthew
<i>James of Alphaeus</i>	<i>James of Alphaeus</i>	<i>James of Alphaeus</i>	<i>James of Alphaeus</i>
Thaddaeus	Thaddaeus	Simon the Zealot	Simon, Zealot
Simon the Cananaean	Simon the Cananaean	Judas of James	Judas of James
Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	

For further information on each apostle, consult encyclopedic articles on related subjects. The following notes were thought helpful.

The first, Simon, who is called Peter. The word **first** is not intended to signify primacy, but rather its usual numerical sense; as if Matthew were saying, “Here is where the list begins,” without numbering all of the men. It cannot mean that Peter was the first disciple, since even his own brother, Andrew, preceded him in discipleship (Jn. 1:40-42), and brought Simon to Jesus. There is no doubting that Peter was a preeminent Apostle, judging from the much greater knowledge we have of him than any other Apostle possibly except John or Paul. (See Jn. 1:40-44; Mt. 8:14ff.; Lk. 5:1-11; Mt. 10:2; 14:28; Jn. 6:68; Mt. 16:13-23; Mk. 5:37; Mt. 17:1-5; 24-27; Jn. 13:1-10; Lk. 22:31-34; Mt. 26:31-46; Jn. 18:10-12; Mt. 26:56-58; Mk. 14:66-72; Lk. 22:54-62; Jn. 18:15-27; 20:1-10; Mk. 16:7; Lk. 24:34; I Cor. 15:5; Ac. 1:15-26; 2—5; 8; 9—11; 12; 15; Gal. 2:11-

14; I Co. 9:5; Jn. 21:18, 19; 2 Pet. 1:12-15.) Peter's preaching is not only summarized in Luke's Acts, but brought down to our age in the letters Peter wrote. But that this preeminence is no primacy, as will be shown in the outline study: "The Primacy of Peter."

Andrew his brother, i.e. Peter's, hence many of the passages on Peter's early relationship to Jesus apply equally well for Andrew. Later mentions of Andrew: Jn. 6:8, 9; 12:20-22.

James the son of Zebedee. Although his brother John is more prominent in the Gospel narratives, as well as in the Acts, James is mentioned first here, since, it is thought, he was the older. John is described as James' brother, but not vice versa and always appears in the apostolic lists after James, except in the list of Acts. This latter fact may be a foreshadowing of the more eminent position in the Church occupied by John. James' tragic murder was the first martyrdom among the Apostolic company. (Ac. 12:2) See notes on the call of the four fishermen, Mt. 4:18-22.

John his brother. Were James and John cousins of Jesus? It may be that Zebedee's wife and the mother of Jesus are sisters, a possibility which would make these men cousins and explain their special intimacy with the Lord in several important occasions. (See Charts 1 and 5, on the special study, "The Brethren of the Lord," under Matthew 13:54-58). Besides his call and position as one of the inner circle of Jesus' closest associates (Mk. 5:37; Lk. 8:51; Mt. 17:1-8; Mk. 9:2-8; Lk. 9:28-36; Mt. 26:36-46), John "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (Jn. 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20), the following texts on James and John reveal that vigor and vehemence, that zeal touching on ambition that probably earned them the title "sons of thunder" (Mk. 3:17); Lk. 9:51-55; Mk. 9:38 and Lk. 9:49; Mt. 20:20-28; Mk. 10:35-45. John's ministry not only involved his early preaching, seen in the Acts, but abides to our time by way of the Gospel that bears his name, three letters and the great Revelation (1:1, 4, 9).

10:3 **Philip** of Bethsaida (Jn. 1:44), an early disciple of John the Baptist, brought Nathanael to the Lord (Jn. 1:45). Though the evidence is slight upon which the following description is based, it might be instructive to include it. (ISBE, 2368)

(Philip) himself possessed an inquirer's spirit and could therefore sympathize with Greek's doubts and difficulties . . . the slower Philip, versed in the Scriptures (cf. Jn. 1:45), appealed more to the critical Nathanael and the cultured Greeks (cf. Jn. 12:20-22). Cautious and deliberate himself and desirous of submitting all truth to the test of sensuous

experience (cf. Jn. 14:8) he concluded the same criterion would be acceptable to Nathanael also (Jn. 1:46). It was the presence of this materialistic trend of mind in Philip that induced Jesus, in order to awaken in His disciple a larger and more spiritual faith, to put the question in Jn. 6:6, seeking "to prove him." . . . It was not merely modesty, but a certain lack of self-reliance, that made him turn to Andrew for advice when the Greeks wished to see Jesus.

Bartholomew is possibly the surname (Bar Tolmai="son of Tolmai") for *Nathanael* of Cana in Galilee. The arguments backing this identification of two names with one man are:

1. Nathanael is never mentioned by the Synoptic Gospels, while Bartholomew is never mentioned by John, who implies that Nathanael was one of the Twelve (Jn. 21:2).
2. In the Synoptics, Philip is closely connected with Bartholomew (see lists of the Apostles), and in John with Nathanael (cf. Jn. 1:45ff.). It was Philip who brought him to Christ.
3. Most of the other Apostles have two names; why not Nathanael Bar-Tolmai?

Thomas Didymus ("the Twin" of whom? See Jn. 11:16) Interestingly, the Clementine Homilies, 2:1, supply the name "Eliezar" as Thomas' twin brother. Where was this unknown twin—had he chosen not to follow Jesus? Had that twin too been separated from Thomas by the dedication to the Master of his twin-Apostle? Coincidentally, he is always linked with Matthew, in the Synoptic lists: was he associated in work with Matthew? Consider the imaginative description of Kerr (*ISBE*, 2973), worked out of these texts: Jn. 11:16; 14:5; 20:24-29; 21:2:

Although little is recorded of Thomas in the Gospels, he is yet one of the most fascinating of the apostles. He is typical of that nature—a nature by no means rare—which contains within it certain conflicting elements difficult of reconciliation. Possessed of little natural buoyancy of spirit, and inclined to look upon life with the eyes of gloom or despondency, Thomas was yet a man of indomitable courage and entire unselfishness. Thus with a perplexed faith in the teaching of Jesus was mingled a sincere love for Jesus the teacher. In the incident of Christ's departure for Bethany, his devotion to his Master proved stronger than his fear of death. Thus far, in a situation demanding immediate action, the faith of

Thomas triumphed; but when it came into conflict with his standards of belief it was put to a harder test. For Thomas desired to test all truth by the evidence of his senses, and in this, coupled with a mind tenacious both of its beliefs and disbeliefs, lay the real source of his religious difficulties. It was his sincerity which made him to stand aloof from the rest of the disciples till he had attained to personal conviction regarding the resurrection; but his sincerity also drew from the testimony to that conviction, "My Lord and my God," the greatest and fullest in all Christianity.

Matthew the publican unobtrusively inserts his own name in this hall of fame, containing names of the greatest men our world will ever know. Fully conscious of the significance of the list, Matthew never ceased to marvel in the wonder at God's grace who could make use of a PUBLICAN! Notice that although Matthew tells very little about any other Apostle—perhaps a distinguishing appellation here or a blood relationship there—he does not mention the occupation of any other Apostle. The only Apostles about which he tells anything negative are Matthew the publican and Judas Iscariot! Other than his other name, Levi, son of Alphaeus (Cf. Mt. 9:9 with Mk. 2:14; Lk. 5:27) little else is known of the man, except his authorship of this Gospel. It is not likely that Alphaeus, his father, should be the same as the father of James of Alphaeus, for this man would have been his brother, a fact that he would hardly have overlooked in light of the other pairs of brothers mentioned.

James the son of Alphaeus. See Chart 5 on "the Brethren of the Lord" under 13:54-58 to visualize the following points relative to this James, Simon and Thaddaeus, all of which are problematic and inconclusive:

1. This James of Alphaeus is thought to be identifiable with James the Little (Mk. 15:40).
2. If we see four women at the cross and identify Mary, the mother of James the Little and Joses (Mk. 15:40) with Mary of Clopas (Jn. 19:25);
3. And if the name "Clopas" is *linguistically* and *personally* to be identified with Alphaeus (on which question good scholars stand both for and against);
4. And if Clopas be admitted to be Joseph's brother, according to the testimony of Hegesippus cited by Eusebius (*Ecc. Hist.* iii, 11);

5. Then James of Alphaeus (Clopas) is also a cousin of the Lord.

Thaddaeus is the same as **Judas of James**, as a comparison of the lists of the Apostles shows, Matthew and Mark always using the former name; Luke consistently adopting the latter. So it is "Judas Thaddaeus of James," but how are we to understand the genitive "of James"—brother or son? It would seem strange to use the genitive for brotherhood when it is so often intended to indicate the parent, unless there is some clear, overriding reason in a special case to interpret it otherwise. Perhaps in putting the emphasis on "James" in the name "Judas of James," we have looked back to the last-mentioned man of that name, when it might have been Luke's purpose only to distinguish this Judas from the next Judas (Iscariot) in much the same way as does John who actually says "Judas, not Iscariot" (Jn. 14:22). If this James happened to be just another unknown man by that name, then, of course, the supposed kinship to Jesus of Thaddaeus Judas of James vanishes.

10:4 **Simon the Cananaean** is just hellenized Hebrew for **Simon the Zealot**. Edersheim provides the true Hebrew for what comes out in Greek as "Cananaean:" *Qannaim* (*Life*, I, 237; on the Zealots, see encyclopedic articles and Edersheim, *Life*, 237-242; cf. Notes on 9:27, 30). Is this Simon the same man as the Symeon, mentioned by Hegesippus (*Eccl. Hist.*, iii, 11; iv, 22), who was the son of Clopas, Joseph's brother? If so, Simon would be the brother of James of Alphaeus, granted the possible identifications given in his case. While these two men, James of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, are not called brothers, as are the first two pairs, yet it is strange that Luke (6:15, 16 and Ac. 1:13) should consistently bracket the name of Simon by the names "James of Alphaeus" and "Judas of James". He does this without either identifying the "James" intended in the second case or explaining whether the simple possessive form (*Iakôbou*) means "son" or "brother", unless that relationship was so clear as to require no further explanation. It may be that the explanation is to be found right in the text: James, Judas Thaddaeus and Simon are three brothers, sons of the same father Alphaeus-Clopas. But these connections, if that they may be called, are too tenuous to provide anything more than interesting speculation.

Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him. What an epitaph! It is his only claim to fame. Most folks think he was a Judean from the Judean town named Kerioth (Josh. 15:25), or perhaps of Moab, since there too was such a city (Jer. 48:24; Am. 2:2), because his

family name, Iscariot, seems to be derived from "Ish-Kerioth," "a man of Kerioth." However, this is not conclusive since a Galilean could carry such a name without being from Kerioth himself. In Italian, for example a man can be named Giovanni di Bologna ("John of Bologna") but be born and live in Rome, or Katherine Genovese ("the inhabitant of Genova, Italy") who lived her whole life in New York. So Judas' Judean name does not make him any less a Galilean than Peter, unless, of course, other information should prove him so. Simon Iscariot, Judas' father (Jn. 13:26), may have been an immigrant from Judah (or even son of immigrants himself) in which case such a distinction would make sense in the new area in which he was the newcomer, easily distinguished from the other Simons of Galilee by the nickname "Simon, the man from Kerioth." Passages from which a picture of Judas can be gleaned are: Jn. 6:66-71; 12:5, 6; cf. also Mt. 26:7-13; Mk. 14:3-8; Mt. 26:14, 15; Mk. 14:10, 11; cf. Lk. 22:3-6; Jn. 13:10-18, 21-30; Mt. 26:21; Mk. 14:18; Lk. 22:21; Mt. 26:16, 47-50; Mk. 14:43, 44; Lk. 22:47; Jn. 18:2-5; Mt. 27:3-10; Ac. 1:16-20.

These two contrasts, chosen from among many fine character studies of the Apostles, deserve wider readership, even though there is some obvious, if excusable, fiction writing here:

Simon the Zealot . . . in whom hot passion masqueraded as holy zeal. The impure fire had been clarified, and turned into holy enthusiasm, by union with Christ, who alone has power to correct and elevate earthly passion into calm and permanent consecration and ardour. What a contrast he presents to the last name (Judas Iscariot)! A strangely assorted couple, these two; the zealot, and the cold-blooded, selfish betrayer, whose stagnant soul has never been moved by any breath of zeal for anything!

(Alexander Maclaren, *PHC*, 246)

One, Simon the Cananean, 'was a former guerrilla fighter, sworn to kill on sight any Jew who had dealings with the despised Romans. One Jew whom Simon would have killed on sight was our author, Matthew! Matthew quietly inserts his own name in the roster of the Twelve which includes the name of Simon the Cananean, his one-time, would-have-been assassin! Matthew reminds his readers that the disciples had nothing in common with each other except their common loyalty to Jesus Christ. A renegade, Matthew, and a patriot, Simon, who had taken a blood oath to kill any such renegade

—men with the most diverse backgrounds were brought together by Jesus Christ.

(William P. Barker, *As Matthew Saw the Master*, 35)

That Jesus could unite such men to labor side-by-side, gives tremendous witness to Jesus' power to convert men! If the Master can make such eternally good use of such common men, what extraordinary encouragement to put ourselves at His disposal!

FACT QUESTIONS

1. When and where did Jesus first acquire disciples?
2. When and where did He first call men to leave home and follow Him constantly, to become His companions in travel and labor?
3. When and where did He first name the twelve disciples to be apostles?
4. When and where did He first send forth to preach with power and authority?
5. When and where did He question them about their faith in His identity?
6. When and where did He promise them the Holy Spirit to guide them into all truth?
7. Name the twelve Apostles, and tell what you know about each one.
8. Distinguish between the words "disciple" and "apostle," showing the stages of relationship to Jesus and His work through which the Twelve passed from one to the other.
9. Although Jesus chose Judas to become an Apostle, what did He already know about the man? (See John 6:70, 71; 17:12)
10. Describe the sermon that was preached by Jesus at the time of the choosing of the Twelve to become Apostles and show its particular fitness for that occasion.
11. Describe the sermon that was preached by Jesus at the time of the official commissioning of the Apostles, and show its particular fitness and importance for that occasion.

SPECIAL STUDY

THE SUPREMACY OF PETER

The fact that the Apostle Peter is personally mentioned first in every list of the Apostles, and in Matthew's list is marked for special preeminence by the expression: "The first, Simon, who is called

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Peter," has certainly been misinterpreted by many as expressing the ecclesiastical supremacy of the Lord's fisherman-Apostle.

For the following basic outline, which brings together important evidences to the contrary, we are indebted to McGarvey (*Four-fold Gospel*, 221f), to which is added a note here and there:

1. Peter's natural talents gave a personal, but not an ecclesiastical, preeminence over his fellows. This explains not only the Lord's natural preference for this boisturous ex-fisherman over the other less expressive, though nonetheless sensitive, Apostles.
2. That Peter had supremacy or authority over his brethren is
 - a. nowhere stated by Christ, (Mt. 16:18, 19 notwithstanding, see Notes)
 - b. nor claimed by Peter himself; (see below under 4)
 - c. nor stated by the rest of the Twelve.

The total blackout in the New Testament on this subject, so important to the development of the Biblical doctrines of the Church, is incomprehensible in light of the papal claims made for him. For, if this primate position were essential to the nature of the Church, the Apostles could hardly be thought to have omitted reference to it, even if only in passing. But this total silence is most significant: it cannot mean that the other Apostles had no opportunity to mention it, since many Pauline discussions, for example, describe the fundamental unity and nature of the Church without ever once touching the (reputed) primacy of Peter as unitary head of the Church on earth.

3. The clear declarations of Christ place the Apostles upon the same level with each other. (Cf. Mt. 23:8-11; 18:18; 19:27, 28; 20:20-27; Jn. 20:21-23; Ac. 1:8; Lk. 22:24-27) As will be seen in the study of Mt. 18, in its entirety, had Jesus wanted to clarify the burning question of hierarchy in favor of any one of the Apostles, the opportunity offered Him in that context could not have been better. In that case, had He needed to clarify the proper spirit in which to serve Him, while explaining the structure of ecclesiastical hierarchy, which was the practical import of the disciples' question (Mt. 18:1; cf. Mk. 9:33, 34; Lk. 9:46-48), He missed His chance. Evidence that the supposed primacy of Peter was not settled in his favor by the declarations in Mt. 16:18, 19 is to be found in the fact that long after Jesus' promises and predictions about Peter, the disciples dispute

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about which of them was to be regarded as the greatest (Lk. 22:24ff.). In both of these situations, just a word from Jesus explaining that, despite His demands for humility of spirit and a willingness to serve others, yet Peter was to take command of the Church, would have sufficed for all ages to establish Peter's ecclesiastical primacy.

4. Peter's own declaration, rather than assert his supposed primacy, claims no more than a position equal to that of other officers in the Church under Christ (I Pet. 5:1, 4). That any of his supposed successors do not follow in the footsteps of Peter is revealed in the chasm that separates his doctrine from theirs. Peter himself shows that the Church was not established upon him as *petra* (cf. I Pet. 2:4-9, especially in Greek).
5. Paul's attitude toward Peter is incredible in light of the latter's supposed supremacy:
 - a. Paul withstood Peter to his face, a fact that is unbelievable in light of the theory of practically total infallibility (Gal. 2:11-14). Practical total infallibility, not merely when the Roman pontiff speaks "ex cathedra", is fundamental to modern Catholic belief:

The bishops when they teach in communion with the Roman Pontiff, must be heard by all with veneration, as witnesses of the divine and catholic truth; and the faithful must accept the judgment of their Bishop given in the name of Christ in matters of faith and morals, and adhere to it with religious respect. But this religious respect of will and intelligence is in a special manner due to be given to the authentic teaching authority of the Roman Pontiff, even when he is not speaking "ex cathedra," with the result that his supreme teaching authority be accepted with reverence, and that the pronouncements given by him be adhered to with sincerity, according to the mind and will manifested by him, which is made clear especially either by the nature of the documents or by the frequent riproposing of the same doctrine, or by the tenor of the verbal expression.

(Documents of the Vatican II Council, *Lumen Gentium*, on the "Dogmatic Constitution of the

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Church", paragraph 25, my translation from the Italian text.)

- b. If lists in themselves are important, Paul lists Peter as second in importance to James the Lord's brother (Gal. 2:9). Although this is no complete list of the leading figures in the Jerusalem Church, it shows Paul did not consider the order of names in his sentence of great importance, as might be supposed to be the case in a tightly organized hierarchy of which the Roman system is the best example.
- c. Paul did not despise Peter, but sought him out especially (Gal. 1:18, 19), but this is stated in a context where Paul vigorously denies any dependence upon other Apostles for the authority of his own apostolic mission. (Gal. 1:11, 12, 16b, 17; cf. 2:6-9)
6. The attitude of James at the Jerusalem council is incredible, since after the speech of the "infallible" Peter, James requires, "Brethren, hearken unto me . . . my judgment is . . ." These words of James would be rendered utterly superfluous after the declarations of Peter, were he really supreme. Further, it is the decision of the assembled Apostles and elders to follow the advice of James. (Cf. Ac. 15:7-11 with 13-21).

McGarvey concludes that, were it possible even to establish beyond a reasonable doubt that Peter were actually primate in the ecclesiastical sense among the Apostles, the papacy would still be left without a valid claim to its pretended honors, since it would still have to prove that it was heir to the rights and honors of Peter, which is something it has never yet done. The papal claim rests not upon facts, but upon several assumptions:

1. That Peter had supreme authority among the Apostles and evident infallibility;
2. That he was the first bishop of Rome (important, because all successive bishops of Rome are thought to be his lineal successors.)
3. That the peculiar powers and privileges of Peter (if he had any) passed at the time of his death from his own person, to which they belonged, to the chair of office which he thus vacated.
4. That ANY Apostle had a successor.
5. That the bishop of Rome is Peter's direct and personal successor.

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6. That any successor of the bishop of Rome possesses the infallibility invested in him as the supreme teaching authority of the Church.

It might be getting too far afield from our principle theme, the supremacy of Peter, but in connection with the misuse of any evidence of Peter's preeminence, it would be well to remember that the so-called lineal successors of the Apostles do not at all qualify for the office to which they lay claim, inasmuch as the following qualifications identify an apostle:

1. They must have seen the risen Lord. (Ac. 1:21, 22; I Cor. 9:1)
2. They must have been called to Apostleship by the Lord to fulfil that mission assigned to them particularly by the Lord who sent them. (Jn. 20:21) In the absence of positive proof that the Apostles left behind specific directions for their own succession, we are obligated to believe that they left none, hence did not pass on their unique mission.
3. They must perform the signs of an Apostle:
 - a. In miraculous gifts (2 Co. 12:12) that authenticate their message and their doctrines as from God;
 - b. In the conversion of souls to the Lord (I Co. 9:2), not in drawing away disciples after them (Ac. 20:30)
 - c. In the establishment of churches in all the world (Gal. 2:8)
 - d. In divine revelations (I Co. 11:2; 15:1, 2, 3; I Th. 2:13; 2 Th. 2:15; 3:6; Ro. 6:17; Gal. 1:9-12; Phil. 4:9; Col. 2:6-8) not in the imposition of human traditions that contradict God's revelation.
4. They must serve as the foundation of the Church (Eph. 2:20), i.e. their word given under the direct supervision of the Holy Spirit must serve as direction and support for the Church throughout all ages of its existence (Jude 3; 2 Pe. 1:3, 4; Rev. 22:18, 19; I Jn. 4:6; Heb. 2:1-4; 13:7, etc.)

For a discussion of Peter's peculiar responsibility to use the "keys of the kingdom," see notes on Matthew 16:18, 19.

Section 23

JESUS COMMISSIONS TWELVE APOSTLES TO EVANGELIZE GALILEE

II. JESUS INSTRUCTS AND CHARGES THE
TWELVE HOW THEY ARE TO PROCEED

(Parallels: Mark 6:8-11; Luke 9:2-5)

TEXT: 10:5-15

A. THEIR WORDS AND WORKS

(Matthew 10:5-8; Luke 9:2)

5. These twelve Jesus sent forth, and charged them, saying, Go not into *any* way of the Gentiles, and enter not into any city of the Samaritans:
6. but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.
7. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.
8. Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons: freely ye received, freely give.

B. THEIR EQUIPMENT AND CONDUCT

(Matthew 10:9-15; Mark 6:8-11; Luke 9:3-5)

9. Get you no gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses;
10. no wallet for *your* journey, neither two coats, nor shoes, nor staff: for the laborer is worthy of his food.
11. And into whatsoever city or village ye shall enter, search out who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go forth.
12. And as ye enter into the house, salute it.
13. And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you.
14. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, as ye go forth out of that house or that city, shake off the dust of your feet.
15. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- a. What do you see are the differences between the first commission of the twelve and the so-called "Great Commission"? (Mt. 28:19, 20)
- b. Was all of Matthew 10 applicable to the first commission? Or was Matthew summarizing in this one place material from other commissions that properly applied to their own setting?

- c. Is any of Matthew 10 intended for today? If so, what portion(s)? If not, why not?
- d. Why do you suppose Matthew connects the names of the Apostles (vv. 2-4) with the commission which follows, using the phrase "These twelve Jesus sent forth . . ." ? Who were these twelve men socially, religiously, politically? What did they amount to? Who had ever heard of them?
- e. If it be true that a "prophet is not without honor except in his own country, in his own house and among his own kin," why then did Jesus deliberately send these practically unknown Galilean Apostles to labor in their own country and among their own people? What could possibly be gained by this tactic? Could not Jesus foresee that the Galileans would possibly refuse and reject His Apostles as Nazareth rejected Him because they thought they knew too much to accept them?
- f. Why would Jesus, the Savior of all mankind, send His Apostles only to evangelize Israel? Did Jesus not care for the Samaritans or Gentiles? But Jesus deliberately limited the Apostles' ministry to Jews. How can you justify this apparently blatant nationalism in Jesus' practice?
- g. Why does Jesus call His own people "lost sheep"? What was there about the Jewish people that caused them to fit this apt description?
- h. Why did Jesus empower His Apostles to work miracles? How could that help Him to further His own ministry? Would there not be confusion created by six pairs of men going out doing the same works as Jesus? Which man would the multitudes know to follow if so many worked miracles and preached?
- i. What great, purely Christian doctrine is wrapped up in the simple instruction: "Freely you received, freely give"?
- j. If the Apostles were going to be travelling all over Galilee evangelizing why were they not going to need to take a lot of equipment and clothing along for their journey?
- k. In what way(s) would it be more tolerable for great sinful cities of the past, than for a city that refused the Apostles and their message?
- l. What is so important about staying at the home of one respected family during the Apostles' stay in a town?
- m. What is so important about not charging for the miracles the Apostles worked or for the messages they preached? What is the psychological principle behind this advice? In other words,

why is this always good judgment, and properly applicable to Christian workers today?

- n. Is it wrong for a preacher to receive wages? How do you know? Did not Jesus say: "Freely you have received, so freely give"?
- o. How do you harmonize these two apparently contradictory statements: "Freely give" and "The laborer is worthy of his food"? Is not Jesus expecting His disciples to work without expecting wages, while yet expecting to be supported by the very people to whom they minister? Support or wages, what is the difference?
- p. Did Jesus ever revoke His command to the Apostles to pursue their evangelistic labors lightly equipped? Would it be wrong for a missionary or evangelist today to purchase the most useful modern equipment he could effectively put to use to make the Gospel heard?

PARAPHRASE AND HARMONY

These twelve Apostles Jesus sent out to evangelize Galilee, with these instructions: "Do not go off to Gentile country and stay out of Samaritan towns. Concentrate on the lost sheep of Israel. Preach as you travel, announcing the arrival of God's Kingdom. Heal the sick people, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers and cast the demons out. What you have received without paying for it, give without charging for it.

"Do not take a lot of unnecessary extra equipment on your journey. For example, you will not need a lot of silver and gold, no, not even copper coins, in your purse. You are not to take even one suitcase and no lunch. Take only the sandals on your feet and the tunic on your back. Do not even take a change of clothes, nor two pair of sandals nor an extra staff,—one staff is enough. Why? The working man earns his upkeep—you work hard preaching for me and folks will take care of you!

"Now, regardless of what town or village you come to, look for someone who is respected there. Make your home with him until you go on to the next town. When you stop at his house, wish the household peace. If the household deserves it, then the peace in your salutation shall come upon it. But if that house does not deserve your 'shalom', then your blessing of peace will return to you and leave when you do.

"Now should anyone or any town not receive you or listen to your words, here is what you are to do: if they refuse to hear you, then when you leave that house or town, give them a visible demon-

stration of your fulfilled responsibility for trying to save them, by shaking the dust of their house or streets off your feet. I can tell you this: it will go easier on judgment day for the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town!"

SUMMARY

The aforementioned Twelve were sent by Jesus to preach only to Jews in Galilee the message of the arrival of God's Kingdom. They were to give the miraculous evidence of their authority, *without* charging for it. They were to travel light, depending upon good people to help them. If they were rejected they were to keep going. To reject them is to incur God's punishment.

NOTES

I. A PARTICULAR ZONE FOR A PARTICULAR PERIOD

(10:5, 6)

10:5 These twelve Jesus sent forth. **These twelve**, taken as a phrase following immediately upon the heels of a precise list of the names of the men as well as after two specific references to the number twelve, becomes especially emphatic or is nothing but a clumsy redundancy. Why does our author express himself this way?

1. Matthew may be marveling at the comparative insignificance of these men Jesus chose, in contrast to the overwhelming importance of the task to which Jesus called them. **These twelve?** Who are they? Had the power clique of Judea (Annas, Caiaphas, Herod, Pilate and company) glanced at the list of the makers of a new empire that would bring all other kingdoms, rule and authority to their knees before the Nazarene, they would have sneered, "Who are these? Not a one of them in Who's Who! How can this Jesus expect to amount to anything, when He's placing all His hopes on rabble like that? Imagine: not a rabbi among the whole lot!" With quiet inner joy that can come only from knowing the power and victory possible in the Master's service, Matthew responds, "Yes, just imagine Jesus' using **THESE** twelve—of all people! But it was this group that Jesus chose—no others. He knew what He was about. He made the decision to use these nobodies to change the world."
2. Or it may be that Matthew, in connection with the context which his ninth chapter provides, intends to remind us here

that these are the very men with whom Jesus had shared His vision, whom He had involved in a prayer campaign for workers. Morgan (*Matthew*, 102) has it:

"Pray ye," is the first command; "go ye" is the next. The men who have learned to look with the eyes of Jesus until they feel with the heart of Jesus and who, out of such vision and such feeling, begin to pray, are more than half ready for the work of bringing in the harvest.

These twelve Jesus sent forth "two by two," says Mark. This strategy has proven itself time and again by its sound psychology:

1. McLaren (*PHC*, 246) challenges us to "learn the good of companionship in Christian service, which solaces and checks excessive individuality and makes men brave. One and one is more than two, for each man is more than himself by the companionship."
2. The Jewish mentality toward the witness borne by anyone had trained people to expect the testimony of two men to be more weighty than that of one, even though the one were speaking the truth. (Cf. Jesus' way of arguing in Jn. 8:16-18). So two Apostles, working together, could give more powerful convincing witness to the deeds and message of the Christ.
3. McGarvey (*Fourfold Gospel*, 363) adds, "Different men reach different minds, and where one fails another may succeed."

And charged them, saying (*paraggeilas*). This is a formal order, and especially imperative in light of the peculiar nature of the order given: Jesus had to be particularly clear in laying out the work for His men, since some of the things He would have to say contradicted the men's own view of themselves and of the work they must perform.

Go not into any way of the Gentiles and enter not into any city of the Samaritans. Barclay (*Matthew*, I, 372) points out the evidential value of this sentence: "This saying is so unlike the mind of Jesus that no one could have invented it. He must have said it, and there must be some explanation." Its provocative character becomes immediately apparent when we think of Jesus as the universal Christ, for if there is a portion of the race for whom Jesus is not Lord, then He is not worthy of our ultimate consideration. For all of His great accomplishments, if His message is not for every man,

then we may yet suspect that His Word is not final and we have yet someone else higher up with whom we shall have to do. Surprisingly, Jesus deliberately limits His men to Israelitish country.

But this is not latent nationalism or inadvertent parochialism in the program of Jesus. It is just common sense under the circumstances. How so?

1. **The Gentiles** had not been given 2500 years of thorough preparation under the Law and prophets as had the Jews. Therefore, they would not have been quite as ready to appreciate this final revelation God was giving through Jesus the Messiah, as would the Jews.
2. Were **the Samaritans** any better prepared? They retained their denominational form of Judaism, badly mixed with pagan ideas. (See encyclopedic articles on the Samaritans; also Butler's comment on John 4:7-9 in the College Press series, p. 141.)

When one considers the strong Jewish prejudice against all that was non-Jewish, this expedient of limiting the Apostles' ministry to the Jews at this time is just common sense, even though the Lord will later, under different circumstances, broaden even this commission. The time is not yet come when the Apostles' own thinking is broad enough to comprehend a universal Gospel for the entire human race. And if the Apostles themselves had this difficulty, how much more scandalized would Jesus' more distant followers be, were they to witness the shocking (to them) spectacle of a wholesale opening of the Kingdom of God "to just anybody—even Gentiles and Samaritans!" (Study Ac. 11:1-3) Jesus must yet disarm their prejudices as much as possible, while He makes this final appeal to the Galileans by means of this limited mission of the Twelve. So the prohibition itself arises out of Jesus' general masterplan for establishing His Kingdom on earth. He aims ultimately to conquer the world, but to do this, He intends to secure a strong base of operations first. This He does among those most likely to be ready. Later He can countermand this order, turning the Apostles loose on the whole world. (Mt. 28:19; Ac. 1:8; 8:25)

This latter fact becomes a clue that helps determine how long this particular, limited commission was to last and how much of it was intended for that period. Morgan (*Matthew*, 103) reminds us that "with His crucifixion, the order initiated ended, and save in fundamental principles, the commission of those verses has no application to us."

10:6 But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. This command, stated just this way, links the Apostles' mission inseparably with the very motives that moved their Lord, and probably became their own driving force, to share God's mercy with His lost people. (See on 9:36) Jesus deliberately uses that figure out of His own vision of lost Israel to call the attention of His men to the most fundamental character of the work they were to do. He could have said more simply: "Evangelize only the Jews." But He is not merely indicating the proper field in which to begin. He is setting before their minds an unforgettable metaphor that provides them at the same time both direction and motivation. Should anyone object to this severe limitation of the Apostles' outreach, let it be remembered that this limitation bounded Jesus, too. (See on Mt. 15:24) Lenski's observation (*Matthew*, 391) has point here:

What Jesus had done on one occasion in Samaria (Jn. 4:3-42) and on certain occasions for individual gentiles (as in 8:5, etc.) and what he had hitherto said about salvation for all men (5:13, 14; 8:11) was prophetic, was not intended for the present but for the great days of the future.

To appreciate this severe limitation of the scope of the Apostles' work, we must recognize in what context Jesus sets these limits; otherwise, we will but find what seems to be a charge contradictory to the otherwise unsullied universality we have come to associate with Jesus. Why limit the Apostles' ministry to Israel?

1. *The time element* is extremely important to notice. This commission comes long before the salvation for the whole world had been made a reality through the cross, burial and resurrection of the Lord. It will be noticed later (see on 10:7) that the message of the Apostles was not the final form of the universal Gospel intended for the whole world, when the fundamental facts of this Gospel had been enacted upon the stage of history in Jerusalem. This commission, coming as it does almost in the middle of Jesus' own earthly work (see on 10:1), certainly not later, is to be judged in light of the progressive revelation of the Kingdom that He is making. It is imperative that we remember that it is Matthew himself who informs us both of this limited commission here and of the universal commission later (28:19). It may be safely presumed that he could differentiate between them, seeing no contradiction between them.

2. *The sociological element*: Israel was most prepared of any one group to receive the good news these men had to tell. Here in this nation would be the most ready, most immediate reception. This is, of course, relative, since 'many' Gentile hearts, hungering for truth, security and liberation, would have been just as receptive as those among the Jews, as later experiences of the Apostles seem to indicate. (See, for example, Ac. 10; 11:19-26; 13:4-12, 16-50; 17:4, 11, 12, etc.) But there seems to be a "divine order" that stands behind and governs Jesus' approach to the world: these perishing Jews were especially precious to God for the sake of the fathers (Ro. 11:28), and though they have no prior claim to anything, God has a prior claim upon them! (Cf. Ro. 1:16; 2:9, 10; 3:1-3; 9:4-5) So they ought to be sought first. Also, as suggested above, due to the apparent Jewish feeling of their prior rights to all that God offers, Jesus might stand to lose all hope of convincing those among the Jews who could otherwise have been won, were He to begin at this point a general Gentile ministry in conjunction with His evangelization among the Jews. Sociologically, He must not "rock the boat" just yet.
3. *The maturity of the Apostles* is an important matter. Their own preparation was still limited to the point that labor among their own people upon familiar ground was essential to permit their succeeding at all. Barclay (*Matthew*, I, 373) is right in saying: "A message has little chance of success if the messenger is ill-equipped to deliver it." This does not mean that their power or authority was lacking, since Jesus was providing this directly Himself. It means, rather, that their personal character needed time and experience to mature. This is considerate forethought on the part of the Lord: He gives them tasks they can handle, but tasks which will qualify them for larger ones later. Listen to Bruce's description (*Training*, 98):

Their hearts were too narrow, their prejudices too strong: there was too much of the Jew, too little of the Christian, in their character. For the catholic work of the apostleship they needed a new divine illumination and a copious baptism with the benignant spirit of love. Suppose these raw evangelists had gone into a Samaritan village, what would have

happened? In all probability they would have been drawn into disputes on the religious difference between Samaritans and Jews, in which, of course, they would have lost their temper; so that, instead of seeking the salvation of the people among whom they had come, they would rather be in a mood to call down fire from heaven to consume them, as they actually proposed to do at a subsequent period. (Lk. 9:54)

This point cannot be overemphasized, since human beings are incurably worshippers of heroes, children never tiring of playing "follow the leader." The Apostles were to provide new heroes, new leadership to their own people, now tired of leaders who had not the slightest notion where they were going, who instead of giving real spiritual refreshment, wandered around seeking answers to their own dark doubts. But the new leadership of the Apostles must reflect as nearly as possible the mind of Christ. They must sound no uncertain notes, give no false impressions. Because of prejudice and ignorance and moral failure in their hearers, rejection may be judged inevitable in many cases, but insofar as the Apostles themselves were concerned, the rejection must not arise out of some inadequate or false conception of their own. The message of God for any age carries with it its own stumbling block and its own foolishness (Cf. I Co. 1:18-25), and there are difficulties enough without some weakness in the bearer of the message, which give greater occasion to reject it.

4. *The limited amount of time Jesus may have wanted to expend* upon this educational experiment with the Apostles is another factor. The Apostles must have practice working by themselves without Jesus' being present if they are to learn to work well alone. But they must not spend too much time by going too far afield, else they would not be able to return in time for correction, encouragement and instruction. Jesus Himself had a limited time-schedule too. So Jesus limited their objective for them. (Cf. note 1 on 10:23)

Someone, on the basis of the strong Jewish prejudices that were probably present in the Apostles themselves, might object, "But would the Apostles even be tempted to go to Gentile or Samaritan cities at this point in their labors, at this crux in their own maturity?" If they were rejected by many Jewish cities, as Jesus here pictures (10:13-15), then they certainly might be so tempted. Also the happy

memories of the unusually warm reception given Jesus by the Samaritans at Sychar might tempt some Apostle to consider such a ministry. (See Jn. 4:1-42)

This very admonition in itself is strong evidence that Jesus never had anything in His mind less than the ultimate goal of WORLD evangelism. This charge, by its very existence here, clarifies the point that Jesus could never have made an unconscious slip that furtively betrays a latent nationalism. For, if a world-wide mission had not already been on the mind of Jesus and the subject of some of His private lessons, or had Jesus constantly hammered on a strictly Jewish Messiahship, there could have been no need for this limitation. His men would never have dreamed of crossing the borders into Gentile or Samaritan country.

II. A PARTICULAR MESSAGE FOR A PARTICULAR PERIOD.

(10:7)

10:7 **And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. As you go, preach** (*poreuðmenoi kērūssete*) differs from the Great Commission (Mt. 28:19: *poreuthéntes mathēteúsate*) at least in form, if not also in emphasis. The command here (10:7) is expressed in the vivid, moving present tense: "Preach as you go" or "Preach on the way;" whereas the Great Commission, by using an aorist participle attached to an aorist tense imperative verb, actually commands the Apostles to begin to go and make disciples. In this latter case (as also in Mk. 16:15, *poreuthéntes eis tòn kòsmon . . . kērúxate*), the emphasis seems to be upon both the command to go as well as the command to preach or make disciples (See Burton, *Moods*, 173, 174)

Though here (10:7), as in the Great Commission, the same rule applies to the participles, relating them to the function of the principle verb in each case, yet Jesus' emphasis is not so much on the going, as on the preaching while they are going. This is seen immediately when it is remembered that He had already clearly commanded them to go: "Go not" (10:5, *mē apélthēte*) and "Go" (10:6, *poreuésthe*). The resultant advance in thought throws the logical emphasis forward to the proclamation while they moved across Galilee.

Why bother with this? Would not the Apostles be tempted to think that they would begin their "official" evangelistic work only when they arrived at such and such a city? But Jesus opens their eyes to every person they encounter as they travel: their travelling companions, the people in whose homes they would enter along

the way. Every one is to hear the good news, not merely those at the destination of the journey. Note also the omission of the prohibition to "salute no man along the road." (Cf. Lk. 10:4)

The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Notice the continuity in the revelation of the Messiah and His rule: this had been the message of John the Baptist (3:2), and then of Jesus (See note on 4:17); now it is to be the principal theme broadcast by the Apostles. Why?

1. The Apostles' very messages, thundered before an electrified nation, would identify them immediately in the popular mind with John and Jesus. In the very nature of the case, this was as it should be, for there really is a logical progression and connection in these three steps: the harbinger of the Messiah, the Messiah Himself, then the Messiah's ambassadors. It was imperative, however, that Israel feel this connection, lest it seem to those who saw the Apostles at work that somehow the ministry and following of Jesus had suddenly fragmented into chaotic little groups scattered over the country. Rather than witnessing the sight of six pairs of men all announcing a different gospel, Israel is confronted with Jesus Christ and the coming Kingdom of God now on seven different fronts!
2. Repentance and the rule of God is a message always in order. (Cf. Paul's preaching years later, Ac. 20:25) The rejection of God's good government was what made men sinners in the first place: only repentance and submission to God's rule can make men whole again. (Cf. Mk. 6:12)
3. This was the very message that must be proclaimed as groundwork preparation before Jesus could declare the Kingdom.

As suggested by the title of this section, this was but a particular message for a particular period. This is not the type of message that could be preached after the consummation of the great events surrounding the passion, victory and coronation of the King, as well as the commencement of His royal rule on earth. Obviously, the Apostles could not announce facts that had not yet occurred, facts upon which the very Reign of Christ must necessarily be founded. There was much for Jesus yet to do; destroy the fundamental separation between Jew and Gentile, conquer death, offer Himself as the sufficient sacrifice for sin and bring victory to man through His own victory. Before Jesus could seal the universal pact of God with the

world, He must eliminate the old covenant, having fulfilled it. But these grand facts were then all yet future.

The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Though this was the Apostles' exciting announcement, they were not sufficiently prepared, nor was it Jesus' purpose, to identify Him and His program as messianic. Their task was to prepare the way for Jesus, thus leaving Him free to develop this popular enthusiasm, thus aroused, as He saw best. It is impossible not to speculate whether the Apostles would have been asked by their audiences for the identity of the Christ-King. Since the Apostles would have had to refer this question to Jesus, and since, immediately following this evangelistic tour, we find the multitudes beginning to identify Jesus as the Christ, it is clear that the Twelve themselves did not clearly declare Jesus' Messiahship. Otherwise, the multitudes would not have had to speculate for themselves, had the Twelve openly declared Him to be such. (Cf. Mt. 14:1, 2, 13; Mk. 6:14-16; Lk. 9:7-9; Jn. 6:14, 15) These disciples, then, were to limit themselves to heralding the near arrival of God's kingdom. But this joyous announcement did not exhaust the good news (see Lk. 9:6, *euaggelizòmenoi*), for the coming of God's rule carried with it moral consequences for which Israel was not prepared. Israel must repent! (Mk. 6:12; see notes on 3:2, Vol. I, 94)

III. A PARTICULAR CREDENTIAL FOR A PARTICULAR PERIOD (10:8)

10:8 Heal the sick: see on Mk. 6:12, 13; Lk. 9:6 under point VI of this chapter's outline. **Raise the dead:** though there is no record that the Apostles brought men back from the dead during this early ministry, they certainly did this later (Ac. 9:36-42; 20:9, 10). **Cleanse the lepers:** is this particular type of healing mentioned to show the extent of God's healing power operative in the Twelve, i.e. even to the point of curing such a defiling disease as leprosy? **Cast out demons.** Besides the obvious power over Satan that this represents, does Matthew include this command to display the full range of the glorious power intrusted to the Twelve? If so, why this particular emphasis on demons? (Cf. Mt. 10:1; Mk. 6:7, 13; Lk. 9:1) Is it that Jesus would have them realize that the struggle in which they were engaged was a personal battle with Satan himself? (Cf. Mt. 10:24-29) If so, every victory over demons signalled the establishment of Christ's sovereignty over that much more of the devil's former occupation. When the Seventy returned from their particularly successful mission, they rejoiced especially that they were

able to exorcize demons. Jesus' comment on this was a declaration of the fall of Satan, (Lk. 10:17-20)

Freely ye received, freely give. Morgan (*Matthew*, 104) is quite right to point out that "it is because men have lost the sense of the proportion of our Master's orderly speech that, today, some imagine that all this is still our work. This is not our work. We have no commission to heal the sick miraculously . . ." This commission of those Apostles and early disciples (cf. Lk. 10:9) was the proof of their identity with Jesus' program and their miracles became the evidence of the consequent divine authority. The need for such supernatural credentials disappeared once the kingdom of Jesus had been proclaimed throughout the entire earth. (Cf. Col. 1:6, 23; I Th. 1:8) They disappeared, because in the nature of the case they were no longer needed to authenticate the message as from God, since this fact had been well established.

While it may be true that the need for SUPERNATURAL healings, as special credentials authenticating the divinity of the message, has passed, yet even today mercifulness, expressed in practical ways and in proper subordination to the message proclaimed, becomes a powerful credential in the thinking of the unbelieving world. The same generous spirit behind the Apostles' healings can motivate Christians today to share what they have to provide certain necessities of life (hospitals, schools, primary necessities, etc.), a gesture which convinces the doubters and wrings from the scoffers the confession that "these Christians really care about a man!" But the modern Christian must not confuse this generosity with evangelism. This help is only one among many credentials that lends credibility to the message (Cf. Jn. 17:21, 23), since it shows the consistency between the Christians' message and their practice. It shows that God is really producing through the Gospel the very persons that the Gospel is supposed to produce. There may be many opportunities to evangelize a people otherwise unreachable, whose hearts are thus opened to receive the Gospel. But the work of the doctor, teacher or school (or hospital) administrator is not missionary evangelism and should not be called such. How many doctors, teachers, administrators on mission fields have gotten bogged down in the sheer mechanics of their professional work and find that they have no more opportunity to proclaim the very message that challenged them to take up their work in the first place. They might have gained insight from Jesus' own refusal to let His ministry be primarily a miraculous medical practice. He felt frustrated when people wanted to use Him for

their own private purposes and stedfastly refused to get overly concerned about His message. A person can be a missionary anywhere in the world today regardless of his profession by which he earns his living, but he is a missionary because he is first of all a Christian in that place, not because he is a teacher or healer. A person has to decide his usefulness as a missionary by how well he is able to express the Gospel incarnate in his own life in that place, given the limitations imposed upon him by the situation itself.

Freely ye received, freely give. This sentence contains the most profound statement of the whole character of Christianity, as well as the practical expression of it in the Apostles' personal lives and ministry. God's gracious mercy has not given anything to anyone, including the Twelve, on the basis of their having deserved it. Characteristically, the very Christianity thus given by God, has the power in it to cause men, who share Jesus' mentality, to be just this generous. These men had already seen this unlimited, generous spirit in Jesus Himself. (4:23, 24; 9:35) Whereas the Lord Himself constantly, unselfishly and disinterestedly expended all the power of heaven to meet the needs of suffering humanity, although He could have charged dearly for His goods and services, yet He shared as He did out of that pure motivation of unmixed concern for those people He loved and who needed His help. His own pattern of giving out of His own merciful passion to share, only for the sake of those He served, expecting no pay in return, now becomes the standard by which His people model and judge their own giving.

Jesus is saying to His men: I have charged you no tuition for all the lessons in the Kingdom of God, I have charged you nothing for the power to work stupendous miracles in my name, there is no fee for admission into the band of Apostles. In terms of monetary value, all this has cost you nothing, since I chose to give it to you without charge. Now, since you are but responsible administrators of this stewardship, you are not to act as if you were the owners of it with full power to dispense it at any price you choose to command. These free gifts are merely given you on their way to others!" It would be so easy to make the miracles a lucrative source of income and be able to justify it on the basis of its value, while at the same time suggesting that the money would be used for the support of Jesus' ministry. But so to have employed them would have reduced the miracles to mere articles of trade and robbed them of their power as evidence of the presence and activity of God in the world of men.

The very ambiguity of the phrase "Freely you have received,"

unclear in the sense that the Giver is not clearly identified, reinforces the earlier comment (10:1) that Jesus and God are somehow to be closely identified, since obviously it was Jesus who gave them this power, while anyone with the moral sense to see would know that this power was God's.

How do we harmonize this demand, that the Apostles help people without charging for their services, with the comforting remark that "the laborer is worthy of his food" (10:10), or "worthy of his wage" (Lk. 10:7)? The Apostles and other laborers must freely bestow their great gifts without charge of any kind. They will have already seen to their food and lodging, however, by having sought out the godly people of a community whose hospitality saw to those needs. As will be seen on 10:10, the "worthiness" intended is in no way based upon the Apostles' distribution of miracles, but a recognition of the value of the work they are doing. It is not a purchase, on the part of the householder, of some special miraculous gift, nor is it an exchange of some miraculous gift, on the part of an Apostle, for hospitality. (See on 10:10)

IV. A PARTICULAR METHOD FOR A PARTICULAR PERIOD (10:9-15)

In this section Jesus is dealing with the fundamental question on the mind of any reasonable, far-sighted man: how were these workers of His to be supported during their labors? To the modern westerner, and perhaps to the Apostles themselves, unused as they were to the *modus operandi* here outlined, Jesus' words cannot but strike a tone of madness. As we read through the instructions, we are made immediately aware that Jesus is literally stripping His men of every visible means of support. We would have expected that Jesus give His men every possible advantage in order to carry out their mission but here He deliberately orders them to dispense with all those accoutrements men usually think necessary for a journey of the nature they are about to undertake! While the Twelve themselves would have admitted that these instructions were proper for the rabbis, yet, psychologically, they might well have had some difficulty seeing themselves accepting the customary courtesies and generous hospitality usually accorded those venerated men. After all, in their own view, the Apostles may still see themselves as converted publicans, fishermen and what-not. They may feel they are entering a world where they do not belong, where "they do not know their place." Yet, this consideration does not hinder Jesus for a moment from placing His men to this initial test under real-life conditions.

The specific commands of the Lord in this section become to the Twelve but the practical application of Jesus' proscription of anxiety for material needs, seen in the Sermon on the Mount. He practically strips them of their self-reliance; so that they HAVE to go out in the confidence that God would always see to it that faithful men in each locality would receive them and provide for their needs during their labors there. Later, Jesus tests them on this very point: "Did you lack anything, when I sent you out without anything?" Their terse but eloquent reply was, "Nothing." (Lk. 22:35f) Bruce (*Training*, 108) summarizes this section so neatly:

His instructions proceeded on the principle of division of labor, assigning to the servants of the kingdom military duty and to God the commissariat department.

Lest we overemphasize the uncertainties of the situation into which Jesus sent His men, let us remember here that Jesus orders His men on a short tour of just a few weeks (see on 10:1), after which He will definitely revoke these limitations mentioned in this section. (Lk. 22:35-38) These men were to labor among their own people, among orientals to whom hospitality was a sacred honor and obligation. Further, the Apostles themselves were to carry out a ministry of teaching and healing that would, in a sense, earn themselves the esteem and recognition of those who would open to them their homes. While some of the instructions in this section will definitely be changed later, due to the changed nature of the ministry which the Twelve and the early Christians will then have to perform, this does not mean that Jesus changed His method on the supposition that this earlier technique failed. The change of instructions simply means that Jesus accomplished His original plans for the early training missions of the Apostles among their own people, then changed His directives to match new situations. Under the universal commission (Mt. 28:19, 20), they would be evangelizing in distant lands among widely varying mentalities regarding hospitality toward strangers and regarding providing the daily needs of religious leaders. Hence, because they could not then depend upon a relatively uniform Jewish hospitality in pagan lands, they needed a different method of operation. It would be a drastic mistake to apply these rules, given here for a limited operation, to any mission of the Apostles or other evangelists in pagan lands after Jesus' ascension.

10:9 Get you no gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses. The expression: **get you no gold . . .** must be taken in the sense: "Do not procure . . ." (*kṛēsēsthe*), since Mark and Luke's

parallels at this point put the antithetical emphasis on what the men should (nor should not) take along. (Mk. 6:8, *hairōsim*; Lk. 9:3, *hairēte*) Also, this "getting" refers to their preparations for (their) journey (Mk. 6:8; Lk. 9:3; cf. Mt. 10:10) The "getting," then, has no reference to the Apostles' seeking these things mentioned, during their journey, as if they would expect to be paid for their ministry by receiving these items mentioned at the hand of those who benefit from their work. Jesus is not talking about receiving anything DURING the journey, but preparation for the journey. Their "getting" refers to the provisions they would otherwise have gotten together before undertaking the trip. They were to go exactly as they were, with no extra supplies beyond what was needed for "the absolutely immediate present." (Edersheim) Jesus is saying, "Do not take those things travelers generally regard as indispensibly essential. Go confident that your needs will be provided. Let all your concern be centered upon your work, not upon yourselves." This distinction between the "getting" as preparation for the trip, and the "getting," suggested by some, as support received from those benefitting from the Apostles' ministry, is not so important in itself, as an expression of the meaning of this single text. Rather, it is important as a key that unlocks the supposed mystery involved in verses that follow, especially the supposed contradiction between the Synoptists regarding what the Apostles were to take along during their journey. It is the failure to note this distinction that has kept reasonable men from seeing the possible harmony between the Gospel writers at this point.

No gold . . . silver . . . brass means money for groceries, lodging and other essential expenses. **In your purses**, or "girdles" (KJV) or "belts" (RSV) expresses the same function as modern moneybelts, since the sash or leather belt provided just this convenience of carrying valuables close to the body, besides holding the robe in place. (It should be no surprise that robbers strip a man, not only to have his fine robe, but to get at his money belt! Cf. Lk. 10:30)

10:10 **No wallet for your journey.** **Wallet** (*pēra*) may be simply a small suitcase, "a knapsack or traveler's bag . . . but perhaps this passage has in mind the more specialized meaning *beggar's bag*. . . . Such a bag was part of a Cynic itinerant preacher's equipment . . . Such a bag was also used by shepherds . . ." (Arndt-Gingrich, 662) If it be the beggar's wallet that is meant, this requirement means that the Apostles are to consider the help they receive from generous hosts as salary, not beggar's alms. In a sense they will have

actually earned (cf. Lk. 10:7) what is given, so they are to accept what is offered graciously, but with the clear understanding that by their spiritual ministry they will have earned it. If the suitcase idea is in the Lord's mind, then He is saying, "If you are not going to take along a lot of special provisions, food, clothing and other equipment, you are not going to need a bag to carry it in!"

As we consider what the Twelve must (or must not) include, it would be helpful here to list the items side by side:

They were NOT TO PROCURE OR TAKE:	They were to TAKE ALONG:
<hr/> Money Bread (food) Bag for the journey A (new or extra) staff Two tunics (one extra) An extra pair of sandals	<hr/> The one staff they had The one tunic they wore The sandals they had on.

This interpretative analysis seeks to harmonize some of the otherwise seemingly contradictory details where the Synoptists seem to disagree. **Neither two coats:** presumably they would take the one they had on, but were not to provide themselves with another one for a spare. However, **coats**, as such, is not the question here but *tunics* (*chitōnas*), a garment worn next to the skin by both sexes, a shirt. (Arndt-Gingrich, 890) See Mt. 5:40 for a good example of this distinction from that cloak or robe which should properly be called a coat. **Nor shoes**, rather, specifically *sandals* (*hypodēmata*): "a leather sole that is fastened to the foot by means of straps." (Arndt-Gingrich, 852) These are not shoes in the modern understanding of the word. Since Mark (6:9 records Jesus as requiring His men to wear sandals (*sandalia*), presumably He means that His men are to wear the pair they have on, in whatever condition they may be, but are not to procure another pair for the journey. **Nor a staff:** while it is simple to harmonize Matthew with Mark's (6:8) "take nothing except a staff . . ." by saying they were not to take time procuring another staff in addition to the one already in hand, it is more complicated to harmonize with Luke's forthright "Take nothing . . . no staff." Three solutions are possible:

1. Luke's (9:3) "no staff" has exactly the same force as Matthew's (10:10) "nor staff," and means to convey no more than "Do not take time to procure a staff."

2. Since the habit of some of the Apostles may not have been to use a walking stick in their long marches with the Master, they are here ordered not to make even that much special provision.
3. If it be asked whether a man would use two staffs in journeying, we have a third possible solution: "Since you are not going to be carrying a lot of extra provisions or an extra bag, you will not need an extra staff over your shoulder on which to carry those things."

If it be objected that in every case where an apparent contradiction between the Synoptists arises, we have presumed an extra item as a spare, then let it be noticed that Jesus Himself points the way to this solution. All three Evangelists record the prohibition: "Do not take two tunics," a fact which shows the spirit of the entire section: "Take nothing extra, nothing beyond what you have with you right at this moment." Reinforced with this one illustration, consistently reported by all three Synoptists, the proposition is more than probable that we may deal similarly with the other items, which seem to us who read the lists, not to have been reported consistently. Finally, one of the axioms of the harmony of all truth is that if a satisfactory harmony can be shown between two apparently contradictory facts, they may not be said to be contradictions, regardless of the degree of apparent contradiction.

For the laborer is worthy of his food. This is the reason the Lord adduces for giving the foregoing instructions. They will not need to make careful preparations along the lines suggested above, since another higher principle will be operative in this case. In verses 11-14 Jesus will make specific what is here stated in principle.

Food states in one word all that is necessary to sustain the men's life and work. The disciples were to accept just what was offered, without demanding something more or something different: if it is **food**, he is not to be fastidious; if it is enough, he is not to be greedy. (Cf. Lk. 10:8)

The laborer is worthy: "The Apostle who has really worked at the ministry to which I have sent him, will have really earned all he gets." It should not at all surprise us to hear Jesus use the word "wage" (*mistboŭ*) in Lk. 10:7 in regard to another mission, but with reference to the evangelists' support. How encouraging this declaration must have been to men who, though Apostles in name and partly so by training, were but timid beginners. "You men are **WORTHY** of all the support you get." There can be no doubting this truth,

since these fledgling Apostles while in the homes shared their true spiritual treasure. In fact, they gave much more than they ever received back in food and lodging! This very principle is the basis of Paul's argument that those who proclaim the Gospel should receive their livelihood from those who accept the Gospel. (I Co. 9:14; I Tim. 5:17, 18) This support for God's workers, then, comes from those open-handed people who recognize the validity of the work the Christian workers are carrying forward. "This," says Jesus surprisingly, "is to be God's provision for you men. He shall not provide miraculous bread (as, for example, the support of Elijah at Kerith and Zerephath), but common bread given by godly people."

Worthy: Jesus sets a high value on the men because of the special ministry they were to perform for Him. "You are worthy of whatever help you receive. But in my view, those people who receive you will be judged worthy also. If they do not receive you, they are not worthy and will be condemned. Their true worth is determined by whether they receive you or not." (Cf. 10:11-15)

This is all good theory if it will work. The Apostles, immediately upon beginning their first mission, were going to find out whether or not it is practical to trust Jesus' theories. They themselves were going to have to live literally by faith. Even though they had been seeking the Kingdom of God with a more or less single-mindedness and were more or less already unconcerned about food, clothing and shelter ever since they began to accompany Jesus in His travels, yet now the immediate security of Jesus' person is going to be taken away temporarily. Until now Jesus had been with them, and the ultimate responsibility for such matters devolved generally upon Him. Now, however, they were to work without Him for a short period, literally living from day to day, with no forethought or preparation for these normal, human necessities of life. Is it not merciful of Jesus to toughen His men to the realities of faith and to the habit of depending upon God in this practical way? His approach to their weakness and need for this practical experience in trusting God is psychologically sound in its gradualness, in its definiteness, and in the element of real risk these men recognized. This was no mere drill, no false alert: it is the real thing, but on a level where the men themselves could respond at the level of their own growth.

10:11 And into whatsoever city or village ye shall enter, search out who in it is worthy. This is the tactic the Apostles are to use in order to secure themselves food and lodging before they ever mention a word about the mission on which they have been sent.

There is to be no necessary connection between their being ambassadors of Jesus of Nazareth and the hospitality they required, as if the former were a condition of the latter, at least when the Apostles were making these preliminary inquiries for hospitality. Of course, as they become the guests of people, these will learn of their mission. Should these then thrust them out of their houses, out of antipathy to Jesus, then their mission becomes a condition of their hospitality (or rejection).

What kind of inquiry is here required? Is it probable that the Apostles went around asking who were the best, most godly people in town, most noted for their hospitality? Why not? If the elders of the city, sitting in the city gate, cannot tell you immediately several names of such people, out of oriental courtesy one of the elders themselves may take you into his home. (Cf. Gen. 19:1-3) So the indirect question "who in town is worthy (?)" is answered by the estimate of the townspeople themselves: "This family (or that) is worthy." Would the Apostles have gone door-to-door seeking lodging without first talking to the city fathers? Would the city fathers be likely to suggest the best homes of their city to strangers, without first making some inquiry into the business that brings these strangers into town? The answers to these questions depend upon whatever mentality or attitude toward travelers the Jews in general of that period may have had.

Why is this inquiry important? Three reasons suggest themselves:

1. Because the messengers and their message would be marked for good or ill by the known character of those who received them cordially into their home. Though they were to proclaim a Gospel for all, "publicans and sinners" included, yet the high holiness and importance of the message must not be able to be spoken against merely because of an imprudent choice of hosts whose character or notoriety scandalizes potential hearers. The Apostles themselves would all too soon be marked as "unworthy" men, due to their association with Jesus of Nazareth and their fundamental and necessary opposition to the traditions of the fathers. In this work they would need every advantage they could gain. In the eyes of the people their association with the truly righteous people in a city would tend to sanction their mission as from God. (While it is true that that generousness of spirit that manifests itself in hospitality toward strangers is no always present ingredient in the practical godliness of people deemed ortho-

dox, worthy or pious, yet true godliness tends to produce in the godly this characteristic generosity.)

2. Another obvious importance of this injunction is to reduce, in the disciples themselves, any sensitivity about accepting the hospitality of others. As humble disciples of the lowly Nazarene, they might have been inclined unwittingly to downgrade their own program by not going directly to the best people. After all, they might have argued, what right have we to be wined and dined as if we were the highest rabbis in the land? But so to have reasoned would have been to have missed the supreme importance of their own mission. They would be no mere rabbis, but the royal ambassadors of the King of the Universe!
3. Further, and probably a factor much more important than either the public image of the Apostles or their own personal hesitancy, is the advantage of a nucleus of believers from which to work. Assuming that the truly "worthy" of a city were also godly Jews, looking for the Kingdom of God in deeply spiritual terms, these people would be the most receptive to the Apostles' message and could form within Judaism cell groups of believers in Jesus. After Pentecost these could be turned into congregations of the Church. (Study the working from fixed centers in each town in the later mission of the Apostles: "The Church in their house" of Ro. 16:5, 11, 14, 15, 23; I Co. 16:19; Col. 4:15; Philemon 2.)

Into whatsoever city or village ye shall enter, search out who in it is worthy. Feel the infectious confidence of the Master, also pointed out by Bruce (*Training*, 110):

He took for granted, that there would always be found at every place at least one good man with a warm heart, who would welcome the messengers of the kingdom to his house and table for the pure love of God and of the truth. Surely no unreasonable assumption! It were a wretched hamlet, not to say town, that had not a single worthy person in it. Even wicked Sodom had a Lot within its walls who could entertain angels unawares.

And this confidence could not help but infect the Apostles with the certainty that the mission on which He sends them is no fool's errand, but a campaign carefully planned down to the last detail.

There abide till ye go forth. (Cf. Lk. 10:7, "Remain in the

same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the laborer deserves his wages; do not go from house to house.") The fundamental emphasis here is stability and contentment, excellent virtues that recommend those who possess them:

1. Stability, because no momentum would be lost by an endless round of feasting. Thomas (*Land and Book*, cited by PHC, 249) testifies that

oriental hospitality involves a practical system, including a round of visits, involving much ostentation and hypocrisy. It is time-consuming, mind-distracting, leads to levity and in just about every way, counteracts the success of a spiritual mission. The very nature of the Apostles' work demanded serious concentration.

Even if the modest circumstances of the hosts did not permit so lavish an entertainment in view of the Apostles' intention to remain in a town longer than would be accorded other travellers passing through, still it was not their mission to be entertained, but to proclaim the Kingdom. This single-mindedness, obvious in the attitude of the Apostles, testified to the townspeople that these men valued their time, had important business to attend to and needed to be free to work. It is very difficult to carry on work when one must constantly keep an eye on the luncheon calendar or on the dinner memos. It is not impossible, if people properly understand your work, but especially difficult if they do not or else refuse to collaborate.

2. Contentment, because if they wandered around like mendicant monks or appeared to be dissatisfied with the hospitality of the people, or as idle men fond of change, people would hardly take them seriously or give their message a second thought. Though not sins per se, being connoisseurs of fine foods and rare wines was not for the Apostles.

Jesus' advice is a question of emphasis and common sense. Neither banquets nor wide-ranging hospitality are wrong; they just get in the way of serious, sustained work. A different bed every night, ranging from extra hard to lumpy and a new cook every day who is trying to out-do her predecessor in providing the finest feast the visitors ever saw, is enough to kill any Apostle!

10:12 And as ye enter into the house, i.e., the house chosen in the manner described above, **salute it**. (Cf. Lk. 10:5, "Whatever

house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house!') *Salute . . . peace* are practically equivalent terms, since the Jewish "Shalom" is not only a greeting, but a prayer that the peace of God bless those thus greeted. (Cf. Jn. 20:19, 26. The antithesis is 2 Jn. 10. See also the introductions with which the Apostles begin their letters as well as many of the concluding salutations, e.g. 2 Th. 3:16; 1 Pet. 5:14; 3 Jn. 15) Jesus urges His followers to be friendly, courteous and respectful toward those who might serve as hosts for the Gospel proclamation in a village. There is no bullying here, no insisting upon special rights to hospitality as Jesus' messengers, no demanding clergy discounts. He requires them to show the customary regard, following the common rules of social behavior. (Cf. 1 Pet. 2:12-24; 3:8-11) They are to cultivate a spirit of good will. Good public relations are necessary, but this must be gained without compromise of principle. Even though we cannot, and must not, leave people comfortable in the deadly state of unrepentant sin, yet our generous friendliness and obvious good will that treats them as people with whom we hope to live in harmony, can be the means of opening their mind to the gospel we preach.

10:13 And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you. The Apostles were intending to bring the Kingdom of God itself to that home, with all its benefits and blessings! People could hardly guess what really stood there at the door in the person of the Lord's Apostles, but if they opened their homes to receive them, all these marvelous favors would be theirs. If they fail to hear the voice of God in these humble Galilean preachers, they forfeit their key to God's treasury. Nevertheless that which the Apostles so earnestly desired to give them, would come back to the givers themselves. So the Twelve are not to be at all discouraged by even this set-back, knowing that they may even rejoice in rejection for Jesus' sake. (Cf. Mt. 5:10-12) God's peace will hold them stable in such storms. This, of course, can never diminish the tragedy of every refusal to accept the Apostles' message.

If the house be worthy . . . not worthy. It may not immediately appear whether a house is really worthy, in the sense that it accepts the Apostles for sake of the Person and message of Jesus that they bring. Some time may elapse before it becomes clear whether the house is really "worthy" in the highest sense of the word. So the Apostles are not to stand outside the door and wait for the householder to decide whether to permit them, as messengers of

Jesus of Nazareth, to enter. **If it be not worthy** cannot be construed to mean that the Apostles made a mistake about the worthiness of the house, since their inquiries in town led the townspeople to agree that this household was "worthy," in the general sense of "generous, hospitable." But, although a generous, open-hearted family is usually open to new truth, it is not always so. Upon learning the nature of the Apostles' purpose, the householder, driven by prejudices, prudence or other motives, may reject and eject the Apostles because of their mission and views.

Here Jesus' practical instructions accord perfectly with His theory. He has taught the disciples that evangelistic efforts will not produce the same results in every area, hamlet or human heart. (Cf. Mt. 13:18-23) Now as He sends His men forth to begin their own sowing of the seed, He warns them not to expect equal success everywhere: some cities and homes would receive them; some would not.

In relation to the general question of application of this section to the general pattern of history Jesus seems to be describing (see on the introduction of chapter 10), let it be noted here that even in those cases where a house or city that rejects the Apostles, there is no suggestion of a clearly defined persecution. Morgan (*Matthew*, 103) is probably right in saying:

He was rejected, but they were treated with respect, even by the crowds. The crowds argued with them, tried to understand what relation they bore to Jesus, asked them what Christ meant by certain things; but did not persecute them.

While it is probably true that the Twelve were not unaware of the rejection of Jesus by the large majority of the ruling class and by many of the common people—and especially so as the Apostles themselves became more and more aware of the spiritual nature of His claims and intentions—even so, this rejection still did not bring direct persecution to the Apostles until after Jesus' ascension. This latter act left the Apostles, the obvious successors to the crucified Nazarene, exposed to the wrath of the Master's enemies. Only then did they feel the full force of real persecution.

10:14 **And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, as you go forth out of that house or that city, shake off the dust of your feet.** His very foresight and instructions are geared to defeat discouragement by simple rejection or disappointment by difficulties. For Jesus, it is not enough that they simply leave town. Rather, He outlines specific directions what to do in the event some refuse to be won, do not receive them and

obviously close the doors to all further conversation. The Twelve are to act in a specific way which takes away the initiative from their would-be detractors. Even if their words could not be said so as to be heard, because people were hurling insults too loud to permit the Apostles a last word, or because people shut their ears (Cf. Ac. 7:57), the Apostles' last message was to be a pantomime. Another very clear symbolic act that conveys the same meaning is a real or pantomimed washing of one's hands of the whole matter. Remember Pilate. Paul shook his garments. (Ac. 18:6) In this silent witness, the Apostles were relieving themselves of the responsibility for the judgment of that house or city. (Cf. Ezek. 3:16-21; 33:7-9) It is significant that Jesus gave them something very specific to remember to do in such a moment, since the Twelve might otherwise be tempted to call fire from heaven to incinerate the opposition!

The dust meant here is literally the street dust on the Apostles' sandals, easily picked up on one's feet while walking along the often unpaved streets of the towns. (Remember here the practical usefulness and kind courtesy involved in washing someone's feet, or at least in providing water so that he himself can do it. Lk. 7:44; Jn. 13:4-16) But **dust** had become a Jewish symbol for the moral responsibility for something described in the phrase "the dust of —." (See Edersheim, *Life*, I, 644) Brushing the dust off their shoes, then, becomes the vivid warning to the citizens of a city that rejected the Apostles, that they hereby discharge themselves of any further responsibility for the fate of **that house or city**. Its meaning is clear: the Apostles were preaching their last sermon in this symbolic act: "Your blood be on your own heads; we are blameless and leave you to your doom. While you reject us and our message, the fact remains that you ARE responsible for what we have tried to tell you. The kingdom of God HAS actually come near you, but you rejected it. (Cf. Lk. 10:11) Now that we have fulfilled our mission to your city, we hereby remove every trace of our responsibility for your salvation."

It has been noticed by some commentators that the dust of Gentile territories was considered by the Jews to be defiling, in which case the Apostles are seen as treating those cities which reject them in the same fashion as if they were Gentile cities. These see the Apostles as brushing the dust of defiling unbelief from their feet, or something of the sort. Granted that certain Jews viewed the dust of Gentile lands as defiling, would Jesus accede to this Pharisaic concept even to provide His ambassadors a vivid warning to use in the

event of their rejection? Perhaps, since He might use popular language or ideas that convey a clear meaning, even though both He and the Apostles were clearly antagonistic to the fundamental notion involved in the language. (Even the language purists of the Christian faith today speak of Pope Paul VI, even though they deeply reject all the unfounded pretensions upon which his position and title is based, for example. They use this title and name, simply because not many people would know who or what is meant if they started talking about Giovanni Battista Montini, the pope's real name.) One should be careful about pushing this argument too far, since Jesus clearly teaches elsewhere, what really defiles a man. So we know that He knows that mere dust, whatever its origin, is not defiling. But when, for example, Jesus cites the OT books as being authored by those ancients whose names they have traditionally borne, and He cites them without correction or comment, this is revelation, not mere accession to popular language or merely traditional notions.

Should anyone object to the morality of leaving a city or home to its own moral doom, with no more apparent doggedness and merciful patience in seeking to win its inhabitants to fundamental acceptance of the Kingdom of God than is expressed here in this text, it is sufficient here to respond that this instruction must be interpreted in the context of this first training mission of the Twelve. Barclay (*Matthew*, I, 380) has it:

This is an instruction that . . . comes from the situation in which it was given. It was simply due to the time factor; time was short; as many as possible must hear the proclamation of the Kingdom; at that time there was not time to argue with the disputatious and to seek to win the stubborn; that would come later.

If we have understood correctly the time-outline of Jesus' message here given, Pentecost follows, not precedes, this first rapid mission of the Twelve. So there was time for patient labor later, but not on this trip. Further, since we find a similar expression in the practice of the Apostles at a later period (Ac. 13:51; 18:6), it is important that we recognize the fundamental distinction between the function of the Apostles who must blaze new, unknown truth from city to city throughout the world, and that of those pastors and teachers who remain in a town to minister patiently, mercifully seeking to convince the unconvinced however long that process takes.

While Luke 10:10, 11 is not strictly parallel to this text, it

nevertheless gives the best, full commentary on what the Apostles' attitude and actions must be. Bruce (*Training*, 111) draws this mature judgment about that text:

Solemn words, not to be uttered, as they are too apt to be, especially by young and inexperienced disciples, in pride, impatience, or anger, but (they are to be uttered) humbly, calmly, deliberately, as a part of God's message to men. When uttered in any other spirit, it is a sign that the preacher has been as much to blame as the hearer for the rejection of his message. Few have any right to utter such words at all; for it requires rare preaching indeed to make the fault of unbelieving hearers so great that it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for them. But such preaching has been . . . by the apostles.

Even this last word of the Apostles to a city or home is an act of mercy, for it leaves the uncompromising message of faithful Apostles firmly fixed in the mind of any standing among the unbelievers, who might yet be won later. Even this firm, stern warning is to be given in the spirit of: "Bless and curse not." (1 Pet. 3:9; Ro. 12:14)

10:15 Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city. Jesus reaches back into patriarchal history (Gen. 19:1-28) for the event that most vividly pictures God's swift, terrible punishing power and comes up with the cremation alive of the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, whose obdurate wickedness was so notorious and so demanding divine justice that the greater marvel is not their spectacular punishment, but the patience and mercy of God to let them live as long as He did! This destruction is used by Jesus as a point of comparison between the lot of these cities and the destiny of those cities who rejected the Apostles' message. This comparison is the more vivid for the Jews who were accustomed to thinking of these cities as particularly wicked, deserving punishment. (Cf. Mt. 11:24; Ro. 9:29; 2 Pet. 2:6; Jude 7; Dt. 29:23; Is. 1:9, 10; 13:19; Jer. 23:14; 49:18, etc.)

Perhaps it would be more advantageous to deal with the evidential value of this text in a separate article. (See the special study: "Jesus' Witness to Old Testament Inspiration" by John Ransom in this Volume.) However, one cannot help noticing the seriousness with which the Lord presents this illustrative point of comparison. He treats both the incident of the destruction of those ancient cities as well

as the written source from which the incident is derived as if the whole narrative about them were serious, sober history and the document (*Genesis*) which contains it as entirely to be relied upon. It is not enough to say that Jesus merely cites a legendary (hence, somehow, fictitious) tale of a horrible destruction to give particular point to His declaration regarding those cities that reject His messengers. If it be thought that He merely appeals to a traditional story accepted by the Apostles as historically true, but objectively reducible to the level of undocumentred ancient tradition,—an appeal for which Jesus, as a speaker borrowing allusions without Himself authenticating their origin or validity, cannot be held responsible—then, the following reasons may be offered for the conclusion that Jesus is responsible for the true information about the origin and validity of the facts out of the Old Testament He is using and by His use He is revealing truth regarding those books about which it is, at best, now difficult to verify the authenticity:

1. In general, Jesus clearly reveals His divergence from commonly-held mistaken Jewish notions. It may be reasonably supposed that He would not fail to do so on the question of the authorship or authenticity of OT books or facts, where-insofar His own arguments depended upon those books or facts. But in none of His citations or allusions to OT books or events does He once make an editorial correction or "necessary" emendation of this problem that is so vital to our knowledge of OT facts and origins.
2. There is here, also, a moral question: can Jesus remain consistent with His own advertised ethic, when at the same time He is demanding of others absolute honesty and thoughtful helpfulness, He Himself fails to disabuse His misled followers of their dependence upon the OT books then available to them and their mistaken belief of the facts contained therein?
3. Further, can Jesus be the revealer of the mind of God, as He claims, when at the same time He is going around basing His pretensions upon books, accounts or passages that modern Biblical criticism would seek to reduce to legends, fables, traditions or, at best, "later accretions of a kernal of (true) fact"?

In order to deal with these questions properly, each should be taken separately as a theme to develop as argument for the conclusion offered. But these questions DO raise problems for those who would discount wholesale entire sections of OT Scripture as devoid of

historical value, i.e. from which no certain knowledge of ancient facts may be derived. So, Jesus' mention of the cremation of Sodom and Gomorrah has real point, since, unless Jesus tells us elsewhere that that miracle did not, in fact, take place (which, according to the available materials in the four Gospels, He does not do), Jesus Himself may be said to accept the reality of the painful punishment of those perverts.

But what is the exact point of (unequal) comparison here? Jesus is saying, "If you think that the certainly merited, but unspeakably horrible, punishment meted out on Sodom and Gomorrah was terrible, let me assure you that I consider rejection of you Apostles and disbelief of my message to bear as such a far more evident proof of wickedness, that the doom of those unbelievers, who dare turn down your offers of divine mercy, will be even more so. It will actually go easier for those ancients when they face the final judgment, than for these moderns who will have turned their backs on God's Kingdom!"

But why should Jesus' condemnation of those cities that do not receive the Apostles be so severe? How could it be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city?

1. Was it because those hamlets or homes that rejected the Twelve principally because they came as ambassadors of Jesus of Nazareth, would be guiltier than the great, wicked metropolises of antiquity who knew not the identity of the messengers of God who came among them? But did the inhabitants of Sodom ever learn the identity of the apparently normal men who were Lot's guests? There is no connection made in the text, between their being stricken blind and the identity of the angels who so struck them. Nor is there any evidence of an angelic visit to Gomorrah, such as that to Sodom, inasmuch as God's interest in these cities was the rescue of Lot for Abraham's sake, His judgment having already predetermined the devastation of these cities. So it does not appear that the identity of the messengers itself is the point of the comparison.
2. It would be more correct to say that the Sodomites and those of Gomorrah, however indescribably wicked they may have been, had had no opportunities to know God's message, equal to the opportunities of those to whom Christ's Apostles preached. (See notes on Mt. 11:20-24) Guilt is based upon opportunity to know the truth. While the Jews' rejection

of the Apostles, relatively speaking, is not such a bad sin, gross, flagrant and foul as that of the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, yet it is so much more inexcusable and worthy of so much more excruciating severity, since the Jews would have had a more excellent chance to know the truth and act upon it. Lenski (*Matthew*, 397) shows why it should go harder for disbelievers than for Sodomites:

To lie in sin and thus to perish is bad;

To lie in sin and, in addition, to reject grace, and thus to perish, is worse.

3. Jesus is so hard on the disbelievers who shut their ears to the Apostles, since He knows that the Gospel they preach is the opportunity of a lifetime that once rejected might never return. The Gospel appeal might never again be felt.
 - a. Having once successfully resisted the appeal of the message, they may well rest content in having maintained their orthodoxy and their faithfulness to the traditions of their fathers by repudiating this upstart Nazarene and his band, hence be more confirmed than ever in their unbelief.
 - b. They might die before the Apostles or early Christian evangelists can bring the Word around to them again. (See on 10:23) Historically, this occurred in Palestine, since the Apostles could not finish evangelizing even that small country before the horrible death by persecution and martyrdom of the majority of the Apostles themselves and the smashing juggernaut of the Roman might which devastated the nation, hurled the Jews into a black eternity without another occasion to hear the message of grace.

By means of this grand and awesome declaration, Jesus accomplishes two purposes:

1. He clinches His argument about the reliability of support from God through His people. God, whose laborers they are, not only fully recognizes their need for support, but He is especially concerned whether they received it or not, while carrying out their ministry for Him. So concerned is He that He would notice even the dust on their feet and what it testified to Him about the Apostles' reception in a given area! So, if God may be depended upon to vindicate His messengers' word as His own, how much more sure is He to provide their every need in exactly the way He promises them to do so?

2. He gives evidence of His own deity and divine authority. Jesus has just declared that those wicked cities, overthrown by God, will actually have it (comparatively) easier than any city or house that refuses His own Apostles. He must be the Judge Himself to be able so confidently to announce the outcome of what is most surely known to God, the final judgment!

In the day of judgment. Though Jesus is already announcing some of the verdicts of that final day, He does so in a more or less private way to His disciples, whereas on that great day He will render these verdicts public before the whole universe. But the disturbing nature of these declarations could not escape these men, and we must not miss them either: judgment is certain. As certainly as God's punishment rained down upon those wicked cities, so certainly will the impenitent cities (and, in our day, those schools of theology) that laugh the Apostles and their disciples out of town, face their ruin at last.

FACT QUESTIONS

1. What specific area were the Apostles to evangelize?
2. What specific ethnic groups were the Twelve to avoid at this time?
3. Explain the wisdom of Jesus in this choice, in relationship to the Apostles' personal ability, maturity and preparation.
4. Show what motives prompted Jesus to commission these twelve men to work at this particular task.
5. On what other occasion is there a similar commission given to some disciples, thus enrolling them in Jesus' ministry?
6. What message were the Apostles to preach? What did the message mean?
7. What was the purpose of the miracles in the ministry of the Twelve?
8. What were the Apostles to "freely give"? What was it that they had "freely received"?
9. Explain what is meant by the instructions to "salute the house," "your peace will come upon it," and "your peace will return to you."
10. What is the meaning of the oriental expression: "Shake off the dust of your feet"? Is Jesus to be taken literally or figuratively here? What would this expression have meant to the Apostles? Should we try to apply the same attitude involved in this expression today? Give a good 20th Century paraphrase for this expression, showing thereby your application.

CHAPTER TEN

11. List the items the Apostles were to take along during their journeys.
12. List the items the Apostles were NOT to take along.
13. Locate and give the history of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah in such a way as to show the impact of the warning behind Jesus' words that for that city which rejected the Apostles' message it would go worse on judgment day than for those ancient cities.
14. Do the restrictions Jesus placed upon this mission apply to every mission the Apostles are to perform? What evidence do you offer for your answer?
15. State the declarations in this section that emphasize the divine authority of Jesus.
16. Harmonize the apparently contradictory instructions regarding the disciples' taking "shoes or sandals" and "staves." Were the disciples to take no staff nor shoes or at least one pair or what?

Section 23

JESUS COMMISSIONS TWELVE APOSTLES TO EVANGELIZE GALILEE

III. JESUS CHALLENGES AND HONESTLY WARNS THE TWELVE OF THE DANGERS AND DIFFICULTIES THAT LIE AHEAD

TEXT: 10:16-31

A. PERSECUTION BY THE STATE "CHURCH"

(10:16, 17)

16. Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.
17. But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to councils, and in their synagogues they will scourge you;

B. PERSECUTION BY THE STATE GOVERNMENT

(10:18)

18. Yea and before governors and kings shall ye be brought for my sake, for a testimony to them and to the Gentiles.

C. PROMISE OF POWER IN THE PRESENCE
OF PERIL (10:19, 20)

19. But when they deliver you up, be not anxious how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak.
20. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you.

D. PERSECUTION BY THEIR OWN FAMILIES
(10:21, 22)

21. And brother shall deliver up brother to death, and the father his child: and children shall rise up against parents, and cause them to be put to death.
22. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved.

E. PRUDENCE IN PERSECUTION (10:23)

23. But when they persecute you in this city, flee into the next: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.

F. THE SUFFERING OF THE SAVIOR AND
HIS SERVANTS (10:24, 25)

24. A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his Lord.
25. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his teacher, and the servant as his Lord.

G. FREEDOM FROM FEAR (10:26-31)

1. BECAUSE OF THE ULTIMATE TRIUMPH OF TRUTH

26. Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid that shall not be known.
27. What I tell you in the darkness, speak ye in the light; and what ye hear in the ear, proclaim upon the house-tops.

2. BECAUSE OF THE RIGHT REVERENCE

28. And be not afraid of them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

3. BECAUSE OF THE CARE OF THE CREATOR

29. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? and not one of them shall fall on the ground without your Father;
30. but the very hairs of your head are all numbered.
31. Fear not therefore; ye are of more value than many sparrows.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- a. Show the harmony between the passages which command us to fear God and those which say "there is no fear in love" and others which say that the fearful will be condemned.
- b. Why do you think Jesus is being so painfully honest with His disciples as He describes the pain and difficulty they will face?
- c. In what way are the disciples like "sheep in the midst of wolves"?
- d. What is so "wise" about "serpents"?
- e. How are Christians supposed to be harmless?
- f. Do you think that the mentality of fear that Jesus is instilling in His Apostles is healthy? He warns His Apostles about the untrustworthiness of people (10:17). But is this good?
- g. What is the proper balance between this wariness of people and that invincible optimism that Jesus obviously and personally practiced?
- h. Would you say that the person who walks the tightrope between distrust of people and seeking to encourage the best in people is the most mature person? Do you see anything in Jesus' words that verifies or denies or otherwise modifies your conclusion?
- i. What was so important about the Apostles' standing before governors and kings, as Jesus says, "for a testimony to them and the Gentiles"? What kind of testimony do you think Jesus has in mind?
- j. How could these disciples avoid the nagging anxiety that could easily plague and drown their ministry in worry?
- k. How long do you think Jesus expected His disciples to endure these difficulties? What motivations does He provide them which would actually enable them to do this?
- l. What is the difference between cowardice, i.e. that moral unwillingness to take a stand for Jesus when the going is

- impossible and there is more temptation to be silent, on the one hand, and prudence, i.e. the wisdom to "flee to the next city"?
- m. What motivations does Jesus give His disciples to keep them from watering down His message for fear of what men would say?
 - n. What is so important about the promise of leadership by the Holy Spirit? What difference would this make when the disciples were haled before courts to give witness about Jesus?
 - o. What hint does Jesus give in this text that, although He had confined their sphere of their mission to Israel, yet the disciples' testimony would not long be limited to Jews only?
 - p. Do you think the promise of inspiration that Jesus gave in this commission applies to the Apostles only, to all preachers and witnesses for Christ, or only to those facing imprisonment and martyrdom? On what basis do you decide this?

PARAPHRASE AND HARMONY

"Here I am sending you out like so many sheep surrounded by a mad wolf pack! So be sharp—keen, on your toes, yet not cunning, dishonest or shrewd. Be on your guard against people, for they will hand you over to be tried before Sanhedrins, and to be whipped in their synagogues. You will also be dragged into the presence of Roman governors and Herodian princes because of your allegiance to me. But this will but give you opportunity to testify before them and the Gentile world. Take that opportunity!

"When they arrest you, DO NOT WORRY how you are to talk or what to say at your trial, because the right words will come to you at the right time. This is because it will not be you speaking, but rather your Father's Holy Spirit will be speaking through you.

"Brother will betray brother to have him executed. Even fathers will betray their own children. Children will turn on their own parents and send them to their death. You will be universally hated because of your allegiance to me. But the man that hangs on till it is all over will be saved.

"When they start persecuting you in one town, take refuge in the next one on down the road! I can tell you this: you will see a clear demonstration of my vindicated authority before you have com-

pletely covered all the towns here in Palestine. This demonstration of my majesty may be described as my coming in glory.

"Remember: a student does not rank above his teacher any more than a servant is above his master. The student should be content to share his teacher's lot or a servant his master's. If they have called me, the Master of the house, names like "Beelzebul, Prince of Evil or Satan" and the like, what kind of names do you think they are going to call you?

So DO NOT BE AFRAID of them who threaten you, because, like every other previously hidden secret, the Gospel too is sure to be revealed, so deliver your message without any reserve. Even any secret compromises you make to save your life will be found out too! So, all that I have taught you in private sessions and in evening seminars under the stars, broadcast in broad daylight! Proclaim my message on a public, nationwide scale.

DO NOT GET EXCITED about those who can only kill your body but cannot touch your soul! No, have an infinitely greater reverence for God, because He is the one who has the right and ability to punish both you and your body in hell!

"What is the going price on sparrows? Two for a penny? Yet, not a single sparrow hits the ground without your Father's knowing about it! To put it another way: God knows the most detailed facts about you, like how many hairs you have on your head. So DO NOT BE AFRAID. You are of infinitely greater value to God than any number of sparrows."

SUMMARY

Jesus lays before His Apostles the dangers that they will face serving in His ministry. They are not to fear anybody or anything, but get Jesus' message proclaimed at all costs. Persecution by the State, the State Church or by their own families is not to deter them. Nothing is to stop them: they are to keep going, fearlessly proclaiming Jesus' Word on a nationwide scale. They have no reason to fear men, since they serve the living God whose personal care and love for them is far greater reward than all earthly blessings. They are to regard all persecution, not as a failure of their ministry, but an extension of it into areas otherwise untouched and unreachable.

NOTES

In harmony with the presupposition suggested in the introduction to this chapter, regarding the various time elements supposedly in-

tended by the three-fold division into which Matthew orders his material, the following section will be interpreted in reference to that period of the Apostles' mission which began roughly at Pentecost and terminated with the end of the Jewish nation as such. Hence, in this section we will find more direct applications to the life of the early Church than were to be discovered in the partition of the text just concluded. At this point a concurrent study of the *Acts* would be most helpful in providing illustration after illustration of the very thing Jesus is here predicting.

A. A GENERAL WARNING (10:16)

10:16 Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves. Who, knowing the risks and dangers to which he is sending his men, could demand of them such unfailing loyalty and rigid discipline? Many great commanders have so ordered their troops under similar conditions, commanding them to stand and face materially superior forces, though they themselves have improper or inadequate weapons. But Jesus is sending His finest disciples into the face of moral evil and spiritual, wicked powers. These humble followers are armed only with truth embodied in frail, human clay. This is why the Master places their Apostleship on the basis of a personal mandate from Jesus Himself. "I Myself send you forth." (emphatic *egō*) A man can be made to do almost anything when he knows for whom he suffers. So, throughout this passage Jesus continues to reiterate this personal relationship with the King Himself for whom they serve and suffer. (Stop and read verses 16, 22, 24, 25, 27, 32, 33, 34-38, 39, 40, 42, in order to appreciate this.) If we miss this emphasis put here by the Lord Himself we shall fail to sense the strong personal element not only in the obedience of the Apostles to Jesus' orders. We may also be incapable of seeing, in our own service to Him, that His slightest wish is our strongest command. With this understanding, we will see that the smallest item of our lives—from the reason why we brush our teeth and how we go about it, to the way we treat our fellows in driving down a crowded street during the afternoon rush hour—is just an expression of this kind of personal service to Jesus.

I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves. One point to notice about this simile is that Jesus is not sending the Apostles, as it were, sheep into a howling wolfpack, for **sheep in the midst of wolves** is already one complete concept. Jesus used **in** (*en*), not **into** (*eis*). This whole picture, as well as the text in which it is found, is a vivid sketch of the very opposition which already

had begun to surround Jesus' own ministry and had been aroused by it. He is saying, "You are already sheep surrounded by wolves, but I am sending you out anyway!" (Cf. 10:24, 25) Jesus Himself had already stood, or would soon stand, in each place He now pictures to His men. He, the Lamb of God, know what it meant to be surrounded and ultimately torn to pieces by these wolves! He also knew that, if He Himself should be butchered by the wolves, His Apostles, the tender lambs that they were (Cf. Lk. 10:3), could not but expect similar or worse treatment. **Sheep:** what a figure of relative helplessness, in no respect vicious like the attackers. But, in the nature of the case, because of the Gospel they must preach and because of the humble, godly character that must be theirs, these men **MUST** be lambs. They could not, indeed they must not, escape the viciousness of the wolves by trying to be anything but lambs.

The **wolves** Jesus faced were not, for the most part, the slum-dwellers, the rackets men, the street walkers or other segments of the "common rabble," but the polished men of the cloth, the pious leaders of organized religion, the theologians. In fact, it was not the common people that engineered His crucifixion, but these latter. (See Jn. 19:11) Jesus, the Good Shepherd who knew the wolves and refused to run from them (Jn. 10:12), is willing to risk the very existence of His little flock by a frontal attack: sheep versus wolves! Though the term **wolves** is often used with particular force to describe false teachers who try to draw away followers from Jesus (Mt. 7:15; Ac. 20:29), this term might be stretched to include those specific illustrations Jesus provides in the verses that immediately follow: religious rulers (10:17); pagans (10:18); unbelieving families (10:21); all people generally (10:22). This is not surprising, since the attitudes of all but the first mentioned, are but the reflection of the unrelenting bigotry and bitter opposition instigated by the religious leaders. Many were the times during the ministries of the Apostles Peter and Paul, as we learn of those labors in *Acts*, when, as they were making surprisingly rapid progress in their Gospel proclamation in a town, jealous Jews stirred up hostility to the Lord's messengers among the otherwise friendly or neutral populace.

This picture of **sheep in the midst of wolves** reminds us of that continual condition in which the Church has always found herself. Luke, when he set down the sermon preached at the time of the commissioning of the Twelve (Lk. 6:12-17, 20-49), reports this most timely warning: beware of those moments of dead calm, when you face no opposition: "Woe to you, when all men speak well of you, for so

their fathers did to the false prophets." (Lk. 6:26) Jesus knows that the "hatred and inimity of fossilized orthodoxy," as Barclay puts it so beautifully (*Matthew*, I, 386), will be so intense and so protracted that, if at any time the sheep are anything but sheep, or the wolves look more sheepish, His people will have already begun to compromise their fundamental nature. Of course, it is important to remember here that Jesus does not say that the wolves will always be the religious establishment, since He actually gives several different illustrations of "wolves at work" in this larger context. In other societies this nexus is not necessarily so obvious or even so real. However, the **wolves**, i.e. those embittered, violent enemies of the flock, may be found in varying groups with varying intensity, and it takes real insight sometimes to distinguish real wolves from just plain sheep that hold a view antagonistic to our own! It is much too easy to identify the **wolves** in what is merely different from ourselves, or in what is only a secondary manifestation of the real evil with which we ought to concern ourselves. This demand for wisdom is the purpose and point of the concomitant advice which necessarily comes next.

Be ye therefore wise as serpents and harmless as doves.

This is Jesus' counsel in view of the treacherousness of the natural enemies of the disciples. **Wise as serpents.** Skill in sensing and avoiding danger seems to be the characteristic of snakes to which the Lord alludes here. But why is this characteristic so essential? Immediate martyrdom was not to be the goal of Jesus' servants: their business was to give witness to the exceedingly precious message they carried. An early martyr's death is never preferable to a life of labor to spread the good news and strengthen the saints. (Cf. Notes on 10:23; Phil. 1: 19-26; also Paul's clever division of the Sanhedrin against itself, Ac. 23:1-9) Here the emphasis is on discretion, even astuteness in the sense of sagaciousness. What a contrast between this recommendation Jesus makes and that fanatical thirst for martyrdom found in those who, burning for distinction, unwisely and unnecessarily exposed themselves to dangers. He says that His servant must not deliberately invite trouble or court danger, if he may honorably and conscientiously avoid it.

Harmless as doves. The word **harmless**, as a translation of *akéraiōi*, leads away from the intention of that word, since the etymology of *akéraiōs* is not that suggested by Thayer and adopted in the ASV, i.e. *a-* negative + *keráia* or *kéras*, a horn = "hornless," literally; figuratively, "harmless." (See *ISBE*, 2798) The derivation seems rather to be *a-* negative + the stem of *kerámmi*, "to mix" = "unmixed;"

figuratively, "simple, guileless, sincere, unadulterated, uncontaminated, pure, innocent." (*ISBE*, 2798; Arndt-Gingrich, 29; see also Ro. 16:19; Phil. 2:15) So, while "harmless" is not a good translation of the word involved, it is not altogether harmful to the sense, seeing that it does express a resultant, if not a connotative, meaning of the Greek word. The Apostles, if they are to respect Jesus' demand that they be guileless, will not seek to revenge themselves or retaliate against their persecutors or those who refuse their message. However this is a secondary application to the principle intent to the word, as indicated above. In what sense must the Apostles be "sincere, innocent, pure, guileless"?

1. McGarvey (*Matthew-Mark*, 91) takes it that "being blameless, they would encounter no **merited** severity." Their methods of self-defense must never be such as to deserve censure, not must any of their attitudes betray an un-Christian spirit that provokes sentence against them. (Cf. Lk. 9:51-55; contrast Peter's defense, Ac. 4:8)
2. Though the Apostles are to be constantly surrounded by and exposed to evil, they are not to tempt themselves to use evil methods to protect themselves. Even though they must be extremely wary of treacherous men, yet they themselves must not resort to subterfuges and stratagems, but carry out their work with boldness and perfect honesty, even though this latter course may expose them ultimately to suffering. This is clearly implied in later verses. But "guilelessness is not a synonym of gullibility." (*ISBE*, 2798) It is, rather, the unwillingness to deceive even persecutors. Any disciple should learn the difference between telling the truth in all of his spoken words, on the one hand, and telling all he knows, on the other. Only a fool would babble on all that is in his mind, especially when in the presence of persecutors he blurts out particular information that would bring certain harm to innocent people. Any Christian may admit to knowing certain truth that would involve the life or safety of others, while withholding its content from inquisitors upon pain of death or the most horrible tortures. We are permitted to suffer for Jesus' sake by "laying our lives down for the brethren" (I Jn. 3:16). But we are NOT permitted to tell a lie merely to achieve a good purpose, i.e. save human lives.

While the two animal characteristics, i.e. a serpent's wisdom and a dove's innocence, may seem like a strange combination, yet, taken

together, they represent a perfect, balanced relation. Bruce (*Training*, 112,113) sketches that balance:

Amid such dangers two virtues are specially needful—caution and fidelity: the one that God's servants may not be cut off prematurely or unnecessarily; the other, that while they live, they may really do God's work and fight for the truth . . . Conscientious men are apt to be rash, and prudent men are apt to be unfaithful. Yet the combination (i.e., of caution and fidelity) is not impossible, else it would not be required . . . For it was just the importance of cultivating the apparently incompatible virtues of caution and fidelity that Jesus meant to teach by this remarkable proverb-precept . . . The dove must come before the serpent in our esteem, and in the development of our character. This order is observable in the history of all true disciples. They begin with spotless sincerity; and after being betrayed by a generous enthusiasm into some acts of rashness, they learn betimes the serpent's virtues. If we invert the order, as too many do, and begin by being prudent and judicious to admiration, the effect will be that the higher value will not only be postponed, but sacrificed. The dove will be devoured by the serpent: the cause of truth and righteousness will be betrayed out of a base regard to self-preservation and worldly advantage.

Or, to say it another way: "Be wary, but not crafty; simple, but not simpletons." Fraser (*PHC*, 252) suggests rightly that

the Lord Jesus is the consummate example to illustrate His own teaching. He was always on His guard, and penetrated all the maneuvers and plots of those who watched and hated Him. He fell into none of their snares; never lost self-possession; never spoke at random; uttered all His words and conducted all His intercourse with infinite discretion. But He formed no counterplots and devised no *stratagems*. No craft was in His bosom; no guile was in His mouth . . .

Ironically, though the disciples are forbidden to "fight fire with fire" (of the same sort), or to "pay back the enemy in his own coin," i.e. not use those methods for succeeding that worldly people have ever thought absolutely essential to the successful outcome of their plans, yet the outcome of THIS conflict is pre-announced: The Kingdom of God will go to the sheep, not to the wolves! (Cf. Lk. 12:32) Sheep that are convinced of this ultimate victory, regardless of all the inter-

mediate difficulties and "momentary afflictions" (2 Co. 4:17), can never really fear the wolves.

But how is this admonition (10:16) to be harmonized with the declaration of Paul: "Love believes all things"? (2 Co. 13:7) At what point were the disciples to stop giving the benefit of the doubt to the treacherous enemies of Jesus and the Church, and start fleeing, or, perhaps, refusing to reveal their plans in order to save the lives of the members of the Church? It is not always possible to see the enemies' affirmations in the best light or always to put the best construction on their conduct. How long should "love believe all things," before it becomes gullible and, consequently, an enemy to itself? How long should Christians give the benefit of the doubt to those who seem to be reasonable men, but whose present intellectual stance holds them to a course of rejection or opposition to the Christians and their message, before the disciples are to decide that such men are not to be trusted any longer but have actually become a menace to the body of believers and an obstacle to the further proclamation of the Gospel? Two answers arise out of the varying circumstances in which the disciples find themselves:

1. In the days of the first commission, love would demand that the disciples remain in a city to proclaim the glad news of the Kingdom of God, build a nucleus of believers until opposition to their activities becomes so effective as to render ineffective the Apostles' ministry. In this latter case, they were prudently to move on. (10:23)
2. However, when the universal hatred of the Christian movement becomes so general (10:22) as to render impossible or fruitless further flight, or when flight itself is impossible, then love demands that the disciple stand and suffer for the name of Christ where he is.

The answer to this dilemma, then, is to be found in the actions and attitudes of the "wolves" themselves. (Cf. Mt. 7:15,16) While the Christians are to be optimistic that even "wolves" CAN be converted, yet they must always be aware that they MIGHT never be. They must "believe all things" are possible for good in the life of potential or actual enemies (remember Saul of Tarsus!), but this trust must never betray them into handing over all their plans to the enemy. Bruce's summary (*Training*, 113) is very much to the point:

Do not be so simple as to imagine all men good, honest, fair, tolerant. Remember there are wolves in the world—men full of malice, falsehood and unscrupulousness, capable of invent-

ing the most atrocious charges against you, and of supporting them by the most unblushing mendacity. Keep out of their clutches if you can; and when you fall into their hands, expect neither candour, justice, nor generosity. But how are such men to be answered? Must craft be met with craft, lies with lies? No, here is the place for the simplicity of the dove. Cunning and craft boot not at such an hour; safety lies in trusting to Heaven's guidance, and telling the truth. (Mt. 10:19, 20)

The following admonition sharpens this wariness.

B. PERSECUTION BY THE STATE CHURCH (10:17)

10:17 But beware of men; for they will deliver you to councils and in their synagogues they will scourge you. Beware of men: what a shock to those believers who might have been inclined to suppose that the rightness of their message, the goodness of their lives, their own innocence as beginning teachers and their wonderful miracles, would automatically gain for them the good will of all men. Nevertheless, the ability to be both "wise and guileless" requires that the Apostles remain on their guard. This does not mean, of course, that the Apostles will escape harm simply by being alert, for they will ultimately suffer, regardless of all their dexterity and alertness. It is just a question of time and who can hold out the longest, the Apostles or the persecutors. Jesus, therefore, intends His men to be forewarned, hence, forearmed, against the treachery of such unscrupulous men. This way, they would be able to avoid the needless difficulties with such men by guarding themselves against thoughtless, provocative remarks that would inflame them.

Beware of men is not intended to arm us with a general distrust of humanity in general, even though it is with sinners, rebels against the living God and our Christ, that we have to do. However, this admonition does indicate that not all men are to be trusted with the same confidence, since they are capable of destroying all that the Christians seek to create. (Cf. Jn. 2:24, 25) Paradoxically, while the Christian is to seek what is honorable in the sight of all men (Ro. 12:17; 2 Co. 8:21) and what pleases his neighbor for his good (Ro. 15:2) and is to try to do good to all men (1 Th. 5:15), yet he cannot trust every man, nor must he compromise his message in order to reach these other goals. Jesus knew that if the Apostles were going out with the view to pleasing men so as to make their program succeed, they would be strongly tempted to water down their message or be so discouraged as to give it up altogether. In the end they would

fail to hit the specific targets Jesus planned for them. Now the Master explains in what specific areas the Apostles are to be particularly wary.

For they will deliver you up to councils, and in their synagogues they will scourge you. The first member of this parallelism seems to suggest that the **men** of whom the Apostles are to beware are common men, whether in high offices or not, who, because of religious prejudices, political convenience or other motives, betray the Jewish Christians into the hands of the religious authorities. **Councils . . . synagogues** are two words that underline the fundamentally Jewish character of the persecutions that Jesus now describes, since civil and ecclesiastical jurisdiction were so thoroughly blended in Judaism. (Cf. Mt. 23:34) Edersheim (*Sketches*, 91; see also *Life*, II, 553ff) informs us:

Every town had its Sanhedrin, consisting of 23 members if the place numbered at least 120 men, or of 3 members if the population were smaller. These Sanhedrists were appointed directly by the supreme authority, or Great Sanhedrin, "the council," at Jerusalem, which consisted of 71 members. It is difficult to fix the limits of the actual power wielded by these Sanhedrins in criminal cases . . . Of course all ecclesiastical and strictly Jewish causes and all religious questions were within their special cognizance.

As will be noted in the following verse, even the appearance before pagan rulers was, during the early years of Christianity, a Jewish question instigated by Jews, who, enflamed against the Christians, haled them before the Gentiles. This Jewish character of the difficulties gives peculiar force to the time limitations of this section, dating its end approximately with the end of the Jewish power to persecute the Church. The time limits are also seen from another angle, that of the fulfilment of Jesus' words in the life of the early Church. (Ac. 3; 4; 5:17-42; 6-8—8:4; 22:19; 26:11; "scourging" in 2 Co. 11:24) Morgan (*Matthew*, 103ff) reminds us:

A very remarkable fact of history throws light upon this: never from the day of Jerusalem's fall until now has a Christian believer been scourged in a Jewish synagogue . . . There have been other eras of persecution of the Church, but never from the day in which Jerusalem fell has there been a systematic persecution of Christians by Jews . . .

The reestablishment of the Jewish state of Israel in the modern world obsolesces many older views of the Jewish condition. Jerusalem, after

1900 years, by force of Israeli arms is now in the hands of the physical descendants of Abraham. How this fact should be evaluated in modern eschatology is yet to be seen. But this later development must never obscure this obvious: 1900 years are still 1900 years in which the Jews have not had it in their power to deliver up Jewish Christians to the punishments of the Jewish courts until now non-existent. Given the present condition of Israel, this very state of affairs could, of course, begin tomorrow morning.

C. PERSECUTION BY THE STATE GOVERNMENT (10:18)

10:18 Yea and before governors and kings shall ye be brought for my sake, for a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. The Gentile character of these potentates is reflected in the fact that puppet-kings and procurators who governed Palestine were but men appointed by the authority of Rome, as well as the fact that the arraignment of the Lord's representatives before these dignitaries should result in testimony also to the nations. The Apostles were not to regard their low birth or limited cultural opportunities in such a moment, as if they had something to be ashamed of. There were to stand in the presence of those temporary rulers in the name of the King of Kings whose they were and whom they served. They were to think only of the joy of being able at last to bear witness to the message of Christ before such influential men (Cf. Mk. 13:9; Lk. 21:13) They were to see these **governors and kings** as MEN to preach to, not tyrants to fear. (Study the excellent examples of Apostles before their rulers: Ac. 24:10-17; 25:6—26:30; 27:24; Phil. 1:12, 13; 2 Tim. 4:16, 17)

For a testimony to them (*eis martyrion autois*). The Gospel is primarily and fundamentally a message of facts that actually occurred to which eyewitness testimony bears record. Only secondarily is it a philosophy, a world-view or an ethical system. What one thinks about the facts placed before him must determine what he will do with the theology or the ethics or the view of the world that is also connected with the Christian message. The primary job of the Apostles was to testify to what they had seen and heard. (Cf. Lk. 24:47, 48; Jn. 20:30, 31; Ac. 1:8, 22; 2:22, 32; 4:20; 5:32; 10:39-42; 22:15, 18, 20) What a significant testimony that must have been! Whether it were greater than ordinary preaching may be debated, but this presentation of the central facts of the Gospel before such dignitaries could not but demand of these prominent citizens of the Empire that they investigate the entire cause of Christianity, that they set

down in the archives for all history to remember what transpired under the procuratorship of Pontius Pilate. If the rulers rejected the preaching however, the Apostles' witness becomes witness against them before God.

For a testimony . . . to the Gentiles. Here is proof, early in Jesus' ministry, of the ultimate universality of His Gospel, even though He had ordered His men to preach only to Jews at first. This hint is amply clarified and enforced by the Great Commission which revoked some of the limitations in this first mission of the Twelve in a limited area and people (Cf. Mt. 24:14; Mk. 13:30) The nations too must hear the evidence! But the evidence was not all verbal: Jesus said, "For my sake you will be taken before governors and kings, for a witness to them and to the nations." The very act of being brought into court **for Jesus' sake** was in itself evident proof that these witnesses believed something very deeply. Jesus is saying, "Your lives must tell for something! If you men get arrested and are accused of being my disciples, would there be sufficient proof to condemn you?" The force of one's life as testimony itself cannot be overemphasized. The very fact that the Apostles grasped their Lord's meaning and chose rather to suffer trials, imprisonment and death, rather than change or surrender their testimony, proves in itself to be convincing proof of the honesty of the men themselves. It also renders a favorable verdict about the probability of the veracity of the facts they declared.

Notice how concerned Jesus is that men have testimony borne to them! (Cf. Mt. 8:4; 24:14) He wants every one to have a chance, even though, as the true "Knower of the hearts," He is fully convinced that, of all those who do have a chance offered them, only an infinitesimal percent will actually accept it.

Before governors and kings. Nothing could seem more improbable to political observers and the man on the street than that these simple fishermen, publicans and tent-makers would someday stand in the presence of emperors and kings of the mighty Roman Empire stretching from India to Brittania! Or that on such an occasion these simply Galilean teachers would present a defense of the very Gospel that would soon shake that empire at its very foundations and overthrow it. (Dan. 2:44) But Jesus not only predicted it, but also gave detailed instructions how to act when it occurred. In this simple, unobtrusive way, Jesus identifies Himself as a true Prophet of the most fantastic accuracy!

NOTE: Here again Matthew records words of Jesus similar to warnings that Mark (13:9) and Luke (21:12, 13) set down in connection with that period preceding the end of the Jewish nation and Jerusalem. This fact seems to point to the certainty of the suggestion made earlier that the time schedule within this prophecy concerning the mission of the Twelve began with their first public witnessing for Jesus on Pentecost and ended with the destruction of the Jews' power to persecute.

D. PROMISE OF POWER IN THE HOUR OF PERIL (10:19, 20)

If the general warnings just mentioned are clear illustrations of what Jesus meant by "Be as wise as serpents," then what follows may well explain what He meant by being "innocent, or guileless, as doves." But having impressed upon His men the importance of the testimony they must bear before governors and kings, Jesus now forestalls a disturbed reaction in their minds that this declaration foreseeably could produce. How understandable it would be for them to reflect: "Well, if our witness before those great men is so important both to them and others, as well as to ourselves, then how desperately important it is that we make that testimony the best witness we can!" Though this conclusion would be perfectly natural, Jesus reveals to them that it is not the correct deduction, for they must understand that the success of their witness does not depend upon their own frail powers, as if, in such a critical moment, they would be left alone to their own devices.

10:19 But when they deliver you up, be not anxious how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak. 20 For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you. The complete absence of duplicity or conniving on the part of the Apostles could not be more heavily emphasized than Jesus does so here. The disciples are positively forbidden to spend anxious hours planning the form and content of the legal defense. **But when they deliver you up . . .** rather assumes now that this betrayal is a foregone conclusion for the Christians. It also teaches two other truths: it indicates most obviously the moment when the Christians would feel the deepest anxiety as they fear both inadequacy of their own endurance under trial as well as the possible failure to express the testimony of Christ in its proper perspective. This is why Jesus, long years before that moment arrived for any of His followers, takes the sting out of the dread of that hour. He says, "When your time

comes to be haled before the magistrates, do not worry a minute about what defense you are going to make or how you must make it! That is an order!" A second truth comes out of this zeroing in on a point of time yet in the future: Jesus forbids anxiety in that moment when on trial, but in no way does He suggest that they may not prepare themselves well years before that crisis before the court.

It may be objected that preparation *per se* is forbidden, since the Master provides the antithesis to anxiety by specifically promising immediate inspiration. This valid objection, however, regards only one specific type of preparation, i.e. that anxiety vividly described by Lenski (*Matthew*, 400):

To be arrested and haled before judges low or high is enough to upset anyone. In addition to the shame, the fear and other conflicting emotions, the trial itself and the matter of their defense would cause the apostles terrible anxiety. They would, however, not merely be concerned that they might defend themselves and escape the infliction of penalties, their anxiety would be chiefly concerned with the honor of Christ and the gospel, and they would fear that because of their mental confusion, mistakes, weakness, ignorance or other handicaps they might injure the Lord's cause. After a sleepless night or more in a foul cell, with no advocate at their side, in what condition would they be to do justice to the gospel?

It is precisely these preoccupations that are discouraged. But the objection against that preparation that depends upon the leadership of the Spirit is not at all prohibited.

Jesus knows that if the Christians begin to take time out of their preaching to plan legal defense, they will do themselves untold psychological damage as well as put their own cause in doubt. So many uncertainties like what questions would be put to them, the unforeseen turns their trial could take, the personality of their accusers and of the judges, etc., could not be foreseen with any confidence. So they had no objective way of preparing for them. They must, instead, spend their time in preaching. Jesus knows that positive proclamation will accomplish more psychologically with the audience than would self-defense. Further, this confidence that the right answers will be provided when the Apostles are hauled into court, frees their minds psychologically to keep busy at the one major task to which they were to give themselves completely: the proclamation of the Kingdom of God. But, at precisely this point, something

takes place that forms the finest kind of preparation for those fearful moments. In the normal proclamation of the Gospel, two separate, natural phenomena occur. By constant use of the supernatural revelations, inspired in them by God's Spirit here promised, their answers would become second nature to them. The same is true of their own reflections upon the message revealed over the years: out of these meditations would come the most convincing arguments that could be used to present Jesus' message in its most reasonable form. Out of their broad experience in preaching, they would make the Gospel so much a part of themselves that they could not but express in those critical moments what had been the transforming power of their whole previous Christian life.

But again it may be objected: Jesus did NOT here mention any such natural reflection and absorption of the Christian message so that it would become second nature with the Christians brought before the judges. Rather, He promised immediate inspiration. True; He does do this for very good reasons:

1. Because in the case of some Apostles and early Christians, there was not time available for such reflection from the beginning of their own personal testimony until they were attacked, tried and executed. The success of His program did not so much depend upon their maturity as upon the accuracy of the witness under His direct inspiration.
2. Because of the fact that they must learn to depend upon God for the revelation at the right moment, not upon their own wisdom, talents, courage or faith. It might be safe here to say that, had the Apostles dreamed that the success of their testimony should have depended upon the ripeness of their own understanding of the message, they might well have dedicated themselves to monastic reflection or theological research, rather than to preaching and revealing.
3. Further, Jesus could not very well put much emphasis upon this natural, habitual acquisition of the best presentation of the Gospel, since, before it developed, the Apostles themselves could gain little comfort from hoping for it. For them, it lay yet in the misty future.

So, Jesus devaluated this side of the Apostles' growth altogether, assuring them that God would supernaturally provide His message—both form and content—in the critical moments.

Then, why bring up this natural maturing from the life of the Christians, if it is not immediately apparent in the text? But that

it is in the text is obvious from Jesus' negation: "**It is not you that speak, but the Spirit.**" This is a Hebraistic expression absolutely stated for what we would express in a relative idiom: "It is not you alone who speak, but also the Spirit." The Apostles certainly would do the talking, but their thoughts would be directed by God's Spirit. There is, then, a **you that speak**, i.e. the Apostles who would have achieved a certain level of spiritual growth and power. but it is essential that Jesus deny this merely human power used in their testimony and defense, since they certainly, as normal human beings, would be tempted to depend upon whatever human resources were then available. Normal maturity is inserted here in order to point out a side of the Apostles that Jesus could certainly see, although He was not free to bring it into the question here, due to the natural anxieties of the men in their present state of preparation. It is a temptation to think of these noble followers as mere human radios who were tuned into God's wave-length and mechanically received and rebroadcast God's Word. But they were not mere instruments, but MEN, whom God inspired. This natural maturing is mentioned here also by way of application to modern Christians. As men like us, the Apostles must submit themselves to, and grow up into, their own supernaturally inspired message. Revelation received, whether by direct inspiration or indirectly by searching the Scriptures and reflecting thereupon, does not guarantee, nor instantly produce, maturity, sanctity or the memory fund of experience. (Witness Peter's misapprehension of the absolute universality of the Gospel, even though it were he who first revealed it by inspiration, Ac. 2:39. It took special revelations and several particularly surprising experiences before he was convinced of it, although he had lived with his own gospel for several years, Ac. 10 and Gal. 2.) By identifying ourselves with the Apostles as men, we see how to derive comfort from this same instruction:

1. Our confidence that the Apostles' word is the Word of God, because it is a message revealed to and through them by this special inspiration of the Spirit, leads us to stake our lives, honor and eternal happiness on what these men say.
2. Then, our reflection upon that message, our constant preaching and practice of it gives us a fund of memory and experience that touches our lives so deeply. that when we find ourselves in the same crises or trials, our dependence will not be upon our wisdom, our talents, our faith or our courage, but upon His word in us. It should not be at all

surprising that a particular circumstance should call up from our learning of the Scripture a word or a wisdom that so well fits the situation that our enemies cannot withstand the spirit with which we speak.

As all good writers and speakers, artists and musicians know, purely natural "inspiration" cannot take place nor produce great art without great "perspiration," i.e. without that real discipline that prepares the artist to produce his "inspired" masterpieces. So also here, the modern Christian, without benefit of the special gifts of the Spirit, must take the time and submit to the discipline of learning the Word for himself and of teaching it constantly to others, so that it may become so much a part of himself that, in critical situations where the testimony he gives is especially crucial, it is God's Word that is presented. The important question to us is: how much of the Word is really, intentionally and systematically hid up in our hearts so that it can really inspire us to truly great preaching and teaching?

For it shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak. Contextually and logically, **in that hour** would seem to limit the inspiration here promised to those moments when the Apostles stood trial. But the very reason Jesus adduces for their not needing to be anxious (10:20) may be taken as an independent idea, not at all circumscribed by this phrase. **10:20 For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you.** The intentional use of the present participles (*ou gar humeis este hoi lalountes alla to pneuma . . . to lalon*) leads us to look for an inspiration of the Spirit that was continually speaking through the Apostles throughout their ministry, and not merely when they stood trial. The force of Jesus' argument, when seen from this angle, becomes even stronger, for, if God's Spirit could inspire the Apostles when they stood before the tribunal, He could certainly be able to guide them infallibly to accomplish far greater tasks at other times, as, for instance, preparing the written Gospel for all nations and times. The Lord inserts this statement as the reason why the men must not be upset about their defense, as well as to explain just how their answers would be provided them at the right moment. But this reason actually covers more circumstances than that just mentioned, i.e. the trial. Jesus' argument is this: "Since the Holy Spirit will be speaking through you throughout your ministry, do not be anxious for those few moments during your service to me when you must stand before the rulers of synagogues or governors of the Empire.

The Spirit who has provided all your power up to that moment will certainly not forsake you then! He will speak through you just as much on that occasion as on any other."

The basis of this interpretation is found, of course, in other instruction of Jesus on the same subject that covers the same general period of the Apostles' ministry. (Jn. 14:16, 17, 26; 15:26; 16:7-14, etc.) But these passages, that contain information given during the last week of Jesus' ministry prior to the cross, refer to the post-Pentecost guidance of the Spirit. This latter fact lends additional strength to the opinion that, in this section (10:16-23), Jesus is dealing primarily with the labors of the Apostles following His own ascension and prior to the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the Jewish state, a period in which the special activity of the Holy Spirit was especially marked in the normal life of the Church. Jesus Himself is fully able personally to inspire His messengers to preach His Gospel, perform His miracles and perfect His program, without a direct baptism of the Holy Spirit. In fact, the Spirit was not yet given (Jn. 7:38, 39), although the Apostles, and later the Seventy (Lk. 10:9, 17-20), had served Jesus in the capacity of instruments through whom He carried out His miraculous ministry. The Spirit's special service began only after Jesus left the earth to return to the Father. (Jn. 16:7, 13) This is why it may be concluded that Jesus is not discussing here the Apostles' immediate, short-term mission in Jewish territory, but rather their later, world-wide mission to all.

While this promise of power was made here specifically to the Twelve, Jesus gave the Apostles to understand that this special aid was not only their special prerogative, since on other occasions He said the same thing to His disciples in the presence of the multitudes. (Lk. 12:11, 12) In the fulfilment of Jesus' promise in the life of the early Church, Stephen, while not an Apostle, yet under the obvious control of the Spirit, shows how Jesus meant this promise to be understood. (Ac. 6:3, 5, 8, 10; 7:55). While there was no doubt about the unique position and official stature of the Apostles among the orthodox Christians (excluding thus the few detractors of the Apostles here and there), yet these same Christians were to recognize the diversity of the manifestations of the same Spirit. (I Co. 12:4-11, 28-30; Ro. 12:3-8; Eph. 4:7-11) So it would not be surprising to find other Christians, besides the Apostles, speaking by direct inspiration both when under trial and on other occasions as well. In fact, this seems to have been the specific purpose of the laying on of the Apostles' hands, that others might

also be granted special gifts of the Spirit. (Cf. Ac. 8:15-17; 19:6; 2 Ti. 1:6) Presumably, when the Apostles passed from the scene, there would have been no others who could receive this special inspiration, since there is no evidence that anyone but an Apostle could convey such gifts by the imposition of hands. The likelihood that this is the case is rendered even stronger by the formation and diffusion of that body of writings recognized as Scripture, a phenomenon which rendered fundamentally unnecessary the special or sporadic, inspired revelations.

Something significant has come into existence since Jesus pronounced these promises of direct, immediate inspiration by the Holy Spirit: the New Testament. This book is unique in all the world, because it is the personal work and message of the Holy Spirit rendered available to all in a concrete and easily usable form. This book is the personal responsibility of the same Spirit that Jesus sent to reveal His will in permanent form for all ages of the Church. While only the early Christians, especially the Apostles and some of their companions, like Mark, Luke, James and Jude, received that promise of inspiration and participated in its fulfilment by setting down in written form what the Spirit willed, the servant of Jesus today can pour over those pages until its message becomes the heart and vitality of his life. As a natural consequence, the modern Christian can also have a share in the victorious witnessing under fire that those early Christians knew, the only difference being that the early pioneers depended upon an immediate inspiration to reveal God's Word, whereas the modern saints depend upon God's revealed Word to provide immediate inspiration. It should be obvious here that the early Christians depended upon a supernatural phenomenon, while the strength of the modern disciple is more natural, arising as it does out of memory and reflection upon the word revealed once for all. This does not rule out the possibility that the Spirit today should take advantage of our previous study, memorizing and reflection of the Word and sharpen our powers of recall at critical moments. But this is another subject. The point here is that the Apostles must trust, not in themselves to defend themselves, nor even in their God-given, natural powers in those fearful moments, but in the immediate guidance by God's Spirit in them, speaking through them. Would to God that we had the same confidence in the eternal Word of the Holy Spirit so that we depended completely upon it not only for the needed wisdom to respond to our detractors or

accusers, but also for the choice of ideas and words that would help lead our fellows to know the living God!

The evidential value of the declarations made in this short section is obvious. Without once affirming his own obvious authority, Matthew reports this promise of Jesus that the Apostles would be divinely empowered to recall and reveal divine truth. By so doing, Matthew categorically claims his own inspiration, but since the claim is deeply imbedded in the history of Jesus' acts and pronouncements, this becomes the most convincing sort of affirmation that could be made.

E. PERSECUTION BY THEIR OWN FAMILIES (10:21, 22)

10:21 And brother shall deliver up brother to death, and the father his child: and children shall rise up against parents, and cause them to be put to death. Until now Jesus has been discussing harassment by the unbelieving Jews, trials before the Jewish and pagan rulers and other similar difficulties. But now He bares the ugly reality: "For many of my disciples, my service will mean martyrdom!" The surprisingly rapid and successful spread of Christianity is often allowed to obscure those many heart-breaking trials in hundreds of Jewish homes, as one or more of its members took the crucial step to accept Jesus of Nazareth as Messiah. Only the Lord Himself knows how many harsh, bitter arguments were offered to recall those members of a family, that were leaving the good, old, tried-and-true ways of Moses to serve an unrecognized, itinerate Rabbi executed on a stake outside Jerusalem! As it probably seemed to those who remained bound to Judaism, those who left to follow Jesus Christ were embarking on an uncharted sea, leaving the security of the rich ceremonies of the worship of Jaweh to seek eternal joy at the hands of One whose very message denied nearly all that the rabbis had ever thought or taught about the Kingdom of God. How many families were literally shredded by the simple confession: "I believe that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ the Son of the living God?" How many were the moral (if not actually literal) funerals at which a son, a grandmother, a daughter-in-law, a wife or husband or others, was considered thenceforth and forever dead? For how many Christians was it lamented: "It were better for him that he had never been born"?

But this is not merely a question of a family's excommunication of one of its members. This is nothing less than denunciation before the courts by bringing the case before the law in the clear understanding that the charge, if proved, must lead to a verdict of guilty and the death sentence. The most heart-breaking part comes when

the brother, after having betrayed his own kin into the hands of those who would kill them, gives the fatal testimony that seals their doom.

Here Jesus puts the old proverb to the test: "Blood is thicker than water" (=Kinship is more binding, more important than baptism specifically, and, in general, worthy of more consideration than the tenets of one's belief.) This old piece of calculating human prudence is based on the general observation that the bonds which unite families are generally so durable that one could hardly think that differences of belief in religion could cause brothers and sisters, parents and children to sever these tenderest of relations. And, were there no proof to the contrary, we could hardly believe that this actually had been ever considered. Nevertheless, Jesus not only knows the human heart but He also prepares His disciples to face the realities He finds there. Nor would this malignant opposition arise only in the breasts of the vilest men most practiced in wickedness, but more especially in the hearts of the sincerest of men, who in their zeal for God, thought themselves doing Him service by destroying the disciples of Jesus! (Cf. Jn. 16:1-3; Ac. 26:9-11; 23:1; I Ti. 1:13) What consummate blindness, what depth of conviction, what partisan bigotry, what inhuman opposition to rupture the dearest human ties and to be willing to hand over one's own kinsfolk or friends to torture and death!

It is important to recall that these same words are repeated by both Mark (13:12) and Luke (21:16) in connection with the end of the Jewish nation, but are deliberately omitted by Matthew at that point in his own account of the same discourse (Mt. 24). This fact harmonizes further with the suggestion that this section (10:16-23) describes the Apostles' mission from the beginning of their work alone (in His absence) until the fall of Judaea.

10:22 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. Surprisingly enough, this very declaration measures the emotional as well as the moral distance between the non-Christian world and the Christians. Nowadays this very sentence, once intended to mark the distance between Jesus' people and the world's crowd, becomes the very standard by which one may judge how far the Church has shifted from her original heroic uniqueness to her present posture of compromise with the world! At the same time, this phrase proves how far wrong are those philosophers who would find in Jesus' message and program "only the perfection of those forms of thought already known to the ancient world." Jesus' Kingdom

stood out in stark contrast to the ideals of the then-current Judaism (although in perfect harmony with the then-ignored principles preached by the OT prophets) and the morals actually practiced by the non-Jewish world. Though the non-Christian world was badly splintered over many issues, it was to find itself united in its opposition to Christianity. No, Christianity did not find its origins, its divine message or its faith to live by in the garbage heaps of Rome, Athens or Jerusalem! Power, philosophy and religious law united in the endeavor to strangle the life out of Christianity. **Ye shall be hated by all men** is almost perfectly echoed in Tacitus' (*Annal.* XV. 44) famous description of the reason for the persecution of the Church: *odio generis humani*, of which Tacitus' words are the ironic opposite. Men hated Christians because Christians, supposedly, hated mankind! (See Newman, *Manual*, 148-150; Schaff, *History*, II, 85-104; Qualben, *History*, 57-60) Why?

1. Christians recognized an authority higher than the State, and in the event of conflict between the law of the State and that of God, they chose to obey God rather than men. This, in an era when the existing world-view held the State to be the highest good.
2. Christianity was a *religio illicita* because it was viewed as a religion introducing rites the character of which were unknown, or, at least, unrecognized by the State, whose society could be regulated by the laws of the Senate. It was looked upon as a secret society, hence came under the condemnation of such societies in general.
3. Christian morals contradicted the pleasure-mad philosophy of men of the world in general. Because they refused to live like other people, sharing the same selfish goals in life, they were regarded with suspicion as haters of all that is great, fair and noble in humanity.
4. Christians were charged with atheism and superstition, since they had no impressive external religion and rejected all other expressions of religion (temples, priesthood, altars, sacrifices, etc.) other than their worship offered only to the invisible Christ. Their intolerance of other religions was also unacceptable.
5. Christians were chargeable with high treason for their refusal to worship the Emperor.
6. Christians taught a religion that was truly universal without a national basis or barrier, that was destructive to social

classes and fundamentally inimical to slavery, by exalting and honoring useful work by all classes.

7. Christians worked miracles, a fact that could be misconstrued for magic, a serious offense.
8. Christians conflicted with the material interests of the makers and merchants of idols, sellers of sacrificial animals and the priests of the pagan rites.
9. Christians held more or less secret meetings during the persecutions, a fact which easily gave rise to rumors that Christians practiced abominable immorality and cannibalism.

Bruce (*Training*, 113) makes this biting comment:

The ignorant, superstitious populace, filled with prejudice and passion, and instigated by designing men, play the part of obstructives to the cause of truth, mobbing, mocking and assaulting the messengers of God.

Even at times when the Gentile population would have been inclined to welcome the Gospel preached by the Christian missionaries, zealous men, moved by jealousy for their business (cf. Ac. 13:6-12; 16:16-22; 19:23-41) or for their religion (cf. Ac. 13:45-50; 14:1-6, 19; 17:4-8, 13), deliberately incite to violent action the clots of unthinking, unquestioning people here and there by the use of a few catch phrases or shouted slogans packed with emotion.

For my name's sake (See on 5:10-12, Vol. I) This practically universal hatred shall arise *dià tò ònoma mou*. (Cf. Lk. 6:22; Jn. 15:18-21.) This means more than that the mere mention of the word "Jesus" will ignite all the vile bitterness and unrelenting hostility foreseen here. **For my name's sake** means: "You will be execrated for all that I stand for and am." This includes, of course, Jesus' message, its proclamation by which His name became known, and Jesus' Church for she bears His name before the world. (Cf. Ac. 3:16; 4:7, 10, 12, 17, 18; 5:41, 42; 8:12; 9:20, 21, 27; 26:9-11) Note again here the extremely personal cause to which Jesus calls and challenges His men to suffer. (See on 10:16)

Again, it is interesting to see that all three Synoptists set down this very declaration in Christ's great prophetic discourse. (Mt. 24:9; Mk. 13:13; Lk. 21:17) This is significant because Matthew, who is sometimes accused of taking liberties with Jesus' words, arranging them somewhat capriciously as the mood strikes him, also records this concise notice in BOTH chapters 10 and 24. From a human point of view, it is difficult to see how this fact could be thought to

have escaped his notice, if he ever reread what he wrote before releasing it for publication. His inspiration lends divine authority to this repetition, assuring us thus that Jesus actually said this on the two separate occasions. The point of noticing the repetition here is that it assures us that we are on the right tract in finding correspondence between this section (10:16-23) and the general description of Jewish national affairs from 30 A.D. circa until A.D. 70 circa. For, while it is true that Jesus could easily use similar language to describe two widely separated, totally unconnected events, we may be justified in understanding Him as describing the same general period or the same events on various occasions, unless He Himself clarifies our confusion by pointing out the difference, which, it seems, He does not. (See notes on Mt. 24.)

But he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved. The major thrust of this verse is "Do not grow weary of trusting in Me." The details, however, are a bit stickier to explain, for the major term to interpret is **the end**. To what **end** does Jesus refer? **the end** of what? Several possibilities come to the surface:

1. **The end**, coming indefinitely as it does to us in this text, might seem here to be left intentionally indefinite, a possibility that would allow the words to refer as well to one's death as to the second coming of Christ at the end of the world, or perhaps also to the end of the Jewish nation. This indefiniteness has the certain advantage of keeping the disciple on his toes spiritually, since he could never have known for certain in those days when any one of these three ends should take place.
 - a. But since the coming of Christ and the end of the world would be an event having little consequence beyond the psychological stimulation of preparation for an event about the time of which one must necessarily be uncertain, it would not seem as likely that Jesus would put this particular event forward as of primary interest and importance.
 - b. Death, of course, would be the particular end of the individual and, at the same time, be an event which would seal his destiny. Elsewhere (Rev. 2:10) Jesus makes this explicit. While the mention of death is assuredly in the immediate context (10:21) and is an **end** whose date is uncertain enough to require patient endurance on the part of any Christian at any time, but does this exhaust

Jesus' meaning when we compare this expression with other pronouncements He made on the subject?

2. But when this passage is placed along side Jesus' great prophetic discourse (Mt. 24; Mk. 13:9-13; Lk. 21:12-19), it becomes clear that **the end** may have had a closer reference to the judgment then coming upon the Jewish nation. If so, then the application of the exhortation is to remain faithful to Jesus during that period of Jewish persecution which came to an end, never to be repeated after the total defeat of the Jews at the destruction of Jerusalem.

It may be helpful to note these similarities:

Mt. 10:22, 23

and you will be hated by all for my name's sake.

But he who endures to the end will be saved.

When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next; for truly I say to you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel,

before the Son of man comes.

Mt. 24:9b-14

9b and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake.

10 And then many will fall away

11 and betray one another. And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. And

12 because wickedness is multiplied, most men's love will grow cold.

13 But he who endures to the end will be saved.

14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, as a testimony to all nations.

And then the end will come.

Besides the obvious parallels in words at certain points, there are intriguing parallels of thought at others. (See special study on the Coming of the Son of Man.)

Those who remained patient to the end of the Jewish persecutions and of the nation of Israel could say, "By the grace of God, we have remained faithful this long: we can go even further! We have already held on faithfully to Jesus, beyond what we thought even possible. But the end of the world is not yet. So we have learned to remain loyal even to the judgment or to our death, which ever comes first!" But there is an unyielding warning lying just below this promise: "He who quits before the end, will be lost!" (See on 10:32, 33)

This matter is so personal that Jesus uses the emphatic demonstrative pronoun *hohtos*: "The man who holds on till the end, this man (and no other) will be saved." (Cf. Heb. 10:36-39)

F. PRUDENCE IN PERSECUTION (10:23)

10:23 But when they persecute you in this city, flee into the next: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come. Here is a summary application of the principle: "Be wise as serpents; harmless as doves." The disciples must be alert to dangers hidden in any situation that might bring disaster to the cause they promoted, but, at the same time, they must not become involved in witch hunting, i.e. smelling dangers where there are none. **Ye shall not have gone through . . .** indicates that their first target must always be Gospel proclamation. (See below) Bruce (*Training*, 113) summarizes this:

How, then, are the subjects of this ill-treatment to act? . . .
by avoiding the storm of popular ill-will when it arises . . .
and by giving the utmost publicity to their message though
conscious of the risk they run.

The principle thrust of this verse is: "Keep moving, in order to keep preaching as long as you have the opportunity. You do not have to give up your life to the first persecutor that comes along. Go to another town: be elsewhere when they come to take you. I will come, so if you must fear at all, fear that your mission will not be completed in time." Jesus knew that the scribes and Pharisees would harrass the Christians from town to town. (Mt. 23:34b) Since there are so many cities and villages, not only in Palestine but in the world, that need the Gospel, towns where people would give a joyful hearing and an obedient reception, it would be an unwise expenditure of lives and effort to continue in an area where persecution rendered it impossible to continue preaching the Gospel effectively or where people rejected it by continually ignoring the messengers.

Before this idea is seized upon to justify ignoring certain countries of the modern world where Gospel proclamation is either illegal, due to a majority heathen religion (as, in Islamic nations) or practically impossible, due to a denominational Christian State Church (as in Catholic or Protestant countries where small evangelical free churches are hindered for one reason or another), let us remember the

context. Jesus urges this advice in view of a definite terminus to their actual opportunity to evangelize. This juncture is believed to be the end of the Jewish nation. (See Special Study on the Coming of the Son of Man.) If this be correct, the absolute application of this principle of flight in the face of persecution is no longer necessary, since we have already passed the boundary marker that staked off that time period. We have entered rather into that era in which we Christians must patiently stay put, despite the hindrances or handicaps under which we must labor. Naturally, we must seek the very best possible means to communicate the truth of the Gospel in each situation. For example, great economic, social and political revolutions are afoot in Italy that can drastically change the climate within which the Gospel is preached in what is usually thought of as a 100% monolithic Catholic system. But the Churches that have kept hammering at the problem of evangelizing in Italy since World War II have both gotten a foothold in the country from which to move with these revolutions as they take place, as well as a thorough working knowledge of which methods function best in reaching this people. It has historically taken that time to perfect the materials, develop the leaders, prepare the groundwork, become aware of each other's efforts, etc. Had the brethren closed up shop and fled at the harsh persecutions faced in the early years, the free churches in Italy today would not be in their present posture of strength and readiness.

Jesus' advice to flee in the face of persecution is to be interpreted within the contextual time limits He set for it: "till the Son of man be come." After that event, presumably, the requirement that they flee would be no longer relevant.

Flee to the next. This command may sound like cowardice until the Lord's principle is understood. In the same way that banks, knowing the value of human life and realizing that their trained personnel is difficult to replace, give the general advice to surrender the money in the event of a robbery, and in the same way flyers are encouraged to ditch a million-dollar airplane that cannot be safely flown back to base, in order to have the even more valuable life of the trained aviator, so the Master puts a high value on the lives of His men. "When it is possible to flee without compromising your commitment to me or my message, save your lives to fight another day!" But even in this section Jesus takes for granted that

there would come a day when flight would be impossible and apprehension by the authorities inevitable. (vv. 17, 18)

Study the following examples of fleeing before persecution, or of going on to other cities after being refused in a city: Ac. 8:1b, 3, 4; 9:23-26, 29, 30; 11:19; 12:17-19; 13:44-51; 14:5-7, 19, 20; 17:10, 14, 15; 22:17-21.

Here are some examples of remaining firm in the face of persecutors: Ac. 4:23-33; 5:17-42; 6:8—7:60; 8:1b "except the Apostles!" 12:2, 3; 18:1-18; 20:22-25; 21:4, 12-14.

There is real wisdom in knowing when to escape and when to stand and die. However, the decision may not be as complicated as it might seem, since the rule for the early Christians was: "If you can leave, do so; if not, give faithful witness." Therefore, they were not to flee in terror for their lives, but out of determination not to be hindered from delivering Jesus' message to the largest number of people possible.

There is no fanatical enthusiasm or hysteria here! Christian witness is valuable! The longer it is maintained, the more effective and helpful it can be to all. (Cf. Phil. 1:19-26) A dead Christian cannot evangelize, cannot comfort others as well as a living one. Lives are not to be thrown away; death is not to be courted. No self-appointed martyrs allowed here! This is not cowardice, just good sense. No one could accuse Jesus of encouraging His men to be faint-hearted milksops, after taking seriously the bracing demands of cold courage and unyielding commitment stated elsewhere in this same discourse!

You shall not have gone through the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come. Three major terms in this text must be explained: **gone through**; **the cities of Israel** and **the Son of man be come**. The difficulties arise from the fact that each of the three terms are interlocked, complicating the interpretation, since each must be understood not only for itself, but in relationship to the other two. The result must be a whole, with no pieces left over. Notice:

1. **Gone through** has been explained as referring to:
 - a. Using all the cities of Israel as a refuge from persecutors who menace them from town to town in Palestine.
 - b. Reaching all the cities of Israel, whether in flight or by deliberate choice, to work in them by bringing the Gospel to them. This interpretation is preferable both on the

basis of the meaning of the word used (*telésēte*, "to bring to an end; finish or complete," Arndt-Gingrich, 818) and in light of the Apostles' commission to evangelize. This view has the advantage also of including most of the sense of the other one.

2. **The cities of Israel.** In whatever sense Jesus' coming is to be understood, this geographical limitation is important. He is to come to these **cities**, not to the world in general. Thus, **Israel**, as a nation with its cities, would still have corporate existence. **Israel** here may even be intended in the same sense used earlier (10:5-15) to refer to Palestine, not Samaria nor Gentile territory. From this it is clear that the term **cities of Israel** does not allude to those areas in Gentile country where Jews eventually would be found living throughout the world.

The fact that Jesus mentions here **the cities of Israel** should not be taken to mean that these were the only cities being evangelized by the Apostles during the period now alluded to, since in the same section the Master has already pointed out that this period would be characterized also by "testimony before (governors and kings) and the Gentiles" as well. So He is no longer speaking of that mission on which the Twelve were to preach to Jews only. (Cf. Mt. 10:5, 6) This is rather a time when the Apostles would be evangelizing the nations, Israel included. With regard especially to Israel, says Jesus, you will not have terminated your work in this land during your world evangelization, until your time of opportunity will be brought to an end by my coming.

3. **Till the Son of man be come.** Four interpretations have been offered:
 - a. Does Jesus mean that they cannot possibly have fled throughout the entire length of Palestine, before Jesus Himself comes preaching through those same cities? If so, He would be viewed as coming to their rescue when in trouble, or coming to recall them in from their labors to rest. This view, chosen by Foster (SLC, 1965, 35), presumes that "their task was so great and so urgent that they were commanded not to weigh themselves down

with any extra equipment; they were to go with all effective speed . . . Like the "seventy," the twelve were sent before Jesus to announce His coming and to prepare the various cities to receive Him (see Luke 10:1-16)." This view is, of course, based on the supposition that every detail of the discourse in Matthew 10 is to be applied with (relatively) equal force to the first mission of the Twelve in Galilee, a standpoint at least problematic, if not indefensible in light of the factors mentioned in the introduction to this chapter. For, while it is certainly believed here that this entire discourse was delivered prior to, and in preparation for, that first limited mission, it does not follow that every detail of the discourse is to be applied to that first mission. Many of the details, of which this verse (10:23) is one, have relevance to later missions. This view has the handicap of failing to explain the relatively certain absence of serious persecutions during that early mission of the Twelve which would have driven them from city to city only to be rescued by Jesus' personal coming to the particular Galilean town in which they were then endeavoring to work.

- b. Or did Jesus intend that the missionary of the Church would not be finished before the return of Christ at the end of the world? However, how could this exhortation be relevant to the immediate needs of the Apostles, since He has not yet returned in this sense? Would this tactic ("persecuted in one city, flee to the next") be at all applicable to the present age of the Church, or for that matter, to ANY age of the Church from the end of the Jewish nation until Jesus' return?
- c. Or does Jesus refer to the establishment of the Church on Pentecost as the significant "coming" here? This seems unlikely, inasmuch as the Apostles' movements, just ahead of the persecutors, were intended to render possible the thorough evangelization of Palestine, a fact which would more likely be connected with their post-Pentecost activities. However, it is true that other missions did intervene between the early mission of the Twelve and Pentecost (Cf. Lk. 10) which would turn this specific warning into a general order for observance by the Apostles

and other workers during any mission. However, the other characteristics of the period described in this second section of Jesus' discourse (10:16-23) do not match what we know of the pre-Pentecost missions of the disciples. This latter observation would tend to eliminate a pre-Pentecost application of the Apostles' fleeing and, consequently, a Pentecost application of Jesus' appearance. (See the Special Study on the Coming of the Son of Man, for further discussion of the Pentecost problem.)

- d. Or does He mean that some great manifestation of His glory would soon take place before they have the opportunity to evangelize all of Palestine and/or flee through all the cities thereof? If we identify the coming of the Son of man with the retributive justice meted out on Jerusalem and Palestine, then Jesus' final victory over Judaism with the fall of Jerusalem would actually take place before the Apostles could have covered all the cities of Jewish Palestine with the Gospel message. (See the Special Study for the reasons for this identification.) This declaration, so understood, becomes a precise prophecy having remarkable fulfilment in the uncertain times which were characterized by many hindrances to effective, continuous evangelism and which were caused by the rebellions that precipitated the Jewish War. This, in turn, culminated in the fall of the Jewish State.

If this latter interpretation be accepted, Jesus' urgent demand means that the Apostles had only one generation in which to work freely among the Jews in Palestine, i.e. that forty-year period from Pentecost until the Jewish War. To Jesus, every soul was equally precious, so if one hamlet would not accept the message, perhaps another would. Consequently, every moment was precious. Time was not to be lost, trying to convince those who would not be convinced, when there were others who would be.

While these words refer specifically to the ministry of the Apostles, yet there is a real truth about Christian service, hidden just below the surface. When that great hour arrived for the coming of the Son of man, the Apostles would not have reached all the cities of Israel. Their work would be cut short and left largely unfinished. Vaughn (*PHC*, 253) suggests this implication:

Our Lord thus ministers to our necessities by warning us against several mistakes which are apt to spoil and ruin true

work. One of these is the demand beforehand for a roundness and completeness of defined duty, which is not often to be found, and which must certainly not be waited for. The life and work, and the Christ-work of which this text tells, are never finished. . . . A deeper reason lies in the nature of the work. The most real work of all is the intangible, impalpable thing which we call influence. Influence is the thing which Christ looks for, and it is an indefinite, and so, an interminable thing.

G. THE SUFFERING OF THE SAVIOR AND HIS SERVANTS (10:24, 25)

Here Jesus seems to begin another major section of His discourse. (See Introduction of Chapter 10, where the outline is discussed.) In order to feel the general nature of this passage, as opposed to specific instructions "for Apostles only," notice the terminology by which He describes the people for whom these exhortations are intended: "disciple" (v. 24); "slave" (v. 24); "those of His household" (v. 25); "every one" "whoever" (vv. 32, 33); "he who" (vv. 37-39); "you" (Apostles, v. 40); "prophet" (v. 41); "righteous man" (v. 41); "one of these little ones, a disciple" (42). But these general expressions do not at all exclude the Apostles, for what Apostles was not all of these and more? There is no such thing as an Apostle who was first a disciple of the Lord, but there certainly are many disciples who never were Apostles. In this section the Master addresses all those disciples who would have a part of His ministry from that day forward until He comes again. There is considerably less emphasis on the strictly apostolic ministry here and more attention is given to the entire work of the Church.

Having mentioned some of the great hazards these followers must risk, Jesus proceeds to provide them adequate motives for enduring them (vv. 24-33). The first of these motives is: "I your Master and Teacher have endured; you too can make it!"

10:24 A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his lord. Lenski (*Matthew*, 406) thinks "this double statement is axiomatic, so self-evident as to need no proof." But we may ask ourselves why the Lord would say the obvious. He begins with what all could admit as true, in order to carry His listeners to see what emotionally they would not be so ready to admit, but what intellectually they must grasp as certainly true. But why begin with THESE two varied illustrations: what have they in common?

1. The **disciple** is identified with his **teacher** by his own choice.
2. The **slave** is identified with his **lord** by his master's choice, his master's purchase, hence he renders service because he is his master's property.

The slave here (*doúlos*) is not merely a servant who renders service for a wage. So it actually takes both illustrations to describe our unique relation to Jesus. We are not simply and only his **disciples** to discuss with Him His views, His program, and then decide what parts of it are not acceptable to our growing minds, or are, in our view, inadequate or unnecessary. Rather, we are also His **slaves** to do His bidding, and since our service to Him is self-chosen, we have also chosen not to question His word.

But in what sense is it true that Jesus' follower is **not above his teacher . . . (nor) above his lord**?

1. Some think this verse has something to do with how high a student can rise. They see Jesus as affirming that the best thing that can happen to a disciple is to tread in his professor's footsteps, learn his mentality, his approach to the search for knowledge, learn his truth. This is an idea certainly taught in similar language elsewhere, however from the negative side applied to disciples who trust ignorant authorities. (Cf. Lk. 6:39, 40; see my comments on Mt. 7:4, Vol. 1, 402) While it is true that this can happen in regard to the student, was there ever hope that this be also true in the parallel case of the **slave** and **his lord**, i.e., was there much hope for a slave to rise to the level even of his master? If not, the discussion, then, is not centered upon the accomplishments of the student, but upon his being better off than his superior.
2. It is better to take this expression in the sense that no inferior is too good to escape the destiny of his superior. Whatever was good enough for the Lord and Master is good enough for the servant-disciple. If it was not below the dignity of the Lord to humble himself to serve ungrateful men, suffer their abuse and ultimately die for them, it surely should not be considered below the dignity of His servant to do the same. (Cf. Jn. 13:14-16; 15:20)

This latter seems to be the better interpretive translation of **not above** (*ouk . . . hypér*): "no better than." The implication is that Jesus'

disciples are not to think of themselves as exempt from any of the obligations to render service in Jesus' spirit of humility or immune to the same persecutions the Lord Himself must suffer. But is it not even possible to harmonize the two interpretations above and consider both as inherently possible in the text? Consider the following:

The main point of these two parallel illustrations is that all subordinates in a given situation generally undergo the same destiny, for good or ill, as their superiors. If the **teacher's** doctrine is brilliant and true, his students who followed him will be led into the same glorious truth in which the **teacher** himself lived. If, on the other hand, the teacher's premises are false, all his students who remain faithful to him, will plunge with him into intellectual gloom. Either way, they owe what they are to him and share his destiny (so long as they follow him, of course). If a **lord** makes wise decisions that raise the honor and wealth of his house to greatness all his lowliest slaves will be privileged to share in his glory, since they are a part of his house. Contrarily, if he suffers for his bad leadership and unwise decisions, all his house declines with him. Thus, the hopes of the disciples are literally bound to the destiny of Jesus! If these alternatives were in Jesus' mind, then they become instant tests of the disciples' confidence in Him, since He warns them of what will certainly seem to them like an impending tragedy. Important people were already calling Jesus dirty names ("Beelzebul") and with seeming impunity, which, if left unchecked, could proceed further, bringing Him into extremely dangerous collision with the highest religious authorities in Israel. These fears of the disciples were certainly justified, but Jesus here must inform them that theirs would be the same fate.

10:25 It is enough for the disciple that he be as his teacher, and the servant as his lord. But in what sense must the disciple-servant **be as** his superior? To disciples, blind with materialistic messianic hopes, these words may have had a positive, hopeful ring, since they wanted above all else to share Jesus' future. (Cf. Mt. 20:20-28)

1. Their most optimistic view of their own chance for glory could not include being as glorious as their Lord, even though they would hope to be put in positions of authority and honor from the very first. But to the Lord who pronounced them, these words contained a succinct warning that envisions the suffering and dying of His faithful disciples for their convictions about Him.

2. Or, if we eliminate the negative, unworthy elements in the disciples' hopes, we see the disciples identified with ("be as") their Lord in their service for Him. Morgan (*Matthew*, 108) puts it:

The King teaches us that, in all our service for Him, He reckons us as identified with Himself, as going in His place . . . He is above us; but His teaching is to make us become as He is, and all He is, is ours in this matter of service. . . . The bond-servant, bound to obey, because the property of the King, is yet as he goes forth, identified with His Lord, with his Lord's royalty, his Lord's dignity, his Lord's authority, delegated by the king to speak for the King, in the name and nature and power of the King.

This is not absolute equality with the Lord and Master, for the very terms which describe the followers, i.e. **slave** and **disciple**, preclude this. But this identification with Jesus is not mistaken. (Cf. Mt. 10:40)

3. But this realization, that there were to be moments when the disciples would **be as** their Master and Lord, means that this proposition of Jesus is also reversible: the Master and Lord shall fare no better than His own people. What a shock to the Apostles themselves to hear Jesus say: "After all, I have said to you about your sufferings, remember: the Teacher is not above His disciples at this point either!" If you are to suffer for the cause of righteousness, how much more will I, who am its chief proponent!" Jesus was going to receive the same treatment that He here pictures for His men. What comfort these words would bring to these men in later years as they themselves underwent difficult days of hindrances, frustrating imprisonments, harrassment and death! They would stay steady under fire, remembering, "Our Lord Himself has passed this way too: by His grace we too shall stand!"

Jesus' emphasis in this section is upon the identification of His disciples with Him in His suffering, even though their identification with Him through their service in His name is a necessary corollary. If men would not accept the doctrine of Jesus, for whatever reason: misunderstanding, ignorance, deceit, conceit, prejudice, moral opposition or whatever, the disciples must expect no different experience. If it would

appear that Jesus has not been able to get His instruction across to some people, the disciples who are teaching the same truth to the same kind of mind will face the same problems.

Wisely Jesus informs His men ahead of time what they may certainly expect. So doing, He removes the element of shock for the Apostles themselves, since the rude surprise of this evidence of men's rejection of their teaching might tempt them to use the tremendous supernatural power at their disposal in ways unworthy of the Lord who give it to them. (Cf. Lk. 9:51-55) Rather than retaliate, they must learn to continue patiently seeking the redemption of those who might yet be saved. (See on 5:11, 12, 44) By giving Himself as the chief example (see below on *Beelzebul*). Jesus renders His men more capable of dealing with this vicious abuse, since they will have seen their Lord Himself under fire.

Against what frame of mind was Jesus' warning directed? As the disciples thought of their inability and the greatness of the task He sends them forth to accomplish, they must have trembled. Jesus had mentioned the unrelenting hostile powers that would mobilize against them. Now He fortifies them for that onslaught: "Yes, you will be facing difficulties beyond description, but always keep in mind that this is but the necessary outcome of your identification with me." (Ro. 8:29)

If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more them of his household! To reinforce His meaning, the Lord reminds the disciples of a shocking example that they had already heard and were yet to hear with increasing intensity even before Jesus died: **Beelzebub!** (Cf. 9:34; 12:24; Jn. 7:20; 8:48) According to the better manuscripts, this dirty name is not "Beelzebub," but "Beelzebul." Edersheim (*Life*, I, 648) sees a vivid pun in Hebrew here, which, of course, is lost in Greek and its translation, a pun which would carry both the ready wit of Jesus in His being able to combine memorable word combinations as well as give His disciples a taste of the harsh treatment they could expect. Edersheim points out that Beel-Zebbul means in Rabbinic language "Master of the Temple" but sounds so much like Beel-Sibbul which means, figuratively, "lord of idolatrous sacrificing," or, literally "lord of the manure pile," that one can immediately catch the biting sarcasm of the epithet when used in reference to Jesus. If Edersheim is right, or even near it, this crude humor of the scribes would have cut to the heart those who loved Jesus and would be anguished at this reference

to their Lord. I still remember vividly the angry tears of a dear friend when he first read a certain theologian's blasphemous suggestion that Jesus might be the bastard son of a German soldier. While this was a splendid reaction for one whose heart is bound up in Jesus, yet the disciples of the Lord must learn to steel themselves against this kind of brutal misrepresentation, lest they be so deeply shocked or offended by it or take it so seriously that they dismiss their mission as hopeless or give up their discipleship altogether. Whether the specific word be **Beelzebul** or any other blasphemous epithet that intentionally misrepresents everything Jesus stands for or is, some of the sting has already been removed from it by the Lord Himself. He proved He could face such hostility against Himself and despise the shame of the cross and endure it. (Heb. 12:1-4) To the alert disciple, this vicious abuse heaped on the disciple himself becomes the clearly outlined path where the Master has already walked! (Cf. I Pet. 2:19-25)

There is another practical application of the text in the immediate situation of those early Christians: this abusive name-calling becomes the pre-attack warning signal that alerts them to the need for planning their flight to the next city. (10:23)

How much more them of his household? It is as if Jesus had said, "If our enemies have been a bit reticent about attacking me directly, out of fear of divine retaliation, they will hardly have this same fear of you and will the more readily slander you. In fact, when they will have begun to see that we do not use the terrible, destructive powers at our disposal in our own self-defense, they will grow bolder and bolder in their attacks. You may not have it so good as I—and they will crucify me!" In none of this does Jesus outline a plan for retaliation against those who slander, harass or kill His men. He leaves them no alternative but that of accepting the suffering or else of playing the traitor to His cause. Although He guarantees them ultimate victory, yet there is no rancor or retaliation. He demands that they leave it to the judgment of eternity to rectify the injustices of time, the praise of God to silence the slanders of men. It takes a long view and a grand faith to believe Jesus and see God's eternity as more real than time, in order to keep asking oneself, under the ever-present din of men's taunts, why bother to answer these men who before long will be forever silenced? (Cf. I Pe. 4:12-19)

His household we are! (Heb. 3:6; 1 Jn. 3:1-3) What a glorious privilege to belong to such a royal house! We belong to it,

but before we will have enjoyed the privileges of so noble a connection, we will have paid dearly for it. As Barclay (*Matthew*, I, 395) preaches,

When Christianity costs something, we are closer than we ever were to the fellowship of Jesus Christ; and if we know the fellowship of His sufferings, we shall also know the power of His resurrection.

(Cf. also Phil. 3:8-16; 1 Pet. 3:9-18; 4:1, 2, 12-19)

H. FREEDOM FROM FEAR (10:26-31)

1. THE TRIUMPH OF TRUTH (10:26, 27)

10:26 **Fear them not therefore.** But why did Jesus say **therefore**? While this is normally a good translation of *oûn*, does it have this meaning here? If Jesus is making an inference from the preceding material, what are the premises? Two solutions are possible:

1. The actual reasons behind the inferential use of *oûn* (= **therefore**) are not stated in the text, hence must be supplied by the reader. If so, in light of the immediately foregoing context we might suggest something like the following: "You, my disciples, will be treated much worse than me. What is to be your response as my disciples, my servants? This relationship precludes your doubting my provision and care. Therefore, do not fear them!"
2. Dana and Mantey (*Manual Grammar*, 256-258) suggest a slightly adversative use made of *oûn*, in the sense of *however*, which would function admirably here to solve our problem. Accordingly, the sense would be: "You, my disciples will be treated much worse than me. However, do not fear them!" (See also Arndt-Gingrich, 597 on *oûn*.)

With good reason Jesus hammers on this theme throughout this discourse (vv. 26, 28, 31), even as He had emphasized earlier the needlessness of anxiety under trial (v. 19). The Lord has depicted ugly days ahead for those who follow Him and minister in His service and most of the opposition they must meet will come from men who will stop at nothing to hinder their witness. It is absolutely essential for Jesus to continue to drum on this theme: "DO NOT FEAR!" Why? If fear is caused by uncertainty, and uncertainty is caused by disbelief of what Jesus has revealed, then fear is sin! Jesus will not have any disciple be uncertain about anything He has declared. Cer-

tainty that God will do and provide all that Jesus promises is the absolute answer to fear. Fear betrays this lack of trust. (Cf. Heb. 10:32-39; 13:5, 6) Though these early Christians would have many reasons to react negatively to opposition raised to their labors, they must never allow their opponents to become bigger than God. But it is not enough just to say to people who have good reason to fear: "Do not be afraid!" There must be reasons, good ones, that can really allay their fears. The first reason the Master offers is His own personal guarantee of the triumph of truth.

For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known.

This Hebrew parallelism states in two parallel phrases essentially the same observation: truth will out! This is one of the hardest, most concrete maxims in the universe and is worthy of stating in proverbial form, since it has many applications. (Cf. Mk. 4:22; Lk. 8:17; 12:2) Truth is the way things are, not as people tell it nor as they wish it to be. Any philosophy, or view of life, that refuses to admit the true nature of things as they are, can only break itself upon the rocks of this reality. Truth will triumph. Jesus guarantees this by stating categorically that no amount of ignorance or hiding one's eyes can impede truth's ultimate conquest and complete vindication.

This realization immediately puts to test the disciples' trust in Jesus to be telling the truth. Jesus does not mean merely the truth of the assertions He had just made about the dark, bloody future ahead of them, but He may also mean the truth of all of His message. This He lays on the line, "I am willing to place my whole revelation in this framework. If I have been deceiving you, this fact too cannot be hidden. It too will be discovered. But in the meantime, you have enough evidence to decide whether my message comes from God or not, whether it is ultimate truth or not."

What is there about men that Christians are not to fear? This depends partly on what we think Jesus meant by what is **covered that must be revealed, hidden that must be made known.**

1. Is it their secret, unscrupulous plans whereby they plot against the disciples?
 - a. Is Jesus promising a sort of divine counter-espionage that provides the people of God with information regarding the movements of the enemy? (Cf. 2 Kgs. 6:8-19) But the question arises whether Jesus refers to the discovery of enemy plots to destroy the disciples and whether the revelation of the malicious plotting would be made known

during this life and not rather later at the judgment. (However, see Ac. 23:12-22; 9:23-25, 29, 30) Another doubt about this view is seen in the Hebraistic parallelism formed by verses 26, 27, in which the latter identifies more clearly, if not absolutely, what was "covered . . . hid" in the former.

- b. Is Jesus guaranteeing the total vindication of His servants, if not in this life, certainly in the next? (Cf. Rev. 2:9) McGarvey (*Matthew-Mark*, 92) suggests:

Disciples often suffer from injustice that is so covered up from the eyes of the world as to appear like justice, and there is nothing more disheartening than this. But Jesus assures them that no hidden or covered up iniquity shall escape exposure . . .

Here again is a test of their discipleship: can they ignore the harsh words, the sneers, the insinuations, the scoffing, the unreasonableness, the threats of reprisals, the loss of all the profit or advantages by which they must earn their living, in order to remain loyal to Jesus? Can they commit their lives (and all that sustains it) to Him who judges justly? (I Pet. 2:23; 4:19) If so, He is saying, "You will get justice, not in this life necessarily, but before God. That is the only important tribunal to take into serious consideration, no matter how painful or unjust may be men's punishments."

2. Or, in line with the foregoing context, there is another hidden thing that will ultimately be disclosed: the secret fears of Jesus' followers themselves. This is the fear which takes all the fight out of them, that turns them into self-justifying cowards unable to face danger or death. This too will one day be discovered! (See on 10:32, 33) Not only is this rationalizing cowardice wickedness, since it justifies denying Jesus in practical ways by refusing to take a stand for Him when that stand must be taken, but it involves an unexcusable hypocrisy. It is hypocrisy, because the disciples know that Jesus is supreme Lord, but they who give in to their fears, acts as if their tormentors are much more. But this self-excusing pretense is useless and senseless therefore and wicked, for one day God will mercilessly expose it. (Cf. Lk. 12:1-9)
3. Are the disciples afraid that their inability, in view of the

tremendous task before them, will cause them to fail to succeed in proclaiming the Gospel?

- a. There was much of the Gospel that Jesus could scarcely reveal even to His chosen Twelve, due to their spiritual immaturity and their strong prejudices against the foundational principles of His Kingdom. (Cf. "the mysteries, or secrets, of the Kingdom of heaven" Mt. 13:10-17; 16:20; 17:9) They had hardly grasped the reality of His deity or the character of the Throne He was to establish, nor could they understand the necessity for His death for the world's sins. (Cf. Mt. 16:21-23; 17:22, 23; Lk. 18:31-34) After these mighty facts were established and evaluated, the Apostles could understand and broadcast the full message in all of its power. But now, before the fact—at least two years before Calvary, the Resurrection and Pentecost—the disciples, from a human point of view, could not but doubt their own ability to make this glorious message known, especially since there was much in it that they themselves did not comprehend.
- b. Jesus argues: "My present revelation of the Kingdom, that I challenge you to preach, will be misunderstood and misinterpreted and thus remain hidden to the majority of people to whom we all preach. But this is no motive for giving up! Sooner or later this very message we struggle to make real in the lives of those who hear us will come to light. It HAS to! The very secrets of God's Kingdom that you will try to make men see, will not be any better understood when you proclaim them than when I say the same thing. But this is no reason to give up preaching. The truth will triumph!"

So, out of this indefinitely applied proverb come three admonitions: Do not fear therefore that the proclamation of the Gospel shall fail, or that the enemies of the Gospel shall succeed, or that your own cowardice can remain hidden! What a motive for enduring: Jesus is in full control of all the unknowns in our ministry! He says, "Do not fear the opposition, even though it forces you to work harder, for I intend to make progress in the face of the opposition."

10:27 What I tell you in the darkness, speak ye in the light; and what ye hear in the ear, proclaim upon the house-tops. This Hebrew parallelism may identify *what must be revealed* in the preceding verse. However, this sentence could also be

an independent thought, not entirely connected with the preceding, hence the other interpretations are also offered in verse 26. It may be that Jesus is taking the foregoing thought in a specific direction, even though verse 26 itself permitted wider application.

What I tell you means Jesus' own teaching, that is what must be revealed, not more nor less. A man has nothing worthwhile to say who has not listened to Jesus and learned. But having learned, a man has to speak what he has heard from Christ, as if he were standing himself in the presence of the living God. (Cf. 2 Co. 2:17; 12:19; 1 Pet. 4:11) This is the principle truth of which Jesus guarantees the triumph.

What I tell you in the darkness, . . . what you hear in the ear is that classified information He had intrusted to the inner corps of disciples, much of which He required to be kept confidential until the proper moment. (Cf. Mt. 16:20; 17:9) The time would come when the Lord could make clear His own true nature and identity as well as vindicate His program. But that time was not yet, since, for a long time then future, He must use dark parables for the masses, while taking His close disciples aside to explain their meaning in private. (Cf. Mt. 13:10-17)

In harmony with the suggested outline of this discourse, indicated in the Introduction to Chapter 10, it should be noted that this demand for the widest possible publicity for Jesus' teachings proves that He is now referring to a period in the disciples' work later than Pentecost, when the Christians' witnessing was geared to a world-wide evangelistic effort. (Mt. 28:19, 20; cf. Mt. 17:9: "Tell no one the vision, until the Son of man is raised from the dead.")

Speak ye in the light . . . proclaim upon the house-tops. When the moment came for the Apostles to break the story, they were to show aggressive courage in publishing it. (Cf. Ac. 4:13-20, 23-31; 5:20, 29-32, 41, 42; Eph. 6:19, 20; Ezek. 3:9) **The house-tops**, or the flat roofs of Palestinean houses, were the scenes of many activities. (Dt. 22:8; Josh. 2:6-8; Judg. 16:27; 1 Sam. 9:25; 2 Sam. 11:2; Neh. 8:16; Isa. 15:3; Mt. 24:17; Ac. 10:9) Plummer (*Luke*, 318) claims that "to this day proclamations are often made from the housetops." This makes it evident that Jesus is pleading for the widest possible publication of His message, a fact that demands that the Church adopt every medium her finances can reach, that succeeds in bringing the Word to the greatest number of hearers.

2. THE RIGHT REVERENCE (10:28)

Right after picturing nothing better than "blood, sweat and

tears" for His men, the Lord demanded that they not only fly in the face of the enemy but bombard his fortresses with the most vigorous public proclamations of the Kingdom of God. This is entirely foolhardy from any human point of view, for if Jesus is serious, He is asking His followers to commit social, religious, political and individual suicide. But Jesus is just that serious, and He is expecting His men to go on these suicide missions. (Cf. 10:38, 39) He knew fully well that His people were going to be reduced to "fools for Christ's sake, the scum of the earth, the dregs of humanity." (Cf. I Co. 4:9-13) He also knew that only genuine disciples can be made to suffer to this extent in order to carry out His mission to the world. But He must provide them the motive strong enough to drive them forward no matter the cost, the obstacles or temporary set-backs. He must stiffen the moral reserves of the very men whom He must continually scold for having painfully too little faith. (Cf. 8:26; 14:31; 16:8; 17:20; Mk. 16:14) But this cannot be done merely by showing them that their fear is without basis. They need stronger compulsion than this! Intellectually based convictions are absolutely necessary, but they must be deep enough to touch the sentiments, the emotions, fundamental enough to activate the will in only one direction despite all opposition. So the Creator of men here reaches into His men and takes hold of one of their most fundamental drives: fear. But notice His tactic: before He sets the right reverence, the proper fear, before their eyes, He removes the mistaken fear.

10:28 And be not afraid of them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul. Those that kill the body is the way Jesus labels the enemy, and his disciples cannot miss the implication. Jesus spares no words now as He bares the horrible reality that lurks just ahead for His people! The early Christians, along with their thrilling stories of heroic martyrs, also honestly remember those black days for the Church when fear of physical death tempted many to deny any relationship with their Lord. But the fearful torments and horrible death to which the persecutors can put the human body are not to be permitted to dim the disciple's view of God! Jesus wants His men to be able, even in the very face of their tormentors and murderers, to look up and see Him who is invisible, the real Governor and Judge of the universe. (Cf. Heb. 11:27) Their loyalty to Him and their even more painful awareness of His judgment, despite their seemingly endless pain, affliction and brutal death, are to hold them firm. (Cf. 2 Co. 4:7-

12, 16—5:11a; see how Paul develops this motif further.) How different is the ring of these words of Jesus from those frightened excuses of those moral cowards who would try to justify the committing of any sin, merely in order to have one's life! This is the kind of challenge that appeals to real men and contains within itself ample motive for enduring whatever suffering must be faced for Jesus' sake!

Right at the very heart of this bloody description of apparent defeat for the Christians is another bold declaration that guarantees victory for the man who accepts the presuppositions on which it is based. Those **that kill the body . . . are not able to kill the soul!** The presuppositions will be discussed later. Luke (12:4b), on another occasion, includes the victorious shout of the Christian, even while gasping his last: ". . . after these things, they **HAVE NO MORE THAT THEY CAN DO.**" Matthew's word is just as forceful: "**They CANNOT KILL THE SOUL.**" The frustrated murderers stand helpless before a broken hunk of human clay! Their prey has escaped beyond their grasp: the Christian witness has just been introduced into the presence of his King! But, mark, it is Jesus who **makes** this declaration, and it is Jesus who showed how to make it work. Morgan (*Matthew*, 109) puts it beautifully:

There is no utterance more vibrant with victory. . . . Presently this King went to the Cross without faltering, without flinching, with regal bearing, so that the man who condemned Him look for all time mean and contemptible in His presence.

The presuppositions involved in Jesus' demand cry out for examination, since He who created man (Jn. 1:3) and knows what is in man (Jn. 2:25) is making a clear pronouncement on human psychology, which at such a critical moment in the service of His servants, i.e. when they face trials, persecution and death for Him, must not be merely nice theory. Jesus must express something here that is fundamental to the very essence of humanity, if He would provide any real comfort to suffering disciples. Jesus states without explanation that **the soul** (*psychē*), as over against **the body** (*sōma*) is a reality to be reckoned with. Death separates **the soul** from **the body**, since persecutors and murderers were powerless to **damage the soul**. On the other hand, God could certainly touch the psyche, bringing both it and the (resurrected) body into judgment and condemn the whole man! (Cf. Jn. 5:24-29; Rev. 20:11-15; Ac. 24:15) Out of this information arise several important conclusions:

1. Man is not merely an animal, although his mammalian body certainly shares many characteristics with animals. The destiny of his psyche is not enmeshed with that of his body. (It is the other way around, Ro. 8:23) Therefore his morality must not be that of an animal morality devolving into "civilized bestiality." His psyche certainly lives in the body and is definitely influenced to a certain extent by it. (See I Pet. 2:11; 4:1-6; Gal. 5:17, 24; Ro. 6:1-8:39) But Jesus' demand (and the Apostolic theology of the NT backs Him up) is that man's psyche is that part of man which makes the decisions, hence is responsible to God. (Cf. Mt. 10:39; 16:24-27; Lk. 12:20; Rev. 6:9; 20:4; 2 Co. 5:10; Ro. 13:11-14)
2. Man's soul, contrary to the views of many, has real existence beyond the grave, and after the resurrection of the just and unjust (Jn. 5:28, 29) must stand whole, body and soul reunited, before his Maker to give account. And in this state God will destroy those fearful recreants who denied Jesus.

It is fruitless to speculate whether God intends to annihilate the wicked after their judgment ("destroy the soul and body in gehenna,") since many clear texts and single Greek words (like *apòllumi*, *apoleia*, *olethros*) solve the problem by stating in unequivocal language what the fate of the wicked shall be after a few billion years more or less. However, we must remember that human language is a very limited tool for describing the exact nature of the fate of the wicked, since that is not an experience which is common enough to humans to require words to express it. Even the best of human language to express this is figurative, since we have not experiences of infinity (boundless space) or eternity (endless time) or hell (endless punishment). So, every word God has used to warn us of the latter is a word borrowed from the usual human vocabulary, invented to describe the experiences we do have. (See below on "Gehenna" and compare the same figurative use of language to describe heavenly realities, Rev. 21, 22.)

So what the Scriptures actually do produce is a *picture* of what the fate of the wicked will be *like*. Just as the reality of God's plans for the saved will

be better than any word-picture He has drawn of it, so the reality of God's punishment for the wicked can be worse than any terms He has used to describe it.

Even if annihilation were the actual meaning of the Bible language, this offers no hope in any way to the sinner who hopes to have his way in this life, dash through God's judgment on his way out past a short period of punishment for his misdeeds, after which he just fades out into a blissful non-existence. There is no hope even in what the human sinner thinks will be "non-existence," since God is able to punish him even in that state which human beings describe as "non-existence." How? Even if God had used the word "non-existence" or "annihilation," it does not follow that the sinner fully understands the objective reality God is describing by that term, any better than he understands "inextinguishable fire" or "undying worms." (Cf. Mt. 3:12; Mk. 6:48)

In an excellent article that presents the view held by this author, James Orr (*ISBE*, 2501-2504), after giving practically unassailable Scriptural evidence for the view that the finally unrepentant will be eternally punished, still remarks:

While dogmatisms like the above (i.e. universal salvation, annihilation and second probation, HEF), which seem opposed to Scripture, are to be avoided, it is equally necessary to guard against dogmatisms of an opposite kind, as if eternity must not, in the nature of the case, have its undisclosed mysteries of which we here in time can frame no conception. The difficulties connected with the ultimate destinies of mankind are truly enormous, and no serious thinker will minimize them. Scripture does not warrant it in negative, any more than in positive, dogmatisms; with its uniformly practical aim, it does not seek to satisfy an idle curiosity (cf. Lk. 13:23, 24). Its language is bold, popular, figurative, intense; the essential idea is to be held fast, but what is

said cannot be taken as a directory to all that is to transpire in the ages upon ages of an unending duration. God's methods of dealing with sin in the eternities may prove to be as much above our present thoughts as His dealings now are with men in grace. In His hands we must be content to leave it, only using such light as His immediate revelation yields.

For further notes on the punishment of the wicked, see below.

3. Another important conclusion that comes out of this revelation of the dual nature of man is the realization that Jesus is challenging to the very core His disciples' real acceptance of the existence of the spirit world. In the most emphatic way the Lord is demanding that they decide immediately whether they believe in His dual-sided world view with its immediate, tangible, physical world so near at hand, and its invisible, apparently distant world of the spirit. This contrast will become even sharper as well as more evident later (vv. 32, 33): "men (here on earth)" versus "my Father who is in heaven."

But rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Here again the Master puts the real faith of His people to the test by probing their grasp of this reality: "You stand, not before the judgment of human persecutors but before the bar of God!" (see on vv. 32, 33) He is sounding out the firmness of their real convictions about future, hence seemingly unreal, events. He does this, because He knows there is nothing so anchoring to the soul as a sound eschatology. **But rather fear him.** There is nothing basically wrong with being afraid, since God Himself created in us this drive to self-protection, of which fear is the emotional expression. The burning question is, then, not whether we should fear or not, but of WHOM should we be afraid, of dying men or of the living God? Bruce (*Training*, 114) reminds us that "the wisdom of the serpent lies in knowing what to fear."

That we may assume that **him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell** is God, and not Satan, is proved by the observation that, while "the tempter . . . is him who, when one is in danger, whispers, Save thyself at any sacrifice of principle or conscience," (Bruce, *Training*, 115), Satan is not the ultimate reality, not the final Judge with whom we have to do. It is true that his conniving results in getting men *destroyed in hell*, but he himself will

suffer the same fate at the hands of the living God against whom he has led the human rebellion. (Rev. 20:10-15) So it is God who executes the sentence mentioned here and thus must be feared. Plummer (*Luke*, 319) is right to observe that "we are not in Scripture told to fear Satan, but to resist him courageously (Jas. 4:7; 1 Pet. 5:9); . . . 'Fear God and resist the devil' is scriptural doctrine."

But is **fear** a proper motive for ethical conduct? Jesus thinks so and does not hesitate to produce it in any disciple who is tempted to be disloyal. With so much at stake as the faithful proclamation of the Gospel and the salvation of men, especially the soul of the Christian witness himself, Jesus must appeal to the strongest motivation possible. Lenski (*Matthew*, 410) writes:

By the fear of God (He would) drive out the fear of men. . . . This is not childlike fear, the motive of filial obedience, but the terrifying fear of God's holy burning wrath which would strike us if we yielded to the fear of men and denied His Word and His will, Ps. 90:11; Mt. 3:7. This is the fear which really belongs to the enemies of God and Christ, the fear from which they try to hide by their self-deception, which yet will at last overwhelm them. It is really not to touch the disciple's heart save as a last extremity when nothing else will keep him true.

This is not a slavish fear, based only on the conviction of God's sheer power to destroy, a conviction bare of any sense of His love or justice. It is rather a fear of God because He is right. Our deep sense of the sheer holiness of God will not only deepen our fear that God will punish us, but it strengthens our fear that we should grieve His love. Here is a paradox: He teaches us to fear, that we might be fearless! The explanation: the man who fears God has nothing else to fear. Yes, fear is a worthy motive for ethical conduct. Bruce (*Training*, 114) points out that "there are two kinds of deaths, one caused by the sword, the other by unfaithfulness to duty." In so saying, he puts his finger on the menace of "the second death." (Cf. Rev. 20:11-15) Barclay (*Matthew*, I, 400) carries the thought further:

There are things which are worse than death; and disloyalty is worse than death. If a man is guilty of disloyalty, if he buys security at the expense of dishonour, life is no longer tolerable. He cannot face men; he cannot face himself; and ultimately he cannot face God. There are times when comfort, safety, ease, life itself can cost too much.

The most cruel persecution is child's play compared with falling into the hands of the living God! (Heb. 10:26-39) While fear is not the highest motive for ethical conduct and granted that love and a sense of duty should be the driving force that keeps a Christian faithful under fire, Jesus meets His disciples where they might be at their weakest. He says, "If you must fear, fear God!" (For the other side of the question, see my article "The Reasonableness of the Redeemer's Rewards for Righteousness," *Matthew*, I, 198-201.)

Destroy both soul and body in hell. Hell here is not a literal translation of Jesus' word, but it is a good paraphrase of His meaning. Jesus said "*Gehenna*," and, in so doing, illustrated perfectly the state of our knowledge (or better: our ignorance) of the spirit-world just beyond this life, as well as illustrating what is meant by the word "revelation." As stated above, we do not have any absolutely correct or even adequate concept of "hell," so anything God (or Jesus here) wants to say about His punishment of the wicked, He must reduce to human concepts, language and thought-forms. That is, He wants us to understand something significant about it; otherwise, He could "tell it the way it is" and still leave us in the dark about its nature, because of our inability to understand such profound concepts. Jesus makes a passing reference to a place where God destroys people, "*in Gehenna*," (*en geénmē*). Though *Gehenna* is the Greek transliteration of the Aramaic form of the Hebrew *Gē-Hinnom*, "valley of Hinnom," referring to a ravine south of Jerusalem, its literal meaning has little to do with eternal divine wrath. But every time the word is used in the NT it designates the place of eternal punishment of the wicked. (See Mt. 5:22, 29, 30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15, 33; Mk. 9:43; 45, 47; Lk. 12:5; Jas. 3:6) How *Gehenna* came to mean *hell* is not so important at this point as the fact that it DOES mean it.

Two causes are offered to explain this use of the "valley of Hinnom" as the technical designation for the place of final punishment. This valley of Jerusalem has been the zone near Jerusalem where the abominable worship of Molech was perpetrated (cf. Lev. 18:21; 20:2-5; 2 Ch. 28:3; 33:6). Due to this practice, when these repulsive idolatries were abolished by King Josiah (2 Kg. 23:10), the zone was defiled. Later Jeremiah (7:32; 19:1-13), in reference to this defiled area, prophesied that all Jerusalem would be so defiled. Refuse of all kinds, even human carcasses, was cast into this area, making it the garbage dump of the city. Fires were kept

burning to consume the rubbish. Gesenius (*Lexicon*, 872) takes "Topheth" as signifying a "place of burning (the dead)," and even "place of graves," although he admits that many commonly derive the word from a "place to spit upon," i.e. abhorred. However, since this place appears to have borne this name among even idolaters themselves, he prefers "a place of burning." It is this meaning that causes Isaiah to use the word *Topheth* metonymically of the burning place for the King of Assyria. The idea of Gehenna, or valley of Hinnom in which the Topheth was located, as a type of Hell seems to be derived by making a symbolic name from the above passages and from the horrible practices that took place in this valley. The continual burning of the garbage there may have also rendered the name synonymous with extreme defilement. (See *ISBE*, 1183, 1371; Edersheim, *Life*, I, 550, 551; II, 280, 281) The passage from earthly and temporal defilement in a place notorious for human sin and suffering, to the place where the wicked would be finally and eternally punished, then, becomes a natural step.

The point is that Jesus, in attempting to reveal to us what we cannot otherwise know or even imagine about the garbage dump of the universe, makes use of a well-known word that conveys to the Jewish mind all the abhorrence, defilement, pain and suffering associated with *Gehenna*, the garbage dump of Jerusalem. But this offal heap will be like no other destruction we have ever known, since its character is also like a "lake of fire" (Rev. 20:14), "eternal fire" (Mt. 18:8); a "furnace of fire" (Mt. 13:42) and yet with all the light one usually associates with fire, the same place is called "outer darkness!" (Mt. 8:12), a place where men "gnash their teeth," even though they have been toothless for years. In order to form a clear idea about the revelation Jesus has given of the ultimate fate of the unrepentant, consult the following pertinent passages: Mt. 5:22, 29, 30; 10:28; 18:8, 9; Mk. 9:43, 45, 47, 48; Lk. 12:5; Mt. 23:15, 33; 8:12; 13:41, 42; 22:13; 25:41, 46; Jas. 3:6; Lk. 16:22-24, 28; Jude 12, 13; Rev. 14:9-11; 19:20; 20:10, 14, 15; 21:8; 2 Th. 1:6-9. Two excellent articles on the question are Foster's "The Teaching of Jesus Concerning Hell," (*The Final Week*, 102-119) and Orr's article "Punishment" in *ISBE*, 2501ff.

What a motive for endurance! Those who have put God in His rightful place in their scheme of things and fully understood what this must mean to them in the moment of trial before human tor-

mentors, have nothing more serious to fear than death from them. But those who have not settled this one fundamental question, or who have settled it wrongly, must necessarily find themselves prey to the usual human terrors and die a thousand times before their deaths. (Cf. Isa. 8:11-15; I Pet. 3:14; Heb. 13:6; Rev. 2:10)

3. THE CARE OF THE CREATOR (10:29-31)

Here is Jesus' next motive for steadfastness despite all that man can contrive. God is not merely the Judge before whom the disciples must stand: He is **your Father**, and, with this word that evokes all of the encouraging, comforting power of that relationship, the Lord excites all the unyielding incorruptible allegiance that family pride can demand. Here is the perfect mixture of a proper fear of the Lord nicely balanced with a confident love for the Father. Jesus is not satisfied to place before His people only the sterile fear of a critical Judge. Nor can He permit His children to conceive of Him as an indulgent "great Buddy in the skies," who has only endless love and requires nothing from those selfish monsters who would call themselves His people.

10:29 Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Jesus' use of *ouchi* instead of *mē*, indicates that He expected His listeners to agree that this was the going price on these seemingly insignificant birds, incidentally informing us that **sparrows** were an article of commerce. *ISBE* (2839) comments: "This is a reference to the common custom of the East of catching small birds, and selling them to be skinned, roasted and sold as tid-bits—a bird to a mouthful." **And not one of them shall fall on the ground**, whether caught in a trap (cf. Ps. 91:3; 124:7; Prov. 6:5) or killed, **without your Father's** "knowledge and consent" (*àneu toú patròs humón*, Arndt-Gingrich, 64). **Not one of them:** this is a bit more expressive than "none of them" taken in a collective sense, even though, ultimately, the general meaning is the same. This throws the emphasis upon the one bird: "Not even one of them," though many of them could be bought for little. The bird-seller in the market would cry "Two sparrows for one thin copper coin! Today five birds for the price of four, with one thrown into the bargain!" (Cf. Lk. 12:6) This means that even the odd sparrow, the one thrown in for good measure, is dear to God. Luke has "Not one of them is forgotten before God." Jesus could not have made it any plainer that each and every bird is individually present in God's mind when it dies. This will be driven home when He makes His application in verse 31.

Your Father is a far different concept from "the Creator of sparrows," as far different as the emotional impact that it makes. (See notes on 6:26, 32, Vol. I) While assuring us of God's omniscience, the Savior intimates that our Father not only knows such detailed information as the fall of sparrows, but feels and cares about us.

10:30 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Several commentators have insisted upon the difference between "counting" hairs and "numbering" them. Does the Greek word *arithméo* justify this distinction?

1. If so, then perhaps Morgan (*Matthew*, 110) is right in saying, Jesus said God *numbers* them. Counting is a human process. Numbering is more than counting. It is attaching a value to every one, almost labeling each; a far more wonderful thing than counting.

Or, as Lenski (*Matthew*, 412) has it:

Jesus says that each hair is not only counted as one but has its own number and is thus individually known and distinguished. So if any one hair is removed, God knows precisely which one it is.

2. However, Arndt-Gingrich (105) translate *arithméo* simply "count," which, in relation to the practical insignificance of human hairs in the universe, may merely affirm that Jesus' expression is but a proverbial expression, without intending to affirm that God spends His time operating a current file on the past, present and future vicissitudes of hairs! (Cf. I Sam. 14:45; 2 Sam. 14:11; Lk. 21:18; Ac. 27:34)

Thus, in these two parallel illustrations, Jesus advances His argument from God's interest and care about relatively minute things outside us, to God's care for minutiae connected with us. The smaller the object used as a basis of comparison, the less its value, the greater is the force of Jesus' argument: God knows what is happening to His children, and He knows how to care for them. This puts muscle into the demand the Lord had made earlier that the Apostles go out without what would seem to be absolutely necessary provisions. (10:9, 10)

10:31 Fear not therefore; ye are of more value than many sparrows. This deliberate understatement is similar to another: "If your Father notes the fall of the tiniest sparrow, do you suppose He could somehow miss a Boeing 747?" (Cf. Mt. 12:12)

Not only is man so much larger than a sparrow, and consequently would be more obvious visible to the gaze of God, but also man is of so much more consequence to God than any number of other creatures. But Jesus is not describing the importance of His Twelve Apostles alone, so much as He is pointing to the excelling importance of any disciple. (Cf. Lk. 12:6, 7)

Fear not therefore. This admonition connects this lovely picture of the love of God, with the horrible revelations of the uncertainties and the unknowns in the disciples' future, mentioned earlier. But this is just the point: God's concern for and care of His people is not just "pie in the sky by and by," but practical strengthening, comfort and provision in the present. **Fear**, then, is SIN and punishable in hell. The list of hell's inmates has "the cowardly, the timid, those without faith" at the top of the list! (Rev. 21:8) This is because **fear** presupposes that God is somehow paying no attention to our needs or else our plight could somehow escape His notice. **Fear** would even blame God for appearing not to care about us or feel our weakness or pain. **Fear** would hold that the mere mechanics of running the universe, a task suitable for an omnipotent and omniscient Being, could occupy the entire attention of Him who created man for His own fellowship! To this Jesus cries: "No! Your care, your needs, your struggles, your suffering—YOU are of more value to God than any combination of intricate or minute details involved in steering the stars or spotting sparrows!" What a motive for enduring faithfully whatever may come! Barclay (*Matthew*, I, 402) puts it so well:

God's love for men is seen not only in the omnipotence of creation and the great events of history; it is also seen in the day-to-day nourishment of the bodies of men. (Cf. Psal. 136, esp. v. 25) The courage of the King's messenger is founded on the conviction that, whatever happens, he cannot drive beyond the love and care of God. He knows that his times are forever in God's hands; that God will not leave him nor forsake him; that he is surrounded for ever by the care of God. And if this is so—of whom then shall we be afraid?

Is it possible to imagine, much less actually meet, the man who was in want, because he had trusted God too much and gave too much to Christ and His work? Even if that man loses every possession he ever owned and actually were wondering where his next meal were coming from, would he consider himself in want, so great is his love

for and dependence upon God? Jesus takes man's other responsibilities into consideration elsewhere (see notes on Mt. 6:19-34), so He is not encouraging indolence at all. Rather, the commands in this context require that the disciple work to the limit of his capacity as if everything depended upon his achievement, and God will provide his needs, since, ultimately, everything depends upon God.

FACT QUESTIONS

1. Explain the figures of speech involved in this section, showing to what Jesus referred by each figure: "sheep," "wolves," "serpents," "doves."
2. Name several occasions upon which the very things predicted in this passage actually took place in the life and ministry of the people regarding whom Jesus was here speaking. Show how they responded in splendid obedience to Jesus' instructions.
3. List the specific instructions Jesus gave whereby the disciples were psychologically prepared to avoid anxiety.
4. What does Jesus mean by the expression: "It is not you that speak but the Spirit of your Father that speaks in you"?
5. To the end of what must the disciples endure?
6. Explain why the disciples were to flee to another city when they were not received in one city.
7. List some of the various explanations offered for the phrase: "till the Son of man be come," and then give your reasons why you accept the interpretation you do.
8. Explain what Jesus meant by the reference to students and teachers, servants and lords. How does this reference advance His argument?
9. Define the word "Beelzebul" and explain its reference in this context.
10. Explain the reference to revealing what has been covered or hid. About what part of the disciples' ministry was Jesus talking? Was this a promise or a threat, an encouragement or a warning, or both?
11. How did people account for the miracles of Jesus? How did others account for the miraculous phenomenon seen among the Apostles at Pentecost?
12. What is Jesus' meaning in His argument about who has real power to destroy both soul and body?
13. To whom does Jesus refer when He describes someone who can destroy both body and soul in hell?

14. In this serious discussion involving the life and death questions touching the survival of His disciples, what is the point of the reference to the price of sparrows?
15. In what other connections had Jesus used His argument based on the value of sparrows and the exact count of hairs on one's head? What is the underlying connection in each case that makes this a pithy proverb expressing a great truth?
16. Does the expression "destroy both soul and body in hell" refer to total annihilation of the wicked or those who deny Christ, or is this merely a vivid expression describing eternal punishment? On what basis do you answer as you do?
17. Give a short summary of the biblical teaching on the subject of "hell." In so doing, explain the reference to "Gehenna."
18. State the declarations in this text that suggest or openly emphasize Jesus' divine authority.

Section 23

JESUS COMMISSIONS TWELVE APOSTLES TO EVANGELIZE GALILEE

IV. JESUS REQUIRES AND REWARDS LOYALTY OF HIS SERVANTS

TEXT: 10:32-39

A. THE SUPREME HONOR FOR LOYALTY (10:32)

32. Every one therefore who shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father who is in heaven.

B. THE SUPREME DISGRACE FOR DISLOYALTY OR COWARDICE (10:33)

33. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven.

C. THE INEVITABLE ENMITIES INVOLVED IN LOYALTY TO JESUS (10:34-36)

34. Think not that I came to send peace on the earth: I came not to

35. send peace, but a sword. For I came to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the
36. daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's foes *shall be* they of his own household.

D. THE SECRET OF SUCCESS THROUGH
SACRIFICE AND SURRENDER (10:37-39)

37. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.
38. And he that doth not take his cross and follow after me, is not
39. worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- a. This revelation of "blood, sweat and tears," of trial, suffering and death must have been very discouraging to Jesus' disciples as He sent them out. Yet Jesus considered this revelation absolutely necessary to the adequate accomplishment of their mission. Can you show several reasons why He would have predicted these painful pictures? This is surely no way to hold one's disciples, is it? Would this tactic win friends and influence people today? Why?
- b. In what way do you think Jesus had in mind that the disciples would be "confessing Him before men"? Under what sort of circumstances would they be doing this? Sometimes this passage is cited to indicate the necessity for a public declaration of one's willingness to follow Christ, a declaration which is made before the congregation of believers at the conclusion of a Sunday morning gathering for worship. Is this what Jesus had in mind? if so, how could such an application be justified? If not, why not? How does such an application fit the antithesis: "denying Him before men"?
- c. Have you ever denied Jesus before men since becoming His disciple? Be honest now. How, when, where and why did you do it? What encouragement do you find in this text that strengthens you against repeating that sin?
- d. Do you think it would have been better or worse for Jesus' disciples (you included) had Jesus not told this bitter truth about the consequences of being persecuted as His disciple? Why?

- e. Do you think that the Prince of Peace can be telling the truth when He denies that His purpose was to bring peace on earth? Did not the angels shout the news from heaven that Jesus' birth meant peace? How, then, can Jesus expect us to believe that His purpose for coming to earth was not to bring peace, but, rather, a sword? What kind of peace does Jesus reject and what kind of sword does He bring?
- f. Some think that Jesus did not intend to bring a sword to earth, that it was not His *purpose*, but only the *result* of His work. Do you agree? If so, on what basis? If not, why not?
- g. Do you think that it is right to go around splitting up families over religion? If so, then how do you understand the most basic of all commandments to "honor your father and mother" and similar commands regarding family care? If not, then how do you justify Jesus' avowed purpose to set members of the same family against each other?
- h. Do you think that Jesus knew from personal experience what He was here declaring, regarding "enemies in one's own home"? What makes you say this?
- i. Is there anyone really "worthy of" Jesus? Then, what does Jesus mean by declaring that anyone who does not make the necessary sacrifices is "not worthy of me"?

PARAPHRASE AND HARMONY

"So every one who stands up and acknowledges that he is my disciple, I will gladly own him as my own in front of the great Judge, my Father in heaven. But I will repudiate before God anyone who either is afraid to stand up for me in front of men or else publicly denies being my disciple.

"You must never suppose that my mission is to bring peace on earth at any price. In fact, that kind of peace is impossible. My mission is rather to separate the wicked from the truly righteous, but this is going to cause trouble. I will not have peace at the expense of truth! Allegiance to me is going to cause, for example, a man to be set against his own father or a daughter against her own mother! A young wife will go against her mother-in-law. A fellow will find enemies right under his own roof!

"No one who cares more for his father or his mother than he does for me deserves to belong to me! The same is true of the man who holds his son or daughter dearer to him than he does me: he does not deserve to belong to me! Likewise the man who refuses to be

crucified, because he is walking in my footsteps, is not fit to be called my disciple! If you hold your own life dear, I can guarantee you that you will lose it. But the man who will let himself be killed for MY sake, saves his life forever!

SUMMARY

You, my disciples, do not stand before the judgment seat of Herod or imperial Rome: you stand before the judgment throne of the living God! You must decide now how it will fare with you then: I will own or disown you as my disciples before God, on the basis of your allegiance or disloyalty here on earth. This choice is not a simple one, because it is going to rearrange all your present loyalties. You will have to decide whether your family is to come first, ahead of your loyalty to me. This choice may lead you to your death, but remember: the prudent are damned! He who is willing to give up everything he holds dear—even his own life—just to please me, will be able to secure the only life that is worth living! But decide, and decide now.

NOTES

A. THE SUPREME HONOR FOR LOYALTY (10:32)

10:32 Everyone therefore who shall confess me before men, is the broad, general introduction to this audacious declaration of Jesus' regal authority. This dictum has to do with disciples in general. Its universal character becomes immediately clear if we artificially insert the word "apostle," so as to make the sentence apply only to the Twelve. While the Apostles themselves certainly and rightly took this admonition personally, nevertheless, its very general character is not only very apparent, but is also in perfect harmony with the more comprehensive tone of this entire concluding section (Mt. 10:24-42; see on 10:24). **Therefore** neatly links this marvelous promise to the warnings, the gentle coaxing, the facing of unpleasant realities and the challenges Jesus has just put before His people in the earlier minutes of this sermon. This is the logical conclusion especially of the demand that the disciple be absolutely fearless. (Cf. 10:19, 26, 28, 31)

While it would seem most appropriate to consider the word *oun*, here translated *therefore*, in this inferential sense, i.e. drawing a conclusion in relation to statements made before, yet the suggestion of Dana and Mantey (*Manual Grammar*,

255, 256) that *oun* here has an emphatic or intensive use, is not without merit. Some suggestive translations they would substitute for *therefore* are: "be sure that . . . , to be sure, surely, by all means, indeed, etc." Try inserting these words in place of *therefore* to feel the emphasis thus produced. However, despite the good examples adduced by Mantey, it may yet be wondered in Matthew's sentence here whether Jesus is not rather drawing a proper conclusion to all the precedes. If, then, *oun* may well have this special emphatic force, all the better for its ambiguity, since the sentiment expressed by Jesus in this sentence is easily inferential as well as emphatic.

The Master had already intimated that the disciples must fear only "Him who can destroy both soul and body in hell." (10:28) Here He makes this point explicit by stating it in two parallel phrases that leave little room for doubt. How well He knew the propensity of man to save his neck at all cost! Simply, almost quietly, he puts compelling authority into His speech. This is a precious promise, but its logical converse is necessarily a threat to the fearful and unbelieving, stating clearly whom we are to fear. It is Jesus who holds our fate in His hands.

Every one who shall confess me (*homologēsei en emoi*)

This seemingly unusual expression which uses the preposition *en* after the verb is not to be translated literally "confess in my case . . . I will confess in his case before the Father" (see Plummer, *Luke*, 320; Morgan, *Matthew*, 110), but is to be taken as an Aramaism because of the normal use of the preposition *be* after *'odi* in that language. (Arndt-Gingrich, 571, Lenski, *Matthew*, 412). The confession involved here is an agreeing with something affirmed, and admission of one's own position, a declaration more or less public of what one believes, an acknowledgement to being or believing something.

What or whom is the disciple to confess? His belonging to a particular sect of the Church? His adherence to a temporary formulation of the Gospel, a creed? His support of certain ecclesiastical organizations and programs? His understanding or interpretation of certain Scripture texts? According to Jesus, what is the critical issue, the only really burning question? **Whoever shall confess ME.** What a man thinks about Jesus is the only important issue over which he should have to stand trial and give account, because if he be mistaken about this one question, how can he be right, or even significantly near it, in relation to any other issue? There is so much clear evidence for a proper decision regarding Jesus, that to