

work was to cast out unclean spirits in the world and the divine authority was given to cast them out of the men who were possessed of demons. This power was needful that they might be able to demonstrate that they were the Lord's messengers.

8. *Commanded them.* There follows now the charge that he gave them. Matt. 10:5-42, gives this charge at much greater length. *Nothing for their journey.* Make no preparation, such as is ordinarily made on the eve of a journey; set out just as you are. God will provide for all your wants. The open hospitality of the East, so often used as the basis for dissemination of new thoughts, would be ample for their maintenance. *A staff only.* A walkingstick as used in journeys upon foot to support and ease the traveler. Matthew (10:10) gives "neither staves;" i.e., they were to take one only. *Scrip.* A "wallet" or "small bag" (compare 1 Sam. 17:40). It was so called, perhaps, because it was designed to hold scraps, trifling articles, scraped off, as it were, from something larger. It was part of the pilgrim's or traveler's equipage. *Money.* Literally, brass, or rather copper, said to be the first ore that was wrought. Copper having been early used for money, the word has sometimes that meaning.

9. *Be shod with sandals.* Such as they had on at the time, without waiting for shoes especially adapted for the journey. In Matthew, they are directed not to wear *shoes*; here, to be shod with sandals. The shoe of the ancients resembled the modern shoe; the sandal was simply a sole of leather, felt, cloth, or wood, bound upon the feet by thongs. *Not put on two coats.* Literally, tunics. The tunic (Greek) was the inner garment, worn next the skin, usually with sleeves, and reaching to the knees. It answered rather to our shirt than to our coat. The entire outfit shows that they were plain men, to whom there was no extraordinary self-denial in the matter or the mode of their mission. They were going to their brethren (Matt. 10:5), and the best way was to throw themselves on their hospitality. They were accustomed to live in about this way.

10. *In what place soever ye enter into a house.* On their arrival at a city, they were to settle down in the first house to which they obtained access, which, however, was not to exclude prudence and well ascertained information (Matthew); and, once settled in a house, they were to keep to it, and try to make it the center of a divine work in that place. This injunction was meant to exclude fastidious and restless changes.

11. *Shake off the dust . . . testimony against them.* By this symbolical action they vividly shook themselves from all connection with such, and all responsibility for the guilt of rejecting them and their message. Such symbolical actions were common in ancient times, even among others than the Jews. *More tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah.* See Gen. 13:13; chaps. 18, 19. The cities that stood out in the history of the world, as

most conspicuous for their infamy, were yet less guilty (as sinning less against light and knowledge) than those who rejected the messengers of the King.

12. *They went out, and preached that men should repent.* This is one-half of the brief, unambitious narrative of the first apostolic tour of the apostles. Going out from the Lord's presence, or the place where he delivered these instructions, they proceeded to fulfill them, not at random or confusedly, but on a systematic method, going about or through the country and among the villages, or from town to town. *Men should repent.* The same message which had been already brought by John the Baptist and by Christ himself. The time had come for preaching the cross of Christ.

13. *They cast out many devils.* In this verse we have the other half of the evangelist's report of the first apostolic tour. *Anointed with oil.* To suppose that the oil was used medicinally, is contrary to the whole tenor of the narratives. It was "the vehicle of healing power committed to them" an external sign such as our Lord sometimes used to connect himself and the person cured. It was probably also a symbol of anointing by the Holy Spirit.—*Schaff.* The Jews were in the habit of anointing their faces and hair with oil every day when they went among their fellows. This was omitted when sick or fasting. The apostles anointed a sick man when about to heal him with a word and send him forth. It meant that the patient was able to go out among his fellow-men.

FACT QUESTIONS 6:1-13

286. How far from Capernaum to Nazareth?
287. What other incidents occur after the raising of the daughter of Jairus *before* he arrives at Nazareth? (Cf. Matt. 9:27-34)
288. What of the mother of Jesus—where was she living?—where were his sisters? Were they married?
289. Was Jesus keeping the law by worshipping in the synagogue?
290. How did those of Nazareth express their astonishment?
291. If Jesus did no mighty works in Nazareth which mighty works are meant in vs. 2?
292. What Jewish custom was observed in the fact that Jesus was a carpenter?
293. What is inferred in the expression "Son of Mary"?
294. Give the three opinions as to who were the four of vs. 3.
295. Why is a prophet without honor in his own country?—Please do not give a superficial answer—relate this to our blessed Lord and answer accordingly.
296. What were the two conditions upon which Jesus could perform His mighty works?
297. What are the two things that cause our Lord to marvel?

298. What was the reason for the mission of the twelve? Cf. Matt. 9:36-38.
299. What was the purpose of the mission?
300. Read Matt. 10:10 and Mark 6:8 and explain the apparent contradiction.
301. What was a "scrip"? What kind of "money"? Why "sandals"? What is meant by "two coats"?
302. In what way did Jesus prevent fastidiousness and restless change?
303. Why shake the dust from their feet?
304. Please explain the purpose in anointing with oil.

6. THE DEATH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST 6:14-29

TEXT 6:14-29

"And king Herod heard thereof; for his name had become known; and he said, John the Baptist is risen from the dead, and therefore do these powers work in him. But others said, It is Elijah. And others said, It is a prophet, even as one of the prophets. But Herod, when he heard thereof, said, John, whom I beheaded, he is risen. For Herod himself had sent forth and laid hold upon John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife: for he had married her. For John said unto Herod, It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife. And Herodias set herself against him, and desired to kill him; and she could not; for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous man and a holy, and kept him safe. And when he heard him, he was much perplexed; and he heard him gladly. And when a convenient day was come, that Herod on his birthday made a supper to his lords, and the high captains, and the chief men of Galilee; and when the daughter of Herodias herself came in and danced, she pleased Herod and them that sat at meat with him; and the king said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give it thee. And he sware unto her, Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give it thee, unto the half of my kingdom. And she went out, and said unto her mother, What shall I ask? And she said, The head of John the Baptist. And she came in straightway with haste unto the king, and asked, saying, I will that thou forthwith give me in a charger the head of John the Baptist. And the king was exceeding sorry; but for the sake of his oaths, and of them that sat at meat, he would not reject her. And straightway the king sent forth a soldier of his guard, and commanded to bring his head: and he went and beheaded him in the prison, and brought his head in a charger, and gave it to the damsel; and the damsel gave it to her mother. And when his disciples heard thereof, they came and took up his corpse, and laid it in a tomb."

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 6:14-29

273. Just who was this Herod? i.e. who was his father?—brother?—wife? etc.
274. Why did Herod associate the words of Jesus with John the Baptist?
275. Was Jesus like Elijah or one of the Old Testament prophets? In what way?
276. Why did Herod want to see Jesus?
277. Who was Herod Philip? Who was Herodias?
278. If Herod's sin was so plainly and publicly condemned by John why did Herod want to see him and hear him?
279. Was the fear of the popularity of John a factor in Herod's respect for John? Cf. Matt. 14:5.
280. Who attended the birthday banquet?
281. Why make such a rash offer?—was the dance professional?
282. Was Herodias behind the dance and its purpose? Why?
283. Why the urgency in the request for the head of John?
284. Who beheaded John?
285. Where did this incident take place?
286. What do you imagine Salome and Herodias did with the head after it was brought to them?

COMMENT

TIME—Winter of A.D. 29.

PLACES—At Herod's Palace and capital, *Tiberias* on the Lake of Galilee—or at *Machaerus* the palace-fortress east of the Dead Sea.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS—Matt. 14:1-12.

OUTLINE—1. The fear of Herod and of others, vs. 14-16. 2. The imprisonment and its reason, vs. 17-18. 3. The hatred of Herodias, vs. 19-20. 4. The dance and the death, vs. 21-29.

ANALYSIS

- I. THE FEAR OF HEROD AND OF OTHERS, 14-16.
 1. Fear based on what he heard of the miracles of Jesus.
 2. His conscience said, "this is John risen from the dead."
 3. Others said—"this is Elijah, or a prophet like the prophets of our fathers."
- II. THE IMPRISONMENT AND ITS REASON, 17-18.
 1. John in prison because of the hatred of Herodias.
 2. John had rebuked Herod for his marriage to his brother's wife.
- III. THE HATRED OF HERODIAS, 19-20.
 1. A continual desire to kill in the heart of Herodias.
 2. Prevented by the respect of her husband for John.
- IV. THE DANCE AND THE DEATH, 21-29.
 1. The time of the dance—a birthday supper.

2. The reward of the dance—promised by an oath.
3. The mother of death.
4. A sad departure.
5. The trophy of lust and hate.

EXPLANATORY NOTES 6:14-29

"14. King Herod: "King" by courtesy only, since Herod was but a Tetrarch, that is, a governor of the fourth part of a kingdom or province. Jesus warned His disciples to beware of Herod, saying: "*Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the leaven of Herod*" (8:15).

heard: of the fame of Jesus, which the Apostles by their miracles and preaching had helped to spread.

John the Baptist is risen again from the dead. He must have suffered martyrdom during or after the Apostles' first mission, and before the fourth Passover after our Lord's baptism.

is risen again. Evidently Herod was no Sadducee, who said *there is no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit* (Acts 23:8), or his guilty conscience and superstitious fears had obscured his religious belief.

mighty works: miracles. John the Baptist had worked no miracles during his lifetime. *And many resorted to him, and they said: John indeed did no sign* (John 10:41). Herod seems to have imagined that John the Baptist having risen would necessarily do *mighty works*.

14, 15. In these verses three opinions are given concerning our Lord. He is John the Baptist risen from the dead, or Elijah or another prophet.

It is Elijah. According to the prophecy, *Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord* (Mal. 4:5). Elijah had not died, but had been taken up to heaven while conversing with Elisha. *And as they went on, walking and talking together, behold a fiery chariot, and fiery horses parted them both asunder: and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven* (2 Kings 2:11). There was therefore an expectation among the Jews that Elijah should return to earth as the forerunner of the Messiah. Moses had said, a Prophet should be raised up by God (Deut. 18:15), but this refers to Christ Himself.

16. *John whom I beheaded*. Herod fears to meet his victim again.

17. *Herod . . . had apprehended John*; etc. Mark here refers to a preceding event. Herod had had John the Baptist bound and then imprisoned him, probably in Machaerus (*the Black Fortress*), which Herod the Great had built, and which was situated east of the Dead Sea.

This castle had been in the possession of Aretas, father-in-law to Herod Antipas, and Emir of Arabia Petraea. Probably Herod had seized this castle when his lawful wife, hearing of his approaching marriage with

Herodias, had fled to her father at Petra. Machaerus was both a palace and a prison. At this period Herod was probably living there with an armed retinue, on account of the war with Aretas in which he was engaged. Herod lost the day, and the Jews considered this defeat a punishment for the beheading of John the Baptist.

for the sake of Herodias. Herod's sister-in-law and niece.

he had married her. This was unlawful for four reasons:

- (1) Herodias' first husband, Herod Philip I. (not the Tetrarch) was still living.
- (2) The daughter of Aretas, Herod's wife was also alive.
- (3) Herodias was niece to Herod, being the daughter of Aristobulus, his eldest half-brother.
- (4) Herod Antipas was a convert to Judaism, and hence bound to observe the Jewish law. This distinctly forbade marriage with a deceased brother's wife (Lev. 20:21) unless that brother died without issue which was not the case, since Salome was the child of Herodias and Herod Philip I.

18. *to have*,—i.e. to marry.

it is not lawful for thee, etc. John boldly rebuked vice even in the great. As our Lord said, when speaking of him, John was no *reed shaken with the wind*; he was a prophet and *more than a prophet*, and spoke with a prophet's fearlessness. Luke tells us that John also reproved all the evils which Herod had done (Luke 3:19).

19. *Herodias laid snares.* Naturally his boldness in rebuking Herod would arouse her anger and resentment, which was all the keener because she perceived that John had a great influence of Herod, *who feared John*.

20. kept him. Preserved him from Herodias' vengeance, at least for a time.

when he heard him, did many things. Herod was awed by John's virtue. He feared and esteemed him, and did many things to please the Precursor, but not the one thing against which John's rebukes were chiefly directed. Herod would not put away Herodias.

heard him willingly. Herod had his better moments, but he had not the courage to conquer his vices and to amend. It was easier to listen than to yield, and the many things evidently did not cost him so much as the one necessary sacrifice would have done. They were matters of less moment than his sinful marriage. *In like manner, Felix coming with Drusilla* (a daughter of Herodias), *his wife who was a Jew, sent for Paul, and heard of him the faith that is in Christ Jesus* (Acts 24:24).

21. *a convenient day*,—i.e. for the vengeance of Herodias, that she might win by stratagem, where she had failed by direct petition.

made a supper. Probably at the castle of Machaerus.

for his birthday. Herod, like the Roman emperors, made a great banquet on his birthday. The Jews disliked the observance of birthdays, as being connected with idolatry and favouring it, since at these banquets libations and sacrifices were frequently offered to the gods.

princes. High civil or military officials.

tribunes. Doubtless here military tribunes are referred to, of whom there were four or six in each legion. Ten Roman *civil* tribunes were chosen by the people to protect them from the oppression of the senate and nobles. These tribunes would hardly be living in Palestine.

chief men of Galilee. The local authorities, the great landowners.

22. *when the daughter . . . had danced.* Salome here dishonors herself and family by performing the part of a hired scenic dancer. Moreover these oriental dances were generally immodest. It was customary to give some such entertainment at the close of the banquet. Herod and his guests, from their couches, would have a full view of the performers.

Ask me what thou wilt. It would seem as though Salome hesitated as to what request to proffer, since Herod reiterates his offer, and enforces it with oaths, as the original expression indicates.

23. *though it be the half,* etc. Not to be taken literally, but meaning that Herod was willing to bestow great gifts on her. It was a boastful assertion made in presence of his flatterers; possibly he was not sober when he made it. Assuerus had promised Esther the half of his kingdom, but at least it was his to give (Esther 5:3).

24. *What shall I ask?* Herodias does not hesitate as to her reply; she had long since decided what she wished to obtain.

25. *Immediately with haste.* Herodias feared delay, lest she should ultimately meet with a refusal. When Herod was sober, he might again refuse to accede to the request of Salome.

26. *struck sad.* Mark's graphic expression for denoting Herod's consternation. The original Greek word indicates great sorrow and grief. Herod feared to keep his rash oath, yet had not the manliness to break it, by refusing to commit a crime. To keep a rash oath is a sin against the Second Commandment. Herod, by keeping his oath, broke the fifth Commandment also.

27. *an executioner,* literally a *spiculator* which signifies either (1) a scout, (2) a special adjutant, (3) a soldier of the guard. The spiculators formed a special division of the legion, and each emperor had a body of them to guard his person and execute his orders. They were often employed as instruments to execute the emperor's private vengeance. As Herod was at war with Aretas, these spiculators would be in attendance.

28. *the damsel gave it to her mother.*

The crime is now accomplished. Jerome says that Herodias glutted her vengeance by piercing the saint's tongue with needles (as Fulvia did to her enemy Cicero). Nicephorus states that Salome met with a terrible death as a punishment for her share in the sacrilegious crime. When crossing the ice it broke under her, and the fragments drifting together severed her head from her body.

29. *his disciples . . . took his body.* Jerome tells us they buried their master in Sebaste (Samaria). Herod allowed them to perform this act of respect. They buried the headless corpse only. Matthew adds that these disciples "*came and told Jesus.*" Possibly some of John's disciples now attached themselves to Christ, while others in outlying districts entered the Church later, through the ministry of the Apostles (see Acts 19:1-7). In this narrative four details are given by Mark alone:

- (1) Herodias was John the Baptist's enemy rather than Herod, who esteemed him.
- (2) Herod "kept him" for a time at least from her vengeance.
- (3) Salome consulted her mother regarding the request.
- (4) Herod sent a special executioner to behead John." (*Cecilia*)

FACT QUESTIONS 6:14-29

305. In what sense was the title "king" used for Herod?
306. Was Herod a Sadducee? Discuss.
307. Why associate mighty works with John when John did no mighty works?
308. Show how Mal. 4:5 related to the opinion of some.
309. In what place had Herod imprisoned John? Who was Aretas?
310. Give the four reasons it was unlawful for Herod to marry Herodias.
311. Show how the description of John given by our Lord fit him.
312. John's imprisonment was actually a protection—show how.
313. What respect did Herod show for John the Baptist?
314. Who attended the birthday banquet?
315. Why offer a reward for the dance?
316. Was the dance and the request prepared ahead of time?
317. Why was Herod so sad?—why carry out the rash vow?
318. What does Jerome add to the story?
319. What does Matthew add?
320. State the four details given by Mark not included in the other gospels.

7. THE FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND 6:30-44.

TEXT 6:30-44

"And the apostles gather themselves together unto Jesus; and they told him all things, whatsoever they had done, and whatsoever they had taught. And he saith unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert

place, and rest a while. For there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat. And they went away in the boat to a desert place apart. And the people saw them going, and many knew them, and they ran there together on foot from all the cities, and outwent them. And he came forth and saw a great multitude, and he had compassion on them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things. And when the day was now far spent, his disciples came unto him, and said, The place is desert, and the day is now far spent: send them away, that they may go into the country and villages round about, and buy themselves somewhat to eat. But he answered and said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they say unto him, Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat? And he saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? go and see. And when they knew they say, Five, and two fishes. And he commanded them that all should sit down by companies upon the green grass. And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties. And he took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake the loaves; and he gave to the disciples to set before them; and the two fishes divided he among them all. And they did all eat, and were filled. And they took up broken pieces, twelve basketfuls, and also of the fishes. And they that ate the loaves were five thousand men."

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 6:30-44

287. Where had the apostles been? What had they been doing? Into how many villages and towns do you imagine they went?
288. What reaction would their success have on Herod?
289. There was more than one reason for suggesting they "go apart to a lonely place"—can you discover them?
290. Please attempt to locate the area into which Jesus and His apostles were going.
291. How did the crowds know where they were going?
292. Read John 6:4 and discover why there was such a large crowd.
293. Wasn't Jesus tired?—How is it He was not filled with irritation instead of compassion when He saw the crowd?
294. What two things did Jesus do for the crowds? Does this set some kind of example for medical and preaching work? Discuss.
295. Why ask how many loaves they had?
296. Why were they to sit in companies?
297. At what time of the year was it when this miracle was performed?
298. What particular type of miracle was here performed?
299. How much did the people eat?

COMMENT

TIME.—Spring of A.D. 29.

PLACES.—Capernaum, Bethsaida.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS—Matt. 14:13-21; Luke 9:12-17; John 6.

OUTLINE—1. The occasion for the miracle, 30-37. 2. The miracle, 38-44.

ANALYSIS

I. THE OCCASION FOR THE MIRACLE, VS. 30-37.

1. The return and report of the apostles, vs. 30.
2. The need for retirement, vs. 31.
3. The unsuccessful attempt to seek solitude, vs. 32-33.
4. The compassion and teaching of Jesus, vs. 34.
5. The concern of the disciples and the answer of Jesus, vs. 35-37.

II. THE MIRACLE, VS. 38-44.

1. Give what you have—five barley loaves and two fish, v. 38.
2. Sit in ranks of fifty and hundreds on the green grass, v. 39-40.
3. Blessing and multiplying the bread and fish He distributed to the apostles, v. 41.
4. They ate their fill, v. 42.
5. They gathered twelve baskets of fragments, v. 43.
6. There were 5,000 men who ate, v. 44.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

"30-44. THE APOSTLES HAVING RETURNED, JESUS CROSSES THE LAKE WITH THEM IN SEARCH OF REST, AND THERE FEEDS FIVE THOUSAND. Here, and here alone between the beginning of the Galilean ministry and the week of the Passion, we have four parallel reports. John comes into parallelism with the synoptists at this crossing of the lake, and continues parallel through the record of the return, when Jesus walks on the water, though here we lose our four-fold record by the silence of Luke. John contributes a valuable note of time in the remark that the passover was at hand. The death of the Baptist occurred, therefore, in the spring, and there remained just a year of the ministry of Jesus after the death of the forerunner.

30. The tidings of the death of John would seem to have reached Jesus while he was still alone; but about the same time his company was again gathered around him by the return of the apostles. Of the tone of the report they brought to him nothing is said—whether cheerful or sad—nor is there anywhere any glimpse of them in the work of this mission. *They reported what they had done*; Mark adds, *and what they had taught*. In their teaching he would certainly see defects, but his response to their report would be nothing else than cheering: he was training them, and he would not fail to encourage them.

31, 32. The invitation was addressed to the twelve alone. *Come ye*

yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while—i.e. a little while. *A while* is by no means an adequate translation of *oligon*, "a little." He did not expect long rest, but he did hope for a little.—The place was probably Capernaum. After the reunion of the company of Jesus the crowd had returned, and those who were *coming and going* gave them *no leisure so much as to eat*. The whole of verse 31 is peculiar to Mark, and both parts of it are intensely characteristic—the representation of our Lord's feeling and the graphic description of the circumstances.—For the invitation two motives appear, one in Mark and one in Matthew. From Mark we should attribute it to tender care of the apostles, weary from their work, and to his desire to be alone with them for a little. This is one of the touching illustrations of his thoughtfulness toward them. In Matthew it is when Jesus heard of the death of the Baptist that he withdrew privately to the desert place. Joined with the other motive was the desire to be in quiet, that he might have leisure for the thoughts that the death of John suggested. The death of such a man must have been a heavy blow to him, more especially since it was such a death. His personal love for John would make him now a mourner; and the event must also have awakened the thought of Matt. 17:12—"Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them"—and have brought the certainty of his own death freshly before him. It may also have led him to think of modifying his method thenceforth and giving himself more fully, as he did, to the training of his apostles. Thus the two motives were one in effect, driving him away from the shifting, intruding, exacting crowd to be alone with his own.—They went away, not *by ship*, but "in the boat"—the boat that they were wont to use. They must have gone in the early morning.

33. They succeeded in getting away, but not unobserved, Luke says they went to Bethsaida; John, that Jesus "went up into the mountain;" Matthew and Mark, merely that the place was *desert*.—i.e. uninhabited. The fact seems to be that they went to Bethsaida, which stood at the extreme north of the lake, where the Jordan enters it (see chap. 8:22), and thence proceeded a little to the south-east, to some convenient point in the hills that rise from the shore of the lake, where they might hope to be alone. It may be that at Bethsaida itself they did not touch at all, and that Luke's mention of it is meant only for a general designation of the locality. The distance from Capernaum to the vicinity of Bethsaida would not be more than six or eight miles, and could be traversed on foot about as quickly as by boat; if the boat was in no haste, more quickly. In the journey for rest there would be no haste, and the pursuing crowd arrived first. The people were *out of all cities*—i.e. from many towns in that region, especially from those that must be passed on the way. The crowd

grew in going. John speaks of Jesus already seated in the mountain, lifting up his eyes and seeing the crowd approaching, which may be a reminiscence of the fact that they came, not all at once, but kept streaming in. John also connects the mention of the coming throng with the fact that the passover was at hand. It may be that some part of the multitude was made up of pilgrims to Jerusalem, who turned aside to see the Prophet of Galilee.

34. *He came out.* From the boat. The disciples may have been impatient that the ever-present throng was even here; with the Master, however, it was not impatience, but compassion.—The activity of the day was rich and various. The motive, pity for the spiritual state of the multitude, which seems to have been often affecting him with a sad surprise. The shepherd-impulse was strong in his heart and the sight of sheep unshepherded always drew it forth. So *he began to teach them many things*, or, as in Luke, he "spoke to them of the kingdom of God," into which as a fold he would gather the unshepherded (Luke 15:4-6; 19:10; John 10:16). He also "healed their sick" (Matthew), or, as in Luke, "healed them that had need of healing." Such was the rest that he found, and such the opportunity for quiet meditation. He had had no leisure to eat; but, while he became a shepherd to the shepherdless, no doubt his heart was full of the sentiment of John 4:32-34: "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work."

35-44. In this paragraph the synoptists are quite closely parallel, save that Matthew condenses a little, as usual, and Mark adds his fresh touches of description. John diverges at the beginning in attributing the inquiry about the possibility of feeding the multitude, not to the amazed disciples when Jesus has proposed that they shall do it, but to Jesus himself, as a question intended to test the faith of Philip. If it were necessary, no doubt the two conversations could be woven in together and harmonized with a tolerable degree of plausibility; but it is more satisfactory to leave them as two independent reports of the same event. Perhaps the independence is worth more to us than an unquestionable harmony would be. (This is true, for the value of several narratives, instead of one, must be due to their independence. Yet harmony is compatible with independence. Nay, if several accounts of the same events are true, they must be in real harmony with one another, though we are sometimes unable to show this. The omission from the narratives of a single connecting act or remark may render it forever impossible for us to see the exact connections or point out the exact sequence of the things reported. But it is desirable to show the harmony of the different narratives wherever this can be done, or at least to show that the several accounts, though

independent, need not be supposed to contradict one another at any point. Compare notes on John 6:5).

The suggestion of the apostles (verses 35, 36) seemed not only rational, but the only rational one; the people must not be kept away from the necessary comforts, and the disciples thought that even for Jesus to keep them longer would be no kindness. A startling proposal, *Give ye them to eat*. The words are identical in Matthew, Mark and Luke, showing how sharply the incisive and startling command entered the minds of the hearers. Matthew introduces it with equally astonishing remark, "They need not depart." He proposed that which is impossible to men; but he himself was there. There had been as yet no multiplication of food by his hands, so far as we know, except as the turning of water into wine (John 2:1-11) might be called such. The belief of the apostles in his miraculous power ought by this time to have been perfect; but it is to be remembered that he did not propose himself to feed the multitude: he said, *Give ye them to eat*. After that proposal it was only natural that they should think first of their own resources, and inquire how the thing could be done. It was not altogether unbelief that made them speak of buying bread for the people; he had compelled them to look at the matter from that side. They knew that they had nothing adequate, and were equally sure that it was impracticable to buy.—*Two hundred penny-worth of bread*. The proposal to buy is omitted by Matthew, and the quantity by Luke. This quantity is mentioned in Mark without comment, and in John as insufficient. The denarius ("penny" is a very poor translation, or rather, not a translation at all) was equal actually to about fifteen cents, but relatively to considerably more. In Matt. 20:2 it appears as a suitable return for a day's labor.—In Mark alone are the disciples sent to find how many loaves they have. Their investigation and report are represented in the words *when they knew, they say*. Literally, "knowing, they say." One of Mark's telling brevities. The loaves were thin and brittle; from Luke 11:5, 6 it appears that three would be required for a meal for a single person. The fishes are called in John (not elsewhere) *opsaria*, a word that denotes a condiment, something eaten with bread or other staple food. Hence the idea of "small fishes;" but that idea cannot be insisted on, as the word had come to be used of fish generally. After the report of a hopeless quantity, Matthew adds the reply of Jesus: "Bring them hither to me"—the one hope of making the small supply sufficient. This is the one hopeful thing to do with Christian gifts and resources of every kind—offer them to him in whose hands a handful can feed a multitude.

The proposal thus to feed the people was another suggestion of the Shepherd's heart. Bodily wants were not beneath his notice, and yet this

act had predominantly a spiritual purpose. Brief though the record is, that had been a great day of power and teaching, and such a day might well close with a climax of convincing might. The people must sit down in order to secure orderly and impartial distribution. Heavenly things must be handled with earthly wisdom; bread produced by miracle must be distributed in the best human order. The description of the sitting down is peculiar to Mark, and is unlike anything else in the New Testament. *He commanded them to make all sit down by companies—symposia symposia, company by company"—upon the green grass. And they sat down prasiai prasiai—not exactly in ranks, but rather in blocks like garden-beds, some in blocks of a hundred and some by fifties. The repetition or doubling of the descriptive words is in the Hebrew style. The change of word from the general symposia, "company," to the purely descriptive prasiai, "garden-beds," shows how the scene arose pictorially in the memory of the narrator, and he again saw the people arranged in squares and looking, in their vari-colored clothing, like flower-beds on the grass.—The grass is mentioned by Matthew and John. John says that there was "much;" Mark alone calls it green grass—a part, again of the pictorial memory of the scene. The word corresponds, too, to the season, the passover-time, in spring.*

He looked up to heaven, and blessed. So Matthew and Mark—i.e. he blessed God, praised God in thanksgiving; Luke, "he blessed them," the loaves and fishes—invoked the blessing of God upon them; John, "he gave thanks." It was simply the grateful prayer before eating, "grace before meat," offered by the host or head of the family. (So Luke 24:30; see notes on Mark 14:22, 23.) Distribution was made by the hands of the disciples; so expressly in all but John. The separate mention of the giving out of the fishes is a slight link between Mark and John.—In Mark's addition to what Matthew and Luke tell, *and the two fishes divided he among them all*, we see distinctly recorded the deep sense of wonder, and yet the keen observation of an observer close at hand. This story, as told in Mark, can be nothing else than the report of an eye-witness; the evidences are of the plainest and most irresistible kind.—As to the process of the miracle, speculations seem to be in vain. Theories of the acceleration of natural processes have been proposed for such occasions, but they were useless, and when closely examined are absurd. If this work was performed at all, it was done by creative power; and that is enough to say of it. It was no insufficient or halfway work: they were all satisfied.—In John the command to gather the fragments is mentioned; in the others, only the gathering. The word for *baskets* here is not the same as in the record of the similar miracle in chap. 8:8. The word here is *cophinus*, the source of our words "coffer" and "coffin." This, ap-

parently, was the wicker provision-basket that was in common use. The collecting of the fragments shows again, like the order in the distribution of the food, the Saviour's purpose that miracles shall never displace prudence. Though divine power can produce a super-abundant supply, still it is right "that nothing be lost."—A fresh sign of the independence of the four narratives is found in the manner of recording the number of the multitude. That "there were about five thousand men" is mentioned by Luke in connection with the hint of the disciples that it was impossible to buy bread for so many; by John, in connection with their sitting down, when their number was ascertained; Mark says at the very end, just after mentioning the great store of fragments that was left, that *they that did eat of the loaves were about five thousand men* (about, however, is omitted in the best text); Matthew, at the same point, says that here were "about five thousand men, besides women and children." The women and children would be arranged, according to Jewish custom, separately from the men, and in such a multitude would be less in number. Thus there are three different ways of connecting the number with the story, all natural—a striking proof of independence.

The immediate effect of the great work is reported by John alone (6:14): "Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth the prophet that should come into the world." Conviction of his greatness, but conviction of what kind the next section shows." (*W. N. Clarke*).

FACT QUESTIONS 6:30-44

321. Here in vs. 30 is the first use of the term "apostles"—show how appropriate it is just here.
322. What was the possible multiple purpose in withdrawing to a lonely place? Cf. Matt. 14:13.
323. What prevented their eating?
324. Is there any reason to believe there was an excessively large crowd in the district?
325. Did Jesus and His apostles go to the city of Bethsaida? If not why mention it?
326. How far from Capernaum to Bethsaida?
327. Did Jesus have any time for rest or prayer? Was Jesus unhappy about this?
328. In what way is "the independence of two accounts worth more to us than an unquestionable harmony"?
329. Show how the words of Jesus "Give ye them to eat" entered the minds of the hearers.
330. Why mention the amount of "two hundred shillings worth"?

331. What is wonderfully encouraging about the words of Jesus "Bring them hither to me."
332. Show the difference in the use of the two words "symposia" and "prasiai."
333. Why bless the loaves and fish?
334. What are the evidences of an eyewitness in the description?
335. What particular type of miracle was this?
336. Show the striking proof of accurate independent report on the counting of the 5,000.
337. What kind of baskets were used?
338. What was the reaction of the miracle on the multitude?

8. JESUS WALKING ON THE WATER 6:45-52

TEXT 6:45-52

"And straightway he constrained his disciples to enter into the boat, and to go before him unto the other side to Bethsaida, while he himself sendeth the multitude away. And after he had taken leave of them, he departed into the mountain to pray. And when even was come, the boat was in the midst of the sea, and he alone on the land. And seeing them distressed in rowing, for the wind was contrary unto them, about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking on the sea; and he would have passed by them: but they, when they saw him walking on the sea, supposed that it was an apparition, and cried out: for they all saw him, and were troubled. But he straightway spake with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid. And he went up unto them into the boat; and the wind ceased: and they were sore amazed in themselves; for they understood not concerning the loaves, but their heart was hardened."

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 6:45-52

300. If they were at Bethsaida when they landed how is it they now came to Bethsaida as recorded in vs. 45?
301. Why the urgency of Jesus in asking His disciples to go over the sea to Bethsaida?
302. Was there some special burden on the heart of Jesus that He wanted to be alone with God in prayer? Cf. John 6:15.
303. Did Jesus know there was to be a storm at sea?
304. How could He see them in the sea if it was at night?
305. What is meant by "distressed in rowing."
306. Why say "and would have passed by them"? (vs. 48b.) What purpose was there in this?
307. Did the disciples believe in ghosts? Why their fear?
308. Show how appropriate were the words of Jesus to them.
309. When and why did the wind cease?

310. In what manner could it be said "their heart was hardened"? Vs. 52?

COMMENT

TIME—Spring of A.D. 29.

PLACE—The sea of Galilee—near Bethsaida.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS—Matt. 14:22-36; John 6:15-21.

OUTLINE—1. Jesus urged His disciples to get into the boat and go before Him to Bethsaida, vs. 45. 2. Prayer in the mountain, vs. 46. 3. The boat was in the midst of the sea—The disciples rowing for their life—Jesus came to them walking on the water, vs. 47, 48. 4. They saw Him and were afraid. He calms their fears and the sea, vs. 49-51. 5. They should have understood His powers—but they did not, vs. 52.

ANALYSIS

- I. JESUS URGED HIS DISCIPLES TO GET INTO THE BOAT AND GO BEFORE HIM TO BETHSAIDA, VS. 45.
 1. He remained alone.
 2. He sent the multitude away.
- II. PRAYER IN THE MOUNTAIN, VS. 46.
 1. Said farewell to disciples.
 2. Alone in prayer.
- III. THE DISCIPLES IN THE MIDST OF THE SEA ROWING FOR THEIR LIFE —JESUS CAME TO THEM WALKING ON THE WATER, VS. 47, 48.
 - 1. At night.
 2. Came to them three hours before daylight.
 3. Wanted to pass by—(so they could see him).
- IV. THEY SAW HIM AND WERE AFRAID—HE CALMS THEIR FEARS AND THE SEA, VS. 49-51.
 1. They cried out in fear because they thought He was a ghost.
 2. He comforts them with "Be not afraid it is I."
 3. When He stepped into the boat, the wind ceased—astonishment.
- V. THEY SHOULD HAVE UNDERSTOOD HIS POWER, BUT THEY DID NOT, VS. 52.
 1. The loaves and fishes should have taught them of His power.
 2. Their hearts were dull.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

"The effect of this miracle upon the minds of those present was very great. So mighty and wonderful an exhibition of power, reminding them, perhaps, of the feeding of their fathers in the wilderness by Moses, led them to say, "This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world." We can scarce doubt from the context that they meant the Messiah, for so great was their enthusiasm that they proposed among themselves to take Him by force and make Him king (John 6:14, 15). It is said by *Pressense*; "The multitudes are ravished, enthusiastic; now,

indeed, they believe that they have found the Messiah after their own heart." Thus, the effect of the miracle was to confirm them in their false Messianic hopes, for they interpreted it as a sign and pledge of the highest temporal prosperity under His rule, who could not only heal the sick of all their diseases, but feed five thousand men with five loaves of barley bread. Hence, He must immediately dismiss them. It appears from Matthew and Mark that He sent away the disciples first, perhaps that the excitement of the multitude might not seize upon them. That they were unwilling to leave Him, and that He was obliged to "constrain" them to depart, is not strange, if we remember that they knew no way by which He would rejoin them but by a long walk along the shore; and this in the solitude and darkness of the night, for it was evening when they left the place. (compare Matt. 14:15, 23, where both evenings, the early and late, are distinguished.) Aside from their reluctance to leave Him alone at such an hour, there may also have been fear upon their own part of crossing the lake in the night, remembering their great peril from which He had a little while before delivered them (Matt. 8:24) and perhaps also, seeing signs of an approaching storm.

After His disciples had departed, the Lord proceeded to dismiss the multitude, perhaps now more willing to leave Him that they saw His special attendants had gone. So soon as all had left Him, He went up into the mountain alone to pray—the second instance mentioned of a night so spent; the first being the night prior to the choice of Apostles (Luke 6:12, 13), and both marking important points in His life.

We assume that the place where the people were fed was the southern angle of the plain of Butaiha, where the mountains meet the lake. From this point the Apostles, to reach Capernaum, would pass near Bethsaida at the mouth of the Jordan; and as Jesus proceeding along the shore must necessarily pass through it, we find no difficulty in supposing that they directed their course toward it with the design of stopping there, and taking Him with them into the boat when He should arrive. This is plainly intimated by Mark 6:45, and is wholly consistent with John 6:17. This latter passage is thus translated by *Alford*. "They were making for the other side of the sea in the direction of Capernaum." He adds: "It would appear as if the disciples were lingering along shore, with the expectation of taking in Jesus; but night had fallen and He had not yet come to them, and the sea began to be stormy." "The great wind that blew" and the tossing waves made all their efforts to reach Bethsaida useless. Nor could they even make Capernaum. In spite of all their endeavors, they were driven out into the middle of the lake and southerly, down opposite the plain of Gennesaret.

Thomson (ii. 32), referring to this night voyage of the disciples,

says: "My experience in this region enables me to sympathize with the disciples in their long night's contest with the wind. I spent a night in that Wady Shukaiyif, some three miles up it, to the left of us. The sun had scarcely set, when the wind began to rush down toward the lake, and it continued all night long with constantly increasing violence, so that when we reached the shore next morning, the face of the lake was like a huge boiling caldron. The wind howled down every wady, from the northeast and east, with such fury that no efforts of rowers could have brought a boat to shore at any point along that coast. In a wind like that, the disciples must have been driven quite across to Gennesaret, as we know they were. We subsequently pitched our tents at the shore, and remained for three days and nights exposed to this tremendous wind. No wonder the disciples toiled and rowed hard all night, and how natural their amazement and terror at the sight of Jesus walking on the waves. The whole lake, as we had it, was lashed into fury; the waves repeatedly rolled up to our tent door, tumbling on the ropes with such violence as to carry away the tent pins." The width of the sea opposite the plain of Gennesaret is about six miles, and the disciples, who "had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs" when Jesus met them, were thus something more than half-the way over. As this was "about the fourth watch of the night" (Mark 6:48), or from 3-6 A.M., the disciples must have been struggling against the wind and waves some eight or ten hours.

The incident respecting Peter's attempt to walk on the water to meet Jesus is mentioned only by Matthew. That after he had been rescued they entered the ship, is expressly said: "And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased" (Matt. 14:32). In like manner Mark (6:51): "And He went up unto them into the ship; and the wind ceased." But with this John's narrative has been thought by some to be in contradiction (6:21): "Then they willingly received Him into the ship, and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went" (R.V., "They were willing therefore to receive Him into the boat"). It is said that the disciples willed or desired to take Him into the ship with them, but did not, because the ship immediately came to the shore. *Tholuck*, however, defends the translation of Beza, "they received Him with willingness," which is the same as our English version. "John mentions the will only, assuming that every reader would understand that the will was carried into effect" (M. and M.) Some deny that the ship came to the shore by miracle, but suppose that it came rapidly in comparison with the earlier part of the voyage, the wind having subsided and the sea become smooth. On the other hand, *Luthardt* and most rightly regard it as supernatural." (*Samuel J. Andrews*)

FACT QUESTIONS 6:45-52

339. What false hopes did the multitude obtain from the feeding of the five thousand?
340. How account for the reluctance of the disciples to leave Jesus?
341. Jesus spent a night in prayer once before—when?
342. Read Mark 6:45 and John 6:17 and harmonize them.
343. How does Thomson help us appreciate the plight of the disciples?
344. When Jesus came to them on the water how far and how long had they rowed?
345. Why was the incident of Peter's walking on the water omitted by Mark?
346. Harmonize the following accounts: Matt. 14:32; Mark 6:51; John 6:21.

9. HEALING ON THE PLAIN OF GENNESARET. 6:53-56

TEXT 6:53-56

"And when they had crossed over, they came to the land unto Gennesaret, and moored to the shore. And when they were come out of the boat, straightway the people knew him, and ran round about that whole region, and began to carry about on their beds those that were sick, where they heard he was. And wheresoever he entered, into villages, or into cities, or into the country, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and besought him that they might touch if it were but the border of his garment: and as many as touched him were made whole."

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 6:53-56

311. Who was with Jesus at this time? Could thirteen men all get into one small boat? Explain.
312. Please locate Gennesaret on the map—how large a district was this?
313. Does the expression "moored to the shore" suggest there was no town here?
314. How did the people know Jesus?
315. Are we to conclude from vs. 55 that many people followed Jesus carrying their sick from place to place? Explain.
316. Why lay the sick in the "market places"? i.e. why select such a place?
317. Wasn't it rather superstitious to desire to touch His garment? Why did Jesus permit it? Why was the touch effective?

COMMENT

TIME—Spring A.D. 29.

PLACE—The plain of Gennesaret and the adjacent villages and cities.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS—Matt. 14:34-36.

OUTLINE—1. The Landing at the plain of Gennesaret, vs. 53. 2. The gathering of many people, upon recognizing Him, to seek help, vs. 54, 55.

3. The superstitious desire of many people to heal the sick, vs. 56.

ANALYSIS 6:53-56

- I. THE LANDING AT THE PLAIN OF GENNESARET, VS. 53.
 1. Occurred just after the feeding of the five thousand.
 2. The boat was moored—or fastened to the shore.
- II. THE GATHERING OF MANY PEOPLE FOR HELP, VS. 54-55.
 1. This happened immediately after disembarking.
 2. Prompted by their knowledge of Him.
 3. The whole region turned out to bring their sick wherever they found Him.
- III. THE SUPERSTITIOUS DESIRE OF MANY TO HEAL THE SICK, VS. 56.
 1. Occured in villages or cities or in the country.
 2. Sick laid in marketplaces—that they might at least touch His garment.
 3. Those who did touch were healed.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

"53. *And when they had passed over, they came into the land of Gennesaret, and drew to the shore.*

And having crossed (the lake, from east to west) *they came to* (or upon) *the land of Gennesaret*, a small district four miles long and two or three wide, on the west side of the sea of Galilee, or lake of Tiberias, to which it gave one of its names. *Josephus* describes this district as the garden of the whole land and possessing a fertility and loveliness almost unparalleled. Capernaum appears to have been in or very near this delightful region, so that John (6:17) describes this same voyage as a voyage to Capernaum. *Drew to the shore*, or *came to anchor near it*, or retaining the passive form of the original, were brought to anchor (or to land.)

54. *And when they were come out of the ship, straightway they knew him.*

And they going out (or as they went out) *from the ship*, the men of that place (Matt. 14:35), *straightway knowing* (or immediately recognizing) *him*, whom they had often seen before, as they lived so near his home and the centre of his operation. It is an interesting thought, very often incidentally suggested in the gospels, that during the three years of our Saviour's public ministry, his person must have become perfectly familiar to the great mass of the population, at least in Galilee. This, with the certainty that he retains his human body, and is to appear in it hereafter upon earth as he already does in heaven, should preserve us from a tendency to look upon all sensible and bodily associations with the person of our Lord as superstitious and irreverent, an error into which some devout believers are betrayed by their aversion to the oppo-

site extreme of gross familiarity and levity in speaking of his glorified humanity.

55. *And ran through that whole region round about, and began to carry about in beds those that were sick, where they heard he was.*

Running about that whole surrounding country, they began, i.e. at once without delay, and afterwards continued, upon beds (or pallets,) to carry about those having (themselves) ill wherever they heard that he was (literally, is, the graphic present) *there.* The construction of the last clause is ambiguous, being understood by some as an example of the Hebrew idiom which combines the relative pronoun with the adverb *there*, to express our relative adverb *where*; but this would require a pronoun in the first place. Others refer the first of the two particles to the place where they heard of him, and the last to the place where he actually was. But most interpreters prefer the simpler and more obvious construction which refers both particles to one and the same object, 'of whatever place they heard that he was there.' *The running about and carrying about* may refer to the same act, or the former to the spreading of the news and the latter to the actual bringing of the sick. The meaning is not that each one was carried from place to place in search of him, but that some were carried one way, some another, so as to fall in with him in some part of his circuit.

56. *And whithersoever he entered, into villages, or cities, or country, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought him that they might touch if it were but the border of his garment; and as many as touched him were made whole.*

Country, literally, *fields*, as in v. 36 and in such English names as St. Giles's or St. Martin's in the Fields, i.e. outside of old London. *Streets*, or more exactly, *markets* or *marketplaces*, as in every other case where it occurs, but with greater latitude meaning than we now give to the English word. The Greek one according to its etymology and usage, means a place of meeting, especially for business, whether commercial or political, and therefore corresponding both to *forum* and *market*. The *agora* of ancient cities was an open place or square, sometimes immediately within the gates, but usually near the centre of the town. As denoting thoroughfares or public places, *streets* is therefore a substantially correct translation. *The sick*, or more exactly, *the infirm*, a synonymous express with the one in v. 5. If it were but, literally, even, only. This desire was only superstitious so far as it ascribed a magical effect to the mere touch, or regarded contact as essential to the healing power of the Saviour's word. It may have been his purpose to reach greater numbers in a given time without destroying all perceptible connection between the subject and the worker of the miracle. (Compare Acts 5:15; 19:12). This is not a mere

repetition of the statement in 1:32-34, but designed to show that throughout the course as well as at the opening of our Saviour's ministry, his miracles were many, those recorded in detail being only a few selected samples, and also that his constant practice was to heal all who needed and desired it." (*J. A. Alexander*)

FACT QUESTIONS 6:53-56

347. In which direction had the crossing been made? How large was the plain?
348. How can we explain the fact that John 6:17 describes this same voyage as going to Capernaum?
349. Why would the people of this district perhaps know Jesus better than some others?
350. What incidental lesson can we learn from the reference to the human appearance or recognition of Jesus?
351. There is no meaning in vs. 55 of "each one carried from place to place in search of Him"—what is the meaning?
352. What is the literal meaning of the word "country"?
353. Show the patience and love of Jesus in healing the sick.

10. CONFLICT WITH PHARISEES 7:1-23.

a. *Conflict over washings* 7:1-8

TEXT 7:1-8

"And there are gathered together unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which had come from Jerusalem, and had seen that some of his disciples ate their bread with defiled, that is, unwashen, hands. For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands diligently, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders: and when they come from the marketplace, except they wash themselves, they eat not: and many other things there be, which they have received to hold, washings of cups, and pots, and brasen vessels. And the Pharisees and the scribes ask him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat their bread with defiled hands? And he said unto them, Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written,

This people honoureth me with their lips,

But their heart is far from me.

But in vain do they worship me,

Teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men.

Ye leave the commandment of God, and hold fast the tradition of men."

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 7:1-8

318. Did these Pharisees and scribes make a special trip from Jerusalem just to criticize Jesus? Discuss.
319. What is meant by "unwashen," or "defiled" hands?

320. Are we to understand from vs. 3 that "all the Jews" observed the tradition of the elders?
321. Who were the elders? What is meant by tradition?
322. Why bathe after going to the marketplace?
323. Is the word baptize here used i.e. in vs. 4 the same as used in reference to baptizing people? If so how could it be applied to couches?
324. In what sense were the hands of the disciples "common"?
325. Wasn't it unkind for Jesus to call these men hypocrites?
326. In what sense had the Pharisees honored God with their lips?
327. Just what is "vain worship"?
328. Please show just how such persons left the command of God.
329. Is Jesus saying such persons prefer the precepts of men to the commandments of God? Why?

COMMENT 7:1-8

TIME—Summer A.D. 29.

PLACE—In or near Capernaum.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS—Matt. 15:1, 2; 7-9.

OUTLINE—1. Gathering for criticism, vs. 1, 2. 2. The ceremonial carefulness of the Pharisees, vs. 3, 4. 3. Criticism offered and answered, vs. 5-8.

ANALYSIS 7:1-8

- I. GATHERING FOR CRITICISM, VS. 1, 2.
 1. Composed of Pharisees and scribes from Jerusalem.
 2. They were there to criticize the lack of ceremonial washing.
- II. THE CEREMONIAL CAREFULNESS OF THE PHARISEES, VS. 3, 4.
 1. Never ate until they were ceremonially clean—i. e. according to tradition—no law of God required it.
 2. Never returned from the marketplace or used cups, pots, pans without ceremonial washings.
- III. CRITICISM OFFERED AND ANSWERED, VS. 5-8.
 1. Why do your disciples fail to keep the tradition of the elders?
 2. You are fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy of the hypocrites who speak one thing and do another.
 3. Your worship is vain.
 4. You neglect the command of God for the traditions of men.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

"1-4. The place is still Capernaum. *Which came from Jerusalem.* Literally, "having come." The scribes and Pharisees who are mentioned here are probably Galileans who had been at Jerusalem and had just returned thence. The definite article is wanting before the participle. Its presence would indicate that they were a delegation from the capital; but probably these were Galilaean religionists, who, returning from

Jerusalem, perhaps after consultation there, made it their first work to "come together to Jesus" and see what he was doing.—*They saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled*—literally, with common—*hands*. With hands in the ordinary state. Not "with dirty hands"—that was not the point of objection— but with hands *unwashed*, not ceremonially purified according to their ideas of necessity.—*Some of his disciples* were doing thus, not all of them—an indication that he had given them teaching that would render them indifferent to the practice of the Pharisees in this matter, but that only a part of them had yet been freed from their scruples on the subject. —Verses 3, 4 are parenthetical, and the best manuscripts insert an "and" at the beginning of verse 5, which disturbs the grammatical construction and makes a broken sentence. This led copyists to add *they found fault* in verse 2, to complete the structure; but the addition is cancelled by all the chief editors of the text.

The parenthetical passage (verses 3, 4) is wholly peculiar to Mark and is devoted to the explanation, for the benefit of Gentile readers, of the custom of the Pharisees, shared by the Jews in general, about ceremonial cleansings. *The Pharisees, and all the Jews*. A loose popular expression to show that this custom of the Pharisees was widely received; not to be pressed, as if it declared absolute unanimity. Many, of course, had no time for these practices, and the Pharisees despised all who neglected them for that reason or for any other, and thought there was scarcely a hope for them. (See John 7:49 for an utterance of this feeling.)—*Except they wash their hands oft*, or diligently, *pugme*. Literally, "with the fist." Probably descriptive of the washing of one hand by rubbing it with the other. The Sinaitic Manuscript alone has *pukna*, "frequently," which *Tischendorf* alone among editors adopts.—*And when they come from the market*, where in the crowd defilement might most easily be contracted.—*Except they wash, they eat not*. The word is *baptizo*, *ean me baptisontai*. So in Luke 11:38 the Pharisee wondered that Jesus had not first bathed himself (*ebaptisthe*) before dinner. It is not the baptizing of their hands, but of themselves, or, strictly, the being baptized or bathed, that was thus insisted upon. The word "baptize" is used precisely as in 2 Kings 5:14, where it is said of Naaman, "He dipped himself seven times in Jordan." From the strict literal signification, to "immerse" or "submerge," it comes naturally in certain connections to acquire the sense "to wash by immersing," "to cleanse," of course only in cases where the dipping is into clean water. So *Grimm*, *N. T. Lexicon*.) "Bathe" is an admissible translation in this connection, and any difficulties about giving the word its proper meaning here are purely imaginary. In verse 4 the word for "washings," in *washings of cups*, etc., is from the same root, *baptismous*, a derivative of *baptizo*. But it is not the word that is

used to denote the Christian rite, which is a neuter word, *baptisma*, while this is masculine, a form that is found only here and in Heb. 6:2; 9:10. Its signification is properly given by *Liddel* and *Scott* in their *Greek and English Lexicon*, "a dipping in water." It indicates sometimes, in certain connections, a thorough cleansing by water, which would naturally be made, in the case of the objects here mentioned, by dipping, according to the literal signification of the word. The *cups* (*poteria*) were drinking-cups.—As for the *pots*, the Greek word *xestai* is a corruption of the Latin *sextarius*, a pot that held about a pint. These were ordinarily wooden vessels.—The *brases*—or properly bronze—*vessels* were for similar purposes with the wooden. The law provided, at least in certain cases of defilement, that earthen vessels should be broken, and that wooden ones should be rinsed in water (Lev. 15:12).—The word translated *tables* (*klinon*) cannot possibly mean that; it is "beds" or "couches," and may refer to the platforms on which they reclined around the table, which must often be thoroughly washed for fear of defilement, or to the cushions, which would need washing quite as much, and very likely would be washed oftener. But the words *and of tables* are omitted by some good manuscripts, by *Tischendorf*, and by the revisers.

The greater part of these minute requirements lay outside of the Mosaic law. These things, Mark says, *they have received to hold*; and they do them *holding the tradition of the elders*, the interpretations and supplements of the law, brought down orally from the men of an earlier time. Tradition was the ecclesiastical version of the law—the law as it came out of the hands of the great teachers. It was regarded as equally authoritative with the written law itself, and, by some, more so. It was the very life and mission of the Pharisees to keep the traditional interpretations in full force. (See *Farrar, Life of Christ*, 2. 471.) Whoever reads such descriptions as are given by *Farrar* and *Geikie* of the ingenious wickedness with which this was attempted will not wonder at the denunciations of our Lord or be surprised that the Pharisees were his natural enemies. This was a part of the bondage from which he came to set men free.

5-7. Of course they must call him to account, and not the disciples—the rabbi, not the pupils. He and they were reprovéd oftener for neglecting the traditions than for departing from the genuine law. His quotation in reply is almost verbally exact from Isa. 29:13 in the LXX., the sole variation—*teaching for doctrines the commandments of men*, instead of "teaching doctrines and commandments of men"—being identical in Matthew and Mark. Traditionalism has met him in its extreme form, and he does not miss his opportunity to scorch it with the fire of his wrath.—Perhaps the tone of indignation is even stronger in Matthew

than in Mark. *Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites*—i.e. concerning such hypocrites as you, in his own age or in any other. He condemned outward worship without heart, the profession of the lips with no inward devotion or obedience.—Isaiah was full of such denunciations (as chap. 1:11-20), and so were all the prophets. Often, as here, they declared that it was *in vain*; it was empty, fruitless work; it went for nothing. Besides the heartlessness, and as another reason for rejecting such worship, God condemns the foisting upon his religion of human traditions and commandments. His worship must be upon the basis of his own requirements, and no human arrangement may take its place beside what he has appointed. The introduction of human tradition was the point in which the passage from Isaiah was directly applicable to the Pharisees.

8. *For should be omitted at the beginning of this verse, and so should as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do,* at the end. So this strong statement stands alone: *laying aside* (or leaving) *the commandment of God, ye hold the traditions of men.* He charges them, not with addition, but with substitution. They have forsaken command for tradition, God for men. The elders are their chief authority, not Moses or Jehovah; they are not serving God. So, in spirit, Jer. 2:12, 13. The rebuke is there for idolatry; but in the sight of God the sin of the Pharisees was as heinous as that." (*W. N. Clarke*)

FACT QUESTIONS 7:1-8

354. What record does Luke give that is very much like this?
355. Who were these scribes and Pharisees?
356. Why conclude this was not an official delegation?
357. Did the disciples have dirty hands?
358. What has been said earlier about the lack of time for eating?
359. For whose benefit were verses 3 and 4 placed in the text?
360. Read John 7:49 and show how it relates.
361. What is the literal meaning of "wash their hands oft."?
362. Is there some connection with what Naaman the leper did (2 Kings 5:14) and what these Pharisees did? Explain.
363. How is the word "washing" or "baptismous" different than the word used for the action of Christian baptism?
364. Show how immersion is a perfectly natural thought in the "washings" here described.—particularly with "the tables" or "couches."
365. How did the bondage of tradition become a yoke too heavy to bear?
366. Why speak to Jesus and not to His disciples?
367. Do you imagine the Jews who heard the rebuke of Jesus believed it? Did it make them angry? Was it fair? Was it loving?

368. Jesus did not charge them with addition to the law of God but with what? Read Jer. 2:12, 13.

B. CONFLICT OVER PARENTAL CARE. 7:9-13

TEXT 7:9-13

"And he said unto them, Full well do ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your tradition. For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, He that speaketh evil of father or mother, let him die the death: but ye say, If a man shall say to his father or his mother, That wherewith thou mightest have been profited by me is Corban, that is to say, Given to God; ye no longer suffer him to do ought for his father or his mother; making void the word of God by your tradition, which ye have delivered; and many such like things ye do."

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 7:9-13

330. What is meant by the expression "full well" as in vs. 9?
331. Did these Jews accept the fact that they had rejected the commandment of God? Does this carry any warning for us today?
332. What were the two areas of respect for parents? i.e. what is involved in the word "honor"—and "speaking evil"?
333. Was there a death penalty for speaking evil of father or mother?
334. Explain in your own words the use of the expression "Corban."
335. What possible advantage was there in the use of Corban?
336. If any belief or practice today makes void or meaningless the word of God can we expect the same rebuke? Cite examples.

COMMENT

TIME—Summer A.D. 29.

PLACE—In or near Capernaum.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS—Matt. 15:3-6.

OUTLINE—1. Jesus' accusation:—"you reject the commandment of God, vs. 9. 2. The fourth commandment is a specific example, vs. 10-12. 3. The word of God is made void by your tradition, vs. 13.

ANALYSIS

- I. JESUS' ACCUSATION:—"YOU REJECT THE COMMANDMENT OF GOD, vs 9.
 1. In a fine, beautiful, admirable sense you reject the commandment of God.
 2. You prefer your tradition to the commandments of God.
- II. THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT IS A SPECIFIC EXAMPLE, VS. 10-12.
 1. Moses was very plain (Exodus 20:12; 21:17) about the honor to parents.
 2. You have set aside the law of God by your tradition—what belongs to the parents is supposedly given to the temple (or the priests).

3. Your mother and father can starve while you justify your selfishness and disobedience by tradition.

III. THE WORD OF GOD IS MADE VOID BY YOUR TRADITION. VS. 13.

1. The authority of God's word is set aside by your tradition.
2. There are many other examples that could be cited.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. JESUS' ACCUSATION:—"YOU REJECT THE COMMANDMENT OF GOD."

"9. *And he said unto them* probably indicates a break in the discourse; caused, perhaps, by indignant interruptions, or by a call for particulars to illustrate so broad and fearful a charge. So their ancestors asked, "Wherein have we despised thy name?" (Mal. 1:6, 3:8, 13).—Whether called for or not, he was ready with particulars to illustrate the substitution of tradition for command. *Full well*—i. e. finely, beautifully, admirably—*ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition*. The adverb is the same as in verse 6: "Well hath Isaiah prophesied of you." The repetition is intentional, and the word this time is scathingly ironical: "Admirably do you fulfill the word that Isaiah so admirably spoke concerning you." The holy indignation is thoroughly aroused, and he cares not how heavily he lays on the lash." (*W. N. Clarke*)

II. THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT IS A SPECIFIC EXAMPLE.

"10-12. Yet his first illustration is not the one that called out the question. Instead of beginning with the traditions respecting defilements by contact and the necessary cleansings, he goes at once to the Decalogue, and convicts them of setting aside the fundamental law of God to Israel. *Moses said, Honor thy father and thy mother*. An exact quotation from the LXX. of Ex. 20:12.—He adds a second extract, giving the same law as expounded and applied in the legislation of Moses. *Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death*. Emphatic way of saying, "Let him die." Ex. 21:17 quoted almost exactly from the LXX. Both passages are quoted from what *Moses said*, but both are adduced as *the commandment of God* (verse 9) and *the word of God* (verse 13). Thus, Jesus recognizes the Mosaic legislation as the law of his Father; and not merely the milder parts of it, but even the provision for the execution of the disobedient and insulting child. This he brings forward as a part of that law that he has come "not to destroy, but to fulfill"—i.e. to exhibit and establish in the fullness of its spiritual meaning. The principle of honor to parents he recognizes as of perpetual and universal force, and he intends to set up for universal obedience and reverence the truth that was honored by the Mosaic provision of death for the disobedient. Incidentally, his mode of citing the second passage is itself exegetical. Viewed in the light of the context, that passage must

mean that the spirit of the prohibition can be violated without a profane or blasphemous word, and that not to bless parents by such care as a child can give is to curse them, according to the true intent of this law. Such, then, is the "commandment of God" respecting parents: they must be treated with honor, and no one is at liberty to withhold from them what blessing he can give.—But now for the *tradition of men* respecting parents which the Pharisees are diligently keeping. Translate verses 11, 12, "But ye say, If a man say to his father or mother, Whatever thou mightest receive in aid from me is Corban, that is, a gift (to God), ye no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother." *Corban* is a Hebrew word meaning *gift*, but appropriated to use with reference to sacred gifts, acts of devotion to the service of God. The simple uttering of the word *Corban*—"Sacred gift"—over a thing that was supposed to set that thing apart from all ordinary uses and give it the character of a consecrated thing. (See *Ewald, Antiquities of Israel*, p. 81.) Now, Jesus affirms that they apply this mode of consecration to the unholy purpose of escaping duty to parents. If a man utters the magical word "Corban" over his relation to his parents, and so declares that it is devoted to God, he is no longer held under obligation to them. The "Corban" carries no real consecration to God in such a case; it gives no new character to the man's life: it is only a fictitious arrangement for releasing him from a duty that has become irksome. Thus the tradition of men enables them to annul or virtually repeal the commandment of God. The liberty which the tradition gives them is more agreeable to their selfish hearts than the duty to which the commandment binds them; and so they set aside the commandment, in order that they may keep the tradition. To accept such a tradition was to dethrone Jehovah. (See Prov. 28:24.) One is reminded here of Luther's sore conflict as to whether the monastic vow which was urged upon him was consistent with his duty to his aged father, and of innumerable similar cases in the long history of monasticism. True consecration is not the escaping from obligations, but the reacceptance of all genuine duty from the hands of God. Consecration to God never releases from duty to man. He who consents to an obligation to God thereby consents to all obligations that God has placed upon him. To suppose the contrary, as these men did, is to trifle with all obligation."

III. THE WORD OF GOD IS MADE VOID BY YOUR TRADITION.

"13. *Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition.* The word translated *making of none effect* (*akourountes*) is found in the New Testament only in this discourse and at Gal. 3:17: it means "to deprive of authority or lordship," and so, of a law, "to annul." It implies more than neglect: it tells of actual nullification.—*And many such like*

things do ye, which is not genuine in verse 8, is genuine here, and may possibly be the reporter's summary of a further discourse, in which other abuses of a similar kind were treated as sharply as the intrusion of "Corban" to the family. The subsequent discourse seems to imply that something had been said at this very time of the distinction between clean and unclean food. There were abuses enough within reach to justify a long and terrible discourse." (*W. N. Clarke*)

FACT QUESTIONS 7:9-13

369. Do you imagine someone called for specific examples for the general principle laid down in the "fearful charge."?
370. Is Jesus being ironic or sarcastic in the way in which He speaks of Isaiah's prophecy and its fulfillment? Discuss.
371. Jesus does not deal with traditions respecting defilement first—why?
372. Did Jesus recognize the law of Moses as the law of God? Specify.
373. Did Jesus quote from the Greek translation of the Hebrew scriptures? i.e. from the Septuagint?
374. Jesus gives an exegesis of Ex. 21:7 in the manner of citing the passage—what is it?
375. Explain in your own words the tradition invented by the Pharisees called "Corban."
376. What was the problem Luther had with the monastic vow?
377. Can you cite an example in your own experience?
378. What does the expression—"making the word of God of none effect" mean? Cf. Gal. 3:17.
379. Can we make the word of God of none effect by our busy schedule of living?

C. CONFLICT OVER THE SOURCE OF DEFILEMENT. 7:14-23

TEXT 7:14-23

"And he called to him the multitude again, and said unto them, Hear me all of you, and understand: there is nothing from without the man, that going into him can defile him: but the things which proceed out of the man are those that defile the man. And when he was entered into the house from the multitude, his disciples asked of him the parable. And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Perceive ye not, that whatsoever from without goeth into the man, it cannot defile him; because it goeth not into his heart, but into his belly, and goeth out into the draught? This he said, making all meats clean. And he said, That which proceedeth out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, evil thoughts proceed, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, covetings, wickednesses, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, railing, pride, foolishness: all these evil things proceed from within and defile the man."

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 7:14-23

337. Why now address His words to the multitude?
338. Is Jesus using the same meaning for "defilement" in vs. 15 as used by the Pharisees in vs. 5? Explain.
339. Just what is included in the word "nothing" as in reference to that which goeth into a man? Surely some things would be excluded such as poisons of various kinds—how are we to understand this?
340. There is a change in the figure from food to thought—from physical to mental—why?
341. Give your own understanding of vs. 16.
342. Did Jesus expect the multitude to understand His words?
343. What did the disciples mean by referring to His words as "a parable"?
344. Was Jesus abrogating the law of clean and unclean meats by what He said in verse 18 and 19? Discuss.
345. In what sense is the word "defile" used by Jesus?
346. Define in your own words the twelve things that defile men.

COMMENT

TIME—Summer A.D. 29.

PLACE—In or near Capernaum.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS—Matt. 15:10-20.

OUTLINE—1. His message to the multitude, vs. 14-16. 2. His message to His disciples, vs. 17-23.

ANALYSIS

- I. HIS MESSAGE TO THE MULTITUDE, vs. 14-16.
 1. The multitude called together.
 2. Nothing going into man defiles—only that which cometh out.
 3. Those who will can understand.
- II. HIS MESSAGE TO HIS DISCIPLES, vs. 17-23.
 1. Message request by disciples.
 2. They should have understood His message to the multitude.
 3. Man cannot be morally or spiritually defiled by food because it goes to the belly not the heart—what is left is removed by the body.
 4. This He said to indicate all meats are clean.
 5. What proceeds from the evil heart out of the mouth defiles man.—such as: fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, etc.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. HIS MESSAGE TO THE MULTITUDE. v. 14-16

"When Jesus had exposed the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, He took a bold and significant step. Calling the multitude to Him, He publicly announced that no diet can really pollute the soul; only its own actions and

desires can do that: not that which entereth into the man can defile him, but the things which proceed out of the man.

He does not as yet proclaim the abolition of the law, but He surely declares that it is only temporary, because it is conventional, not rooted in the eternal distinctions between right and wrong, but artificial. And He shows that its time is short indeed, by charging the multitude to understand how limited is its reach, how poor are its effects.

Such teaching, addressed with marked emphasis to the public, the masses, whom the Pharisees despised as ignorant of the law, and cursed, was a defiance indeed. And the natural consequence was an opposition so fierce that He was driven to betake Himself, for the only time, and like Elijah in his extremity, to a Gentile land. And yet there was abundant evidence in the Old Testament itself that the precepts of the law were not the life of souls. David ate the shewbread. The priests profaned the sabbath. Isaiah spiritualized fasting. Zechariah foretold the consecration of the Philistines. Whenever the spiritual energies of the ancient saints received a fresh access, they were seen to strive against and shake off some of the trammels of a literal and servile legalism. The doctrine of Jesus explained and justified what already was felt by the foremost spirits in Israel."

II. HIS MESSAGE TO HIS DISCIPLES, 15, 17-23

When they were alone, "the disciples asked of Him the parable," that is, in other words, the saying which they felt to be deeper than they understood, and full of far-reaching issues. But Jesus rebuked them for not understanding what uncleanness really meant. For Him, defilement was badness, a condition of the soul. And therefore meats could not defile a man, because they did not reach the heart, but only the bodily organs. In so doing, as Mark plainly adds, He made all meats clean, and thus pronounced the doom of Judaism, and the new dispensation of the Spirit. In truth, Paul did little more than expand this memorable saying. "Nothing that goeth into a man can defile him," here is the germ of all the decision about idol meats—"neither if 'one' eat is he the better, neither if he eat not is he the worse." "The things which proceed out of the man are those which defile the man," here is the germ of all the demonstration that love fulfills the law, and that our true need is to be renewed inwardly, so that we may bring forth fruit unto God.

But the true pollution of the man comes from within; and the life is stained because the heart is impure. For from within, out of the heart of men, evil thoughts proceed, like the uncharitable and bitter judgments of His accusers—and thence come also the sensual indulgences which men ascribe to the flesh, but which depraved imaginations excite, and love of God and their neighbour would restrain—and thence are the

sins of violence which men excuse by pleading sudden provocation, whereas the spark led to a conflagration only because the heart was a dry fuel—and thence, plainly enough, come deceit and railing, pride and folly.

It is a hard saying, but our conscience acknowledges the truth of it. We are not the toy of circumstances, but such as we have made ourselves; and our lives would have been pure if the stream had flowed from a pure fountain. However modern sentiment may rejoice in highly coloured pictures of the noble profligate and his pure minded and elegant victim; of the brigand or the border ruffian full of kindness, with a heart as gentle as his hands are red; and however true we may feel it to be that the worst heart may never have betrayed itself by the worst actions, but many that are first shall be last, it still continues to be the fact, and undeniable when we do not sophisticate our judgment, that "all these evil things proceed from within."

It is also true that they "further defile the man." The corruption which already existed in the heart is made worse by passing into action; shame and fear are weakened; the will is confirmed in evil; a gap is opened or widened between the man who commits a new sin, and the virtue on which he has turned his back. Few, alas! are ignorant of the defiling power of a bad action, or even of a sinful thought deliberately harboured, and the harbouring of which is really an action, a decision of the will.

We must remember that it leaves untouched the question, what restrictions may be necessary for men who have depraved and debased their own appetites, until innocent indulgence does reach the heart and pervert it. Hand and foot are innocent, but men there are who cannot enter into life otherwise than halt or maimed. Also it leaves untouched the question, as long as such men exist, how far may I be privileged to share and so to lighten the burden imposed on them by past transgressions? It is surely a noble sign of religious life in our day, that many thousands can say, as the Apostle said, of innocent joys, "Have we not a right? . . . Nevertheless we did not use this right, but we bear all things, that we may cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ."

Nevertheless the rule is absolute: "Whatsoever from without goeth into the man, it cannot defile him." And the Church of Christ is bound to maintain, uncompromised and absolute, the liberty of Christian souls.

Let us not fail to contrast such teaching as this of Jesus with that of our modern materialism.

"The value of meat and drink is perfectly transcendental," says one. "Man is what he eats," says another. But it is enough to make us tremble, to ask what will issue from such teaching if it ever grasps firmly the mind of a single generation. What will become of honesty, when the value of

what may be had by theft is transcendental? How shall armies be persuaded to suffer hardness, and populations to famish within beleaguered walls, when they learn that "man is what he eats," so that his very essence is visibly enfeebled, his personality starved out, as he grows pale and wasted underneath his country's flag? In vain shall such a question strive to keep alive the flame of generous self-devotion. Self-devotion seemed to their fathers to be the noblest attainment; to them it can be only a worn-out form of speech to say that the soul can overcome the flesh. For to them the man is the flesh; he is the resultant of his nourishment; what enters into the mouth makes his character, for it makes him all.

There is that within us all which knows better; which sets against the aphorism, "Man is what he eats;" the text "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he;" which will always spurn the doctrine of the brute, when it is boldly confronted with the doctrine of the Crucified." (*Expositor's Bible, G. A. Chadwick*)

FACT QUESTIONS 7:14-23

380. What was the bold step of Jesus?
381. Did Jesus proclaim the abolition of the law? What did He do?
382. What are some of the evidences that the precepts of the law were not the life of souls?
383. How did Paul use the same principle Jesus laid down?
384. Show how "love fulfills the law."
385. What men attribute to the flesh Jesus attributed to what?
386. How has "modern sentiment" colored the picture of sin?
387. Show how the harbouring of a sinful thought is really an action.
388. There are some who have so debased their own appetites until "innocent indulgence" does reach the heart—what shall be done with them?
389. Contrast the teaching of Jesus here with modern materialism.

SUMMARY

6:1—7:23

The testimony for Jesus furnished by the preceding section, is based chiefly on the opinions which men formed concerning him. The disciples, though slow and hard of heart to realize his true nature, were constrained by the continued demonstration to acknowledge his inherent divine power. The masses of the people who had witnessed his miracles were wild with excitement wherever he went, and they brought to him their sick from every quarter, a practice which could not possibly have been kept up had not his cures been real and unfailing. His enemies, though they differed in opinion as to the source of his miraculous power, with one consent acknowledged its reality, and none of them counted him less than a prophet. The strange conceit that he was John the Baptist, or that he was

one of the old prophets raised to life again, attests the struggle of unbelieving minds in trying to solve the problem of his power and of his being. Even the Nazarenes, who, of all his enemies, knew him most intimately and rejected him most scornfully, were constrained to wonder whence he obtained his wisdom and his mighty works. There was only one solution of the problem which was satisfying to the mind, and those alone were satisfied with their own conclusion and rested in it, who believed him to be the Christ and the Son of God. And to this day the men who have rejected this conclusion and have tried to account for the career of Jesus in some other way, have been driven to conceits as baseless and as unreasonable as any of those adopted by the Jews.—*McGarvey*.

C. THE THIRD PERIOD 7:24-9:50

1. THE SYROPHOENICIAN WOMAN. 7:24-30

TEXT 7:24-30

"And from thence he arose, and went away into the borders of Tyre and Sidon. And he entered into a house, and would have no man know it: and he could not be hid. But straightway a woman, whose little daughter had an unclean spirit, having heard of him, came and fell down at his feet. Now the woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by race. And she besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter. And he said unto her, Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs. But she answered and saith unto him, Yea, Lord: even the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs. And he said unto her, For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter. And she went away unto her house, and found the child laid upon the bed, and the devil gone out."

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 7:24-30

347. From where was Jesus going to Tyre and Sidon?
348. Why did Jesus want to be unknown?
349. Give three facts about the woman who came to Jesus at this time.
350. Who are "the children" in vs. 27—who are "the dogs"?
351. Explain the eating the crumbs under the table.
352. What admirable qualities are seen in this woman?
353. What other miracle did Jesus perform at a distance? Cf. Matt. 8:5-13.

COMMENT

TIME—Summer A.D. 29.

PLACE—In the district of Tyre and Sidon.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS—Matt. 15:21-28.

OUTLINE—1. Jesus and His disciples seeks seclusion, vs. 24. 2. A distraught woman seeks help, vs. 25-26. 3. Jesus tests her faith, vs. 27. 4. She answers in faith and humility, vs. 28. 5. Her request is granted, vs. 29, 30.

ANALYSIS

- I. JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES SEEKS SECLUSION, VS. 24.
 1. Leaves Capernaum or near area.
 2. Into the district of Tyre and Sidon.
 3. Into a house to hide from the multitudes.
- II. A DISTRAUGHT WOMAN SEEKS, HELP, VS. 25, 26.
 1. Came immediately upon their entrance into the house.
 2. Came seeking help for her demon-possessed daughter.
 3. Fell at his feet with continual requests.
 4. She was a Greek, a Syrophenician by race.
- III. JESUS TESTS HER FAITH, VS. 27.
 1. The children (Jews) must first be fed.
 2. It is not right to give the children's bread to dogs. (Gentiles)
- IV. SHE ANSWERS IN FAITH AND HUMILITY, VS. 28.
 1. I agree—you are right.
 2. But even dogs eat crumbs from the children's table.
- V. HER REQUEST IS GRANTED, VS. 29, 30.
 1. Because of your faith and humility your request is granted—your daughter is free.
 2. She went home to find it as He had said.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES SEEK SECLUSION. VS. 24

"*Thence*, i.e. from the place where the foregoing words were uttered. But where was this? The last particular place mentioned was Gennesaret (6,53), but followed by a notice of his visiting "that whole surrounding country" (55), and entering into "villages, cities, and fields" (56.) This may seem to cut off the connection and prevent our ascertaining the locality referred to here. But as *thence* implies a definite place previously mentioned, and as the general statement in 6, 53-56 is incidentally and parenthetically introduced, and relates not so much to what occurred at any one time as to the general and constant practice, as appears from the use of the imperfect tense, it is still most probable that the reference is here to the land (or district) of Gennesaret, or to the neighboring city of Capernaum. *Arising*, standing up, an idiomatic phrase of frequent occurrence in the Greek of the New Testament, and often denoting nothing more than what we mean by starting, setting out, putting one's self in motion, especially though not exclusively in reference to journeys. *Went*, or more exactly *went away*, i.e. withdrew, retreated (Matt. 15, 21), from the malice of his enemies, as some suppose, or as others, from the crowd and bustle even of his friends and followers. It is probable, however, that a higher and more important motive led to this retreat, to wit,

the purpose to evince by one act of his public life that, though his personal ministry was to the Jews (see below, on v. 27, and compare Matt. 15:24. Rom. 15, 8), his saving benefits were also for the Gentiles. It is important to remember that these movements were not made at random or fortuitously brought about, as infidel interpreters delight to represent, and some of their believing admirers do not venture to deny, but deliberately ordered in accordance with a definite design, the reality of which is not affected by our being able or unable everywhere to trace it in the history. *Into* (not merely *to* or *towards*, which would be otherwise expressed) *the borders*, a compounded form of the word used twice in v. 31 below, and not applied like it to all contained within the bounds, but to the bounds themselves, in which specific sense it is employed by Xenophon, Thucydides, and Plato, who speaks of the bounds (or limits) of the philosopher and politician. The Greek word is properly an adjective, and means bordering or frontier parts (Matt. 15, 21.) *Tyre and Sidon*, the two great seaports of Phenicia, put for the whole country, which apart from them had no importance. The whole phrase does not mean the region between Tyre and Sidon, but the boundary or frontier between Galilee and Phenicia. *Would* and *could*, as in so many other cases, are not mere auxiliary tenses, but distinct and independent verbs; *he wished* and *he was able*. The construction *he was willing to know no one* (i. e. to make no acquaintance or receive no visit), though grammatically possible, is not so natural or obvious as the common one, *he wished no one to know* (him), or *to know* (it), i. e. his arrival or his presence. *To be hid*, or lie concealed, the Greek verb being active in its form."

II. A DISTRAUGHT WOMAN SEEKS HELP. VS. 25, 26

"The reason that he could not be concealed is now recorded. *For a woman, having heard of him*, i. e. of his arrival now, or of his miracles before; but even in the latter case, the other fact must be supplied. *Whose little daughter* (an affectionate diminutive, used also in 5, 23) *had an unclean spirit*, in the sense repeatedly explained already. It appears from this case, that these demoniacal possessions were not confined to Jews, or to any age or sex. *Coming* (into the house where he was) *and falling at his feet*, the full phrase which occurs in a contracted form above, the act denoting not religious adoration but importunate entreaty.

26. The remarkable circumstance in this case, which in part accounts for its insertion in the history, is that the woman here described was a Gentile, not only by residence but by extraction. A Greek, not in the strict sense, but in the wider one arising from the Macedonian conquests, which diffused the Greek civilization through the whole of western Asia, so that in the later Jewish dialect, Greek was substantially synonymous

with Gentile, even where the language was not actually spoken, as it may have been in this case. A *Syrophœnician*, so called either in distinction from the Libyophœnicians in Africa, or because Phœnicia, as well as Palestine, belonged to the great Roman province of Syria. Both countries also had been peopled by the sons of Canaan, so that this woman was at once a Greek, a Syrophœnician, and a Canaanite (Matt. 15:22.) By *nation*, race, extraction, birth. (Compare Acts 4, 36. 13, 26. 18, 2 24, Phil. 3, 5.) *Asked*, in the secondary sense of *begged*, and therefore followed by *that*, and not by *whether*. (Compare Luke 4, 38.) *Cast forth the devil, or expel the demon.*" (J. A. Alexander)

III. JESUS TESTS HER FAITH. VS. 27

"Another singularity of this case, which suggests a further reason for its being so minutely stated, is our Lord's refusal to perform the miracle, of which this is the first and only instance upon record. Even here, however, it was not an absolute and permanent refusal, but a relative and temporary one, designed to answer an important purpose, both in its occurrence and in the historical account of it. *Let*, or more emphatically, *let alone* (implying an untimely interference), suffer or permit, the same verb which we have already had in different applications. *Filled*, sated, satisfied, the same verb as in 6, 42, and there explained. *Meet*, i.e. suitable, becoming, handsome, which approaches nearest to the strict sense of the Greek word, namely, *fair* or *beautiful*, though commonly applied in Scripture to excellence or beauty of a moral kind. *To take*, not pleonastic, as it often is in vulgar English, but *to take away* from them and bestow it upon others. *The children's bread*, the bread intended and provided for them, and when actually given belonging to them. *Dogs*, a diminutive supposed by some to be contemptuous, like *whelps*, or *puppies*, but by others an expression of affectionate familiarity, like *little daughter* (A Greek word of the same form) in vs. 25. This question is connected with another, as to the sense in which dogs are mentioned here at all, whether simply in allusion to the wild gregarious oriental dog, regarded as an impure and ferocious beast, or to the classical and modern European notion of the dog as a domesticated animal, the humble companion and faithful friend of man. The objection to the former explanation is not only its revolting harshness and the ease with which the same idea might have been expressed in a less unusual manner, but the obvious relation here supposed between the children and the dogs, as at and under the same table, and belonging as it were to the same household. John, it is true, uses dogs in the offensive sense first mentioned; but his language is "without are dogs" (Rev. 22, 15), apparently referring to the homeless dogs which prowl through the streets of eastern cities (compare Ps. 22, 20. 59, 6. Matt. 7, 6. Phil. 3, 2); but here the dogs are

represented as within, and fed beneath their master's table. The beauty of our Saviour's figure would be therefore marred by understanding what he says of savage animals, without relation or attachment to mankind. *Cast*, throw away, a term implying waste of the material as well as some contempt of the recipient. Like most of our Lord's parables or illustrations from analogy, this exquisite similitude is drawn from the most familiar habits of domestic life, and still comes home to the experience of thousands."

IV. SHE ANSWERS IN FAITH AND HUMILITY. VS. 28

"28. There is no dispute as to the meaning of this admirable answer, which might almost be applauded for its wit, if Christ himself had not ascribed to it a higher merit, as an evidence of signal faith, combined with a humility no less remarkable. There is, however, some dispute as to its form, particularly that of the first clause, which some explain as a denial of what he had said, and others more correctly as a partial affirmation or assent, but followed by a partial contradiction, as in our translation. The best philological interpreters are now agreed that *yet* is not a correct version of the Greek phrase, which can only mean agreeably to usage, *for* or *for even*. The meaning of the answer then will be, 'Yes, Lord (or Sir), it is true that it would not be becoming to deprive the children of their food, in order to supply the dogs; for these are not to eat the children's bread, but the crumbs (or fragments) falling from the table.' The whole is therefore an assent to what our Lord had said, including his description of the Gentiles (Matt. 15, 24) as the dogs beneath the table, and a thankful consent to occupy that place and to partake of that inferior provision. *Of* (literally *from*) *the crumbs* is not here a partitive expression, as it sometimes is, but simply indicates the source from which the nourishment is drawn. The idea suggested by an ancient and adopted by a modern writer, that the word translated *crumbs* here means the pieces of bread which the ancients used as napkins, is not only a gratuitous refinement, but a needless variation from the usage of the word, which is a regular diminutive of one itself denoting a crumb, bit, or morsel, especially of bread. *Children* is also a diminutive, the same with that in 5, 39-41, and entirely distinct in form, though not in meaning, from the one here used in the preceding verse."

V. HER REQUEST IS GRANTED. VS. 29, 30

"29. *For* (the sake of, on account of) *this word* (saying, speech, or answer), *go thy way* (i.e. in modern English, *go away*, depart), perhaps to be taken as an abbreviation of the full phrase, *go in peace* (or into peace) employed above in 5, 34, and there explained. The merit of her answer was its faith (Matt. 15, 28), to which her whole request was granted instantaneously, the demon having actually left her child when

these gracious words were uttered. Now as this faith was the gift of Christ himself, there could neither be surprise on his part, nor legal merit upon hers, but only a benignant recognition of his own work in her heart, which his discouraging reception of her prayer at first had served both to strengthen and illustrate, and was therefore no more unkind than the similar processes continually going on in true believers, though of course unknown to the experience of those skeptical interpreters, who either sneer at this as cruel treatment of a distressed mother, or assume a real change of purpose wrought in Christ by her persistent importunity.

30. This is merely a distinct historical statement of the fact that she found the Saviour's declaration verified on reaching home, *the demon* (actually) *gone out and the daughter laid upon the bed*, or rather *thrown* there (as the Greek word strictly means) by the fiend at his departure, so that her mother found her just as he had left her. This removes all appearance of departure from the general rule previously laid down, and derived by induction from the history at large, that in cases of miraculous restoration there was no protracted convalescence, but an instantaneous return to ordinary occupations. Had this been a case of mere corporeal healing or resuscitation, the effect would probably have been the same as in the cases just referred to. But the miracle was here one of dispossession, and this was no doubt sudden and complete; for the bodily exhaustion which ensued was not a remnant of the previous disease, or even a transition from an abnormal to a normal state, but rather a decisive indication that the latter had been reinstated as the preternatural excitement which accompanied possession, and was usually symptomatic of it (see above, on 5, 5), would not have allowed her to lie quietly upon her bed, the sight of which recumbent posture must have satisfied the mother instantly, not that her daughter was recovering, but that she was recovered, from her fearful preternatural disorder. In recording this most interesting miracle, Mark treats it as an instance of extraordinary faith, without making prominent its bearing on our Lord's relation to the Jews and Gentiles, which belongs therefore rather to the exposition of the parallel account in Matthew (15, 21-28.)" (*J. A. Alexander*)

FACT QUESTIONS 7:24-30

390. "From thence" refers to what place?
391. How were the movements of the Saviour decided?
392. What is meant by the word "borders" of Tyre and Sidon?
393. What was the probable purpose in Jesus' desire to be hid?
394. Just what did the woman do when she came into the house where Jesus was staying?
395. In what sense was this woman a "Greek"? In what sense a "Canaanite"?

396. How is the word "take" used in reference to the children's bread?
 397. In what sense was the word "dogs" used by our Lord?
 398. Did the woman agree with Jesus in the evaluation of children and dogs? What were the crumbs?
 399. When did the demon leave the daughter?
 400. Did Jesus change His purpose with the woman because of her begging?
 401. Was the child laid out on the bed by friends or the demon—explain.
 402. Was there ever any period of convalescence in the healings of Jesus?

2. HEALING A DEAF MUTE 7:31-37

TEXT 7:31-37

"And again he went out from the borders of Tyre, and came through Sidon unto the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the borders of Decapolis. And they bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and they beseech him to lay his hand upon him. And he took him aside from the multitude privately, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat, and touched his tongue; and looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened. And his ears were opened, and the bond of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain. And he charged them that they should tell no man: but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it. And they were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well: he maketh even the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak."

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 7:31-37

354. Please trace on the map the route of Jesus on this occasion.
 355. What is the meaning of the word "Decapolis"? How used here?
 356. Who brought the deaf mute to Jesus?
 357. Why did Jesus take him away from the multitude—please attempt an answer.
 358. How would this deaf-mute feel as Jesus took Him to Himself?
 359. Into whose ears does Jesus place His fingers?—into His own or into the deaf-mute? Why do this? Was this sign language?
 360. Please notice the actions of Jesus and remember they were given for the benefit of the deaf-mute—the deaf-mute was intently watching the actions and expressions of Jesus—each action spoke to him—what did they say?
 361. Did the deaf-mute hear the word—"Ephphatha"?
 362. Why charge them that they should tell no man?
 363. Who gave voice to the thought "He hath done all things well"?

COMMENT

TIME—Summer A.D. 29.

PLACE—Tyre—Sidon—Decapolis.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS—Only Mark records this incident.

OUTLINE—1. The place of the healing, vs. 31. 2. The man to be healed, vs. 32. 3. Preparations for healing, vs. 33, 34a. 4. The healing and results, 34b-37.

ANALYSIS

- I. THE PLACE OF HEALING, VS. 31.
 1. Journeyed from the borders of Tyre and Sidon.
 2. Through Sidon to the shore of Galilee.
 3. Into the midst of the district of Decapolis.
- II. THE MAN TO BE HEALED, VS. 32.
 1. Brought by his friends.
 2. Deaf with a serious speech impediment.
 3. Begged Jesus to lay His hands upon him.
- III. PREPARATIONS FOR HEALING, 33-34a.
 1. Jesus took him aside from the multitude unto himself.
 2. Jesus placed His fingers in the ears of the man.
 3. Spat on the ground and touched the man's tongue.
 4. Looked up to heaven and sighed.
- IV. THE HEALING AND RESULTS, 34b-37.
 1. He was healed when Jesus said "Ephphatha" or "Be opened."
 2. Ears were opened—tongue was loosened—he spoke plainly.
 3. Jesus strongly urged them to tell no man about this—the more He urged them the more they did publish it.
 4. They were beyond measure astonished and said, "He hath done all things well."

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. THE PLACE OF HEALING.

"31. According to the text adopted by the revisers, the course of the journey is here quite definitely marked out: "And again he went out from the borders" (region) "of Tyre, and came through Sidon unto the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the borders" (region) "of Decapolis." That he visited the city of Tyre itself is not affirmed, but from the course of the journey it seems probable. He did pass through Sidon, which lay, like Tyre, on the shore of the Mediterranean. From Capernaum to Tyre may have been thirty English miles, and from Tyre to Sidon twenty more. Between the two cities were Zarephath (called Sarepta in Luke 4:26), where Elijah was preserved alive in famine and restored the widow's son to life (1 Kings 17). His alluding to the event in the synagogue at Nazareth is enough to assure us that our Lord did not pass the spot without remembering again how it was a Gentile widow to whom the prophet was sent. From Sidon he turned south-eastward, and crossed the upper Jordan, and came down on the eastern side. But he did not

merely make the journey downward along the river; he appears to have extended his tour still eastward—we cannot tell how far—through some part of the region known as Decapolis, probably visiting some of the cities from which that region took its name. The reasons that determined the route, of course, cannot be ascertained. Thus he made his way down to the Sea of Galilee, reaching it somewhere on the eastern side. The limits of Decapolis are somewhat uncertain, but its extent was such that his journey may have taken him farther south than his destination; so that it is impossible to tell from what direction he approached the lake or what point of its shore he probably first touched. Of course the length of the journey cannot be measured; but it can scarcely have been, from Capernaum back to the lake, less than one hundred and fifty English miles, and it may have been more. On the east as well as on the north this was a tour into heathen territory, but in no part, so far as we can judge, was it a tour of missionary activity. It was rather an episode in his ministry when he was alone with his disciples. By comparison with Matthew it appears that this miracle was wrought, most probably, on some "mountain" near the lake, where many were gathered about him."

II. THE MAN TO BE HEALED.

"32. *They bring unto him one that was deaf.* The adjective literally means "stricken," or "smitten" (*kophos*, from the verb *kopto*, "to strike"); the thought is that the person has been smitten in some of the organs of sensation, so as to be deprived of power. Sometimes it is the organs of speech that are thus conceived of as smitten, and the word then means "dumb;" sometimes it is the organs of hearing, and it then means "deaf," as here. The other descriptive word (*mogilalos*) means "speaking with difficulty;" not "speechless" (*alalos*), as in verse 37. It is used here alone in the New Testament. It cannot be smoothly rendered without paraphrase, and *had an impediment in his speech* represents it well. Yet the word is used broadly for "dumb" in the LXX. (Isa. 35:6).—The great healer was asked to put his hand on the man; so Matt. 9:18: "But come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live." But now, as then, the great Healer had a way of his own."

III. PREPARATIONS FOR HEALING.

"33, 34. Three peculiarities appear in this act of healing—the privacy of the transaction, the use of signs and physical media, and the unusual vocal utterances of the Healer. These peculiarities all appear again in the other miracle in chap. 8:22-26, already alluded to. In studying them in this case it is to be remembered that this is the only detailed report that we possess of the healing of a deaf man; and, although we may not be justified in inferring that all healings of the deaf resembled this, we may find in the peculiar method now adopted a special significance in con-

nection with the nature of the affliction that was to be removed. In healing the blind, Jesus, so far as we know, always made some appeal to the senses and powers of which the afflicted ones were possessed, drawing out their faith by word or touch or by requiring the performance of some act. (See Matt. 9:29; Mark 8:23; 10:49; John 9:6). So, usually, in healing the lame and helpless. (See John 5:6-8; Mark 3:3; Luke 17:14.) In the case of a deaf man words would be of no avail; and if any such appeal was to be made, it must be done by signs. In the present case Jesus probably saw in the man himself some reason for judging it best that the cure should be private. The withdrawal from the crowd would impress him, though he could not hear its tumult, with a sense of solemnity. Perhaps Jesus saw in him a vanity that would render anything like a public act of healing hurtful to him. In any case, it was a solemn and touching experience to be alone, or almost alone, with Jesus to be healed.—As for the signs and the physical media, they were such as he could well understand. Jesus *put his fingers into his ears*. Not a mere touch, but an insertion—a sign of the impartation or transference of something from one person to the other, with reference now to the powerless organs of hearing. This was the laying on of his hand that had been asked for, made definite, appropriate, and instructive by his wisdom. Then *he spit, and touched his tongue*—i.e. touched the man's tongue with a finger perhaps moistened with his own saliva—another sign of the transference of something from himself to the afflicted man, this time with reference to his injured organs of speech. Then he stood *looking up to heaven*, to indicate that this was an act that depended upon a heavenly power—an act, indeed, of Heaven upon the earth. Of course there had been no opportunity, because no possibility, of preaching to the man, and in his ignorance he may easily have supposed that this was some influence of a magical kind. He may not have known to what power he was submitting himself, and the reverent heavenward look of Jesus may have been intended silently to lift his heart and faith to God. How better could he show a deaf man that he was receiving a gift from above? Then *he sighed*, or rather, "groaned." The word is not used elsewhere of him, but it is found in Rom. 8:23 and 2 Cor. 5:2, where evidently no less a word than "groan" is needed to represent its meaning. This was no artificial utterance intended for effect: it was a spontaneous utterance of genuine sorrow in sympathy with human suffering. It came from the same source as the tears at the grave of Lazarus. Although the man could not hear the groan, he might be aware of it, for doubtless his eyes were busy in observing what his Benefactor was doing; and if he was aware of it, he must have felt, however dimly, that there was a deep and genuine sympathy in the Healer's heart. This could be no magician's performance to him: this was a deed of love. And then

at last he spoke; and, though the man might not hear the word he may have known, as before, that it was spoken."

IV. THE HEALING AND RESULTS.

"34b. *Ephphatha, that is, Be opened.* Here, as in chap. 5:41, Mark has preserved the very word in the Aramaic tongue that fell from the lips of Jesus. No other evangelist has done this, except in the case of the utterance on the cross, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani." In the other case (chap. 5:41) the Aramaic words that Mark preserves were spoken when of the disciples only Peter, James, and John were present; and it is not unlikely that the same special three were the only auditors at this time also. Whether others were present or not, this must certainly have come down to us from one who heard it. The *Ephphatha, Be opened*, was addressed to the man with reference to his organs of sense, which are conceived of as closed.

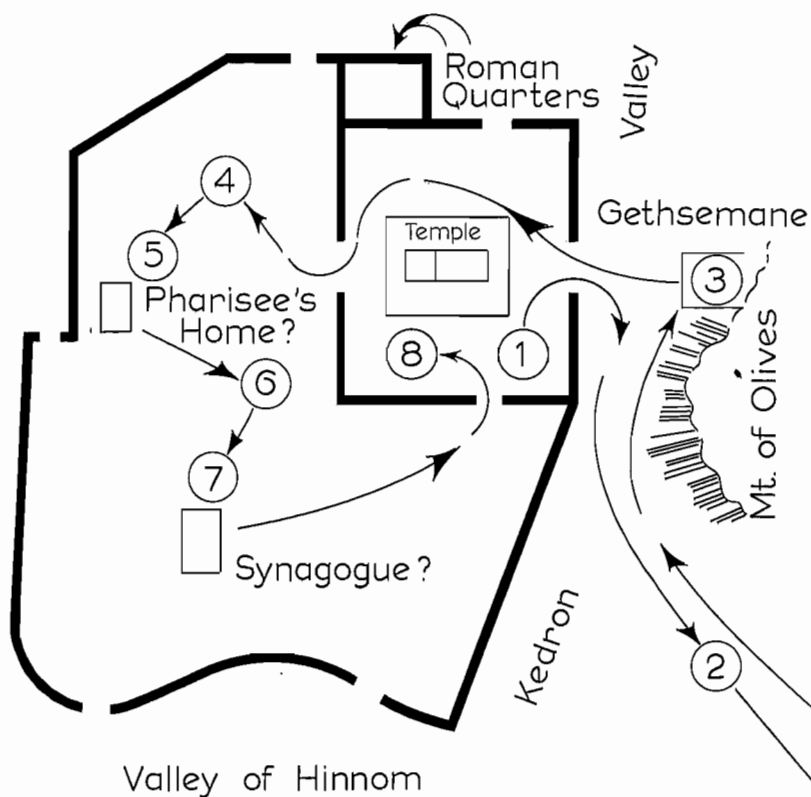
35. It would seem that the moment of the *Ephphatha* was the moment of the change. Of course we know that the preceding parts of the transaction were in no sense necessary to the cure, and were introduced for the sake of the man himself; and we may judge that he received no new power of speech or hearing until the symbolic or pictorial part was finished and the word was spoken.—The cure itself is detailed in Mark's peculiar way. The revisers omit *straightway*, and thus represent the result: "And his ears were opened, and the bond of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain," or rightly, normally.—*The string of his tongue* is an unfortunate phrase, from which a reader might suppose that the man was in some way tongue-tied. But the reference is merely to the bond or restraint that was upon his powers of speech, and there is no indication as to the nature of that restraint.—But now the organs of sense were *opened*, and henceforth all was done (*orthos*) in the natural or normal way.

It is worth while to look back at this act and observe how beautifully our Lord brought to light all that was essential in a work of healing. Perhaps the symbolic action was all the more beautiful, because it must be made to do the whole work of words. Two signs of the transferring of power from himself to the afflicted—the upward look to heaven, to indicate the source of power; the deep sigh or groan of genuine sympathy with the suffering that is to be removed—and the word of power by which the deed is done, and the bond is broken. A beautiful story for deaf-mutes.

36, 37. He charged them. Not merely the man himself, but the people who were around. Of course they would quickly know what had been done, and must be included in his prohibition. Often did he thus plead for silence about his works (as in chap. 3:12 and 5:43), and now, while

MAP NO. 5—THIRD YEAR, LATER JUDEAN MINISTRY (about 3 months)

1. Temple; Feast of Tabernacles; Sermons on Light of World; Freedom; Abraham's Children; Man born blind healed; Good Shepherd; 70 sent out to evangelize, Jn. 7-8-9-10 & Lk. 10
2. Bethany; Jesus, Mary & Martha, Lk. 10
3. Place of Prayer; Discourse on Prayer, Lk. 11
4. Place unknown; charged with being in league with Satan, Lk. 11
5. Dining in Pharisee's home; denounces Pharisaism, Lk. 11
6. Before multitudes of 1000's Great evangelistic appeals on Hypocrisy, Anxiety, Covetousness, Lk. 12-13
7. In a Synagogue; heals woman bowed double; controversy over healing on the Sabbath, Lk. 13
8. Feast of Dedication (December); Jews seek to kill Jesus, Jn. 10



he was in search of retirement and quietness, the request was especially to be expected. But, as usual, it was all in vain: the gratitude of the healed and the wonder of the spectators were too strong, and the story must be told. It seems probable that this miracle was the means of bringing on the great period of thronging that is described in Matt. 15:30, 31. Mark's expressions in description of the abundant proclamation and the excessive amazement are of the very strongest character.—The final testimony of praise seems to have been called out by the many healings that took place, though first suggested by the one. *He hath done all things well* (perfect tense)—he has been gracious everywhere and successful in everything—*he maketh* (present tense) *both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak. —The dumb.* A stronger word than in verse 32." (W. N. Clarke)

FACT QUESTIONS 7:31-37

403. Read Matt. 15:29-31 and relate it to this record in Mark.
404. Show how Mark 8:22-26 compares with this incident.
405. How far from Capernaum to Tyre?; from Tyre to Sidon? What place was between the two cities?
406. What was the total distance traveled from Capernaum to the place of the healing?
407. They bring to him one that was "stricken"—explain the word "stricken" as here used.
408. The man to be healed could speak—but how?
409. Jesus never healed without a genuine personal concern for the one to be healed (if they were present)—show how he adapted His words and actions to the one to be healed—with the blind; the lame; the deaf.
410. What did the deaf-mute think when Jesus looked to heaven?
411. What is a better word than "sigh" in reference to Jesus? Why?
412. Why preserve the very word Jesus spoke?
413. The man was in no way "tongue-tied"—how do we know?
414. This is a beautiful story for deaf-mutes—show how.
415. Why would His request for quietness about His work be especially expected at this time and place?
416. Read Matt. 15:30, 31 and show the relation to this incident.

3. FEEDING THE FOUR THOUSAND. 8:1-10

TEXT 8:1-10

"In those days, when there was again a great multitude, and they had nothing to eat, he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat: and if I send them away fasting to their home, they will faint in the way; and some of them are come from far. And his disciples answered him, Whence shall one be able to fill

these men with bread here in a desert place? And he asked them, How many loaves have ye? and they said, Seven, And he commandeth the multitude to sit down on the ground: and he took the seven loaves, and having given thanks, he brake, and gave to his disciples, to set before them; and they set them before the multitude. And they had a few small fishes: and having blessed them, he commanded to set these also before them. And they did eat, and were filled: and they took up of broken pieces that remained over, seven baskets. And they were about four thousand: and he sent them away. And straightway he entered into the boat with his disciples, and came into the parts of Dalmanutha."

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 8:1-10

364. Where did the feeding of the four thousand take place?
365. For how many days had some in the multitude been without food? What does this indicate as to interest in what Jesus was teaching?
366. Please read the record of the feeding of the five thousand and show at least three contrasts in the comparison of the two incidents.
367. Note the use of the term fasting in vs. 3. Why worry about them?
368. Why refer to the district of Decapolis as a "desert place."
369. Does the reply of the disciples in vs. 4 indicate any knowledge of a previous multiplying of loaves? Please read the context carefully.
370. Did the apostles know what Jesus was going to do before He did it? i.e. with the loaves and the people?
371. Just what type of bread did they have?
372. What order did Jesus give to the multitude?
373. Was it the prayer of thanks for the loaves and fish that resulted in the multiplying of them in the hands of Jesus?
374. Just how many small flat loaves would it take to feed 4,000? How many small fish?—please estimate.
375. Consider the fact that all ate until they were "filled" not just a little, but until they were filled. What does this mean to you?
376. Why gather up the fragments?
377. Were there actually more than 4,000 fed? Explain.
378. Had Jesus arrived in a boat? Where was the miracle performed? Cf. 7:31; Matt. 15:32-38.

COMMENT

TIME—Summer A.D. 29.

PLACE—In Decapolis.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS—Matt. 15:32-38.

OUTLINE—1. The occasion for the miracle, vs. 1. 2. The need for the miracle, vs. 2, 3. 3. The disciples and the miracle, vs. 4, 5. 4. Preparation for the miracle, vs. 6a. 5. The miracle, vs. 6b, 7. 6. The results of the miracle, vs. 8-10.

ANALYSIS

- I. THE OCCASION FOR THE MIRACLE, VS. 1.
 1. In the days of Jesus' time in Decapolis.
 2. A great multitude had gathered.
 3. They had nothing to eat.
- II. THE NEED FOR THE MIRACLE, VS. 2, 3.
 1. Three days without food.
 2. If sent home they would faint on the way.
- III. THE DISCIPLES AND THE MIRACLE, VS. 4, 5.
 1. How shall such a multitude be filled?
 2. We have seven loaves.
- IV. PREPARATION FOR THE MIRACLE, VS. 6a.
 1. Sit down in anticipation of eating.
 2. Gave thanks for the loaves.
- V. THE MIRACLE, 6b, 7.
 1. By power of His own will he created enough loaves for the multitude.
 2. The apostles were the waiters.
 3. Also blessed and created fish for the multitude.
- VI. THE RESULTS OF THE MIRACLE, VS. 8-10.
 1. They ate and were filled.
 2. Seven large baskets of fragments gathered.
 3. They were dismissed.
 4. Jesus and His disciples departed in a boat for Dalmanutha.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. THE OCCASION FOR THE MIRACLE.

"1. 'In those days the multitude being very great,' etc. We now come to what is called 'The Second Miracle of the loaves.' From the fact that we have two miracles performed almost under the same circumstances, and in the same manner, and the accompanying details very much resembling one another in both cases, we cannot but gather that we have here a peculiar phase of Christ's love and power presented to us, and by its repetition commended very urgently to our notice, so that we should be very anxious to realize all that is taught us in these two accounts. It would seem at first sight impossible to do more than repeat what has been before remarked on the two miracles, as related in St. Matthew, and on the first one which has already been fully described in Mark, but it is not so. We have yet many fragments to gather up if nothing is to be lost. In the first place, then, the Lord here takes the initiative."

II. THE NEED FOR THE MIRACLE.

"2, 3. 'I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with me three days,' etc. In the former miracle He felt equal compassion

for the multitude, but did not express it. The disciples urge upon Him to send them away, and then He, as it were, invites them to suggest some exercise of the mighty power which they had so repeatedly seen put forth by Him. But they can suggest nothing except what is natural, that they should be dismissed to take care of themselves. Now the Lord Himself begins: "I have compassion on the multitude, they have been with me three days. If I send them to their own houses, they will faint by the way," etc. Here was the hint given that they should ask Him to do as He had done just before, but apparently not a thought of the former mighty work presented itself. They seem to have altogether forgotten it."

III. THE DISCIPLES AND THE MIRACLE.

"4. 'And his disciples answered him, From whence,' etc. We marvel at (must not the word be said?) this stupidity, but is it not natural? This surprise arises out of our ignorance of man's heart, of our own hearts, and of the deep root of unbelief therein. "It is ever more thus in times of difficulty and distress. All former deliverances are in danger of being forgotten, the mighty interpositions of God's hand in former passages of men's lives fall out of their memories. Each new difficulty appears insurmountable, as one from which there is no extrication; at each recurring necessity it seems as though the wonders of God's grace are exhausted, and have come to an end. God may have diverted the Red Sea for Israel, yet no sooner are they on the other side than, because there are no waters to drink, they murmur against Moses, and count that they must perish through thirst (Exod. xvii. 1-7), crying 'Is the Lord amongst us or not?' Or, to adduce a still nearer parallel, once already the Lord had covered the camp with quails (Exod. xvi. 13), yet for all this, even Moses himself cannot believe that He will provide flesh for all that multitude." (*Trench*)

But the backwardness of the Apostles to believe in Christ's readiness to feed the multitudes miraculously, is in strong contrast with their readiness to believe in His powers of healing. They had but a short time before urged the Lord to grant the request of the Syrophenician woman, when He seemed unwilling. May it not, in part, have arisen from the infrequency of this sort of miracle? As *Theophylact* says, "He did not always work miracles for the feeding of the multitude, lest they should follow Him for the sake of food."

And may there not be also something typical, something prophetic, about it? Do not many true disciples of the Lord in these days, who thankfully acknowledge the Lord's power to cleanse and heal, seem to have their eyes closed to the supernatural or eucharistic feeding, of which this miracle is so remarkable an adumbration?

Again, do we not learn from this miracle how Christ will exercise acts of special providence to help and succour those who are following

Him? Is there any life of a poor humble Christian which does not contain some account of interpositions almost supernatural in favour of those who have given up all to follow Him? *Dean Hook*, in a lecture on this very miracle, gives a striking one: "There was an individual who gave up a profitable employment, acting under advice, and not from the mere caprice of his own judgment, because he thought, taking his temptations into account, he could not follow it without peril to his soul. And after many reverses he was reduced to such a state of distress, that the last morsel in the house had been consumed, and he had not bread to give his children. His faith did not, however, forsake him; and when his distress was at the height, he received a visit from one who called to pay him a debt he had never hoped to recover, but the payment of which enabled him to support his family until he again obtained employment." And he adds, "Many a similar tale can our poorer brethren tell."

5. 'And he asked them, How many loaves have ye?' etc. This question was not for information. He knew well how many they had, but he asked it that there should be no mistake about the miraculous nature of the feeding. There were two more loaves and a somewhat smaller multitude than on the former occasion, but this does not, in the smallest degree, affect the character of the mighty work."

IV. PREPARATION FOR THE MIRACLE.

"6. 'And he commanded the people to sit down on the ground,' etc. From the fact that it is expressly mentioned in the account of the former miracle, that there was much grass in the place, and that they sat by companies on the green grass, it has been argued with much probability that this second miracle took place at a much later time in the year, when the grass had been dried up by the scorching rays of the sun.

'And gave thanks.' We have before noticed the symbolical character of this "giving thanks" as foreshadowing the Eucharistic Benediction; but we learn also from it a more homely lesson, how that for all food, whenever received, thanks should be rendered, and we also learn how we ought to be thankful for all means and opportunities of doing good. The thanks of the Lord would be tendered to His father not only in anticipation of the actual food soon to be so marvellously provided, but for the opportunity of showing forth the Divine glory and power, and also of relieving the wants of so many who were following Him for a good purpose.

'And gave thanks, and brake, and gave to his disciples,' etc. From the circumstantiality with which these details are given in each of the four accounts, it is clear that there is some particular lesson which the Lord and His Spirit would have us draw from this. That lesson seems to be that the true feeding in the Church of Christ is not that each man should

take for himself, but that all that can be called food is to be given through ministerial intervention."

V. THE MIRACLE.

"7. And they had a few small fishes . . . seven baskets . . . sent them away. From the mention of a few small fishes, it seems evident that the disciples gave all their provisions of every kind for the sustenance of the multitude; but notwithstanding this they were not in want, for a much larger quantity of fragments or broken pieces was taken up than in the case of the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand: the word here used signifying hampers or panniers, rather than baskets. The same word is used to denote the basket in which St. Paul was let down from the walls of Damascus (2 Cor. 11:33)."

VI. THE RESULTS OF THE MIRACLE.

"10. 'And straightway he entered into a ship . . . parts of Dalmanutha.' *Dr. Thomson*, in "The Land and the Book," thinks that he can identify this place with a certain Dalhamia, about half-way down on the western side of the Lake. It is about two miles south of El Medjet, which has been supposed to be the site of the ancient Magdala (or Magadan) (Matt. 15:39)." (*M. F. Sadler*)

FACT QUESTIONS 8:1-10

417. What difference would it make if we did feel the two accounts of feeding the multitudes were actually two versions of the same event?
418. Please show at least three distinct differences in the two records.
419. Why did the disciples ask the question of vs. 4? Please attempt an answer.
420. Jesus did not ask the disciples to give them to eat, (as he did before)—What does this mean?
421. At what point in the events did the miracle occur?
422. Which baskets were the largest—the ones here or the ones in the feeding of the 5,000?
423. What type of miracle occurred here?
424. Locate Dalmanutha on the map.

4. THE DEMAND FOR A SIGN 8:11-13

TEXT 8:11-13

"And the Pharisees came forth, and began to question with him, seeking of him a sign from heaven, tempting him. And he sighed deeply in his spirit, and saith, Why doth this generation seek a sign? verily I say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto this generation. And he left them, and again entering into the boat departed to the other side."

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 8:11-13

379. What type of sign did the Pharisees want?

380. What test or trial was this to Jesus?
 381. What emotion filled the Saviour's heart as He "sighed deeply"?
 382. Read Matt. 16:1-4 for a little more complete account of this.
 383. Show how unreasonable was this request for a sign.
 384. Was Jesus disappointed as He turned to get in the boat to go across the lake? Discuss.

COMMENT

TIME—Summer A.D. 29.

PLACE—Capernaum.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS—Matt. 15:39—16:4.

OUTLINE—1. The dispute and question, vs. 11. 2. The disappointment and refusal, vs. 12. 3. The departure, vs. 13.

ANALYSIS

- I. THE DISPUTE AND QUESTION, vs. 11.
 1. The Pharisees sought Him out.
 2. Disputed and sought a sign from heaven.
 3. This was only to justify themselves.
- II. THE DISAPPOINTMENT AND REFUSAL, vs. 12.
 1. Sighed deeply from the bottom of His heart.
 2. Why seek a sign when it is here.
 3. No sign such as you seek will be given.
- III. THE DEPARTURE, vs. 13.
 1. Left them.
 2. Once again sought seclusion to instruct His apostles.
 3. Sailed from Capernaum eastward.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. THE DISPUTE AND QUESTION.

"11. *The Pharisees came forth, and began to question with him.*—i.e. came out from their homes when they heard that he was there. By some it is assumed that he went beyond Dalmanutha to Capernaum, and that this interview took place there; but the intension of both evangelists apparently was to tell what happened almost as he had landed. Hence these were in all probability Pharisees of Dalmanutha. Matthew associates Sadducees with them.—*Seeking of him a sign from heaven.* See similar requests in John 2:18; Matt. 12:38; John 6:30, all previous to this. What they asked for was something like the manna (so, expressly, in John 6:31), or thunder from a clear sky (1 Sam. 12:18), or fire from heaven, such as came to Elijah (1 Kings 18), or the signs of Joel 2:30, 31. There was a popular impression that, although miracles upon the earth might be spurious and deceptive, signs from heaven could not be counterfeited. It was expected that they would accompany the coming of the Messiah, and therefore Jesus was repeatedly asked to fulfill this expectation. If he

was the Christ, they thought he would certainly be able and willing, and even anxious, to give this proof of his claim.—But they were *tempting him*, nevertheless—i.e., as in Matt. 19:3 and Mark 12:13, they were trying to entangle him, to his own injury with the people. They knew well enough that he would not give them a sign from heaven; all the Pharisees in Galilee must have known the great refusal recorded in Matt. 12:39 and the more recent one of John 6. He would not give them the sign, but by repeatedly calling for it they might discredit his claims with the people, who expected it of the Messiah. Since they themselves hated him, they must take all measures to prevent Israel from supposing its hopes to be fulfilled in him; so they would play upon false hopes and studiously repress all spiritual expectations. This was his welcome when he landed again on the soil of Galilee. He had been absent long enough to allow calm thought about him, and had now returned after a few days of gracious working just across the lake. This was his reception—the old wearisome demand of spiritual blindness: *Give us a sign from heaven.*”

II. THE DISAPPOINTMENT AND REFUSAL.

“12. At human misery he sighed (chap. 7:34); at human sin amounting to criminal inability to discern the truth he *sighed deeply in his spirit*.—a touch of personal remembrance peculiar to Mark. This deep sigh, or groan, was the sign of the chafing of his spirit against spiritual barriers. To the physically deaf he could say “Ephphatha,” but not to these spiritually hardened and self-imprisoned Pharisees. What voice could reach them? When the rich young man departed sorrowful, he pointed his disciples to the brighter side, saying, “With God all things are possible.” But in the case of these proud and hardened men he could only sigh, for the gates of spiritual possibility seemed closed.—*Why doth this generation seek after a sign? This generation*, the men of his time, who had the opportunity to know him—why should they ask for a sign? If there was no spiritual recognition of him, the case was hopeless; signs would teach them nothing. He himself was the true Sign from heaven, the living Witness to the present God. If they did not see that he was in the Father and the Father in him, their blindness must remain. Therefore he told them, with his emphatic *verily I say unto you*, that no sign should be given them.—In Matthew three additions are placed here, all exceedingly significant: (1) He contrasts their quickness in detecting signs of coming changes of weather with their slowness in discerning spiritual signs. (2) He traces their lack of perception of a present God to spiritual adultery. The prophets represent Israel as the wife of Jehovah, and often as the unfaithful and adulterous wife. This generation, says Jesus, is thus adulterous; it has broken faith with God, and has become carnal and

unloving. Therefore it has lost all spiritual sense and consciousness of him, and, instead of discerning his holy presence in him whom he hath sent, must be asking for visible signs and portents to certify his nearness. But for the spiritual adultery there would be felt no need of signs. (3) "There shall be no sign given but the sign of the prophet Jonah," of which he had before spoken (Matt. 12:39,40), and which he seems to have wished to keep in their sight as a suggestive lesson, which might possibly awaken some right questionings in their hearts."

III. THE DEPARTURE.

"13. Disheartened and repelled by this reception in "his own country," he abruptly turned back, without going on, as it appears, to Capernaum, and re-embarked to return to the eastern shore. It is little to say that he must have gone in sadness. "He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." We should greatly misread his life if we interpreted such language almost entirely in the light of his latest sufferings. He felt the grief of rejection, not merely as a personal wrong, but more as the rejection of God and goodness and of saving love. Bringing the message of infinite mercy, he must have longed to be accepted; and it could not be other than a constant grief to him that "he came to his own, and his own received him not."

Not more than a few hours at the most does he appear to have remained on the western shore, and now he is again afloat on the lake with his disciples, setting out on another journey alone with them, not to return until they have visited the region of Caesarea Philippi." (*W. N. Clarke*)

FACT QUESTIONS 8:11-13

425. From where did the Pharisees (and Saducees) come?—how soon did they come?
426. Explain just what kind of sign these Pharisees wanted.
427. Did they actually expect a sign? Why ask?
428. How was their spiritual blindness indicated?
429. What two things caused Jesus to sigh?
430. Show how the rich young ruler had more promise than these men.
431. What was the true sign they failed to recognize?
432. What three additional facts are given by Matthew?
433. Show how this incident fulfills John 1:10.

SUMMARY

7:24—8:13

This section contains an account of three more remarkable miracles—the expulsion of a demon from the Gentile woman's daughter; the restoration of speech and hearing to the deaf stammerer; and the feeding of four thousand men with seven barley loaves and a few small fishes. By

these the divine power of Jesus is once more exhibited. The section also exhibits the tenderness of his compassion in his dealing with the Gentile woman and the hungry multitude, and his judicial indignation against hypocrisy in his conversation with the Pharisees. These are attributes of character which, though they do not prove their possessor to have been superhuman, are necessary to that perfection of character which must be found in the Son of God.—*McGarvey*.

5. WARNING AGAINST THE LEAVEN OF THE PHARISEES.

8:14-21

TEXT 8:14-21

"And they forgot to take bread; and they had not in the boat with them more than one loaf. And he charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod. And they reasoned one with another, saying, We have no bread. And Jesus perceiving it saith unto them, Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? do you not perceive, neither understand? have ye your heart hardened? Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember? When I brake the five loaves among the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces took ye up? They say unto him, Twelve. And when the seven among the four thousand, how many basketfuls of broken pieces took ye up? And they say unto him, Seven. And he said unto them, Do ye not yet understand?"

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 8:14-21

358. Why does Mark mention the fact that they had forgotten to take bread?
386. Why mention at this time "the leaven of the Pharisees"?
387. Define in your own words: The leaven of the Pharisees—the leaven of Herod.
388. Why connect the word leaven with the subject of bread?
389. How did Jesus know of the reasoning of their hearts?
390. Note please the three questions of Jesus in vs. 17—discuss each one as they relate to the apostles—as they relate to us today.
391. Distinguish between the use of the eyes—ears—memory in the process of understanding.
392. Why refer to the feeding of the 5,000 and the 4,000?
393. Do you believe the apostles did understand after Jesus rebuked them?

COMMENT

TIME—Summer A.D. 29.

PLACE—On the lake of Galilee.

PARALLEL ACCOUNT—Matt. 16:5-12.

OUTLINE—1. Forgot to take bread on their trip, vs. 14. 2. Jesus said:

"beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Herod," vs. 15. 3. The disciples thought He referred to their supply of bread, vs. 16. 4. Jesus rebuked them for their lack of spiritual perception, vs. 17, 18. 5. "Why worry about physical bread when I fed 5,000 & 4,000 with a few loaves"? vs. 19, 20. 6. Do you now see *I* refer to something more important than physical bread?, vs. 21.

ANALYSIS

- I. FORGOT TO TAKE BREAD ON THEIR TRIP, vs. 14.
 1. Left in haste.
 2. Had with them in the boat only one loaf.
- II. JESUS SAID: "BEWARE OF THE LEAVEN OF THE PHARISEES AND HEROD," vs. 15.
 1. This was given as an order.
 2. This was given as a warning.
- III. THE DISCIPLES THOUGHT HE REFERRED TO THEIR SUPPLY OF BREAD, vs. 16.
 1. They reasoned or conversed among themselves as to what He meant.
 2. They agreed He must have reference to buying bread from their enemies.
 3. But then this is no danger because we have no bread.
- IV. JESUS REBUKED THEM FOR THEIR LACK OF SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION, vs. 17, 18.
 1. He read their minds.
 2. Why are you worried about your bread supply?; what I have said does not refer to your bread.
 3. Are you still void of depth?
 4. Are you yet without understanding?
 5. Is your heart stone?
 6. What has happened to the eyes, ears, and memory of your heart?
- V. WHY WORRY ABOUT PHYSICAL BREAD WHEN I FED 5,000 AND 4,000 WITH A FEW LOAVES? vs. 19, 20.
 1. When I fed the 5,000 how many baskets were left over?—12.
 2. And how many for the 4,000?—7.
- VI. DO YOU NOW SEE I REFER TO SOMETHING MORE IMPORTANT THAN PHYSICAL BREAD? vs. 21.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

- I. FORGOT TO TAKE BREAD ON THEIR TRIP.

"14. The neglect to take a supply of bread was doubtless the result of their haste in again setting out; and, in that view of the matter, Jesus himself was responsible for it, since he had hurried them away."

understand him well enough to escape such an idea. Here was indeed the unspiritual heart, upon which the spiritual thought seemed almost wasted. More than in the case of his townsmen at Nazareth, he "marvelled because of their unbelief." If Christian teachers find even their brethren slow of perception in spiritual things, they may hear their Master saying to them, in the spirit of John 15:18, "Ye know that they misunderstood me before they misunderstood you."

VI. DO YOU NOW SEE I REFER TO SOMETHING MORE IMPORTANT THAN PHYSICAL BREAD?

"21. In Matthew the final question, "Do ye not yet understand?" is expanded into a direct intimation that the warning did not refer to bread. Matthew adds also that they did at last perceive that he was warning them against the teaching or the principles of the Pharisees and Sadducees. But it is quite certain that they did not take in his full meaning, and that when the subject was dropped he knew that his utterance had not reached its aim. He had had to expend the energy that might have been given to the work of enforcing an idea in the vain effort to get it apprehended, and then to withdraw baffled by the unreceptiveness of his hearers. It was not his method to urge truth upon them faster than they were able to receive it. John 16:12 illustrates his real method: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now."—Observe, again, the distinct reference in these questions to the two separate miracles of feeding—a reference which cannot possibly be removed from the passage without utterly destroying one of the most vivid and self-witnessing scenes in the whole Gospel narrative. Observe, again, too, that in referring here to the first miracle Jesus employs the word *cophinus* in mentioning the baskets, and in referring to the second the word *spuris*, preserving the very distinction that has been made in the two narratives of Mark." (*W. N. Clarke*)

FACT QUESTIONS 8:14-21

434. Who was responsible for the lack of food?
435. What definite indications of an eye-witness do we have in this section?
436. Are we to conclude that Herod was a Sadducee from Matthew's reference to the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees? What are we to conclude?
437. Please explain the distinctive influence of each of these groups; (1) Pharisees (2) Sadducees (3) Herodians.
438. How does the request for a sign from heaven relate to this warning of Jesus?
439. As they reasoned among themselves what conclusion did they form?

440. What is it that testifies to the "absolute originality and truthfulness of the record"?
 441. Why was Jesus so sharp with the disciples?
 442. What particular attitude in the hearts of the disciples disappointed Jesus the most?
 443. When the subject was dropped was Jesus satisfied that His teaching was understood? Discuss.
 444. How is the use of the two words for "baskets" as used in this record an indication of two incidents of feeding the multitudes?
6. HEALING THE BLIND MAN OF BETHSAIDA 8:22-26

TEXT 8:22-26

"And they come unto Bethsaida. And they bring to him a blind man, and beseech him to touch him. And they took hold of the blind man by the hand, and brought him out of the village; and when he had spit on his eyes, and laid his hands upon him, he asked him, Seest thou aught? And he looked up, and said, I see men; for I behold them as trees, walking. Then again he laid his hands upon his eyes; and he looked stedfastly, and was restored, and saw all things clearly. And he sent him away to his home, saying, Do not even enter into the village."

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 8:22-26

394. Please locate Bethsaida on the map.
395. Who brought the blind man to Jesus?
396. What is meant by the word "beseech"?
397. Why lead the blind man out of the village?
398. Did Jesus actually spit upon the eyes of the blind man? for what purpose?
399. Is this an example of a progressive healing? Discuss.
400. There must have been some purpose in the two stages of the healing—what was it?
401. Did the blind man have faith in order to be healed?
402. Why send the man who was healed away?

COMMENT

TIME—Summer A.D. 29.

PLACE—Bethsaida Julias, on the east bank of the Jordan River where it flows into the Lake of Galilee.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS—only in Mark.

OUTLINE—1. A blind man brought to Jesus, vs. 22. 2. The blind man led out of the city for healing, vs. 23a. 3. Two stages of healing, 23b-25. 4. Sent home, vs. 26.

ANALYSIS

I. A BLIND MAN BROUGHT TO JESUS, vs. 22.

1. They were in Bethsaida Julias.

2. An urgent request made for healing.

II. THE BLIND MAN LED OUT OF THE CITY FOR HEALING, VS. 23A.

1. Jesus led him by the hand.
2. Away from the multitude so the healing would teach the lesson intended.

III. TWO STAGES OF HEALING, 23B-25.

1. Spat on his eyes and laid his hands upon him.
2. Asked: "Do you see anything"?
3. He looked up and saw the disciples in an indistinct manner.
4. Jesus laid his hands upon his eyes—he looked intently and saw clearly.

IV. SENT HOME, VS. 26.

1. He was not from Bethsaida.
2. He was refused permission to return to Bethsaida—sent directly home.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. A BLIND MAN BROUGHT TO JESUS.

"22. Mark here records a miracle not given in the other gospels, one of the very few passages entirely peculiar to him. His reason for inserting it cannot be merely that it followed the dialogue above recorded (vs. 14-21); for he often omits multitudes of miracles in writing of the periods to which they belong. So far as his design can be conjectured, it was probably to illustrate and exemplify still further our Lord's variety of method in the working of his cures, by stating a case (perhaps the only one) in which the cure was gradual. *He cometh*, or, according to the older manuscripts, *they come*, i.e. Jesus and his company, the twelve apostles and perhaps some others who attended him from place to place. *To* (or into) *Bethsaida*, or, as a few copies have it, *Bethany*, an obvious error of transcription, probably occasioned by the resemblance of the names, both which are compounded with the Hebrew *beth* (a house or place.) *Bethsaida* is supposed by some to be the town so called in Galilee, the birthplace of Andrew and Peter (John 1, 44); but the best interpreters and highest geographical authorities understand it of Bethsaida in Perea, on the north-east shore of the lake in a solitude near which (or belonging to it) the five thousand were fed. This Bethsaida was distinguished from the other by its Greek or Roman name, *Julias*, which it bore in honour of a daughter of Augustus. *They*, indefinitely, some men, certain persons, otherwise unknown; or more specifically, the man's relatives, friends, neighbours. A *blind (man)*, not one born blind (as in John 9:1), for he knew the shape of trees (see below, on v. 24), but blinded by disease or accident. *Besought*, in Greek *beseech*, the graphic or descriptive present being still continued. *To touch him*, literally, *that*

he would (or still more closely, so that, in order that, he might) *touch him*. These words in the original rather state the motive than the substance of the prayer, a nicety of form without effect upon the meaning yet entitled to attention as an illustration of the difference of idiom. This specific prayer is not a sign of strong but rather of deficient or contracted faith, assuming contact to be necessary to the cure, an error which our Saviour did not think it necessary in the present instance either to reprove or correct."

II. THE BLIND MAN LED OUT OF THE CITY FOR HEALING.

"23b. *And taking*, laying hold upon, *the hand of the blind (man)*, which in the order of the words in the original, although the construction in the version is grammatical and justified by usage; the sense of course remains the same in either case. *He led him forth out* (or *outside*) *of the village*, a term applied with considerable latitude to towns of every size. Out is twice expressed in Greek, once by the compound verb, and once by the adverbial preposition. The reason of this movement has been variously conjectured; some supposing an intention to express displeasure towards the people of the town for reasons now unknown; others a desire to be uninterrupted in the process which was more than commonly protracted. But these and other explanations, which need not be stated, assume that Mark intended to describe this and the following proceedings on our Lord's part as having a distinct significance, whereas he rather means to show how far he was from following a fixed routine, or countenancing the idea that a certain outward form was necessary to the curative effect. Against this error he provided by sometimes doing more, sometimes less, sometimes nothing, in the way of gesture or manipulation, and of all these methods we have instances recorded in the book before us."

III. TWO STAGES OF HEALING.

"23b-25. *Having spit on* (or rather *into*) *his eyes*, which some regard as a medicinal appliance, healing virtue being ascribed to the human saliva by *Tacitus*, *Suetonius*, *Pliny*, and in various dicta of the Talmud. Others find a symbolical meaning in the transfer of something from the person of the healer to the person of the healed. But the necessity of these conjectures is precluded by the view of the matter just suggested. *And putting* (laying or imposing) *hands upon him*, as had been requested by his friends (vs. 22). *Asked*; interrogated, questioned. *If he saw* (literally, *sees*, another instance of the graphic present) *ought*, an old word, not yet wholly obsolete, for anything. This pause, as it were, in the midst of the cure, to ask him as to its effect, is so unlike the usual immediate restoration, that it may be confidently reckoned as at least one reason for Mark's giving a detailed account of this case.

And looking up, raising his eyes, trying to use them. The particle with which the Greek verb is compounded sometimes denotes upward motion, sometimes repetition. Hence the verb itself may either mean to *look up* or to *see again*, but the latter, though preferred by some interpreters, is a less natural anticipation of what follows in the next verse. The sensations of the blind man, on his first attempt to see again, are strangely but expressively described in his own language, the peculiarity of which, however, is exaggerated to the English reader by an equivocal construction, quite unknown to the original, and only partially removed by careful punctuation in the version. It is probably one of the most common and inveterate misapprehensions of a scriptural expression, that the participle *walking* here agrees with *trees*, and that the blind man intended to describe his partially restored sight by saying that the men around him were like walking trees. But in Greek there is and can be no such ambiguity, the concord being there determined, not by the position of the words, which is far more free and discretionary than with us, but by their form or termination, which distinguishes their gender and requires *walking* to agree with *men*, and *trees* to be taken by itself without any qualifying epithet. The word *men* also has the article which shows it to mean not men in general, but *the men* who were passing or at hand, perhaps the twelve apostles; for although he led him out of town, it is not said that they were unaccompanied, or that the place to which he brought him was a solitude. This meaning therefore of the clause, according to the common or received text, is, *I see the men walking about as trees*, i.e. undefined in form and figure. Except by their motions, which were those of men, he could not distinguish them from trees. It is remarkable however that the oldest manuscripts almost without exception have another reading, which appears to give the patient's words more fully. *I behold men because as trees I see (them) walking*. This is an awkward sentence, it is true, but not on that account less likely to have been pronounced on this occasion, while its very awkwardness may possibly have led to its abbreviation in the later copies. The weight of manuscript authority in favour of this reading is confirmed by its internal fitness, as a broken expression of surprise and joy, beginning with a sudden exclamation, *I see the men!* then qualifying or explaining it by adding, *because* (that is, at least), *as trees I see (them) walking*.

Then, afterwards, or in the next place, a Greek particle often employed to separate the items in an enumeration, and intended here to mark distinctly the successive stages of the healing process, an effect secured still further by the word *again*, which is the next in the original though not in the translation. As if he had said, having gone thus far and partially restored the man's sight, he proceeded in the next place to

impose his hands upon the eyes themselves, as he had previously done upon some other part, perhaps the head. It is possible indeed that even in the former instance he had laid his hands upon his eyes, but this is a less natural construction of the language, *spitting in his eyes and laying his hands on him*, where the mention of the eyes in one clause and of the person in the other, favours, though it may not peremptorily require, the former explanation. *Made him*, caused him, i.e. in this case both required and enabled him. *Look up, or see again*, the same two sense of the verb that are admissible in the verse preceeding. If the latter be adopted here, the meaning of the phrase is, that he *caused him to receive his sight*; if the former, that he *caused him to look up*, or try to see, on which he found his sight restored completely. The only objection to the first construction is that the restoration of his sight is then distinctly stated three times, whereas on the other supposition, it is only stated once, the other two expressions being then descriptive of the effort or experiment by which the patient was assured first of partial then of total restoration. He looked up once and saw men like trees; he looked up again and saw them clearly. *Was restored to* (reinstated in) his sound or normal state, another term implying that he was not born blind, *Every (man) or all (things)*, as the Greek may be either masculine and singular, or neuter and plural. Another reading, found in some editions, removes the ambiguity by making it both masculine and plural, *(all men)*, which may then be understood to mean specifically all those whom he saw before *as trees* (but) *walking*. Clearly, an expressive Greek word which originally means *farsightedly*, in opposition to near (or short) sight, although here, as in the classics it may have the wider secondary sense expressed in the translation and opposed to the dimness of his sight when only partially recovered."

IV. SENT HOME.

"26. *And he sent him away into his house* (or *to his house*), which was not in the town or village, as appears from the ensuing prohibition. The modern philologists deny that the Greek particle repeated here ever corresponds to *neither . . . nor* in English, as expressing an alternative originally present to the speaker's mind; and one of them explains the first to mean *not even*, and the last *nor even*. 'Do not even go into the village, nor so much as speak to any (person) in the village.' The supposed inconsistency of these two precepts, or at least the superfluousness of the last, as he could not tell it in the town unless he went there, has produced no less than ten variations in the text of this clause, all intended to remove the incongruity, and therefore all to be rejected as mere glosses. This may serve to show by a remarkable example the extraordinary principle, on which the ancient copyists frequently pro-

ceeded, of deciding what the writer should have said, instead of simply telling what he did say. To this single error may be traced a large proportion of existing variations in the text of the New Testament, most of which happily have never become current, but are found exclusively in certain copies or at most in certain families or classes of manuscripts. This erroneous principle or practice is the more to be condemned as the necessity of emendation is in almost every case imaginary. In the one before us, for example, the supposed incongruity arises from the strict fidelity with which the very words of Christ (or their equivalents) are here reported just as he pronounced them, not in a rhetorical or rounded period, but in short successive clauses, the natural form of a peremptory order. The man having just been brought out of the town, though not residing there, would naturally think of going back to tell and show what had been done to him. But this our Lord, for reasons which have often been explained before, is determined to prevent by pointed positive directions, which, without a change of meaning, may be paraphrased as follows: 'Go home—go directly home—no, not into the town, but home—not even for an hour or a moment—do not go into the town at all—not even to tell what I have done—do not so much as speak to any person in the town—but go directly home.'" (*J. A. Alexander*)

FACT QUESTIONS 8:22-26

445. Since Mark is the only gospel writer to record this miracle what is his purpose in giving it?
446. There is some question as to which Bethsaida is involved here—why?
447. Who brought the blind man?
448. Do you believe the blind man had partial sight before Jesus touched him? Discuss.
449. What conclusion do you have for the reason of leading the blind man out of the city?
450. Why spit into the eyes of the blind man?
451. Why did Jesus ask the blind man if he could see?
452. Just what did the blind man say?—what did he see?
453. After Jesus place His hands upon the blind man the second time did He make him look up or did the blind man do this of his own will?
454. Verse 26 is a remarkable example of the mistake of copyist—explain.

7. JESUS THE MESSIAH 8:27—9:1

TEXT 8:27—9:1

"And Jesus went forth, and his disciples, into the villages of Caesarea Philippi: and in the way he asked his disciples, saying unto them, Whom do men say that I am? And they told him, saying, John the Baptist: and others, Elijah; but others, One of the prophets. And he asked them, But whom say ye that I am? Peter answereth and saith unto him, Thou

art the Christ. And he charged them that they should tell no man of him. And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders, and the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. And he spake the saying openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him. But he turning about, and seeing his disciples, rebuked Peter, and saith, Get thee behind me Satan; for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men. And he called unto him the multitude with his disciples, and said unto them, If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever would save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's shall save it. For what doth it profit a man, to gain the whole world, and forfeit his life? For what should a man give in exchange for his life? For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of man also shall be ashamed of him, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels. And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There be some here of them that stand by, which shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God come with power."

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 8:27—9:1

403. How far from Bethsaida to Caesarea Philippi? Please locate on the map.
404. Why ask the disciples of the opinion of others? What meaning is there in the name Jesus applied to Himself? Cf. Matt. 16:13, 14?
405. How would Jesus meet the designations given concerning Him—i.e. in what way was He like John the Baptist?; like Elijah?; like one of the prophets?
406. Who thought Jesus was John the Baptist risen from the dead?
407. Show how appropriate this question was at this particular time in the life of Jesus.
408. What did Peter mean in his use of the name "Christ"?
409. Why doesn't Mark record the blessing pronounced by Christ upon Peter?
410. Define each of the three classes of persons referred to in vs. 31.
411. What is meant by the expression "He spake the saying openly"?
412. Please attempt an explanation of the attitude of Peter when he rebuked the Lord.
413. Why look at all the disciples and rebuke Peter? In what sense was Jesus *not* speaking to Peter?
414. Show the connection of denying self with the rebuke of Peter.
415. Define in your own words what it means to "take up his cross and follow . . ."

416. How do we attempt to save our life and in the process lose it?
 417. Specifically how can we lose our life for His sake? Please be personal and practical.
 418. How is the word "soul" or "life" used in vs. 36?
 419. Is Jesus saying a man has no real life or is not really living unless he is giving himself to His service?
 420. How does being ashamed of Jesus fit into this context?

COMMENT

TIME—Summer of A.D. 29. From six to eight months before the Lord's Crucifixion.

PLACE—In the neighborhood of Caesarea Philippi, about thirty miles northeast of Capernaum and the Sea of Galilee. It was upon the upper sources of the Jordan, the largest of the three streams that unite to form the river springing from a fountain near Caesarea Philippi. *Professor McGarvey* says: The city of Caesarea Philippi stood at the northeastern curve of the upper Jordan valley, and about twenty-six miles north of the lake of Galilee. Mountains 2,000 feet high rise abruptly from the eastern side of it, while the snow covered summit of Mt. Hermon, 9,000 feet high, swells heavenward but a few miles north of it. Its earliest name known to us was Paneas, so called in honor of the god Pan, and on or near its side Herod the Great erected a temple in honor of Augustus Caesar. Afterward Philip the Tetrarch, to whom Herod gave the district at his death, rebuilt the old town, and called it Caesarea Philippi in honor of himself and Tiberius Caesar. The city is now in ruins, but the wall can be traced on every side, and in some points on the east and south sides it is standing at almost its original height. Just outside the northeastern angle of the wall is the famous spring which is one of the three principal sources of the Jordan.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS—Matt. 16:13-28; Luke 9:18-27.

LESSON OUTLINE—1. The Good Confession. 2. The Cross of Christ. 3. Losing and Finding Life.

ANALYSIS

I. THE GOOD CONFESSION, vs. 27-30.

1. Christ at Caesarea Philippi. Mark 8:27; Matt. 16:13; Luke 9:18.
2. Opinions of Christ. Mark 8:28; Matt. 16:14; Luke 9:19; John 6:69.
3. Peter's Confession. Mark 8:29; Matt. 16:16.

II. THE CROSS OF CHRIST, vs. 31-34.

1. The Prophecy of the Cross. Mark 8:31; Matt. 16:21; 17:22; Luke 9:22.
2. Peter Rebuked. Mark 8:32, 33; Matt. 16:22, 23.
3. Bearing the Cross. Mark 8:34; Matt. 16:24; Luke 9:23.

III. LOSING AND FINDING LIFE, VS. 35 TO 9:1.

1. The Way to Save Life. Mark 8:35; Matt. 16:25; Luke 9:24.
2. Gain or Loss. Mark 8:36, 37; Matt. 16:26; Luke 9:25.
3. Ashamed of the Cross. Mark 8:38; Luke 9:26; Rom. 1:16.
4. Coming in the Kingdom. Mark 9:1; Matt. 16:28; Luke 9:27.

INTRODUCTION

It was after our Lord had closed his public ministry in Galilee, and while he was seeking retirement in order to communicate special instruction in the principles of his kingdom to the apostles, who were to succeed in his work, that he gave the great lesson concerning the foundation on which he would found his church, and the lesson on consecration and self-denial that its extension in the world requires. Here begins the second great division of the Savior's ministry, a period that leads directly to his sufferings and death. The first period culminated in the confession of Peter; the second in the cross and resurrection.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. THE GOOD CONFESSION.—27. *Jesus went out, and his disciples. Went out* is the word regularly used in this gospel when a departure from one scene of work to another is notified. In this case, our Lord, leaving the district in which he had hitherto been chiefly working, proceeded in a northeasterly direction along the valley of the Upper Jordan. *And his disciples.* Their presence is here mentioned expressly, calling attention to the object of a journey through a district to a great extent heathen, and lately traversed, viz., their special instruction (Mark 9:31). *Into the towns.* Away from the populous cities The solitude of the beautiful district, wither the Savior now journeyed, is illustrated by the fact that it is the only district in Palestine where a recent traveller found the pelican of the wilderness (Ps. 102:6). *Caesarea Philippi.* A city at the northeast extremity of Palestine and at the foot of Mount Lebanon, anciently called Paneas, and now Banias. It has now about fifty houses, many ruins of columns, towers, temples, a bridge, and a remarkable castle. *And by the way.* His conversation by the way: (1) The turn it often took when the disciples were left to themselves—disputes concerning greatness, etc. (2) The turn Christ gave to it—inquirings concerning his mission and person. Learn: (1), Avoid foolish and worldly talk; (2), Improve passing opportunities; (3), Let your talk be often about the Savior.—*Biblical Museum. Whom do men say that I am?* The following conversation refers to three points: (1) The Christ. (2) The suffering Christ. (3) The disciples of the suffering Christ. The object of this first question is evidently to prepare the way for the next. The inquiry was not concerning the opinions of the Scribes and Rabbis, but concerning the opinions of the people.

28. *And they answered.* As Jesus had not openly declared that he was the Messiah, but had allowed men to hear his surpassing wisdom and see his life and works and draw their own conclusions, there would naturally be various opinions. *John the Baptist.* Who had been killed by Herod a few months before, now restored to life. That was one popular notion regarding him, circulating, no doubt, chiefly among those who had never seen him. Herod Antipas entertained it (chap. 6:16). *Elias.* The great ideal of a prophet and spiritual reformer. It was very generally expected that he was to return to the earth in connection with the Messiah's advent (Mal. 4, 5).—*Morison.* *One of the prophets.* The Jews believed that at the coming of the Messiah the prophets were to rise again. They did not declare their belief in him as the Messiah himself, doubtless for this reason, that the whole ministry of Christ appeared to them to stand in contradiction to their Messianic expectations.

29. *Whom say ye that I am?* He had never openly spoken of his Messiahship. It was his will that the revelation should dawn gradually on the minds of his children; that it should spring more from the truths he spake, and the life he lived, than from the wonders which he wrought. It was *in the Son of man* that they were to recognize *the Son of God*.—*Farrar.* The time was come when it was of the greatest moment that they should have a settled conception of his real character and mission. *And Peter answereth.* With that honest readiness and impulsiveness which were so characteristic of his nature, and which fitted him for being a leader of the little circle.—*Morison.* *Thou art the Christ;* Matthew adds, *the Son of the living God.* This confession not only sees in Jesus the promised Messiah, but in the Messiah recognizes the divine nature.—*Cambridge Bible.* The confession of Peter is the first fundamental Christian confession of faith, and the germ of the Apostles' Creed.—*Lange.* It was a decisive answer, and given as out of a higher inspiration. The Lord himself, as we learn from Matt. 16:17, traced the thought to its divine source. And yet it was, no doubt, founded on evidence which the disciple had diligently studied, and logically construed to his own inner satisfaction. The Lord in the passage in Matthew declares that the grand truth confessed by Peter is the rock on which his church shall be built. By faith in this truth men become disciples of Christ and members of his church.

30. *Charged them that they should tell no man.* The time had not yet come to proclaim that he was the Christ. To do so prematurely would result in harm rather than good. He must first demonstrate his Messiahship by his resurrection.

II. THE CROSS OF CHRIST.—31. *He began to teach them . . . must suffer many things.* The great lesson of our two years of his ministry

was that he was the Christ; after this had been learned by his apostles they were ready to be taught he must die a violent death. So from this time onward we find him speaking more and more plainly of the "decease which he must accomplish." The supreme purpose of his advent was not to teach truth, nor to work miracles, nor to illustrate the perfection of manly character, but to die, to die for sinners, to bear their sins in his own body on the tree. *Rejected of the elders, chief priests and scribes.* The three constituents of the Sanhedrim. The elders (leading men) would be chosen because of their material and political influence; the high priests, because of their elevated ecclesiastical position; the scribes, because of their literary and rabbinical qualifications. Now, for the first time, the disciples received full and clear information of the sufferings and death of Christ.

32. *And he spake that saying openly.* Without reserve, publicly. The previous statements respecting this subject, made by our Lord, were expressed in figurative language.—*Godwin.* *And Peter began to rebuke him.* The same Peter who but just now had made so noble and spiritual a confession, and received so high a blessing, now shows the weak and carnal side of his character. This world has many Peters, who wish to be wiser than Christ, and to prescribe to him what it is needful to do.

33. *Turned about and looked on his disciples.* A sudden movement is indicated. Looking at all, he singles out Peter for special warning. *Rebuked Peter, saying Get thee behind me, Satan.* Christ saw, with the lightning glance of his spirit, in the words of Peter a suggestion not so much of his as of Satan's. This is the very temptation that fell from the lips of Satan in the wilderness when he offered to surrender the kingdoms of this world to Jesus without his suffering on the cross. The Lord when he says, with sudden vehemence, "Get thee behind me Satan!" was not speaking directly to Peter but to the prince of darkness, who had for a moment taken possession of Peter's mind and lips. Peter had been greatly elated over the Messiahship of Jesus, but still expected an earthly king Messiah after the type of David, in whose kingdom he would have a great place. To hear the Lord talk of the cross was a cruel disappointment to his ambitious hopes.

III. LOSING AND FINDING LIFE.—34. *When he had called the people unto him.* The great lesson of his Christhood and death on the cross had been given to the apostles alone. Now the throng and his disciples are united and the Lord teaches a grand truth that springs directly from what had occurred just before. *Will come after me.* Will become my disciple. There was an eagerness among many of the people to "come after him." The wistfulness of a considerable proportion of the northern population had been awakened. They were ruminating anxiously on Old Testament

predictions, and filled with vague expectancy. *Let him deny himself.* The word is strong in the original—"let him deny himself off, let him entirely renounce himself." Let him be prepared to say "no" to many of the strongest cravings of his nature, in the direction more particularly of earthly ease, comfort, dignity and glory. Our common thoughts of "self-denial," i.e., the denial to ourselves of some pleasure or profit, fall far short of the meaning of the Greek. The man is to deny his whole self, all his natural motives and impulses, so far as they come into conflict with the claims of Christ. *And take up his cross.* Even as the Lord would take up his cross at Jerusalem. So every disciple must "crucify the old man," his selfish nature (Rom. 6:6), give up his old life, and become dead to it. The cross is the pain of the self-denial required in the preceding words. The cross is the "symbol of doing our duty, even at the cost of the most painful death." Christ obeyed God, and carried out his work for the salvation of men, though it required him to die upon the cross in order to do it. And ever since, the cross has stood as the emblem, not of suffering, but of suffering for the sake of Christ and his gospel as the highest ideal of obedience to God at any and every cost. *Follow me.* Obey and imitate Christ.

35. *Whosoever will save his life.* Whoever makes this the end will lose life. A great principle is stated. All self-seeking is self-losing. Even in spiritual things, he who is perpetually studying how to secure joy and peace for himself loses it. A certain measure of self-forgetfulness is the condition of the highest success, even in Christian grace. *But whosoever shall lose his life.* In the sphere of the present. *For my sake, and the gospel's.* It is only loss for the sake of Christ that has this promise. Multitudes of people lose their lives for gain, for pleasure, for fashion. Each of these has more martyrs than the cross ever required; but the loss was without compensation or hope. But whosoever loses for the love of Christ, for the sake of preaching and advancing the gospel *shall save it*—shall have a blessedness and glory which will a thousand times compensate for every loss.

36. *What shall it profit a man?* This is one of the searching questions that the Scriptures are wont to throw out to arouse reflection. Let each student try to conscientiously answer this question and the one which follows.

37. *What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?* What would a man not give? If he had the whole world, would he not willingly give it, provided he really knew, believed, or felt, that otherwise he would be utterly lost? The Saviour has gone forward in thought, and taken his standpoint in eternity. It is from that standpoint that he puts the question.

38. *Shall be ashamed of me and of my words.* As many would be

prone to be. The temptation to *shame*, in reference to the Savior and the Savior's sayings or doctrines, continues to the present day, and is pervading society to the core, even in countries called Christian. It is one of the severest temptations which young converts have to encounter. The anticipation of it is one of the mightiest motives to keep men away from conversion, and on the other side of Christian faith and fealty. *This adulterous and sinful generation*. Adulterous here, as in the Old Testament, means "unfaithful to God." *When he cometh*, etc. The glorious coming to judge the world when all nations shall appear before him.

9:1 *Some of them that stand here, etc.* The allusion to the final coming of the kingdom of Christ in power which took place on the day of Pentecost. The day of Pentecost, when the descent of the Spirit took place, marks the beginning of "the dispensation of the Spirit," "the new economy," or the kingdom of righteousness. Its consummation will be seen when all souls shall be converted to righteousness and Jesus shall come.

FACT QUESTIONS 8:27—9:1

455. Give three facts about Caesarea Philippi.
456. The verses before us begin what great division in our Lord's ministry?
457. What area of public ministry concludes with the eighth chapter?
458. What was the purpose of our Lord in going into the district of Caesarea Philippi?
459. Give three lessons we can learn in the example of our Lord.
460. Did Jesus want the opinions of the scribes and rabbis? Why not?
461. Show how Mal. 4:5 helped form the opinion of some.
462. Show how "the whole ministry of Christ appeared to them to stand in contradiction to their Messianic expectation?"
463. "It was in the Son of man that they were to recognize the _____ of _____."
464. The confession of Peter sees in Jesus the Messiah but even more—what was it?
465. The confession of Peter had both a human and divine origin—explain.
466. How was Jesus going to demonstrate His Messiahship?
467. It took two years to teach one great truth—what was it? What was the second great truth to be taught in the next few months?
468. What was the supreme purpose of His advent?
469. Why choose the three classes mentioned in vs. 31? Do we have their counterpart today? Discuss.
470. What hurt Peter the most—the words that Jesus would be killed or being called Satan? Discuss.

471. Satan repeated his temptation to Jesus through the words of Peter—explain.
472. Were there many who wanted to follow Him? Who? Why? How?
473. Explain the strong meaning of "deny himself."
474. Discuss in your own words the meaning of "the cross" as here ascribed to every disciple.
475. Even in spiritual matters "he who would save his life shall lose it"—please apply.
476. Multitudes lose their lives—discuss two or three areas where this loss takes place—with no gain—only loss!
477. In what way do we save our life?
478. Isn't the use of the word "soul" in vs. 37 an unfortunate one?—it has a wider use than the eternal nature of man—Discuss.
479. How is the temptation to be ashamed overcome?
480. What is the fundamental error in being ashamed?

9. THE TRANSFIGURATION 9:2-8

TEXT 9:2-8

"And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart by themselves: and he was transfigured before them: and his garments became glistening, exceeding white; so as no fuller on earth can whiten them. And there appeared unto them Elijah with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus. And Peter answereth and saith to Jesus, Rabbi, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah. For he wist not what to answer; for they became sore afraid. And there came a cloud overshadowing them: and there came a voice out of the cloud. This is my beloved Son: hear ye him. And suddenly looking round about, they saw no one any more, save Jesus only with themselves."

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 9:2-8

421. Six days after what?
422. Was there some particular reason for taking three men? For taking these particular three?
423. What mountain? Please locate the previous events on the map.
424. Please attempt a definition of the word "transfiguration."
425. What caused his garments to become so bright?
426. In what form did Moses and Elijah appear? How did Peter, James and John know Moses and Elijah?
427. Read Matt. 17:1-8; Luke 9:28-36 and tell of the topic of their conversation.
428. What was the immediate reaction on Peter, James & John, to the appearance of Moses and Elijah? Why?

429. Why did Peter make the suggestion of building booths? Please notice that Mark gives the reason.
430. When did the cloud overshadow them? What type of a cloud was it? (Read the parallel accounts)
431. Who spoke out of the cloud? Cf. II Peter 1:16.
432. Why was this declaration concerning the Son made at this particular time? What did it mean to those who heard it?
433. Where were Peter, James & John when Moses and Elijah disappeared i.e. where were they physically? Cf. parallel accounts.
434. What prompted Peter, James and John to look around? Cf. Parallel accounts.

COMMENT

TIME—Summer A.D. 29.

PLACE—Uncertain—in the vicinity of Caesarea Philippi or Mt. Tabor—some think Mt. Hermon.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS—Matt. 17:1-8; Luke 9:28-36.

OUTLINE—1. The time and the participants, vs. 2. 2. The event, vs. 3. 3. The appearance of Moses and Elijah, vs. 4. 4. Peter's unthinking suggestion, vs. 5, 6. 5. The voice of God, vs. 7. 6. They saw no one save Jesus, vs. 8.

ANALYSIS

- I. THE TIME AND THE PARTICIPANTS, vs. 2.
 1. Six days after the events in Caesarea Philippi.
 2. Peter, James and John by themselves.
 3. Into a high mountain.
- II. THE EVENT, vs. 3.
 1. His garments became exceedingly white and glistening.
 2. This is called a transfiguration or a "metamorphosis" (vs. 25)
- III. THE APPEARANCE OF MOSES AND ELIJAH, vs. 4.
 1. Sudden, unexpected appearance.
 2. Moses and Elijah recognized.
 3. Talked with Jesus (about his coming death).
- IV. PETER'S UNTHINKING SUGGESTION, vs. 5, 6.
 1. Peter was greatly impressed.
 2. Let us build three memorials.
 3. He was so filled with awe he did not know what to say.
- V. THE VOICE OF GOD, vs. 7.
 1. A bright cloud covered them.
 2. The voice spoke out of the cloud—"This is my beloved Son: hear ye him."
- VI. THEY SAW NO ONE SAVE JESUS, vs. 8.
 1. The disappearance was sudden.

2. Jesus touched them as they were prostrate only then did they know Moses and Elijah had disappeared.

EXPANATORY NOTES

I. THE TIME AND THE PARTICIPANTS.

"2. *after six days.*) In the note on Matt. 17:1, it has been observed that these days were probably passed in the neighborhood of Caesarea Philippi. To the reasons there given, it may be added (1) There is no indication of a change of place: but Mark never omits to notice our Lord's arrival at, or departure from, any place; he has a regular formula for both "He came to," "He went forth," cf. chh. 1:14, 21, 35; 2:1, 13; 3:7; 4:35; 5:1; 6:1, 32, 53; 7:24, 31; 8:10, 13, 22, 27. The beginning of the journey to this district is distinctly marked in ch. 8:27, the termination in ch. 9:30. (2) The space of six days for the sojourn is not more than might be expected, considering the special object of our Lord's journey and the novelty and paramount importance of the truths which He there prepared the minds of His disciples to receive.

There is, therefore, little room for doubt as to the scene of the Transfiguration: Tabor being out of the question, it must have been some considerable height in the immediate vicinity. Not, however, as Dr. Thomson supposes, Mount Panium, a lower spur of the chain of heights, of which the summit would be within sight of the followers of Jesus. We read, "*He leadeth them up* (words which denote a steep and difficult ascent, such as Dr. Tristram describes in his visit to Lake Phiala) *to a high mountain.*" Which height cannot, of course, be determined; but, considering the special relation of Mount Hermon to Palestine, commanding a prospect over its whole extent, visible in its snowy splendour from every district, and bearing in mind the last view of Moses from a corresponding height over the promised land, we can scarcely resist the conclusion, to which late travellers and critics have been led, that the supernatural transaction took place on one of its loftiest peaks.

transfigured.) Literally, "He was changed in form." This may be illustrated by Phil. 2:6, "being in the form of God;" for the radiant form of the Transfiguration was an effulgence of the Divine glory."

II. THE EVENT

"3. *exceeding, white.*) St. Matthew, more forcibly, "as the light;" the pure, essential light of the Godhead.

as snow.) Possibly, as Dean Stanley suggests, a reference to the snow of Hermon; but the words are not found in the oldest MSS, and are properly omitted in late critical editions.

no fuller on earth.) The comparison may seem to modern ears some-

what strange; but it is just one which would have been used by Dante, who, like Mark, always endeavours to make his readers vividly realize objective facts. Mark, however, has a still higher aim; he would mark the difference between earthly and heavenly brightness. The "fuller on earth" restores material clothing to its natural whiteness; the heavenly Fuller gives perfect purity. Cf. Mal. 3:2."

III. THE APPEARANCE OF MOSES AND ELIJAH.

IV. PETER'S UNTHINKING SUGGESTION.

"6. *For he wist not,*) Luke has, "not knowing what he said." Our Evangelist adds the explanation; the words were spoken in bewilderment and great terror. Critics, therefore, are not justified in imputing to the apostle a weak or superstitious feeling, as though he held it fortunate that he and the other apostles were there to prepare tabernacles for the heavenly visitants, or that he expressed a desire to remain there, devoting his life to monastic contemplation, much less, as some have suggested, as though he were shrinking from the Cross. We have, at the most, a touch of nature: Peter then, as usual, seeking to give expression to his feelings in hasty outward action."

V. THE VOICE OF GOD.

"7. *that overshadowed.*) The cloud, as Matthew remarks, was bright; but brightness is the Divine veil. "His brightness was as the light; there was the hiding of His power."

my beloved Son.) Matthew adds, "in whom I am well pleased." So also Peter, in his second Epistle, ch. 1:17. It is not easy to account for the omission here."

VI. THEY SAW NO ONE SAVE JESUS.

"8. Here Mark omits to notice the coming and touch of Jesus, recorded by Matthew; but he has characteristic and graphic expressions, which may suggest both. *Suddenly*, as though startled by the touch of Jesus, *they looked round about*—a word almost peculiar to Mark, implying searching or curious look; and at the end of the verse Mark adds the touching words, "with themselves;" a preparation for His great promise, "I am with you always"—not, as then, for a season only, but to the end of time." (*F. C. Cook*)

FACT QUESTIONS 9:2-8

481. Give two reasons for concluding the six days were spent in the district or neighborhood of Caesarea Philippi.
482. Why does Mr. Cook seem to favor Mt. Hermon as the place of the transfiguration?

483. In what sense are we to understand Jesus was changed in form?
Cf. Phil. 2:6.
484. Why the detailed and repeated reference to the appearance of His clothes?
485. Why do some critics feel Peter was weak or superstitious? Explain.
486. Why mention the brightness of the cloud?
487. Isn't the pleasure of the Father inferred even though not stated?
i.e. in the omission of the words "In whom I am well pleased"?
488. What does the word used by Mark—translated "looked round about" suggest?

10. THE DISCIPLES ASK ABOUT ELIJAH. 9:9-13.

TEXT 9:9-13

"And as they were coming down from the mountain, he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, save when the Son of man should have risen again from the dead. And they kept the saying, questioning among themselves what the rising again from the dead should mean. And they asked him, saying, The scribes say that Elijah must first come. And he said unto them, Elijah indeed cometh first, and restoreth all things: and how is it written of the Son of man, that he should suffer many things and be set at nought? But I say unto you, that Elijah is come, and they have also done unto him whatsoever they would, even as it is written of him."

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 9:9-13

435. Why would the transfiguration mean more after the resurrection?
436. Had the three disciples heard of the approaching death of Jesus?
—had any word of His resurrection been given?
437. Why inquire at this particular time about Elijah? Cf. Mal. 4:5, 6.
438. Who were the scribes mentioned in vs. 11?
439. In what sense had Elijah already come?
440. What was to be restored by Elijah?
441. In what way did Jesus associate His death with the coming of Elijah?
442. To whom did Jesus refer when He said Elijah had come?
443. Where was it written concerning the death of John the Baptist—
Cf. 1 Kings 19:2, 10.

COMMENT

TIME—Summer A.D. 29 immediately after the transfiguration.

PLACE—Coming down from the mount of transfiguration.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS—Matt. 17:9-13.

OUTLINE—1. The command for silence, vs. 9. 2. The thought of resurrection was strange to the disciples, vs. 10. 3. They ask about the coming of Elijah, vs. 11. 4. Jesus answers, vs. 12, 13.

ANALYSIS

I. THE COMMAND FOR SILENCE, VS. 9.

1. As they came down from the mount.
2. Tell no man what you have seen.
3. Wait to tell until I have been raised from the dead.

II. THE THOUGHT OF THE RESURRECTION WAS STRANGE TO THE DISCIPLES, VS. 10.

1. They thought on what Jesus said.
2. They asked among themselves what He might mean by "rising from the dead."

III. THEY ASKED ABOUT THE COMING OF ELIJAH, VS. 11.

1. If you are the Messiah (as we believe you are);
2. In light of your prediction of death and resurrection how is it said Elijah must come first?

IV. JESUS ANSWERS, VS. 12, 13.

1. It is true—Elijah must come first and restore all things.
2. It is also true that the Son of man must suffer and be rejected.
3. Elijah in the person of John the Baptist has come and they have treated him as predicted.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

THE DESCENT FROM THE MOUNT

"In what state of mind did the apostles return from beholding the glory of the Lord, and His ministers from another world? They seem to have been excited, demonstrative, ready to blaze abroad the wonderful event which ought to put an end to all men's doubts.

They would have been bitterly disappointed, if they had prematurely exposed their experience to ridicule, cross-examination, conjectural theories and all the controversy which reduces facts to logical form, but strips them of their freshness and vitality. In the first age as in the nineteenth,

it was possible to be witnesses for the Lord without exposing to coarse and irreverent handling all the delicate and secret experiences of the soul with Christ.

Therefore Jesus charged them that they should tell no man. Silence would force back the impression upon the depths of their own spirits, and spread its roots under the surface there.

Nor was it right to make such a startling demand upon the faith of others before public evidence had been given, enough to make scepticism blameworthy. His resurrection from the dead would suffice to unseal their lips. And the experience of all the Church has justified that decision. The resurrection is, in fact, the centre of all the miraculous narratives, the sun which keeps them in their orbit. Some of them, as isolated events, might have failed to challenge credence. But authority and sanction are given to all the rest by this great and publicly attested marvel, which has modified history, and the denial of which makes history at once untrustworthy and incoherent. When Jesus rose from the dead, the whole significance of His life and its events was deepened.

This mention of the resurrection called them away from pleasant day-dreams, by reminding them that their Master was to die. For Him there was no illusion. Coming back from the light and voices of heaven, the cross before Him was as visible as ever to His undazzled eyes, and He was still the sober and vigilant friend to warn them against false hopes. They however found means of explaining the unwelcome truth away. Various theories were discussed among them, what the rising from the dead should mean, what should be in fact the limit to their silence. This very perplexity, and the chill upon their hopes, aided them to keep the matter close.

One hope was too strong not to be at least hinted to Jesus. They had just seen Elias. Surely they were right in expecting his interference, as the scribes had taught. Instead of a lonely road pursued by the Messiah to a painful death, should not that great prophet come as a fore-runner and restore all things? How then was murderous opposition possible?

And Jesus answered that one day this should come to pass. The herald should indeed reconcile all hearts, before the great and notable day of the Lord come. But for the present time there was another question. That promise to which they clung, was it their only light upon futurity? Was not the assertion quite as plain that the Son of Man should suffer many things and be set at nought? So far was Jesus from that state of mind in which men buoy themselves up with false hope. No apparent prophecy,

no splendid vision, deceived His unerring insight. And yet no despair arrested His energies for one hour.

But, He added, Elias had already been offered to this generation in vain; they had done to him as they listed. They had re-enacted what history recorded of his life on earth.

Then a veil dropped from the disciples' eyes. They recognized the dweller in lonely places, the man of hairy garment and ascetic life, persecuted by a feeble tyrant who cowered before his rebuke, and by the deadlier hatred of an adulterous queen. They saw how the very name of Elias raised a probability that the second prophet should be treated "as it is written of" the first.

If then they had so strangely misjudged the preparation of His way, what might they not apprehend of the issue? So should also the Son of man suffer of them.

Do we wonder that they had hitherto recognized the prophet? Perhaps, when all is made clear at last, we shall wonder more at our own refusals of reverence, our blindness to the meaning of noble lives, our moderate and qualified respect for men of whom the world is not worthy.

How much solid greatness would some of us overlook, if it went with an unpolished and unattractive exterior? Now the Baptist was a rude and abrupt person, of little culture, unwelcome in king's houses. Yet no greater had been born of woman." (*G. A. Chadwick*)

FACT QUESTIONED 9:9-13

489. In what state of mind did the apostles return from beholding the glory of the Lord, and His ministers from another world?
490. What would have happened if they had told prematurely the events of the mount?
491. How would silence help the disciples?
492. Show how all other miracles relate to the resurrection.
493. Why was it that Jesus was thinking about His death upon coming down from the mount?
494. What Malachi 4:5, 6 said—what the scribes had said did not agree with what Jesus said—at least in the minds of the disciples—explain.
495. Are we to yet expect the return of Elijah? i.e. before the second coming of Christ?
496. When did the veil drop from the eyes of the disciples?
497. In what sense are we in danger of doing the same thing the three apostles did?

11. HEALING THE EPILEPTIC BOY 9:14-29

TEXT 9:14-29

"And when they came to the disciples, they saw a great multitude about them, and scribes questioning with them. And straight-way all the multitude, when they saw him, were greatly amazed, and running to him saluted him. And he asked them, What question ye with them? And one of the multitude answered him, Master, I brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit; and wheresoever it taketh him, it dasheth him down: and he foameth, and grindeth his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast it out: and they were not able. And he answereth them and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I bear with you? bring him unto me. And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, straight-way the spirit tare him grievously; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming. And he asked his father, How long time is it since this hath come unto him? And he said, From a child. And oft-times it hath cast him both into the fire and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us. And Jesus said unto him, if thou canst! All things are possible to him that believeth. Straightway the father of the child cried out, and said, I believe; help thou mine unbelief. And when Jesus saw that a multitude came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I command thee, come out of him and enter no more into him. And having cried out and torn him much, he came out: and the child became as one dead: insomuch that the more part said, He is dead, But Jesus took him by the hand and raised him up; and he arose, And when he was come into the house his disciples asked him privately saying, We could not cast it out. And he said unto them This kind can come out by nothing, save by prayer."

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 9:14-29

444. Where had Jesus and the three apostles left the other apostles?
445. What was it that caused the excitement and amazement when the people saw Jesus?
446. For what purpose had the scribes followed the disciples? About what were they disputing? Show the futility of such a dispute.
447. To whom is the question of vs. 16 addressed?
448. What is meant by the words of the father who said his son: "had a dumb Spirit"?

449. How do we know this boy was suffering from epilepsy? Cf. Matt. 17:15—Are we to conclude that epilepsy is caused by demon possession? Explain.
450. What is meant by the expression "pineth away"?
451. Discuss the inability of the disciples as related to casting out this demon.
452. Who was the "faithless generation" of vs. 19?
453. Why the reaction of the evil spirit upon seeing Jesus?
454. Did Jesus know all about the boy? Why ask the father the question of vs. 21?
455. Did the father have some doubt as to whether Jesus could help him?
456. Jesus picked up the words of the father and made a special appeal—what was it?
457. How did the father interpret the words of Jesus? In what sense did he believe? In what sense didn't he believe?
458. Jesus hastened to perform the miracle—why?
459. Note how Jesus addressed the demon—what significance is there as to the power—nature and work of demons?
460. If the boy was dumb how could he cry out?
461. What is meant by the phrase "torn him"?
462. Was the boy dead when Jesus raised him?
463. What rebuke and lesson for the disciples were in the words of Jesus in vs. 29?

COMMENT

TIME—Summer A.D. 29.

PLACE—At the foot of the mount of transfiguration—in the district of Caesarea Philippi.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS—Matt. 17:14-20; Luke 9:37-43.

OUTLINE—1. The place and the people of the healing, vs. 14, 15. 2. The occasion of the healing, vs. 16-18. 3. The healing, vs. 19-27. 4. The question of the disciples, vs. 28, 29.

ANALYSIS

I. THE PLACE AND THE PEOPLE OF THE HEALING, vs. 14, 15.

1. The nine disciples at the base of the mount questioning with the scribes; a great multitude gathered.
2. Many were shocked to see Jesus—ran to him and greeted him.

II. THE OCCASION OF THE HEALING, vs. 16-18.

1. Jesus asked about the point of the discussion.
2. The father with his possessed son said he had asked for help from the disciples but could not get it.

III. THE HEALING, VS. 19-27.

1. The grief of Jesus because of their unbelief, vs. 19.
2. The son brought to Jesus—the demon convulsed him, vs. 20.
3. The sympathy of Jesus—the desperation of the father, vs. 21, 22.
4. All things are possible to him who believes—do you believe?—"Yea Lord, I believe—help thou my unbelief." vs. 23, 24.
5. Because the multitude was about to make a scene Jesus delayed no longer in the healing, vs. 25.
6. The final attempt of the demon to destroy the boy, vs. 26.

IV. THE QUESTION OF THE DISCIPLES, VS. 28, 29.

1. In someone's house the disciples asked—"why couldn't we do it"?
2. Jesus said, "you lacked the proper attitude to exercise healing power."

EXPLANATORY NOTES. 9:14-29.

I. THE PLACE AND THE PEOPLE OF THE HEALING.

"14-15. The time was the day after the Transfiguration (Luke), and the place was the foot of the mountain. Early in the day, probably, Jesus and the three came down, the three burdened and uplifted by their glorious secret; thinking, perhaps how Moses with shining face, and Joshua, came down Mount Sinai. It is to Peter, who was one of them, that we owe the mention of what *he saw* in coming down. (Instead of *he*, the revisers, on manuscript authority, read "they.") It was an excited throng listening eagerly to the discussion of "scribes" (not *the scribes*) with the nine apostles and any other disciples who may have been present. How vivid is the picture of the effect of Jesus' approach!—the excitement, the amazement, the instantaneous turning away from the one object of interest to him.—*Greatly amazed*, or awestruck; not, so far as we can judge, from any peculiarity in his appearance, as if some light of the glory were still shining in his face, as when Moses drew near to Israel at the foot of the mountain (Ex. 34:29-35), for, if that had been the case, we should certainly have heard of it; and such a shining, too, would have defeated the purpose of concealment. Rather was it because he was the person of whom they were talking, and they were at once delighted and impressed by a certain sense of solemnity by the appearing of him who had never failed in a work of miraculous healing.—The eager interest with which they all turned from futile discussion and failure to the Mighty One appears in their running to meet him."

II. THE OCCASION OF THE HEALING.

"16-18. But he cared for his own and came down like a father to his children in trouble, asking the crowd, and especially the scribes, what they were discussing with his friends. He knew their weakness, and saw that they were perplexed and defeated. They were saluting him with welcome after his absence—not the nine only, but the multitude—when he broke in with his question.

The answer came from the most interested, and the one who had the best right to tell the story. *One of the multitude*. Matthew says that he "came kneeling," and Luke that he "cried out" with his request.—*I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit*—i.e. a spirit that makes its victim dumb; so in Matt. 9:32, and 12:22. When Jesus addressed the spirit (verse 25), he spoke to it as *dumb and deaf*, perhaps because of what he had observed in addition to what the father told him.—The additional symptoms described in verse 18 are those of violent convulsions, and plainly they are those of epilepsy, which in this case was complicated with insanity. Luke uses the word *sparassein*, "to convulse," and Mark, at verse 20, the stronger compound word *susparassein*. Matthew says that the child was "lunatic," or epileptic; but he adds that the lunacy was the work of a demon. More particularly, when the demon seized the boy he tore or convulsed him, or, as some explain it, threw him to the ground; and then he foamed and gnashed his teeth, and the consequence was that he pined away or was steadily wasting. These are the symptoms of epilepsy, which was well known among the ancients, and was regarded by the Greeks and Romans as a sacred disease, brought on directly by supernatural power and of evil omen. The word "lunatic," or "moonstruck," is applied to the victim in this case, as often, probably because the attacks were associated with the recurrence of the full moon. The questions, both physiological and psychological, that are connected with the subject of demoniacal possession are full of difficulty; but nothing is more certain than that our Lord on many occasions, and most emphatically on this, recognized the presence of a personality distinct from that of the victim and commanded it away.

The man said, I have brought unto thee my son.—i.e. to the place where he supposed that Jesus was, because his company was there; brought him, apparently, half in hope and half in despair; this was the last resort, and he came to it without much faith.—But Jesus was not there; probably the man came in the cool of the morning, when Jesus and the three were about coming down from the mountain. *And I spake to thy disciples, that they should cast him out; and they could not*. In Luke, "I

entreated thy disciples." Their inability is often explained by the fact that Jesus was not with them, but they had cast out many demons in his absence when he sent them forth for such work (chap. 6:13). Then, however, they were sent; and perhaps the lack of the consciousness of mission now embarrassed them. The three leading apostles, too, were absent, and perhaps the company at the foot of the mountain felt itself to be really the less, though actually the larger. No doubt, also, the severity of the case gave them pause. Their confidence was not strong enough to bear the sense of publicity and of being tested that came with the challenge; for the scribes at once followed up their failure; plying them with questions that must have made them most uncomfortable. The penalty of unbelieving fear is confusion. (See Jer. 1:17.) Nor was there much to help them in the faith of the father."

III. THE HEALING.

"19. *He answereth him, and saith.* The revisers' text, more correctly, "He answereth them and saith." Not to the afflicted father, but to the inefficient disciples.—*O faithless generation!* Not now "of little faith;" in Matthew and Luke, "Faithless and perverse generation." Here expressly, as in chap. 8:18 implicitly, he ranks his own disciples with the generation to which they belong, since he finds in them the ordinary unbelief. They ought, he implies, to have been able to cast out the evil spirit. Perception of the sadness of the case probably repressed their faith; but it ought to have aroused their compassion, and their compassion ought to have increased their sense of the possibility of healing through the grace of Christ. Our Saviour is exacting in the expectation that his friends will be in possession of the spiritual gifts and graces that he offers them. His almost impatient question means, "How long shall this generation, whose unbelief I am learning so thoroughly, vex me so? How long must I live among the faithless?"—But he ends with *Bring him unto me.* The Mighty One now takes hold where the weak have failed.

20. The sufferer was brought, but the sight of the great Healer maddened the malign spirit; so that the boy went into a violent convulsion and *wallowed foaming* on the ground. Was it the dumbness of the victim that prevented such confession as that of chap. 1:34; 3:11; 5:7? There was no confession, and no vocal objection or entreaty on the part of the spirit.

21, 22. The sad sight arrested even the Healer's mind in the midst of his act of mercy. Compassion was prompting the act, and one would think compassion would urge him on to finish it. But nowhere does the true human thoughtfulness of Jesus appear more plainly; he looked on

pityingly while the boy suffered, and compassion even stopped him for a moment while he tenderly inquired how long the infliction had been upon him.—The naturalness of this pause is inimitable; and not less so is the father's answer. We can hear in it the tones of anxiety and despair, and of eagerness for the utmost that can be done. *Of—or from—a child.* Then, apparently, the boy had passed beyond early childhood, though in verse 24 he is called by the diminutive name *paidion*, "a young or little child."—*And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters to destroy him.* But it has been baffled thus far. This demoniac had more watchful friends than the one at Gergesa (chap. 5:3), who had no home but in the tombs. It was but too common in ancient times so to turn maniacs loose, and this boy was fortunate above many in having care and protection.—For healing at the hand of Jesus the father had strong desire, but very little faith. *If thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us,* counting himself in with the child as calling for the gift, but looking upon this as a kind of forlorn hope, concerning which he had as much despair as confidence. The disciples had failed; it was supposed that the Master had more power, but who could tell? *If thou canst do any thing* was much as he could say. Was not this one of the faithless generation? But there was more excuse for him than for the disciples, who had seen so much.

23. As by the revisers, the word *believe* should be omitted. It was doubtless added by copyists, though very early, to complete an imperfect construction and explain a sentence which without some help they could not understand. With the word omitted, Jesus took up the father's words, "If thou canst do any thing for us," or rather, merely, *If thou canst*, indicates, moreover, that the quoted words form grammatically a part of his sentence. We have not an indignant exclamation, as if he had said in amazement, "If thou canst!" and we have not a question, as if he had asked, "Do you say, If thou canst?" rather did he mean, "As for that if thou canst of thine, that *ei dune*, all things are possible (*dunata*) to him that believeth." The play upon the words (*dune*, *dunata*) cannot be reproduced in English, except very imperfectly, but it is something like, "As for that if thou canst of thine, all things can be to him that believeth." By this he means, "You have inquired about ability and whether any help is possible, but you have misplaced the question. The question of ability is in you, not in me. Faith is the secret of ability and of possibility. The power is sufficient on my part; is it on yours? I can give, but can you receive?" Yet the thought is expressed, not so much reprovingly as cheerfully; for the conclusion is not a severe one, but rather the hopeful announcement of the boundless breadth of the possibilities

of faith. This is another way of saying, "Believest thou that I am able to do this?" but with a gracious hint that the man will do well to believe. So does the great Object of faith love to encourage faith. He loves to be trusted.

24. The father's answer was a cry strong and eager, but the words *with tears* are of doubtful manuscript authority. *Lord* should quite certainly be omitted, and the insertion of *thou*, which in the Greek is unexpressed, misrepresents the rapidity of the man's utterance in the eagerness of his impassioned prayer. "I believe, help my unbelief." The saying is commonly, perhaps, taken to mean, "I believe, but I desire to believe more worthily; increase my faith." This makes help to mean "remove" or "abolish"—a sense for which no good support can be found. If the man had meant to ask that his faith might be rendered equal to the occasion, one would not expect him to ask it in this ambiguous way; and especially is it certain that he would not use the same word, *help*, that he had just employed in quite another sense.—This word is repeated from the former prayer, *have compassion on us, and help us*, and naturally means, as there, "heal my son." So the thought is, "I believe, and yet my faith is scarcely worthy of the name; I hardly dare to call it faith or to plead by it as a believing man. Yet do not wait for something better, but grant my prayer, even to this faith which is no faith. I do believe; but if my belief is no better than unbelief, still heal my son. Do not sternly judge my faith, but help me as I am." There is no contradiction here, and scarcely even paradox, but only deep sincerity in the beginnings of faith, joined with the eagerness of strong desire for a special gift. This is an early "Just as I am," and a very rich and suggestive one. If the man had paused to study his own faith and to make it sufficient, and withheld his prayer till he could make it satisfactory, would he more have injured himself or grieved the Master? He was pleasing Jesus best when he ventured wholly on him, trusting all the defects of his faith to the mercy from which he was imploring help. "Just as I am" is the word most acceptable to him.

25-27. The excitement was rising, and it was time that the scene should be brought to an end, more especially as the father was now ready in heart to receive the gift for which he prayed. The form of exorcism employed in this case was the most elaborate and solemn of all that are recorded in the Gospels. *Thou dumb and deaf spirit*. So addressed with reference to its work upon the child, the effects of its agency.—*I charge thee*. I is emphatic in the Greek—"I, thou knowest who," as the spirit knew at chap. 1:24. The emphasis upon the pronoun is our Lord's solemn self-assertion in the spiritual realm.—*Come out of him*. The customary com-

mand; but the addition, *and enter no more into him*, is found here alone. It is pleasant to think that this exceptional command sprang from our Lord's perception of the exceptional severity of the case, and the more than usual interest that he seems to have taken in it.—The rage of a hostile will when compelled to yield vented itself in the final cry and convulsion; for here also the word is "convulsed," rather than *rent*.—How intensely vivid is the narrative in verses 26, 27—the prostration of the child, the whisperings of the spectators, the kindness of the Healer! *He took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose*. Luke, and he alone, notes the amazement of the beholders at the mighty power or majesty of God. The same word is used in 2 Pet. 1:16 of the glory or majesty which the three disciples had seen in Jesus on the very night before this healing.—This is one of the many cases in which we would be thankful to see what has been hidden, and know the subsequent relations of this father and child to Jesus. Did the child appreciate the Healer and grow up into a holy Christian manhood? Were all the demons exorcised in his soul? Did the father grow in faith, as one ought after such a beginning?"

IV. THE QUESTION OF THE DISCIPLES.

"28, 29. This final reference to the failure of the disciples is omitted by Luke and given more fully by Matthew who adds here a saying about the power of faith similar to that which followed the blighting of the fruitless tree (Mark 11:23). *When he was come into the house*, or "home," to the temporary home that the company had in that region.—*Why could not we cast him*—rather, "it"—*out*? The question had already been answered by the exclamation, *O faithless generation!* in verse 19, but they were not quick to take reproof, and this inquiry was one of the many illustrations of their slowness, with which he had to be patient. Yet perhaps unbelief never fully understands its own failures, but supposes there must be some reason for them to be sought.—*This kind* (of demons) *can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting* (some manuscripts omit *and fasting*)—i.e. This is an extreme case, one that can be made to yield only to faith nourished by the earnest use of all the means of strength. Prayer is recognized as the first great spiritual agency; and if the reference to fasting is genuine, our Lord associates with prayer self-denial, regarded, evidently, as the fitting means of attaining a holy self-command. Fasting in itself, considered as an end, would certainly command his instantaneous and unutterable contempt, as did the many performances of a similar kind that came under his notice; and fasting in general received from him such comments as showed that he esteemed it not very highly. But prayer and self-control

go harmoniously together as the means by which an efficient faith may best be sought." (W. N. Clarke).

FACT QUESTIONS 9:14-29

498. What is the peculiar value of Mark's narrative of the healing of this demoniac?
499. How is the genuineness of this record observed? Why is this important?
500. How would any shining or glow on the face of Jesus have defeated the purpose of concealment?
501. Why were the people so eager and happy about the appearance of Jesus?
502. Who was best qualified to answer the question of Jesus as of vs. 16?
503. Specifically describe the illness of the boy.
504. In what sense was the boy "moonstruck"?
505. Describe the characteristics of epilepsy.
506. Our Lord on many occasions, and most emphatically recognized one fact about demon possession—what was it?
507. In what sense had the father brought his boy to Jesus? Hadn't the disciples cast out demons before? (6:13) Why not here?
508. Jesus classified His apostles with others in calling them a "faithless generation." Why? Cf. 8:18.
509. Why didn't the evil spirit confess the diety of Jesus? Cf. 1:34; 3:11; 5:7.
510. What caused Jesus to pause in the midst of healing the boy to ask a question of the father?
511. If the demon cast the boy into water how is it he did not drown?
512. Show how there was more excuse for the faithlessness of the father than for the disciples.
513. Explain just how Jesus used the words of the father—: "If thou canst."
514. The answer of the father is commonly understood to mean—: "I believe, but I desire to believe more worthily; increase my faith."—but this is not the true or whole meaning—what is the meaning?
515. Show how the expression "Just as I am" fits the father.
516. What word was emphasized in the charge of Jesus to the evil spirit? Why?
517. Why did Jesus use the words—"and enter no more into him."?
518. Show how intensely vivid the narrative is in vs. 26, 27.
519. What was the reaction of the healing—i.e. on the beholders?

520. Why did the apostles ask about their inability—? didn't they already know it was because of unbelief?
 521. What are the efficient means by which faith may best be exercised?

12. THE RETURN TO GALILEE, AND THE RENEWED PREDICTION OF THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION

9:30-32

TEXT 9:30-32

"And they went forth from thence, and passed through Galilee; and he would not that any man should know it. For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered up into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and when he is killed, after three days he shall rise again. But they understood not the saying, and were afraid to ask him."

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 9:30-32

464. Please trace on the map the movement of the Lord.
 465. What did Jesus want no man to know? i.e. in vs. 30.
 466. In what sense was Jesus already being delivered up into the hands of men?
 467. Why didn't the apostles understand the very plain words of Jesus about His death and resurrection? Show an example where we have been just as dull of hearing.
 468. Why were they afraid to ask Him?

COMMENT

TIME—Autumn of 29 A.D.

PLACE—Turning southward from the district of Caesarea Philippi and Mount Hermon Jesus and His company return to their old home in Capernaum.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS—Matt. 17:22, 23; Luke 9:43-45.

OUTLINE—1. Jesus departs the area—travels as secretly as possible, vs. 30.
 2. He wants to have as much time as possible to teach His apostles of His coming passion, vs. 31. 3. Even when He plainly told them they did not understand, vs. 32.

ANALYSIS

- I. JESUS DEPARTS THE AREA—TRAVELS AS SECRETLY AS POSSIBLE, vs. 30.
1. The twelve apostles and Jesus leave the district of the transfiguration and healing.
 2. They travel through the province of Galilee (—upper and lower Galilee).
 3. Their movements were unannounced and sudden so as to enable Jesus to be alone with His apostles.

II. HE WANTED TO HAVE AS MUCH TIME AS POSSIBLE TO TEACH HIS APOSTLES OF HIS COMING PASSION, VS. 31.

1. He taught them personally.
2. He said, "The Son of Man is being delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill Him; after His death He will rise from the dead on the third day."

III. EVEN WHEN HE HAD PLAINLY TOLD THEM THEY DID NOT UNDERSTAND HIM, VS. 32.

1. They heard but did not understand.
2. They were ashamed of their ignorance and therefore did not ask Him for an explanation.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. JESUS DEPARTS THE AREA—TRAVELS AS SECRETLY AS POSSIBLE.

"30. *and passed through Galilee.*) Or, "and were passing along through Galilee." The meaning is, that our Lord, with His disciples, then left the district of Caesarea Philippi, and on their journey passed through Upper Galilee. They probably crossed the Upper Jordan by the bridge or ford called Binat Jacob, below Lake Huleh, and thence followed the route to Capernaum.

and he would not.) The reason is given in the next verse. Our Lord would prevent a concourse of people—not, as some hold, because He was now in the territory of Herod Antipas, but because the disciples needed further instruction, specially concerning His death. St. Matthew's account is less full, but agrees with this. He says, "while they abode in Galilee," i.e. were no longer in the district of Caesarea Philippi."

II. HE WANTED TO HAVE AS MUCH TIME AS POSSIBLE TO TEACH HIS APOSTLES OF HIS COMING PASSION.

III. EVEN WHEN HE HAD PLAINLY TOLD THEM THEY DID NOT UNDERSTAND HIM.

"32. This verse gives additional information. St. Matthew notices the deep sorrow of the disciples; St. Mark says that they still failed to understand the saying. He uses the imperfect tense throughout denoting the continued or repeated result of His teaching. If the disciples understood what was meant by suffering and death, they could not reconcile it with what they knew of His Person, and were probably at an utter loss as to the sense in which He was to rise again: whether it implied entrance into a higher state, or restoration to common life. The narrator evidently feels that the fear to inquire, through natural and evincing reverence, was detrimental to them, showing an imperfect appreciation of His character and of their duty." (F. C. Cook)

FACT QUESTIONS 9:30-32

522. Trace the route of our Lord from Caesarea Philippi to Capernaum.
 523. Why do some hold that since Jesus was in the territory of Herod Antipas He wanted to remain in secret?
 524. Why were His Words concerning His death hard to reconcile to what they knew of His life?

13. THE CHILDLIKE SPIRIT 9:33-43

TEXT 9:33-43

"And they came to Capernaum: and when he was in the house he asked them, What were ye reasoning in the way? But they held their peace: for they had disputed one with another in the way, who was the greatest. And he sat down, and called the twelve; and he saith unto them, If any man would be first, he shall be last of all, and minister of all. And he took a little child, and set him in the midst of them: and taking him in his arms, he said unto them, Whosoever shall receive one of such little children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever receiveth me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me.

John said unto him, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name: and we forbade him, because he followed not us. But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a mighty work in my name, and be able quickly to speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is for us. For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink, because ye are Christ's, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward. And whosoever shall cause one of these little ones that believe on me to stumble, it were better for him if a great millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea. And if thy hand cause thee to stumble, cut it off: it is good for thee to enter into life maimed, rather than having thy two hands to go into hell, into the unquenchable fire."

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 9:33-43

469. Didn't Jesus know of what they reasoned on the way? Why ask them?
 470. Had anything happened in the experience of the apostles which would suggest the topic of greatness in the kingdom? Discuss.
 471. What confession was made by the silence of the apostles?
 472. Why call the twelve to come close to Him?
 473. Show how the very nature of the desire to be first would place such a person last in the kingdom of Christ?
 474. What principle is at work in the one who wants to serve all that makes him first of all?
 475. Name two qualities of a child to be much desired by the citizen of Christ's kingdom.

476. Please explain how receiving a child relates to receiving Christ?
477. Discuss the meaning of the word "receive" as here used.
478. What possible connection do the words of John in vs. 38 have to do with what Jesus said in vs. 37?
479. These disciples fell into the terrible sin of sectarianism—show how.
480. When and where had the apostles seen such a man?
481. How was such a one enabled to cast out demons?
482. Was it wrong for this unknown disciple to cast out demons? Why did John think it was wrong?
483. What principle is involved in the words of Jesus in vs. 39-41 which is applicable to us today?
484. "For he that is not against us is for us." is this always absolutely true? Discuss.
485. Why the illustration of the cup of cold water?
486. Is there any connection between offending the little ones and forbidding one to cast out demons or giving a cup of water in the name of Christ? Please *think* on this question.
487. Who are the "little ones" of vs. 42?
488. What is the meaning of "stumble" as here used?
489. Show how mention of sinking into the water of the sea fits the place where it was said.
490. In what sense could the hand be the cause of sin? What basic lesson is taught here?
491. Isn't Jesus suggesting rather drastic action to avoid sinning? Is it practiced today? Discuss.
492. What is the meaning of "life" and "hell" as used in vs. 43-47.
493. Give your own meaning of vs. 48, 49.
494. Show how vs. 50 relates to what has preceded.

COMMENT

TIME.—The autumn of A.D. 29; probably five or six weeks after the last incident.

PLACE.—The place of this event is Capernaum, "the Lord's own city," on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee, to which he had now returned from the neighborhood of Caesarea Philippi, on the head waters of the Jordan.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS.—Matt. 18:1-14; Luke 9:46-50.

LESSON OUTLINE—1. Who shall be Greatest? 2. Bigotry in the Kingdom. 3. Christ's Care of the Little Ones.

ANALYSIS

I. WHO SHALL BE GREATEST? vs. 33-37.

1. Disputing about Pre-eminence. Mark 9:1, 2; Matt. 18:1; Luke 9:46; 22:24.
2. The Path to True Greatness. Mark 9:35; 10:35-40; Matt. 20:26-27.
3. The Child as a Text. Mark 9:36, 37; 10:13-16; Matt. 18:2.

II. BIGOTRY IN THE KINGDOM. vs. 38-41.

1. A confession of Bigotry. Mark 9:38; Luke 9:49, 50; Num. 11:26-29.
2. Bigotry Rebuked. Mark 9:39, 40; 1 Cor. 12:3; Num. 11:29.
3. No Good Deed Lost. Mark 9:41; Matt. 10:42.

III. CHRIST'S CARE OF THE LITTLE ONES. vs. 42, 43, 44-50.

1. Offending the Little Ones. Mark 9:42; Matt. 18:6; Luke 17:1.
2. Cutting off Offenses. Mark 9:43; Matt. 5:29; 18:8; Deut. 13:6.
3. Punishment for offenders. 44-50.

INTRODUCTION

The great revelations of Caesarea Philippi, considered last were followed by the manifestation of the glory of the Savior on the Mount of Transfiguration, related in Mark 9:2-13, and parallel passages, and this wonderful event was evidently succeeded by a few weeks of partial retirement, during which the Lord sought to impress upon his apostles the great truths that had been so recently revealed. Shortly after the Transfiguration he healed a lunatic child (Mark 9:14-32), somewhere among the foot-hills of Mt. Hermon; and then, probably crossing the Jordan near its sources, he would enter the northern parts of Galilee, and thus journey towards Capernaum. Matthew's language (Matt. 17:22), "And they abode in Galilee," implies that some time was spent there instructing the disciples in the truths he had just opened to them. During these journeyings, and probably just before their arrival at Capernaum the dispute referred to in the lesson had arisen among the disciples.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

I. WHO SHALL BE GREATEST?

33. *And he came to Capernaum.* On his return from his journey to Northern Galilee, from the neighborhood of Caesarea Philippi and the Mount of Transfiguration. During his absence he had been confessed and had acknowledged himself as the Christ. Though this was followed by his declaration that he must be crucified, yet his disciples had so little conception of the true nature of his kingdom that they expected a speedy establishment of a royal Messianic throne on the earth with the various accompaniments of earthly royalty. Not free from earthly ambition, a strife

had arisen among them as to which of them should be the great ministers of the Messianic King. This had occurred on the way back to Capernaum. The Lord had taken no part in it; they no doubt sought to conceal their dispute from him, but after their return and they had entered into the house where he was abiding he suddenly startled them by demanding the cause of their dispute. He asked, not for information, but as an introduction to the lesson he sought to impress.

34. *But they held their peace.* Deep shame kept them silent, and that silence was the most eloquent confession of their sinful ambitions. *Who should be the greatest.* Who should occupy the chief position under the King—the position of prime minister, as it were, in the kingdom that they thought he was about to inaugurate.—*Morison.* What seductive dreams lay for Galilean fishermen in their being commissioned by the Messiah, as his confidential friends, and the first dignitaries of his kingdom! They had as yet no other notion of the kingdom that was shortly to appear than that it would be a temporal one; that their Master was to become a powerful prince, with places, honors, wealth, at his command.

35. *And he sat down.* As teachers did while teaching. The lesson, which touched the fundamental principle of the Christian life, was impressed formally and with all solemnity. *And called the twelve.* To come close to him. He wanted all of them to hear him. *If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all.* Simply because the desire to be first, self-seeking, is exactly opposite to the spirit which is the law of Christ's kingdom, the spirit of love, of self-denial, of helpfulness of others, of humility. Therefore the more any one has of the desire to be first, the less he has of Christ's kingdom. So that the very desire to be first makes him last by the very nature of things. *And servant of all.* Despotism, self-seeking, ambition, ever make a man a slave. No one is so much a slave as he who desires to be first of all. He is a slave to his ambition, to the whims and opinions of other people, to circumstances. But voluntary service in the kingdom of love, and under the impulse of humility and self-denial, makes a man a spiritual power, gives him an unconscious and blessed greatness. To be truly great one must (1) forget himself in his work, (2) be humble instead of conceited, and (3) be a helper of his race, or the servant of all. Paul, Luther, Washington and Lincoln were the servants of humanity.

36. *And he took a child.* Matthew's account indicates that the disciples asked him a question concerning who should be greatest, or the grounds of greatness in his kingdom. The Lord answers by an object lesson. He called a child (Matthew) and first placed the child in the midst, and then took it in his arms, possibly drawing a lesson for his disciples from its

ready submission and trustfulness. *Set him in the midst.* As an illustration; as a living parable. Matthew says that he went on to say, "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." They not only should not be *first*, but they should not enter at all, if they indulged their present spirit. Chrysostom says: "For such a little child is free from pride, and the mad desire of glory, and envy, and contentiousness, and all such passions, and having many virtues—simplicity, humility, unworldliness—prides itself on none of them; having a two-fold severity of goodness—to have these things and not to be puffed up about them."

37. *Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me.* There is scarcely a better test of a Christian's character than his bearing toward children and the childlike. Our Lord sets a little child in the midst of his disciples everywhere—in the family, in the Sunday-school, in the congregation, in the community; that child is our Lord's representative, and the object of his watchful care. Just in proportion as there would be a readiness to receive our Lord as he is, if he were visibly present in person, is that child welcomed in heartiness and cared for tenderly. How does that father treat his children, and his neighbor's children? How does that pastor minister to the children of his flock? How does that church provide for the children of its congregation and membership? How are those Christian citizens looking after the children of their community? These are questions which we may suppose our Lord to be asking as he searches the fidelity of his professed followers.—*Trumbull.* *In my name.* Receiving in my name is serving with Christian love, and as belonging to Christ. Influenced by regard to my name. We should lay emphasis on this expression. *Receiveth me.* Observe that the true way to receive Christ is to receive into our hearts, for Christ's sake, those who need the hospitality of our sympathies, as the way to serve Christ is by serving the needy and suffering (Matt. 25:40).—*Abbott.* *Receiveth . . . him that sent me.* When we love or receive him who was one with the Father, we enter into fellowship with him who is the Supreme and Eternal Love. Compare John 14:10, 23.

II. BIGOTRY IN THE KINGDOM

38. *And John answered him.* The words were so far an "answer" to what our Lord had said, that they were suggested by it. The disciple desired to show, as in self-vindication, that he not only "received" his Master, but that he was unwilling to "receive" any who did not openly follow him as a disciple.—*Ellicott.* The expression, "in my name," seems to have suggested to John a sudden question. They had

seen, he said, a man who was casting out devils in Christ's name; but since the man was not one of them, they had forbidden him. Had they done right?—*Farrar. We saw one.* The disciples had shortly before returned to Christ from their first missionary tour, in which they were empowered to cast out devils (Matt. 10:8). The man here referred to they probably met during this tour. He must have been a disciple of Christ, who was enabled by his faith, yet without a commission, to cure the possessed.—*Abbott. Casting out devils in thy name.* Really, and not in a wrong spirit, as did the Jewish exorcists (Acts 19:13, 14); for it was done *in thy name*. Such workers as this man believed in him, or they would not have used his name. *And he followeth not us.* What perplexed John was, that one not belonging to the apostolic band should have wrought precisely the miracle which stood foremost among the signs of apostleship; that which the disciples themselves had so lately attempted, but failed to work. See Mark 9:18, 23. Nor are we able to explain the case because we know nothing more of the man or circumstances than is here stated. *And we forbade him.* Hindered him, so far as blaming him, and insisted on the abandonment of the exercise of his gift.

39. *Forbid him not.* He neither praises nor blames him for following an independent course, and not working with his disciples. He simply declares that he must not be forbidden, and that those who work the same kind of work that we do should be regarded not as enemies, but allies. Thousands, in every period of church history, have spent their lives in copying John's mistake. They have labored to stop every man who will not work for Christ in their way from working for Christ at all.—*Ryle. No man which shall do a miracle in my name.* He who does a mighty work in the name of Christ cannot be an enemy of the Lord. The principle inculcated forbids discouraging any work, by whomsoever undertaken, minister or layman, man or woman, which is really accomplishing spiritual results.—*Abbott.* If we see any one really accomplishing results that are for Christ it is wrong to hinder his work.

40. *For he that is not against us is on our part.* Note the social *us*. The Savior graciously associates the disciples with himself. On another occasion (Matt. 12:30) he said, "He that is not with me is against me." There is no belt or border-land between right and wrong. He who is not good is bad; he who is not bad is good. In the highest sphere Christianity and goodness are identical. Christ is impersonated goodness.—*Morison.*

III. CHRIST'S CARE FOR HIS LITTLE ONES.

41. *For whosoever shall give.* The idea is, that, if so small a service as is here referred to goes not unrewarded, much more will the ejection of a demon in his name be approved and rewarded of him. *A cup of water.* Here mentioned as the cheapest of all bodily refreshments, and therefore suitable to represent the smallest act of kindness done by man to man. *In my name.* With this motive, because he belongs to Christ; with the desire to serve Christ, and honor him, and express his love to him. *He shall not lose his reward.* He shall be treated as if it were done to Christ himself. It will be accepted as an expression of love and honor to his Master.

42. *Whosoever shall offend (cause to stumble) one of these little ones that believe in me.* The weakest and feeblest of God's flock, not merely the children, but the little ones, in intellectual and spiritual power and in ecclesiastical position and earthly honor. The child yet nestling in his arms, and furnishing the text for his remarks, he warned them of the awful guilt and peril of offending, of tempting, of misleading, of seducing from the paths of innocence and righteousness, of teaching any wicked thing, or suggesting any wicked thought to one of those little ones. *Better that a millstone were hanged about his neck.* We are taken, in imagination, into the presence of a certain dreadful scene. We see a millstone attached to a man's neck. The fastening, passing through the central perforation of the stone is made secure. It is a sad sight. Yet, turning from another scene, we say, "This is better." It is better than that the same man should act the part of a seducer, and entrap a childlike follower of Jesus. *And were cast into the sea.* Which was within sight. Death is a less evil than sinning—much less than causing others to sin; for one kills the body, the other the soul. No language or figures could more powerfully portray the deep interest of the Master in the little children. How terrible to lead them astray!

43. *If thy hand offend.* Cause you to sin or stumble; ensnare you into evil. Are we to understand these passages literally? No, certainly not. The meaning is, if an object dear as the right eye, and useful as the right hand, stand between you and your progress to heaven, and your complete surrender to Christ, that object, however dear, you are to part with.—*Cumming. Hand.* The temptation to do what is wrong—forgery, stealing, murder. *Eye.* Lusting, coveting. *Foot.* Going into forbidden ways. He goes on to warn them that no sacrifice could be too great if it enabled them to escape any possible temptations to put such stumbling-blocks in the way of their own souls or the souls of others.—*Farrar. Into life maimed.* The meaning is, not that any man is in such a case that he hath

no better way to avoid sin and hell; but, if he had no better, he should choose this. Nor doth it mean that maimed persons are maimed in heaven; but, if it were so, it were a less evil.—*Richard Baxter. Into hell.* Not *Hades* but *Gehenna*, the place of eternal punishment. The name was derived from the valley of Hinnom near Jerusalem where refuse was burned.

"48. *where their worm dieth not.* Yet another strong figure, again in terms of Isa. 66:24, and expressing a future penalty that does not exhaust itself.

49. *every one shall be salted with fire.* Once more the connection hangs on a phrase, here 'fire'; but in this case the continuity of thought between 48 and 49 is deep and strong, far more so than in the next case, that of the 'salting' in 49 and the 'salt' in 50. The clause added by the A. V., 'and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt' (cf. Lev. 2:13), is no part of the original . . . The addition was originally an interpretation of the genuine text (which falls out in some early MSS.): then it was added to it. The genuine saying, a very striking one, seems connected with the preceding mention of a fire that is not quenched, thus: 'Yes, the fire, I say, is not quenched; for with fire—of one sort or another—all must, sooner or later, be salted.'

The key to its meaning is found probably in the Levitical regulation which provided that with all oblations salt was to be offered (Lev. 2:13), as the glossing addition rightly suggests. Salt was used in connection with the making of covenants (Lev. 2:13; Num. 18:19; 2 Chron. 13:5); and the sacrificial salt of the Levitical offerings was the symbol of the covenant-relation between God and Israel. It was interpreted by this time, at least, with reference to the properties of salt as a preservative against corruption in things apt to putrify, a preservative, however, with a stinging, painful effect on sentient life. In this respect it is like 'fire,' which also causes pain, yet it may be, wholesome and purifying pain; hence the combination of the two metaphors in the one idea 'salted with (purifying) fire.' To this discipline of suffering in one form or another, Jesus says, all men must submit, whether freely or by constraint. The form he here sets before his disciples, for their good, is that of discipline; voluntarily accepted for the sake of the true life, to be safeguarded thereby from corruption; and illustrations of this positive or cleansing function of moral fire have just been given in 43-47. But these are only special cases of the general principle of suffering as integral to the path of his disciples, as of their Master, which Jesus had set himself to bring home to them ever since he had hinted, while near Caesarea Philippi, at the Cross looming before him (see 9:31 f).

The best commentary on the whole saying is another equally striking, in Luke 12:49: 'I came to cast fire (of testing) upon the earth: and what will I, if it is already kindled?' There he adds that he has himself to be 'baptized' with this kind of searching 'baptism' (cf. Matt. 3:11, for the metaphor, 'He shall baptize you with holy spirit and fire'), and is sore pressed or 'straitened' in spirit 'til it be fulfilled.' The context which precedes this in Luke (12:47 f.) makes the parallel most illuminative, teaching as it does that 'stripes' for servants will be 'few' or 'many,' according as their unreadiness for the Lord's arrival is accompanied by knowledge or ignorance of his declared purpose to return ere long, so that they should be ready for Him. The broad moral for all ('every one') is the necessity for practice of the sacrifice of self, that 'life' may be gained and loss escaped.

50. *Salt is good, lost its saltiness.* The sweeping out of salt that has lost its virtue, and become useless or hurtful, is still, travellers tell us, a common sight in Palestine.

wherewith will ye season it? Salt once spoilt can never have its saltiness restored. So if the qualities which make up the 'saltiness' of the true disciple—fidelity at all costs of pain, self-abnegation, and the like—are turned to faithlessness and selfishness, what becomes of the discipleship which should save others from the corruption of worldliness and selfhood? There is no human source of 'saltiness' capable of renewing it.

Have salt in yourselves. Keep the purifying sacrificial fire alive in your souls, and in particular let it burn up the egoism that destroys unity.

and be at peace one with another. Let the saving salt of fidelity to your Divine calling fulfill itself in brotherly relations with one another. So the words seem to bring us back to the disputing of the disciples (9:33) with which the conversation started. Selfish claims for the chief places destroy peace among men, and are not of the spirit of Jesus' disciples." (J. Vernon Bartlet).

FACT QUESTIONS 9:33-50

525. State two very important things that had happened during Jesus' absence from Capernaum.
526. What was the basic misconception of the disciples as it related to the Messianic kingdom?
527. What did the disciples mean by the use of the term "greatest"? Greatest what?
528. Was there any significance in the fact that He sat down?
529. The more one has a desire to be first the less he has of what?
530. State the two things the truly great one must do.
531. A little child is free from what undesirable qualities?

532. Why is it true that there is scarcely a better test of a Christian's character than his bearing toward children or the childlike?
533. In what sense was John in his comment of vs. 38 showing his self-vindication?
534. How was it possible to cast out demons without being one of the twelve or one of the seventy?
535. What does the principle laid down by Christ in vs. 39 inculcate?
536. In what sense is Christ "impersonated goodness"?
537. How does giving a cup of cold water relate to forbidding the casting out of a demon?
538. Relate the offending or stumbling of the little ones to the context.
539. Is death better than sin? Is this literally true?
540. If we are not to understand the passages of vs. 43, 44 literally how are we to understand them?
541. Explain the "hell" or "Gehenna" here mentioned by Christ.
542. In what sense does "the worm die not" in the place of eternal punishment?
543. Give your exegesis of vs. 49.
544. There seems to be two or three uses of the word "salt" in vs. 49, 50—discuss them.

SUMMARY 8:14-9:50

The two miracles recorded in the preceding section—the cure of the blind man at Bethsaida (viii. 22-26), and the casting out of the obstinate demon (ix. 14-29)—are additional demonstrations of the divine power of Jesus. They are not mere repetitions of former proofs, but they possess peculiar force in that the blind man was cured by progressive steps, each one of which was a miracle in itself, and in that the demon in question was one of peculiar power and obstinacy.

The foreknowledge of Jesus is again displayed in his two predictions concerning his own death (viii. 31-33; ix. 30-32), and with his foreknowledge, his predetermined purpose to submit to death at the hands of his enemies.

But the crowning argument of the section is contained in the account of the transfiguration. If the testimony of those who witnessed his scene is not false testimony, his divine majesty and his God-given right to be heard in all that he chooses to speak, are established beyond all possibility of a mistake.

End of Part First.

We have now reached the close of the first general division of Mark's narrative. Hitherto, after a few introductory statements in the first chapter (i. 1-13), all the incidents which he records occurred in Galilee, or in

the regions immediately adjoining. Now the writer leaves Galilee, and returns to it no more. (*McGarvey*)

III. THE PEREAN MINISTRY 10:1-52

Jesus Leaves Galilee, 10:1 (on His way to Jerusalem)

TEXT 10:1

"And he arose from thence, and cometh into the borders of Judea and beyond Jordan: and multitudes come together unto him again; and, as he was wont, he taught them again."

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 10:1

495. Please note the expression; "he arose from thence" has more meaning than just a move from one place to another. What significance is there here?
496. Please locate this move on the map—just what is involved in "the borders of Judea"? Where is "beyond the Jordan"?
497. Refer to the parallel passage in Luke. Explain the harmony—or lack of it.
498. What was the purpose in the gathering of the multitude?
499. Do the gospel writers indicate that teaching was the major work of Christ? Discuss.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

"1. *And he arose from thence, and cometh into the coasts of Judea by the farther,*" etc. It will be necessary to say a word or two respecting the sequence of events. Gresswell, with whose "Harmony" most commentators substantially agree, having inserted as the continuation of this discourse, as given in Matt. 18:10-35, the dealing with an offending brother, and St. Peter's question respecting how often he ought to forgive, and the parable of the Unmerciful Servant, then puts down the events from Jesus' going up to Jerusalem at the Feast of the Tabernacles in John 7:2, to the departure of the Lord, after His discourse respecting the Good Shepherd, to Bethany, beyond Jordan, where John first baptized (John 10:40). Either during this stay at Jerusalem, or at its conclusion, the Lord enters into a certain village, no doubt Bethany, near Jerusalem, where He is entertained by the sisters Martha and Mary (Luke 10:38). After this when in Bethany, beyond Jordan, he hears of the sickness of Lazarus, and returns to Jerusalem and raises him from the dead, then He again retires, but now into the "city called Ephraim" (John 11:54). Between this retirement and the final entry into Jerusalem occur most of the events recorded between Luke 10:1 and Luke 18:14, and at the account of the Lord's taking up and blessing the little children the three Synoptics again coincide (Matt. 19:13; Mark 10:13; Luke 18:15) and substantially continue to do so to the end.

We cannot then understand the word "thence" as referring to the place where the Lord had been speaking of the salt losing its savour, and was urging the Apostles to "have salt in themselves." It is quite necessary to understand it, so far as we are concerned, indeterminately as referring to some place in Galilee not mentioned.

"Cometh into the coast of Judea by the farther side of Jordan," i.e., by Peraea. This was the second residence in Peraea, and so the Evangelist intimates, by twice making use of the word "again."

"And the people resort unto him *again*; and as he was wont he taught them *again*."

A. JESUS IS QUESTIONED ABOUT MARRIAGE 10:2-12

TEXT 10:2-12

"And there came unto him Pharisees, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him. And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you? And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement and to put her away. But Jesus said unto them, For your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment. But from the beginning of the creation, Male and female made he them. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the twain shall become one flesh: so that they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. And in the house the disciples asked him again of this matter. And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her: and if she herself shall put away her husband, and marry another, she committeth adultery."

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 10:2-12

500. Where was Jesus when the Pharisees approached Him?
501. Read the parallel account in Matthew to understand the question was not only a matter of divorce but of the cause for divorce.
502. In what sense was this a trial question?
503. Read Deut. 24:1—Tell what relation this text has to the question.
504. Both Jesus and the Pharisees referred to Moses but with very different results—show why.
505. What is meant in vs. 5 by the statement "hardness of heart"?
506. Wasn't Moses compromising the law of God by writing the commandment of Deut. 24:1?
507. Why refer back to the conditions existing at the time of creation?
508. For what cause will a man leave his father and mother?
509. What is the meaning of the word "cleave" as here used?
510. Just how is the relationship of "one flesh" effected? In what sense are the two one?

511. When, where and how does God join the husband and wife together?
512. Is Jesus forbidding all divorce?
513. Discuss the force of the expression "put asunder."
514. Why did the disciples continue the question of the Pharisees?
515. Please show how completely and finally the words of Jesus answered the question.
516. Can marriage ever become adultery? When?
517. Are there any innocent persons in these acts of adultery? Discuss.

• COMMENT 10:2-12

TIME—A.D. 30—Probably the month of March.

PLACE—On the farther side of the Jordan, near the borders of Judea.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS—Matt. 19:3-12.

OUTLINE—1. The trial question, vs. 2. 2. The answer of Jesus, vs. 3-9. 3. The disciples ask further questions, vs. 10-12.

ANALYSIS

- I. THE TRIAL QUESTION, VS. 2.
 1. Posed by Pharisees.
 2. Asked as a snare.
 3. Can a man divorce his wife? (for every cause)
- II. THE ANSWER OF JESUS, VS. 3-9.
 1. What did Moses command you?
 2. Moses was very lenient as recorded in Deut. 24:1.
 3. This commandment was a concession for your weakness—and hardness of heart.
 4. From the beginning God created two to become one.
 5. What God has joined together man can not and should not divide.
- III. THE DISCIPLES ASK FURTHER QUESTIONS, VS. 10-12.
 1. This occurred in a house.
 2. The reason a man should not divorce his wife (except for fornication) is because when he marries again he commits adultery against his wife.
 3. The same principle applies to the wife in regard to her husband.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. THE TRIAL QUESTION.

"2. The questioners are *the Pharisees*—omnipresent tempters!—and the old practice of trying to catch him by questions still survives.—*Is it lawful*. Perhaps not asked in the narrowest technical sense, as if calling for an interpretation of the Mosaic law, but more generally, asking the judgment of the Rabbi: "May a man put away his wife?" The law of

divorce in Deut. 24:1 was not entirely plain in the statement of the admissible grounds of complaint against a wife, and the ambiguity had occasioned endless discussion. The schools of Shammai, the stricter, and Hillel, the more lax, contended about it, and the people were divided. Therefore, however Jesus might reply, his answer could be trusted to make him enemies. Moreover, he was in the territory of Herod, under whom the Baptist had suffered for his boldness in the matter of an adulterous marriage. Matthew's addition, "for every cause," was as nearly as possible the translation of the current phrase justified by the lax school of Hillel; and so the question meant, "Is the lax school right?"

II. THE ANSWER OF JESUS.

"3,4. His answer drove them back to their own authorities. The law under which all their discussions were, and ought to be, conducted was the law of Moses, and what he said must be first considered. *What did Moses command you?* was the first legitimate question. But their answer was evasive. They stated the permission as if it were unlimited, omitting all references to the occasions of divorce which the law recognized.

5-9. Yet he accepted their report of the law, imperfect as it was, without criticism. They had omitted the crucial point, the determination of occasions for divorce, and so would he. They had spoken of permission; of permission he would speak. Divorce was a permitted thing, and the permission was so vague that there might be difficulty in defining its limits. It was permitted, but why? *For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept.* The preposition means "on account of," or "out of regard for." The noun means "hard-heartedness;" "spiritual dullness and incapacity;" "unresponsiveness to God," amounting to inability to accept high motives. Moses wrote you this precept, said Jesus (in Matthew, "he suffered you to put away your wives"), because you were not up to the level of a better precept. He said that Moses wrote the precept; but, according to their view of the matter and according to his (see Mark 7:13), the legislation of Moses expressed the appointment of God. It was Jehovah himself who permitted them to put away their wives.—But this precept was not given because there was not a better one at hand. A better was provided in the constitution of man. *From the beginning of the creation—from the very origin of things—God, the Creator, made them male and female.* An exact quotation from Gen. 1:27, Septuagint. Verse 7 and half of verse 8 are exactly quoted from Gen. 2:24, Septuagint, though in Mark some manuscripts (and Tischendorf) omit *and cleave to his wife.*

This passage from the narrative of the Creation was cited to show that the distinction of sexes was originally constituted the ground of

marriage. By this law marriage is the union of a male and a female of the human race; and it is such a union as shall form a new centre of life to both. For this cause—i.e. because he created them male and female—a man shall leave the parents, into natural unity with whom he was born, and find the centre for a new unity in his union with a fellow-being of the opposite sex. Thus the distinction of the sexes was given as the foundation of the family.—Now, the duration for which God intended this union may be inferred from his own testimony as to its closeness and completeness. This testimony Jesus now quotes—and *they twain shall be one flesh*—and then he adds his own emphatic restatement of the fact: *so then they are no more twain, but one flesh*—that is, the union that is founded on the relation of the sexes makes the two to be one flesh, makes each to be, physically, part and property of the other. Marriage has wrought an actual unity which is not to be broken. It is the union of one man and one woman, and the blending of life in sexual union establishes between that one man and that one woman a real unity. By establishing such a relation the Creator showed his intention that a union thus formed should be irrevocable and inviolable, to be legitimately terminated only by death."

In verse 9 is given the better precept that springs from this original order. The verb is in the aorist, not in the perfect; and the reference is not to special cases in which God *hath joined together* two given individuals, but to the original constitution of the race, in establishing which he *joined together* in permanent unity every pair who should ever come together in the union of sex with sex.—*What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.* That one flesh or one body (see 1 Cor. 6:16, where Paul expressly recognizes the truth that physical union establishes true and permanent unity) which has been formed in accordance with God's appointment in the creation of man, let not man put asunder.—Note the contrast between God and man: man may not break what God has made. Man may break this unity, either by personal unfaithfulness to the obligation of marriage or by contradictory enactments permitting dissolutions that God does not permit. Of the possible dissolution, for one cause, he speaks below.

This law of exclusive and permanent union was the original law of marriage; and this law Jesus reaffirms. But a lower law was given in that legislation which Jesus distinctly recognized as the work of God. Now, Jesus declares that that law was given because of the incapacity of men for this. He thus announces the imperfection of the Mosaic law—not only its incompleteness, but its imperfection—and asserts also its educational purpose. It was meant to train men for a better life than they

could then accept. Accordingly, there was in the law a certain amount of what is called accommodation. "God often speaks and gives law, not as he himself is able to do, but as we are able to hear" (*Chrysostom*, on Ps. 95)—a sound principle, but always to be accompanied by this: "When God thus speaks and gives law, it is in order that he may make us able to hear all that he is able to say to us." We need have no difficulty in admitting that God has dealt in rudimentary instruction, and, so far, in inferior instruction, if only we keep steadily in view his purpose of moral education for men."

III. THE DISCIPLES ASK FURTHER QUESTIONS.

10-12. Mark alone tells of the later inquiry of the disciples. In Matthew the address to the Pharisees is continued, with the solemn assertion that he who puts away his wife, except for fornication, and marries another commits adultery. In Mark "except for fornication" is omitted; but it is sufficiently implied. The statement in both Gospels is that a man is charged with adultery when he enters into a new sexual union while the first is still unbroken—i.e. when he breaks the exclusive unity of flesh with his wife by an act of union with another. Of course an equal union of sexes can be broken by either member; and so the "except for fornication" is implied clearly enough in principle in Mark. Verse 12, indeed, distinctly enforces the principle of equal responsibility. The custom to which it alludes, of the wife putting away the husband, was a custom, not of Jews, but of Romans and of other Gentiles. Possibly Jesus saw that there was danger, under Roman influence, of its coming in among the Jews.—Here, in verses 11, 12, is our Lord's own answer to the original question, whether a man might put away his wife. It is, "No, unless she has already broken her unity with him." Sexual unfaithfulness forfeits the bond, but nothing else does.

The teaching of this passage is strong and conclusive for all who acknowledge the authority of Jesus Christ. The inviolability of marriage is grounded, not in any principles of expediency or advantage, right as these might be, but in its correspondence to the constitution of man as male and female. The sexual element in marriage makes of the two one flesh—i.e. it was meant that sexual union should be inseparable from permanent personal unity—and only by sexual unfaithfulness can the unity, once established, be broken. This is not to affirm that sexual unfaithfulness is necessarily more guilty than any other sin—a life-long course of drunkenness and abuse may be as guilty—but the sexual relation is the groundwork of the family, and its purity is absolutely essential to the physical and moral welfare of mankind. With good reason, therefore, God has made faithfulness in this relation the determining element

in the perpetuity of marriage. To this divine appointment human laws should be made to correspond. Separations for other causes than adultery there may be, but dissolution of marriage, never. If it is said that such a law works hardship in many cases, the answer is that all laws that are for the general good sometimes work hardship while sin continues. But the purity and the permanency of the family are worth so much to mankind that individuals may well afford to suffer hardship rather than contribute to the overthrow of so precious an institution.

FACT QUESTIONS 10:2-12

545. Is the attitude of the Pharisees the same throughout the ministry of our Lord? Why?
546. Who was Shammai and Hillel—what school of thoughts did they represent? What reference in the Old Testament was of particular concern on the matter of divorce?
547. How was the question of the Pharisees framed in such a way to put Jesus in an undefendable position?
548. Why raise the question about Moses? Who raised it—see Matt. 19:7.
549. What is meant by "hardness of heart"?
550. What was originally constituted the ground for marriage?
551. Why mention the thought of the two becoming one? When does this occur?
552. How is the imperfection and incompleteness of the Mosaic law shown?
553. What is meant by saying that in the law of God "a certain amount of accommodation is found?"
554. How can it be said that the exception of divorce for fornication is inferred by Mark? Explain.
555. Does Jesus say a person guilty of sexual unfaithfulness is necessarily more guilty than any other sinner? Discuss.
556. Does Jesus add anything to the Mosaic law by saying a wife could put away her husband?
557. Why is the home the most precious institution in the world?

B. CHRIST'S LOVE TO THE YOUNG. 10:13-22

TEXT 10:13-22

"And they brought unto him little children, that he should touch them: and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it, he was moved with indignation, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me; forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I

say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein. And he took them in his arms, and blessed them, laying his hands upon them.

And as he was going forth into the way, there ran one to him, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none is good save one, even God. Thou knowest the commandments, Do not kill, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honour thy father and mother. And he said unto him, Master, all these things have I observed from my youth. And Jesus looking upon him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me. But his countenance fell at the saying, and he went away sorrowful: for he was one that had great possessions."

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 10:13-22

518. Had little children been brought to Jesus before this time? Why? Who brought them?
519. Was Jesus baptizing the children? Where was Jesus when this incident occurred?; please be as specific as possible.
520. Notice the tense in the verb "rebuked"—it denotes continuing action—what would this suggest?
521. Why wasn't Jesus patient with His disciples instead of being "moved" with indignation?
522. Does the expression "to come unto me" suggest anything about the age of the children?
523. Was Jesus saying the children were already in the kingdom of God? Discuss.
524. Specify three ways in which we should be like little children.
525. What is the meaning of "the kingdom of God" as here used? Does this refer to the church? Discuss.
526. What is the meaning of the word "blessed" as used in vs. 16?
527. In approximately what place did Jesus meet the rich young ruler?
528. Designate the urgency and eagerness of this young man.
529. Mark the humility and trust of this one.
530. What did the ruler mean by the words "Good Teacher"?
531. Was the ruler asking for the way to go to heaven or was there something more in the question?
532. Why did Jesus pick up the words "good teacher" and make a point out of them?

533. In what sense is God the only one who is "good"?
534. Did Jesus tell the rich young man that he could find eternal life in keeping the commandments? Discuss.
535. Why mention the particular six commandments He did?
536. Was the young man bragging or lying when he said he had kept the commandments since his youth?
537. Why does Mark say "Jesus looking upon him loved him"?
538. Just what did the young man lack?
539. Mention six things he did not lack.
540. This one was to trade one treasure for another—please explain how this transaction was to be made.
541. Show the connection of heavenly treasure and following Jesus.
542. As carefully as you can, tell what you believe the young man expected Jesus to say in answer to his question.
543. Was the young ruler lost? Discuss.

COMMENT 10:13-22

TIME.—A.D. 30. This conversation probably occurred in the month of March, on Christ's last journey to Jerusalem, only a few weeks before his crucifixion.

PLACE.—On the farther side of the Jordan, near the borders of Judea. (See Mark 10:1). After the raising of Lazarus, the Lord retired to escape the storm of persecution to "Ephraim, a city of Judea," and after a short interval of rest crossed the Jordan into Perea, where he was still at this date, en route to Jerusalem. If the student will locate a point in the the Jordan valley, east of the river, not far from Jericho it will be near where the little children were brought to the Lord. This region east of the Jordan was called Perea (beyond) because it was *beyond* the river. It included the districts of Bashan and Gilead and in the time of the Savior was fertile and populous, with a mixed population, partly Jewish and partly Gentile.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS.—The blessing of the little children (vs. 13-16), in Matt. 19:13-15, and Luke 18:15-17. For the lesson to the rich young man, see Matt. 19:16-30; 20:16 and Luke 18:18-30.

INTERVENING HISTORY.—Many events occurred, the chief of which were: 1. The visit of our Lord to Jerusalem at the Feast of Tabernacles, October, A.D. 29 (John 7:8-10), which was marked by (1) solemn discourses during the feast, and an attempt of the Sanhedrim to apprehend him (John 7:11-51, 8:12-59); (2) the opening of the eyes of one born blind (John 9:1-41), the revelation of himself as the Good Shepherd (John 10:1-18). 2. Return to Galilee (October). 3. Final departure from Galilee (Novem-

ber), (Luke 9:51; Mark 10:1). 4. Ministrations in Judea, and mission of the seventy (Luke 10:13: 17). 5. Visit to Jerusalem at the Feast of Dedication (John 10:22-39), (December). 6. Tour in Perea (Luke 13:22-17; 10). 7. The raising of Lazarus (John 11:10-46). 8. Resolve of the Sanhedrim to put him to death, and his retirement to Ephraim (John 11:47-54), (January, A.D. 30). 9. Goes to the borders of Samaria and Galilee; heals ten lepers (January, February). 10. Starts towards Jerusalem down on the east side of the Jordan (March). 11. Discourse on marriage and divorce on the way.

OUTLINE—1. Christ and the Children. 2. The Rich Young Seeker. 3. The One Great Lack.

ANALYSIS

I. CHRIST AND THE CHILDREN, VS. 13-16.

1. Children Brought to the Lord. Mark 10:13; Matt. 19:13; Luke 18:15.
2. The Disciples Rebuked. Mark 10:14; Matt. 19:14; Luke 18:16.
3. Of Such is the Kingdom of God. Mark 10:14; Matt. 19:14; Luke 18:16.
4. Christ Blessing the Children. Mark 10:16.

II. THE RICH YOUNG SEEKER, VS. 17-20.

1. The Great Question. Mark 10:18; Matt. 19:16; Luke 18:18.
2. None Good but One. Mark 10:19; Matt. 19:17; Luke 18:19.
3. What Doest Thou? Mark 10:20; Matt. 19:18, 19; Luke 18:20.
4. A Self-Righteous Spirit. Mark 10:21; Matt. 19:20; Luke 18:21.

III. THE ONE GREAT LACK, VS. 21, 22.

1. One thing Thou Lackest. Mark 10:21; Matt. 19:21; Luke 18:22.
2. Christ Rejected. Mark 10:22; Matt. 19:22; Luke 18:23.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. CHRIST AND THE CHILDREN.

In this incident the very heart of Christ is published to poor sinners; and we may clearly perceive the freeness and fullness of the mighty grace of the Redeemer, who is willing to receive the youngest child as well as the oldest man.—*Spurgeon*.

13. *And they brought young children*. Of varying ages, for according to Luke, Christ called them to him. There were parents in those days wise enough to know that it was not well to wait until children were old enough to become hardened in sin before seeking for them the blessing of a Savior. We bring children to Christ (1) by daily, constant, earnest

prayer on their behalf; (2) by teaching them the truth; (3) by consecrating them to God for this life and the life to come; (4) by training them up for Christ. "Set before your child life and death, hell, and heaven, judgment and mercy, his own sin, and Christ's most precious blood, labor with him, persuade him with tears and weeping to turn unto the Lord."—*Spurgeon. That he should touch them.* An act expressive of imparting a blessing, and showing that the nearer we are to Jesus the greater the blessing which comes to us from him. Blessings come to those who are near, which cannot come to those that are afar off. This is true of physical healing, and of moral and intellectual influences. We must draw near to Christ in order to receive his blessing. *His disciples rebuked those that brought them.* "The erroneous apostles," as Richard Baxter calls them, thought that the Great Rabbi would be annoyed, and his attention diverted from matters of greater importance than anything connected with little children. They think it is to abuse the goodness and misuse the time of their Master, Dr. Tyng says: "It seems to me that the Devil would never ask anything more of a minister than to have him look upon his mission as chiefly to the grown up members of his congregation, while somebody else was to look after the children."

14. *When Jesus saw it he was much displeased.* The language of the original is much stronger: so it is expressed in the Revised Version, "moved with indignation." The disciples had already been cautioned about their treatment of children (Matt. 18:10-14). Some sign of displeasure was probably on his countenance. How careful we should be not to call forth his displeasure by keeping children from him! Peloubet assigns five reasons for the Lord's indignation. (1) Because they were keeping away from him those who wanted to come to him, and for whom he died. (2) They were taking away those who were the very hope of the church, the kingdom they were appointed to build up. (3) Because the children are the type of all who shall enter his kingdom. (4) Because he loved little children, and rejoiced in their love. (5) Because they were hindering the best workers in his kingdom, the mothers. *Suffer the little children to come unto me.* To refuse children access to his grace was to misrepresent his spirit, his mission, and his kingdom. In bringing the children at that moment the mothers interrupted him in an important doctrinal discourse: yet Jesus suspended his teaching, and pronounced a blessing. It signified that there was a place in his thought, in his heart, in his mission, in his church, for children. *For of such is the kingdom of God.* Such as have the childlike disposition toward God. God wants little children in his kingdom. People are most likely to come into the kingdom when children, since all must become like little children in order

to enter the kingdom. *Children in the kingdom of God in heaven.* Such as die before they have wandered out of God's kingdom into the kingdom of Satan are certainly saved, since they are "of the kingdom of heaven."—*Abbott*. Then, beyond a doubt, in that kingdom shall all the little ones be found. For it is not as children of Christians, it is not as baptized, but it is as *children*, that of such is that kingdom.—*Alford*. *Children in the kingdom of God on earth.* Perhaps it is as well for us to learn the lesson at once, so that we might accept the statement which the words of the Savior would teach; namely, that little children are the true wards of the church, and ought to be welcomed, cherished, and valued highly.—*Sunday School Times*.

15. *Whosoever shall not receive*, etc. Christ now holds up the children as an example to his disciples. He had the ideal childlike spirit, and delighted to see in little ones his own image. Purity, truthfulness, simplicity, docility, and loving dependence made them his favorite types for his followers. The apostles needed the lessons their characteristics impressed.—*Geikie*.

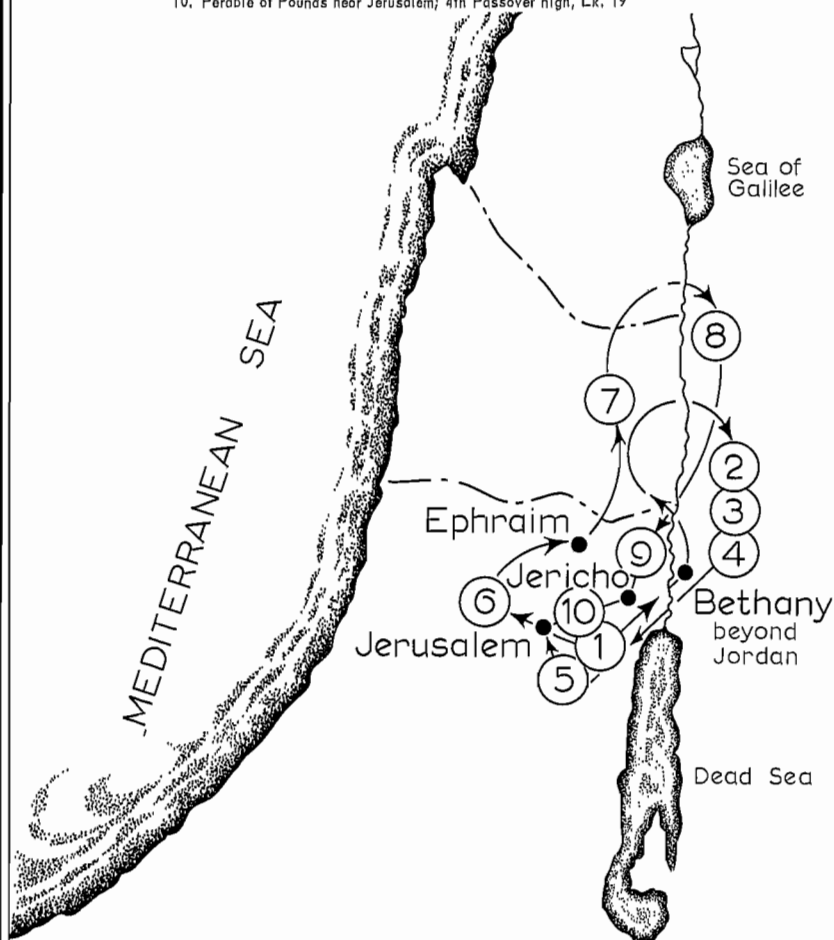
16. *Took them up in his arms.* He ever giveth more than men ask or think. He had been asked only to touch the children. He takes them into his arms, and lays his hands upon them, and blesses them.—*Cambridge Bible for Schools*. As I look at Christ in this, the most stirring period of his history, with the dark events of his last agonies thickening on his horizon, condescending to take little children in his arms and bless them, I feel deeper chords in my nature touched than when I see him hush the furious tempest, or raise the buried dead.—*Thomas*. It is well to note (1) that these children were not babes. The Lord called them to him. (2) They were not brought to be baptized, but that the Lord might touch them. (3) He did not baptize them, but laid hands on them and blessed them. (4) All parents and all mothers especially should bring their children to Christ for his blessing, should teach them of him, his demand for their hearts, and that they should obey him.

II. THE RICH YOUNG SEEKER.

17. *When he was gone forth on the way.* Had continued his slow journey towards Jerusalem. As his aim was to teach the people, his daily journeys were very short and he often paused for days together where an open door was presented. *There came one running.* This incident is described in Matt. 19:16-23, and Luke 18:18-23. The three accounts should be carefully compared by the student. This case presents some remarkable points. (1) The man was of irreproachable moral character; and this amidst all the temptations of youth—for he was a "young man" (Matt. 19:22)—and wealth, for "he was very rich," (v. 22). But (2)

MAP NO. 6—THIRD YEAR, LATER PEREAN MINISTRY (about 3 months)

1. Feast of Dedication, Jerusalem; attempts to kill Jesus; retreats to Bethabara (place of His baptism), Jn. 10
2. Perea; journey through cities and villages; few saved, Jn. 10
3. Home of a Pharisee; rules for fasting, Lk. 14
4. Place unknown; parables of lost sheep; lost coin; lost son; Lazarus and Rich man; Lawyer's question, Lk. 15 & 16
5. Receives call to come to Bethany; raises Lazarus; Jews seek to kill both, Jn. 11
6. Retirement to Ephraim with 12 disciples, Jn. 11
7. Journey through borders of Samaria; Galilee, Perea; heals ten lepers, Lk. 17
8. Sermon on the Mount; teaching on Divorce; little children; Pharisee and publican; rich young ruler; parable of laborers in vineyard; plainest prediction of crucifixion; James & John seek chief honors, Mt. 19-20, Mk. 10, Lk. 17-18
9. Jericho; two blind men healed; Zacchaeus, Lk. 19
10. Parable of Pounds near Jerusalem; 4th Passover night, Lk. 19



restless, notwithstanding, his heart craves eternal life. (3) He so far believed in Jesus as to be persuaded he could authoritatively direct him on this vital point. (4) So earnest is he, that he comes "running" and even "kneeling before him," and that when he was gone forth "into the way" (v. 17)—the high road—by this time crowded with travelers to the passover.—*J. F. and B. Running*. They that will have eternal life must run for it; because the Devil, the law, sin, death, and hell follow them.—*Bunyan. Good Master, what shall I do?* He sincerely desired salvation; and he imagined that some generous action, some great sacrifice, would secure this highest good.—*Godet. What shall I do?* (In Matthew, What good thing shall I do?) He had not yet learned that he needed first to be good, to have a pure and holy heart, before he could have eternal life. *To inherit eternal life?* That I may be among those that are true children, and, as such, lawful inheritors of the kingdom.—*Cook*.

18. *Why callest thou me good?* Christ does not rebuke the young man for employing what was nothing more than the language of respect by any pupil to a teacher.—*Abbott*. But he asks him whether he looks upon him merely as any other teacher; or does he recognize him as a divine teacher—the only one who is truly good; the "good master" who knows all things, and whose teaching is eternally true.—*P. There is none good but one, that is God*. He does not deny that he is good; for he is the one who is good, even God (1 John 3:5). Some have mistakenly found in these words an affirmation that Christ is not divine. To whom Stier relies; "Either there is none good but God; Christ is good; therefore Christ is God: or, there is none good but God, Christ is not God; therefore Christ is not good." There is no answer to these syllogisms but to deny the sinlessness of Christ.

19. *Thou knowest the commandments*. After uttering his mild rebuke, our Lord proceeds to answer the young man's question by exhibiting the moral character requisite as "meetness" for the enjoyment of everlasting life.—*Morrison*. St. Matthew says that our Lord first answered, "Keep the commandments;" and when the young man asked, "What kind of commandments?" he seems purposely to have mentioned only the plainest commandments of the second table, to show the young man that he had fallen short, even of these in their true interpretation, much more of that love to God which is the epitome of the first table. Thus does Christ "send the proud to the law, and invite the humble to the gospel." —*Farrar. Defraud not*. It seems as if intended to be a special application of the tenth commandment. One who had great possessions, gathered in the usual ways by which men gain wealth, needed to examine himself

specially by that text. Were there no ill-gotten gains in his treasure?—*Ellicott*. Our Lord gives this enumeration of the commandments to bring out the self-righteous spirit of the young man, which he before saw.

20. *All these have I observed*. There was, no doubt, great ignorance in this reply. He knew but little of any one of these precepts in the strictness, spirituality, and extent of its requirements, who could venture on any such assertion. Yet there was sincerity in the answer, and it pointed to a bygone life of singular external propriety.—*Hanna*.

III. THE ONE GREAT LACK.

21. *Jesus beholding him loved him*. Jesus read his heart in a moment, and was won by the evident worth of his character. As he looked at him, so earnest, so humble, so admirable in his life and spirit, he loved him. Could he only stand the testing demand that must now be made, he would pass into the citizenship of the kingdom of God.—*Geikie*. Jesus loves all men, but his sympathies are called forth specially in behalf of those seeking for eternal life. It is out of his sympathy and love that he makes a demand on him that will reveal to the young man his own heart. *One thing thou lackest*. He thus proposed to him one short crucial test of his real condition, and way to clear self-knowledge. He had fancied himself willing to do whatever could be required; he could now see if he were really so. *Go thy way*. He now gives him proof of what he lacked. Far from arresting on their way those who believe in their own strength, he encourages them to prosecute it faithfully to the very end, knowing well that if they are sincere they shall by the law die to the law (Gal. 2:19). *Sell whatsoever thou hast*. The Lord loved him so well that he invited him to the highest honors, even to become a member of his immediate attendants, like the apostles. These had all given up everything in order to follow Christ, and the same test and opportunity was offered to this young man. It was the crisis of his life. Had he accepted the opportunity perhaps his would have been one of the great names in the early history of the church; but the world gained the victory, he loved it better than Christ, he rejected the offer and thus he disappears from sight forever. *Follow me*. All these things are parts of one whole, the Christian life. He must have all, would he enter eternal life. Note his possible future as a disciple, compared with his obscure future as a nameless rich man.

22. *And he was sad*. He had been touched where weakest, but this was exactly what his repeated request demanded.—*Geikie*. *And went away grieved*. He shrank from the one test that would really have led him to the heights of glory at which he aimed. *Great possessions*. It was too much. He preferred the comforts of earth to the treasures of heaven;

he would not purchase the things of eternity by abandoning those of time; he made, as Dante calls it, "the great refusal." And so he vanishes from the gospel history; nor do the evangelists know anything of him further.—*Farrar*. Which would have been better for this young man—to leave his goods to become the companion in labor of the St. Peters and St. Johns, or to keep possessions so soon to be laid waste by the Roman legions?—*Godet*.

FACT QUESTIONS 10:13-22

558. How is Mark 10:13-22 to be associated with the raising of Lazarus?
559. Why is this district called "beyond the Jordan"? What territory was included in it?
560. Name five events that occurred between the feast of the Tabernacles and the healing of the ten lepers.
561. How is the "mighty grace of the Redeemer" seen in His attitude toward the little children?
562. Name three ways children are brought to Christ today.
563. What lesson can be gained from the fact that Jesus touched the children?
564. What error was made by the apostles in rebuking the children?
565. Name three reasons for the Lord's indignation.
566. Are all children who die going to heaven? Discuss.
567. In what sense are children today in the kingdom of God on earth?
568. Is it true that Jesus saw in children His own image, and therefore held them up to his disciples as examples?
569. Show how the time and circumstance of blessing the children shows something of the beautiful character of Jesus.
570. Johnson says it is well to note four facts about this incident—mention three of them.
571. Why were some of the days' journeys of Jesus very short?
572. Note three remarkable things about the one who came running to Jesus.
573. Just what was the young man seeking?
574. "Either there is none good but ———; Christ is good; therefore Christ is ———; or, there is none good but God; Christ is not God; therefore Christ is not ———."
575. In what way does Christ "send the proud to the law, and invite the humble to the gospel"?
576. How did "defraud not" apply to the young man?

577. Show how there was both ignorance and sincerity in the answer of the young ruler.
578. Why did Jesus love the young man?
579. What is meant by the phrase "go thy way"?
580. What wonderful opportunity did Jesus offer the young man?
581. Why couldn't the young man follow Christ and keep his money?
582. What is "the great refusal"?

C. THE RICH MAN AND HEAVEN 10:23-27

TEXT 10:23-27

"And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! And the disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. And they were astonished exceedingly, saying unto him, Then who can be saved? Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for all things are possible with God."

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 10:23-27

544. Why mention the appearance or looks of Jesus?
545. Show how appropriate this question was.
546. What is "the kingdom of God" as used here?
547. Why were the disciples so amazed?
548. Show how the exaggerated illustration of the camel and the needle's eye fit the circumstance.
549. Did the disciples believe there was some connection between being rich and God's approval? Discuss.
550. Did the disciples think—"if a rich man cannot be saved no one can be saved"? Why?
551. What was impossible and possible in the salvation of a rich man?

COMMENT

TIME.—March—A.D. 30. Shortly after the conversation with the rich young ruler.

PLACE.—In Perea—the east side of the Jordan, near the borders of Judea.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS.—Matt. 19:23-26; Luke 18:24-27.

OUTLINE.—1. Jesus states the rich man's poor chances for heaven, vs. 23.
 2. The disciples are very surprised, vs. 24a, 3. Jesus repeats with emphasis and illustration His first assertion, vs. 24b-25, 4. "Who can be saved?"—God can make it possible, vs. 26, 27.

ANALYSIS

- I. JESUS STATES THE RICH MAN'S POOR CHANCES FOR HEAVEN, vs. 23.
 1. This was said as Jesus looked intently into the faces of His disciples.
 2. It is almost impossible for a rich man to be saved.
- II. THE DISCIPLES ARE VERY SURPRISED, vs. 24a.
 1. This surprise was because of their thought that a man was rich because God had blessed him.
 2. Jesus had flatly contradicted their concept.
- III. JESUS REPEATS WITH EMPHASIS AND ILLUSTRATION HIS FIRST ASSERTION, vs. 24b-25.
 1. Jesus calls His disciples "children" (in understanding) as He repeats His statement.
 2. The possibility is like that of a camel going through the eye of a needle.
- IV. WHO THEN CAN BE SAVED?—GOD CAN MAKE IT POSSIBLE, vs. 26, 27.
 1. The increased amazement of the disciples.
 2. Jesus again looked searchingly at them—"what man cannot do, God can do."

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. JESUS STATES THE RICH MAN'S POOR CHANCES FOR HEAVEN.

"23. Now again the deliberate look of Jesus round the whole circle of his disciples, gazing into each face, impressed itself on the memory of Mark's informant. His saying, *How hardly*—i.e. with what difficulty—*shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!* is amply confirmed by experience. Christian men often become rich, but rich men rarely become Christians. The reason is not far to seek: the process of gaining wealth encourages self-seeking, and the possession of it encourages self-importance; but the spirit that can enter the kingdom is the spirit of a little child."

II. THE DISCIPLES ARE VERY SURPRISED.

"24a. This remarkable verse is peculiar to Mark. The astonishment of the disciples was natural, with their ideas of the kingdom. "Hard for rich men! What can he mean?" All the splendid imagery of the prophets (as in Isa. 60) might rise in their minds to contradict him; and the idea of

delivering Israel from oppression by a kingdom that rich men could scarcely enter must have seemed to them absurd."

III. JESUS REPEATS WITH EMPHASIS AND ILLUSTRATION HIS FIRST ASSERTION.

"24b-25. Jesus solemnly repeated his hard saying; yet his mood was tender, as his word *Children* shows, here alone addressed to them. ("Little children," in John 13:33.)—According to the common reading, the repetition of the saying explains and softens it by the modification. *How hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter.* But there seems sufficient reason to accept the reading of ancient manuscripts by which the words *for them that trust in riches* are omitted. In that case the repetition of the saying removes it from the special case of rich men and applies the sentiment more widely: *Children, how hard it is to enter into the kingdom of God!* Plainly, such a remark was a natural outcome of the incident, for it was not chiefly his riches, but his heart, that sent the man away sorrowful, and a like heart is in all men. To all men, therefore, rich or poor, it is by nature *hard to enter into the kingdom of God*—hard in itself, since sin is what it is.—Let us not be afraid that such a text will prove too discouraging. It is better to know things as they are; and perhaps the doctrine of free grace has been so used as to lead to an untrue idea of the easiness of salvation.

25. *It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle.* This comparison may have been proverbial, as the Talmud contains, at a later date, a closely similar saying. The Koran exactly reproduces it from the New Testament. As for the popular explanation—that the small gate in the city wall, too narrow for a camel to pass through, was called the needle's eye—there is no sufficient evidence of the antiquity of such a use of the name. The comparison needs no special explanation; it is a strong way of representing impossibility: "It is so hard for sinful men, rich or poor, to enter the kingdom, that for a rich man—one who is especially involved in the unchildlike habits of the world—to enter is harder than for a camel to go through a needle's eye." This is no contradiction of any gracious and winning Scripture. It is the Saviour's emphatic statement of a fact, parallel to Luke 13:24 and 14:26-33, and to many other of his words."

IV. WHO THEN CAN BE SAVED?—GOD CAN MAKE IT POSSIBLE.

"26, 27. *Astonished before; astonished out of measure now.*—The inquiry was *among themselves*, a whispering of amazement. *Who then can be saved?* With such a standard, how would the kingdom receive any one? For was not the love of money everywhere? and how could the kingdom live, with a law so strict?—*Jesus looking upon them.* Again

Peter remembered his look. The word, both here and in verse 21, is the same as in Luke 22:61: "The Lord turned and looked on Peter,"—*With men it is impossible*. Not now difficult, but more. On human principles or by any power of man it cannot be done; the proud man cannot be brought into the kingdom of the humble, or the worldly-minded rich man into the kingdom of the poor in spirit. So in John 3:3: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."—*But not with God: for with God all things are possible*. He can make new creatures of men; he can impart the spirit of the kingdom. He has command, too, of all means, earthly and heavenly. So he can bring into his kingdom men who are spiritually incompatible with it. (See 1 Tim. 1:12-17; 1 Cor. 15:9, 10.) The implication is that, even though this case looks so hopeless, God can yet find means of bringing the unwilling rich man to a better mind. In his hands are even life and death." (W. N. Clarke)

FACT QUESTIONS 10:23-27

583. Why is it that Christian men often become rich, but rich men rarely become Christians?
584. What could arise in the mind of the disciples to contradict the words of Jesus?
585. Is the thought of difficulty in entering the kingdom general or specific? i.e. does this principle apply to all—explain.
586. Is there any truth in the thought of a needle's gate in the city wall of Jerusalem? Why was this explanation offered in the first place?
587. Why were the disciples particularly amazed at this time?
588. How will God make the impossible possible? Discuss.

C. PETER'S HASTY WORDS. 10:28-31

TEXT 10:28-31

"Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or mother, or father, or children, or lands, for my sake, and for the gospel's sake, but he shall receive a hundred-fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life. But many that are first shall be last; and the last first."

THOUGHT QUESTION 10:28-31

552. Why did Peter ask this question?
553. Show the low spiritual tone in the question asked by Peter.
554. Did Peter feel he and the other apostles had done what Jesus asked the rich young ruler to do?

555. Had Jesus said anything about the advantages in following Him? (Cf. His words to the rich young ruler.)
556. Is Peter saying that he and the other apostles actually left all to follow Jesus with the thought of getting more than they left?
557. Please notice that Jesus did not direct His answer to Peter— what does this imply? There are to be rewards—but for whom? How?
558. Please be specific in your understanding of just how we can receive a hundred fold of houses, brethren, sisters, mothers, children, lands—with persecutions. If you can not give a specific answer— (one with personal meaning) think and pray and study until you can.
559. Why add the warning of vs. 31? What does it mean?

COMMENT 10:28-31

TIME.—March, A.D. 30.

PLACE.—In Perea—at the same time and place as the incident with the rich young ruler.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS.—Matt. 19:27-30; Luke 18:28-30.

OUTLINE.—1. "Look at us: we have left all to follow you." vs. 28. 2. No one has left all to follow me who will not be rewarded a hundred fold along with persecutions and in the age to come eternal life, vs. 29, 30. 3. Warning—the first may be last—The last may be first, vs. 31.

ANALYSIS

- I. LOOK AT US: WE HAVE LEFT ALL TO FOLLOW YOU, VS. 28.
 1. Right after Jesus' words to the disciples about riches and the kingdom Peter responds.
 2. We are examples of those who have left all to follow. (What shall we receive in return?)
- II. NO ONE HAS LEFT ALL TO FOLLOW ME WHO WILL NOT BE REWARDED A HUNDRED-FOLD—ALONG WITH PERSECUTIONS—IN THE AGE TO COME ETERNAL LIFE, VS. 29, 30.
 1. Jesus replied emphatically—"truly"—
 2. This principle applies to all—anyone who leaves all to follow Me will be rewarded a hundred-fold and at the end—eternal life.
 3. Such reward will be accompanied with persecution.
- III. WARNING—THE FIRST MAY BE LAST—THE LAST MAY BE FIRST, VS. 31.
 1. Some—like you, Peter—start poorly but finish well.
 2. Some—like the rich young ruler—start well but do not finish.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. LOOK AT US: WE HAVE LEFT ALL TO FOLLOW YOU.

"28. Peter, as usual, speaks for them all, saying, in substance, "We have done what this man would not; we have accepted the kingdom on the right terms at personal sacrifice." The question, "What shall we have, therefore?" added in Matthew, is plainly implied here and in Luke. Here is a frank statement of self-seeking, even in self-renunciation; self-denial in the hope of direct returns. The apostles were still hoping that their special honors in the kingdom would make amends for everything. Yet in the words of Peter now there may be a tone of despair, in view of the depression of their prospects implied in the words just spoken: "What shall we have, what amends, if the kingdom is to be of this exacting and unambitious kind?" No concealment anywhere of the low spiritual tone of the disciples."

II. NO ONE HAS LEFT ALL TO FOLLOW ME WHO WILL NOT BE REWARDED A HUNDRED-FOLD—ALONG WITH PERSECUTIONS—IN THE AGE TO COME ETERNAL LIFE.

"29, 30. How tender and wise the answer! There is no distinct rebuke, but there is a silent one in the fact that the promise is made, not to the apostles only, but to all who make such sacrifices as they speak of. Apostles have no exclusive claim, nor even an assurance of pre-eminence in this respect. The rewards of the kingdom are for all the faithful, all who, *for my sake, and the gospel's*, have forsaken what they held dear. Note the true suggestion—that the forsaking must be for a person and for a principle. Jesus wishes not to be regarded apart from the gospel, nor can the gospel be regarded as a true object of sacrifice apart from Jesus. So in chap. 8:38. The promise seems to mean (for of course the promise of multiplication of goods cannot be taken literally) that all good that is given up for Christ shall be immeasurably more precious to the soul for the surrender. It shall be given back to the soul, if not to the hands, enhanced a hundred-fold in value. It may be given back to the hands—i.e. sacrifices may be required in spirit that are not called for in the course of divine providence—and in that case the hundred-fold of new preciousness is always found. But to the soul all that is given up for Christ shall be returned, and thus graciously multiplied. (The possible thoughts of the lad who gave up his loaves and fishes, John 6:9). The principle of self-sacrifice sweetens life instead of embittering it, and the experience of self-denial surprises the soul with unthought-of wealth. So much at present; and in the age that is coming, with its full spiritual rewards, eternal life. So 1 Tim. 4:8.—But the warning lies in the solemn reservation, preserved by Mark alone. *With persecutions*. No

easy way leads to these honors and rewards (2 Tim. 3:12; 2 Cor. 11:23-27; 6:4-10). Even when outward persecution is not, still the principle is the same: it is no easy way.—The *hundred-fold* will not prevent the persecutions; but neither will the persecutions interfere with the coming of the hundred-fold."

III. WARNING—THE FIRST MAY BE LAST—THE LAST MAY BE FIRST.

"31. A wise caution. "The judgment of God is according to truth," and rank will finally be determined by true judgment and not according to present appearances. Let no man boast; even the rich young man who has gone away sorrowful may possibly yet outrank the apostles. Here, according to Matthew, our Lord adds the parable of the Laborers (Matt. 20:1-16) to illustrate the solemn warning, *many that are first shall be last; and the last first*, to which, at the end of the parable, he returns.—The rich young man we see no more, unless under his proper name. Those who think that he may have been Lazarus suggest that his sickness, death, and resurrection, or some part of that great experience, may have been used by God, to whom all things are possible, in bringing him to the spirit of the kingdom. Whoever he may have been, we cannot suppress the hope that he who is said to have loved him did not leave him to himself." (W. N. Clarke)

FACT QUESTIONS 10:28-31

589. Is there in the words of Peter a tone of despair? Why?
590. Show how there is not a distinct rebuke to Peter but a very real silent one.
591. What was said about a person and a principle?
592. What sweetens life? What surprise is in store for the soul who exercises self-denial?
593. Why say "with persecutions"—Show how this principle is reflected in other references.
594. Read Matt. 20:1-16 and show the connection with Mark 10:31.
595. Why do some say the rich young man was Lazarus? or Saul of Tarsus?

C. JESUS FORETELLS HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION 10:32-34

TEXT 10:32-34

"And they were in the way, going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus was going before them; and they were amazed; and they that followed were afraid. And he took again the twelve, and began to tell them the things that were to happen unto him, saying, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests

and the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him unto the Gentiles; and they shall mock him, and shall spit upon him, and shall scourge him, and shall kill him; and after three days he shall rise again."

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 10:32-34

560. What was the reason for the amazement of the disciples? Please remember the purpose of going to Jerusalem.
561. Who were "those who followed" mentioned in vs. 32?
562. When and where had Jesus before mentioned His death and resurrection?
563. List the eight particulars in the prophecy made by Jesus.
564. Who were "the Gentiles" to whom the priests and scribes were to deliver our Lord?

COMMENT

TIME.—March, A.D. 30.

PLACE.—In Perea—at the same place and time as the previous incident.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS.—Matt. 20:17-19; Luke 18:31-34.

OUTLINE.—1. On the way to Jerusalem the disciples were filled with fear as they anticipated what would happen to them in the city. Jesus confirmed their fears, vs. 32. 2. Jesus details in prophecy what would happen to Him at Jerusalem, vs. 33, 34.

ANALYSIS

- I. ON THE WAY TO JERUSALEM THE DISCIPLES WERE FILLED WITH FEAR AS THEY ANTICIPATED WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO THEM IN THE CITY. JESUS CONFIRMED THEIR FEARS, VS. 32.
 1. Going up to Jerusalem—Jesus led the way.
 2. He spoke privately to the twelve of His coming passion.
- II. JESUS DETAILS IN PROPHECY WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO HIM AT JERUSALEM, VS. 33, 34.

The Son of man will be: (1) delivered to the chief priests and scribes. (2) condemned to death. (3) delivered to the Gentiles. (4) Mocked. (5) Spit upon. (6) Scourged. (7) Killed. (8) After three days raised from the dead.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

- I. ON THE WAY TO JERUSALEM THE DISCIPLES WERE FILLED WITH FEAR AS THEY ANTICIPATED WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO THEM IN THE CITY. JESUS CONFIRMED THEIR FEARS.

"32. *And they were in the way* (or on the road) *ascending to Jerusalem*, i.e. they were still upon their journey when the following discourse was uttered. This is another intimation that we have before us a con-

nected narrative. *And Jesus was going before them* (or leading them forward), which seems to imply some unusual activity or energy of movement, as if he was outstripping them, in token of his eagerness to reach the scene of suffering. This may throw some light upon the next clause, *and they were amazed*, or struck with awe, the same verb that is used in v. 24, here denoting probably some dark foreboding of the scenes which were before them in Jerusalem, a feeling which would naturally make them slow to follow in that dangerous direction, and dispose them to wonder at his own alacrity in rushing, as it were, upon destruction (John 11:8). *And following they feared* (or were alarmed), i.e. although they followed him, it was not willingly, but with a painful apprehension of danger both to him and to themselves. There is something very striking in the picture here presented of the Saviour hastening to death, and the apostles scarcely venturing to follow him. This backwardness would not be diminished by his *taking again the twelve*, i.e. taking them aside from the others who accompanied him on his journey. *He began* (anew what he had done more than once before) *to tell them the (things) about to happen to him*. This is commonly reckoned our Lord's third prediction of his passion to the twelve apostles; but including the less formal intimation in 9:12 it may be counted as the fourth."

II. JESUS DETAILS IN PROPHECY WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO HIM AT JERUSALEM.

"33, 34. *Behold* invites attention and prepares them for something strange and surprising, as the intimation of his death still was to them, although so frequently repeated. *We are ascending to Jerusalem*, the form of expression always used in speaking of the Holy City, on account both of its physical and moral elevation. (Compare Luke 2:42. John 2:13; 5:1; 7:8. 10. 14. 11:55. Acts 11:2; 15:2; 18:22; 21:4. 12. 15. 24:11; 25:1. 9. Gal. 2:1. 2.) The prediction is the same as in the former cases, but with a more distinct intimation that he was to suffer by judicial process, or by form of law. *They* (the Sanhedrim, the national council or representatives) *shall condemn him unto death, and deliver him to the Gentiles* (literally, nations, meaning all nations but the Jews) for the execution of the sentence, all which was literally fulfilled, as we shall see below.

This verse describes the part to be taken by the Gentiles in the sufferings of Christ, every particular of which has its corresponding facts in the subsequent narrative; the mocking; the scourging; the spitting; the killing; and the rising. Here again the terms of the prediction may appear to us too plain to be mistaken; but, as we have seen already, the correct understanding does not depend upon the plainness of the lan-

guage, but upon the principle of interpretation. If they attached a mystical or figurative meaning to the terms, it mattered not how plain they might be in themselves or in their literal acceptation, which they probably supposed to be precluded by the certainty that he was to reign and to possess a kingdom." (J. A. Alexander)

FACT QUESTIONS 10:32-34

596. What intimation do we have in these verses of a connected narrative?
597. What is striking in the picture in these verses?
598. Do we have here the third or fourth prediction by Jesus of His death? (Cf. 8:31; 9:31; 9:12)
599. Why always speak of "going up to Jerusalem"?
600. Why say "behold" before the comment Jesus made?
601. What was added in this prediction not found in the former ones?
602. How was it possible for Jesus to be so plain in His words of His coming death and still be misunderstood by His disciples?

D. SELFISH AMBITION REPROVED. 10:35-45

TEXT 10:35-45

"And there came near unto him James and John, the sons of Zebedee, saying unto him, Master, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall ask of thee. And he said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you? And they said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and one on thy left hand, in thy glory. But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink the cup that I drink? or to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? And they said unto him, We are able. And Jesus said unto them, The cup that I drink ye shall drink; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized: but to sit on my right hand or on my left hand is not mine to give: but it is for them for whom it hath been prepared. And when the ten heard it, they began to be moved with indignation concerning James and John. And Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them: and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it is not so among you: but whosoever would become great among you, shall be your minister: and whosoever would be first among you, shall be servant of all. For verily the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 10:35-45

565. Your understanding of this section is not going to be at all complete unless you also read Matt. 20:20-28. Please read it!
566. Who actually voiced the petition?
567. Isn't it strange such a thought even entered the heart of those who made it? Discuss.
568. In what manner did these three look upon Jesus?
569. James and John wanted to sit at His right and left in His "glory"—what type of "glory" did they contemplate?
570. What was "the cup" and "baptism" of vs. 38?
571. Why did Jesus ask the question about the cup and baptism? Did they understand the question?
572. When did James and John drink the cup and experience the baptism?
573. For whom was the right and left of Jesus' throne prepared?
574. Why were the ten indignant? Be specific.
575. Why wasn't Jesus angry with the sad lack of understanding evidenced by the apostles?
576. Why not refer to the Jews in their exercising of power? Who were "the Gentiles" of vs. 42?
577. What a revolutionary thought Jesus proposed in vs. 43, 44—! What type of greatness did Jesus envision?
578. Why refer to Himself as "the Son of man"?
579. Show how Jesus fulfilled His purpose.
580. In what sense was Jesus' life "a ransom for many"?

COMMENT

TIME.—March A.D. 30.

PLACE.—Perea—across from Jericho.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS—Matt. 20:20-28.

OUTLINE—1. The selfish request, vs. 35-37. 2. Jesus' answer and rebuke, vs. 38-45.

ANALYSIS

I. THE SELFISH REQUEST, 35-37.

1. Made by James and John the sons of Zebedee (through their mother).
2. Asked as to a great potentate who had all power (—as well as favorites).
3. A bold, blantant request for special favor.

II. JESUS' ANSWER AND REBUKE, VS. 38-45.

1. You ask out of ignorance.
2. You want to share my glory. Are you ready to also share my suffering?
3. Without understanding the apostles answer "yes." Jesus confirms that they will indeed share His suffering.
4. He could not grant preference.
5. The ten were angry with James and John for making such a request.
6. Jesus explained by comparison the place of true greatness.
7. The Son of man is come to serve not to be served—indeed His life is given as a ransom for all.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. THE SELFISH REQUEST.

"35. *James and John, the sons of Zebedee.* They were among the earliest disciples, John having been, with Andrew, one of the first who followed Jesus (John 1:36-40), and James having probably been brought by John to Jesus on that same day (John 1:41, where the form of expression in the Greek implies that, though Andrew was the first to find his brother, Simon, and bring him to Jesus, John also quickly found his brother, James, and brought him too). James and John were two of the three nearest to Jesus. In Matthew the request at this time comes from their mother, whose name was Salome (compare Matt. 27:56 with Mark 15:40), and who was probably the sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus. The request was probably suggested by the words just spoken, and recorded only by Matthew (19:28): "When the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Of course they took this literally, or nearly so; and now the two disciples, or their mother for them, came asking for the two thrones nearest the King himself. Their personal nearness to him in the apostleship and the early date of their following may have emboldened them to this; and if they were first-cousins to him, as seems probable, this would be another reason for expecting a favorable answer. —Yet, as if they feared failure, they would try, with a genuine human impulse, to pledge the answer in advance. *We would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire*, or, rather, "ask." He gave no pledge but asked for their request; when, behold, in spite of all that he had said, now of death, and before (chap. 9:35) of humility, it was the most ambitious request that could be made—a request for the two chief thrones."

II. JESUS' ANSWER AND REBUKE.

"38. Personal loyalty was at the bottom of the desire: they had cast in their lot with him and with him they desired to have their portion. Yet it was a childish desire, an ambition for the end in profound ignorance of the way.—*Ye know not what ye ask*. It is like the reply of a father to foolish children. When addressed to men—ambitious men—how humiliating! yet in this case how searchingly appropriate! It is not less appropriate with reference to many of our requests to our Heavenly Father; for often do we pray for the end in ignorance of the way, and often when the way be by no means acceptable to us.—The principle of his rejoinder is that of Matt. 10:24: "The disciple is not above his master." There is but one way to all the thrones, the way the King has taken.—*Can ye drink* (not "drink of") *the cup that I drink*—i.e. which I have to drink, and in spirit am already drinking, the cup of utter self-sacrifice, even unto martyrdom. He drinks the cup, he does not merely drink of it; and he proposes the same to them.—*And be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?* "that I am already in spirit enduring?" Another simile for the coming death, omitted by Matthew. The baptism is the overwhelming in pain and death; the woe is to come like the rushing of the water over the body of one whom John plunged in the Jordan. Perhaps he could not have found, within the range of their common thoughts, a stronger simile for his purpose; but he seems to have chosen it partly, also, because it was a sacred simile, the sanctity of baptism having given to the form a suggestive character that made it especially suitable for his use. When it comes to this symbolic use of the word, no one doubts that the act which forms the basis of the symbolism is a complete immersion.—The two questions mean the same, and the thought is, "You ask for thrones: can you die, and in spirit suffer death before death, as I do? Can you take up the cross and come after me, and go to the throne by the way that I take?"

39. Their unqualified *We can* contained both good and evil. They knew that they were attached to Jesus, and it was their loyal hearts that spoke. But they knew not themselves, and spoke in ignorant assurance. The third of the special three put himself similarly on record (Luke 22:33); so that Peter, James and John are the men to whom we owe the most remarkable utterances of the confidence that is easy to an ignorant heart. Yet the *We can* of James and John and the profession of Peter came true in later times, when they had learned the secret of their Master more deeply. Their claims of victory were premature, but their hearts already had the secret of future victory.

The kindness of the answer is something wonderful. There is no tone

or spirit of rebuke in it, although there was so much room for reproof. On the surface it is a denial of the request—at least, it would put an end to all exclusive expectations. Yet the prediction *Ye shall indeed drink the cup that I drink* is really a promise of all that is precious in what they asked for. If he could truthfully say, "Ye shall suffer in my spirit," the thrones were assured, though no promise was given of the special ones that were ambitiously chosen. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne" (Rev. 3:21). This prediction scarcely amounts to an announcement of martyrdom for each of the two brothers; it might be fulfilled by life in the martyr's spirit. But James drank that cup (Acts 12:2) and John suffered, if he did not die (Rev. 1:9). Both attained to high seats at the Master's side, but thrones how unlike all that they were thinking of! and by a way how different from all that they expected! In both aspects was the answer true, that they knew not what they asked. The real thrones were more glorious than they thought, and the way was such as they knew not.

"40. The remainder of the answer surprises us; for, instead of giving them some reason why they must beware of looking too high or expecting too much, he disclaims the power to grant their request. *To sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give*: "but it is for them for whom it hath been prepared." So, correctly, in the Revision. Matthew adds "by my Father."—*But* (alla) is not equivalent to "except;" as if he had said, "It is not mine to give, except to those for whom it hath been prepared." Such a translation, though sometimes proposed, is inadmissible. Two statements are here—that the assignment of the highest rank is the prerogative of the Father, which reminds one of the language of Mark 13:32, and that the highest rank shall be assigned by him to those for whom it has been prepared. But who are they for whom the highest rank has been prepared by the Father? (See verses 42-44). They are the disciples who are most like the Master. The nearest thrones are prepared for the truest followers, just as the crown is prepared for the successful contestant (1 Cor. 9:24). Here, again, the last may be the first, and even the chief apostles cannot be sure that some servant of humbler name may not at the end be above them.

41. *The ten*—the remainder of the apostolic band—*began to be much displeased with James and John*. Began, but were soon interrupted and brought to account by the Master.—*Displeased*. The same word as in verse 14. Why displeased? Had they not all been questioning who should be greatest (chap. 9:34)? and would they not all have been glad of the places James and John had chosen? It was human nature: they thought it very wrong when two petitioned for what all would gladly have claimed.

42. *Jesus called them*—not necessarily the ten—apart from James and John; this word was for all.—First he states the worldly principle of greatness—a principle with which he says they are familiar. *Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles*, or “the nations” i.e. the recognized and accepted rulers of the world—*exercise lordship*, or “lord it,” *over them*—that is, over the Gentiles, or nations, their subjects—and *their great ones exercise authority upon them*. This is the ordinary human conception of greatness. Recognized greatness among the nations of the world implies the exercise of domination over men; the great ones lord it. This is the ideal of greatness and a kingdom which Jesus rejected in the wilderness, and again when the Jews became his tempters (John 6:15).

43, 44. *But so shall it not be*—or, on manuscript authority, “it is not so”—*among you*. Your principle is not the principle of the world, and you have your own type of greatness and your own way of becoming great. Accordingly, he proceeds to tell of the Christian way of becoming great. The verbs in the future tense may best be rendered by “will” instead of *shall*, for Jesus is telling not what he requires, but what a man will do who intelligently seeks the Christian greatness in the Christian way. Also, instead of *whosoever will be great*, read “whosoever wishes to become great,” and, in verse 44, “whosoever wishes to become chiefest,” or “first.”—What, now, is the Christian principle of greatness and the way by which a wise Christian will seek high rank? The Christian greatness consists in humble service; and a Christian who wishes to be great will seek it, if he seeks as a Christian, only through humble service.—The desire for greatness is here represented in two degrees, “whosoever wishes to become great among you” telling of the general desire for eminence, and “whosoever of you wishes to become first” expressing the still higher desire for pre-eminence. It is not “the first,” as if a Christian could distinctly set his ambition on that it is “first”—that is, a person of first rank, one of the highest.—Observe particularly that our Lord does not forbid or discourage such desires; he does not say that there are no honors in his kingdom or bid us look for a dead-level of spiritual equality; and he does not hint that it is wrong to desire to have a place among the “first.” But he proceeds to tell how a Christian, if he intelligently adopts the Christian principle, will act on such a desire. Does he wish to become great? he will be *your minister* (*diakonos*), attendant, or assistant—i.e. he will make himself a helper to his brethren. Does his ambition reach higher, so that he wishes to become a man of first rank? he will bow still lower, and be *the servant of all*, a slave (*doulos*) for the service of all to whom he can be useful. There is a threefold climax. “First” is higher than “great,” indicating a higher ambition in the aspiring soul.

Slave (doulos) is lower than minister, attendant (diakonos), indicating a deeper humility as the means of reaching the higher honor. *Of all* is broader than "of you," in *your minister*, indicating that the deeper humility will seek and find opportunities of wider as well as greater usefulness. The higher one wishes to rise, the lower will he bend in brotherly service, and the more freely will he give himself to many.—It may be asked whether our Lord's teaching is not self-contradictory here; whether, in practice, we can conceive of seeking first rank by means of humility and service; whether the two motives are not incompatible. Certainly they are incompatible, so long as we hold the worldly conception of thrones and rewards. But the idea of greatness through any elevation that would gratify vanity he has just expressly ruled out, and has placed the honors of the kingdom in something else. The honor in this kingdom consists in being like the King, and the first rank in being most like the King. Whoever seeks this intelligently will seek it exactly as Jesus said, by humble and loving service to many. In this view of the matter it is evident that the honors are not altogether in the future. Whoever is doing the service in the Master's spirit is already of high rank, already on the throne. But the aristocracy in the kingdom is unconscious. They who belong to it are the last to suspect the fact, and any who may suppose themselves to belong to it are wrong (Matt. 25:37-39).

45. The great illustration and example is the Christ himself, in whose glory the ambitious disciples were hoping to share. He came to illustrate, not the human idea of greatness by being served, but the divine idea by serving. The great God himself is greatest in his helpfulness of love, and when he came nearest to men to show them his glory he came thus, in the self-sacrificing Son of man.—*Not to be ministered unto*. Not to "lord it" or "exercise authority" over men, after the manner of the Gentiles, *but to minister*, "serve," and *to give his life a ransom for many*. The extreme act of service. Compare the similar teaching at another time, in Luke 22:24-27, culminating in the words, "I am among you as he that serveth," and the matchless object-lesson in John 13:1-17; also Rom. 15:1-3; Phil. 2:5-11. In all these passages, and in many more (as Gal. 6:2; 2 Cor. 8:1-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4), the footsteps of the Master are shown to the disciples that they may follow. The act of God in providing the propitiation for our sins, and the act of Christ in laying down his life for us, are given as the supreme examples for us in 1 John 4:10, 11; 3:16. This was our Saviour's way to glory: the chief throne was prepared for the chief servant, and it will be found that the king is he who has done the most for his brethren. This is the only way by which any throne in his kingdom can be reached. (See John 12:26, spoken when only death remained to him.)—*To give his life a ransom for many*. A

ransom is the price paid for the release of prisoners or captives. The word *for*, in the sense of "instead of" ("a ransom for many"), is entirely appropriate, since a ransom is naturally conceived of as taking the place of the persons who are delivered by it, or serving instead of them. An idea of vicariousness, or action in the place of others, resides in this word, as well as in the word *ransom* itself. The phrase falls in with the other language of Scripture which represents the giving up of his life as the indispensable means for the deliverance of men from sin; and of this he was thinking when he spoke of the supreme act of service, the giving of his life a ransom for many. In order to *minister* thus to men he came into the world.—We often think of his way to the cross as rich in example for us; but here the cross itself is made the chief example. So Eph. 5:2. Here we are called to the spiritual "fellowship of his sufferings." (W. N. Clarke)

FACT QUESTIONS 10:35-45

603. Of what is this section a living illustration?
604. Give three facts concerning the former association of James and John.
605. Who was the mother of James and John?
606. Can we catch anything in the words of Jesus to indicate why James and John made the request they did?
607. Did James and John have any special nearness to Jesus that would encourage such a request? Discuss.
608. Did James and John actually believe Jesus would grant the request even before He knew what it was?
609. What was the basic motive in making the request?
610. Show how humiliating were the words of Jesus "Ye know not what ye ask."
611. Please explain the symbolism of the two figures of "the cup"—"the baptism."
612. Show how the immediate answer of "we can" contains both good and evil.
613. Show how James and John indeed were given "high seats at the Master's side."
614. Who are they for whom the highest rank has been prepared by the Father?
615. Show how the Father gives such positions and not the Son.
616. Show the inconsistency of the disapproval of the ten.

617. What is the worldly principle of greatness? When and where had Jesus rejected this principle?
618. What is the Christian principle of greatness?
619. Does Jesus discourage ambition by His words of rebuke for a certain type of greatness? Discuss.
620. Show the "threefold climax" in the words of Jesus.
621. What will be found by the "deeper humility"?
622. Aren't the two concepts of humility and greatness contradictory? Discuss.
623. What of the "aristocracy" of the kingdom?
624. Show how Jesus was the greatest and grandest illustration of what He taught.
625. How does the example of God also illustrate the principle of true greatness?
626. In what sense is the word "ransom" here used?
627. In what manner can we share in the "fellowship of his sufferings"?

F. BLIND BARTIMEUS 10:46-52

TEXT 10:46-52

"And they come to Jericho: and as he went out from Jericho, with his disciples and a great multitude, the son of Timeus, Bartimeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the way side. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me. And many rebuked him, that he should hold his peace; but he cried out the more a great deal, Thou son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stood still, and said, Call ye him. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good cheer; rise, he calleth thee. And he, casting away his garments, sprang up, and came to Jesus. And Jesus answered him, and said, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? And the blind man said unto him, Rabboni, that I may receive my sight. And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And straightway he received his sight, and followed him in the way."

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 10:46-52

581. Read Luke 18:35-43 and note the difference in the location of the healing—please attempt an explanation.
582. Why was there a great multitude with the disciples?
583. Why mention the father of Bartimeus?
584. Why were there more beggars in the days of our Lord?

585. How did Bartimeus come to have faith in Jesus?
 586. Why call Jesus "son of David"?
 587. What is the meaning of "mercy" as here used?
 588. Give two possible reasons for the attempt of the disciples to silence this beggar.
 589. How account for the change in attitude of the disciples from vs. 48 to vs. 49?
 590. Why ask him what he wanted? (as in vs. 51)
 591. What is the meaning of the expression: "Go thy way"?

COMMENT

TIME.—A.D. 30; the latter part of March.

PLACE.—Jericho, the "city of Palm Trees," situated fifteen to twenty miles northeast of Jerusalem, in the valley of Jordan, at the foot of the pass that led up from the Jordan valley to the central highlands and to Jerusalem. It was about six or seven miles north of the Dead Sea and about five miles from the Jordan at the base of the mountain rampart. After Jerusalem, it was at this date the most important city of Judea. It was 900 feet below the Mediterranean, and about 3,400 feet lower than Jerusalem. See the section of Palestine from east to west. The district was a blooming oasis in the midst of an extended sandy plain, watered and fruitful, rich in palms, roses and balsams; hence the name, "the fragrant city." Built by the Canaanites, and destroyed by Joshua, it was rebuilt and fortified at a later day, and became a seat of a school of the prophets. Herod the Great beautified it, and it was the most luxuriant spot in Palestine. In the twelfth century scarcely a vestige of the place remained. There is now on the site a wretched village with about 200 inhabitants. Sloping gently upwards from the level of the Dead Sea, 900 feet under the Mediterranean, it had the climate of lower Egypt and displayed the vegetation of the tropics. While snow is falling at Jerusalem, thin clothing is comfortable in Jericho.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS.—Matt. 20:29-34; Luke 18:35-43; 19:1.

LESSON OUTLINE.—1. The Blind Beggar's Petition. 2. The Lord's Call. 3. The Blind Beggar Healed.

ANALYSIS

I. THE BLIND BEGGAR'S PETITION, VS. 46-48.

1. The Beggar by the Wayside. Mark 10:46; Matt. 20:30; Luke 18:35.
2. Appeal to the Son of David. Mark 10:47; Matt. 20:31; Luke 18:38.
3. The Beggar Rebuked. Mark 10:48; Matt. 20:32; Luke 18:39.

II. THE LORD'S CALL, VS. 49, 50.

1. The Lord Hears the Cry for Mercy. Mark 10:49; Matt. 20:32; Luke 18:40.
2. The Beggar Comes to Jesus. Mark 10:50; Matt. 20:32; Luke 18:40.

III. THE BLIND BEGGAR HEALED, VS. 51, 52.

1. The Prayer for Sight. Mark 10:51; Matt. 20:33; Luke 18:41.
2. Saved by Faith. Mark 10:52; Luke 18:42.
3. Following Jesus. Mark 10:52; Matt. 20:34; Luke 18:43.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. THE BLIND BEGGAR'S PETITION.

46. *They came to Jericho.* The Lord and his disciples, on their way to Jerusalem. The exact position of the ancient Jericho is not known, but it was not far from the site of the present village, and was from five to seven miles from the Jordan on the great highway from the Trans-Jordanic county to Jerusalem. It was several hundred feet above the Jordan level, but still many hundred feet below the level of the sea, and there was a continual ascent from thence to the highlands on which stood Jerusalem. *His disciples and a great number of people.* At this season Jericho would be full of people who were going up to attend the Passover. The number would be greatly increased by those coming from Galilee by the way of Perea, to avoid passing through Samaria. These, added to the Trans-Jordanic pilgrims, would, within a week or two of the Passover, crowd the great highway at Jericho with travelers. Besides, curiosity and expectation caused the crowds to travel in the company of Jesus. *Blind.* Ophthalmia is fearfully prevalent, especially among children, in the East, and goes on unchecked, in many or most instances, to its worst results. It would be no exaggeration to say, that one adult out of every five has his eyes more or less damaged by the consequences of the disease.—W. G. Palgrave. *Bartimeus, the son of Timeus.* His being mentioned by name implies that he was well known. His father, too, would appear to have been noted for some reason or other. Perhaps they both became ultimately attached to the cause of the Savior and the fellowship of the disciples. *Bar* is the Aramaic word for *son*, *Timeus* being the name of the father. Matthew mentions two beggars. He was present. Mark and Luke who wrote upon the testimony of others only mention the more prominent one whose name had been preserved. Dean Howson says: "These difficulties we may dismiss. The particular spot is of no consequence; and, if there were two blind men, there certainly was one. Our attention is to be fixed on this one, Bartimeus." *Sat by the wayside begging.* Both

beggary and blindness are much more common in the East than with us—the former owing to unjust taxation, uneven distribution of wealth, and the total absence of public and systematized charities; the latter owing to lack of cleanliness, and to exposure to an almost tropical sun, and to burning sands.—*Abbott*.

47. *When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth.* A designation never used by the evangelist, save in recording the words of others. He was familiarly, and also contemptuously, known as the *Nazarene*—inhabitant of Nazareth. He had heard of him before—heard of healings wrought by him, of blind eyes opened, of dead men raised. It had never crossed his thoughts that he and this Jesus should meet, when now they tell him that he is near at hand. He can do that for him which none but he can do. It is his one and only chance. *He began.* Immediately, as soon as he heard this, and continued so to do until he gained his end. *To cry out.* For God loves to be entreated, he loves to be compelled, he loves to be even vanquished by our persevering importunity.—*St. Gregory.* *Jesus, thou son of David.* He therefore believed that Jesus of Nazareth was the son of David, i.e., the expected Messiah. The cry of the blind man was a recognition of Christ's dignity as the Messiah; for this name, "son of David," was the popular designation of the Messiah. There was, therefore, upon his part, a confession of faith. *Have mercy on me.* The emphasis naturally falls on the word "me"; for Bartimeus, hearing that it was Jesus, and knowing his own disadvantage from his blindness in the crowd, fears he may be overlooked.

48. *Many charged him that he should hold his peace.* Not because he called Jesus the son of David, but (1) because he presumed to intrude a private grief upon the King of Israel, when, as they supposed, he was going in triumph to Jerusalem to assume his throne and deliver the nation. This spirit of rebuke is exactly the same as that of Matthew (19:13). (2) Perhaps from selfishness, not wishing to have the Lord's attention called away from their instruction. (3) From indifference to other's needs. (4) They thought they were pleasing the Master in defending him from a beggar. *Cried the more a great deal.* They were not to be silenced, and the litanies of Christendom for centuries have been modeled on the *Kyrie Eleison* (Lord have mercy on us) which came from their lips.—*Plumptre.* Methinks we hear his shout. There would be the very strength and might and blood and sinew of that man's life cast into it; he would be like Jacob wrestling with the angel, and every word would be a hand to grasp him that he might not go. The gate of heaven is to be opened only in one way, by the very earnest use of the knocker of prayer.—*Spurgeon.* *Thou son of David.* He suffers himself now to be

publicly appealed to as the Messiah in the presence of all the people, which he had never done before. The time for his acceptance of, and sympathy with, the Messianic hope of his people had now arrived.—*Lange*. It was a great act of faith in this blind man to call him the son of David, whom the people pointed out as being Jesus of Nazareth.—*Bengel*. *Have mercy on me*. This is prayer. There is no preamble, no vague utterance, no redundancy of expression in real prayer. Much of what is called prayer in these modern times is nothing but a weak and windy string of sentences.—*Thomas*. Jesus was passing by—would soon be past—might never pass that way again. It was a short opportunity; it seemed likely it would be the only one.—*Tyng*. The preaching of the gospel is a perpetual announcement that Jesus is near.—*Luther*.

II. THE LORD'S CALL.

49. *Jesus stood still*. The multitude had rebuked the blind Bartimeus for his intercession, but the Lord stopped at his cry. He is kinder than men. He is no respecter of persons. The blind beggar is to him as the rich ruler. He came to die for both. *And commanded*. This is a reproof of the reprovers. *To be called*. Making those help who had hindered. *They call the blind man*. Nothing could be more natural than the sudden change which is effected in the conduct of the multitude, as soon as they observe the favorable disposition of Jesus. *He calleth thee*. The call of Christ is always full of cheer—always, too, a call to do something as a token of trust in him.—*Abbott*. His call is always a call for an act of faith. He bids Bartimeus come.

50. *Casting away his garment*; i.e., his outer garment. This was his cloak, or mantle, which is often used by the poor at night for a covering, and which the law of Moses gave them a special claim to, that it should not be kept from them over night when it was given as a pledge. The outside garment hindered his speed, could be spared, and is therefore thrown aside. In dead earnest is he, and can brook no delay. *Rose*. The Revised Version says Bartimeus threw off his "garments," so sinners should throw away everything that hinders their going to him—everything that obstructs their progress—and cast themselves at his feet. No man will be saved while sitting still. The command is, "Strive to enter in;" and the promise is made to those only who "ask" and "seek" and "knock." *Came to Jesus*. The blind man runs to Jesus without seeing him. So must we hasten to him in faith, though we see him not. He does not need to be told a second time; he does not wait for any guiding hands to lead him to the center of the path. A few eager footsteps, he stands in the presence of the Lord!

III. THE BLIND BEGGAR HEALED.

51. *What wilt thou that I should do?* With a majesty truly royal, Jesus seems to open up to the beggar the treasure of divine power, and to give him, if we may so speak, *carte blanche*.—*Godet*. Jesus asks, not for information, but to draw from them an expression of their desire. The gift is of more value when given in answer to prayer. *Lord*. Better, *Rabboni*, as in the Revised, the word being the same as in John 20:16, and occurring in these two passages only. The word was an augmentative form of Rabbi, and as such expressed greater reverence. The gradations of honor were Rab, Rabbi, Rabban, Rabboni. *That I might receive my sight*. Not *how* or *why*, but the *desire*, which he believes the Lord can grant in the best way. The man, whose cry has been hitherto a vague, indeterminate cry for mercy, now singles out the blessing which he craves, designates the channel in which he desires that his mercy should run.

52. *Go thy way*. Matthew states that he touched his eyes. Other blind men had called him the son of David, but he had straitly charged them not to make him known. No such charge is given to Bartimeus. He is permitted to follow him, and glorify God as loudly, as amply as he can (Luke 18:43). As the time draws near, all the reasons for that reserve which Jesus had previously studied are removed.—*Hanna*. *Thy faith hath made thee whole*. It was the confidence which the blind man cherished in the ability and benevolence of Jesus that induced him to seek aid from Jesus, and that induced him to persevere while the crowd sought to restrain him. Such confidence Jesus delighted to acknowledge and to honor. The faith of this man was great; because, being blind, he could not see the miracles which Jesus did. Faith came to him by hearing. He believed on the testimony and report of others; and so he inherited, in a manner, the promise of the Lord his Savior, "Blessed are they who have not seen and yet have believed" (John 20:20). Christ was always ready to heal. No one was ever refused who asked him. It rested with the man; the healing could not have its way and enter in, save the man would open his door. Hence the question, and the praise of the patient's faith. *Made thee whole*. Complete, sound, nothing wanting. A sinner is never whole; never a complete, perfect man. Christ makes us whole. *And followed Jesus*. Glorifying God, as Luke adds (18:43), and joining the festal company of His Healer, who all likewise gave praise unto God for the miracle which they had witnessed. Compare Acts 3:8-10. Thus, as our Lord journeyed toward Jerusalem, he gathered in his train fresh monuments of his power. The march of earthly conquerors is tracked with blood; smoking villages and mangled corpses

mark the way which they had trodden, while weeping captives are chained to their triumphal chariots. But the Savior left joy behind him wherever he went, and collected new trophies of his mercy.—*Tyng*.

APPLICATION.—This miracle is in one sense a parable. It teaches most forcibly the doctrine and methods of salvation by faith. It has been so represented by commentators of all ages. The blind man represents one, without faith, who is blind to the unseen interests of his soul. In his darkness, "the passing of the Saviour," in his gospel preached, may stir him to a sense of his needs. He then calls for mercy upon Jesus, confessing his faith in him as the Messiah King and Healer. Men may try to hinder him coming to Jesus. The Lord calls him, but he has first called unto the Lord. The Lord gives him the election who has elected the Lord. The sinner is required to arise and go to Christ in obedience, is then healed of his sins and blindness and follows the Master.

FACT QUESTIONS 10:46-52

628. Give five facts about Jericho.
629. Why would the great number of persons already in Jericho be greatly increased at the time Jesus and His disciples came into it?
630. What type of blindness did Bartimeus have?
631. What is implied by mentioning Bartimeus by name?
632. Why does Matthew mention *two* beggars? How reconcile these accounts?
633. What designation concerning our Lord is never used by the evangelist Mark except in recording the words of others? Why?
634. How did Bartimeus know Jesus?
635. What example for us is in the cry of the beggar?
636. What did the designation "Son of David" indicate?
637. Give three possible reasons for asking Bartimeus to hold his peace.
638. How was the response of Jesus to the acknowledging Him as the Messiah by Bartimeus different than others?
639. How did Jesus reprove the reprovers?
640. What is always included in the call of Christ?
641. Why did the beggar cast aside his garment? In what manner did he arise?
642. How could he so eagerly come to Jesus if he could not see Him?
643. Why did Jesus ask the question: "What wilt thou that I should do"?
644. What was the meaning of the word "Rabboni"?
645. What was included in the expression "Go thy way"?
646. Show how great was the faith of the blind man.
647. What is added by Luke 18:43?

SUMMARY 10:1-52

In this section Jesus is exhibited as a teacher, a prophet, and a worker of miracles. His instruction on the subject of divorce (1-12), displays a knowledge of the primary intention of God concerning the relation of the sexes, and an insight into the design of the Mosaic statute on the subject, which not only rose high above the Jewish learning of his own age, but laid claim to a knowledge of the unrevealed counsel of God. None but the Son of God, or one specially commissioned to speak the mind of God, could blamelessly speak as he speaks on this subject. He sets aside, for the future, the statute of Moses, stating the reason which governed the mind of God in giving it, and restores as the law of his kingdom the original law of wedded life prescribed in the garden of Eden.

His teaching, in the same section, on the spiritual relations of infants; on the duties and dangers connected with riches; on the rewards of self-sacrifice for his sake; and on the true exercise of ambition, are alike suited to his character as the Son of God, and to the highest happiness of mankind. It is inconceivable that they can be the teachings of an ignorant or a wicked pretender.

While his superhuman wisdom is thus displayed in his teaching, his ability to look with divine foreknowledge into all the details of future events is demonstrated by minute description of the sufferings which awaited him.

The account of blind Bartimeus, while it proves again his power to heal, reflects additional credibility on the account of his previous miracles. This man, being blind, could have known of the previous miracles only by hearsay; he could not have seen them for himself. That he did, then, believe in the power of Jesus to heal, shows the abundance and sufficiency of the testimony; and the very existence of this testimony in regard to a matter about which men could not be mistaken, is proof that real miracles had been wrought. (*McGarvey*)

IV. THE LAST WEEK 11:1-15:47

A. SUNDAY: THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY 11:1-11

TEXT 11:1-11

"And when they draw night unto Jerusalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount of Olives, he sendeth two of his disciples, and saith unto them, Go your way into the village that is over against you; and straightway as ye enter into it, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon no man ever yet sat; loose him, and bring him. And if any one say unto you, Why do ye this? say ye, The Lord hath need of him; and straightway he will send him back hither. And they went away, and found a colt tied at the door without in the open street; and they loose him. And certain of them that stood there said unto them, What do ye, loosing the colt? And they said unto them even as Jesus had said: and they let them go. And they bring the colt unto Jesus, and cast on him their garments; and he sat upon him. And many spread their garments upon the way; and others branches, which had been cut from the fields. And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Blessed is the kingdom that cometh, the kingdom of our father David: Hosanna in the highest. And he entered into Jerusalem into the temple; and when he had looked round about upon all things, it being now eventide, he went out unto Bethany with the twelve."

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 11:1-11

592. Please attempt to locate the place described in vs. 1 as "nigh unto Jerusalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany."
593. Who were the two disciples of vs. 2?
594. Into which village did the disciples go?
595. Why was it important to mention the colt had never carried a man? Cf. Zech. 9:9.
596. Was this not a rather presumptuous request on the part of Jesus? Explain.
597. Why would the owner of the animal be so willing to comply with the request?
598. Why promise immediate return of the colt?
599. At what particular place was the colt tied?
600. Did they bring one or two animals. Cf. Matt. 21:2.
601. Were the people and the disciples aware of the prophetic import of their actions?
602. Why cast garments upon the colt?
603. Why was symbolized or typified in casting the garments and leaves in the way?

604. Why did Jesus permit this public demonstration?
 605. What is the meaning of the word "Hosanna"?
 606. How is the word "blessed" used here?
 607. In what sense did Jesus restore the kingdom of David?

COMMENT

TIME.—A.D. 30. Sunday, 2d April, 10th Nisan (Palm Sunday), the fifth day before the great Jewish Passover. It was the first of their secular days after the Jewish Sabbath had ended.

PLACES.—(1) Bethany. (2) The main road from Bethany to Jerusalem. (3) Jerusalem. The places connected with this lesson are among those hallowed by the most tender associations of our Lord. He slept the night preceding the entry into Jerusalem at Bethany, the home of Lazarus, Martha and Mary, where he had raised Lazarus from the dead, to which sweet place of rest and sympathy the Lord often retired when at Jerusalem. It stood about two miles east of the city on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, which lay between it and Jerusalem. Through it led the highway from the Jordan to the Holy City. A small village with a similar name still stands upon its ancient site. From Bethany the road led through Bethphage, a small village of the time of our Lord, nearer Jerusalem, that has not even left a trace by which its position can be certainly known. Over the *Mount of Olives* there were three paths, one on the north between two peaks of the hill, a second over the summit of the southern peak, and a third on the south around the slope, between the Mount of Olives and the Hill of Offence. This was the best and most frequented road and was the one taken by the Savior. The Mount of Olives lay just east of Jerusalem, with the vale of the Kedron, or valley of Jehoshaphat, as it was called, between. The summit was about a mile from the city and overlooked it. It took its name from the olive trees that grew upon its sides until they were cut down by the Roman general, Titus, for use in the siege of Jerusalem. It was a kind of "park," or pleasant resort for the inhabitants. It rises 2,724 feet above the sea level and 300 feet higher than the Temple hill.

INTERVENING HISTORY.—Many interesting events occurred between the healing of Bartimeus and our present event; the following is their probable order: (1) Our Lord, after giving sight to Bartimeus, converts Zaccheus, and is entertained by him in Jericho (Luke 19:1-10), where he remains during the night. (2) In the morning he speaks to the people the parable of the pounds (Luke 19:11-28). (3) He leaves Jericho, and apparently reached Bethany on the evening of Friday, March 31, Nisan 8. There (4) in quiet retirement he spent his last earthly Sabbath (our

Saturday, April 1); and (5) in the evening, the Sabbath being over at Sunset, he sat down to a festal meal provided by the sisters of Lazarus at the house of one Simon, who had been a leper. (Matt. 26:6; John 12:2). (6) At this feast he was anointed by Mary (John 12:3); and (7) during the night a council of the Jews was convened to consider the propriety of putting, not him only, but Lazarus also, to death (John 12:10).—*Maclear*.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS.—Matt. 21:1-11; Luke 19:29-44; John 12:12-19.

LESSON OUTLINE.—1. The Lord's Charge. 2. The Charge Obeyed. 3. The King Proclaimed.

ANALYSIS

THE LORD'S CHARGE, VS. 1-3.

1. The Two Disciples Sent. Mark 11:1; Matt. 21:1; Luke 19:29.
2. The Charge to the Disciples. Mark 11:2; Matt. 21:2; Luke 19:30.
3. The Lord Hath Need. Mark 11:3; Matt. 21:3; Luke 19:31.

II. THE CHARGE OBEYED, VS. 4-7.

1. The Disciples on their Mission. Mark 11:4; Matt. 21:6; Luke 19:32.
2. The King's Demand. Mark 11:6; Luke 19:34.
3. The King Obeyed. Mark 11:7; Matt. 21:7; Luke 19:35.

III. THE KING PROCLAIMED, VS. 8-11.

1. Homage to the King. Mark 11:8; Matt. 21:8; Luke 19:36.
2. Hosanna to the King. Mark 11:9, 10; Matt. 21:9; Luke 19:38; John 12:13.
3. The King in Jerusalem. Mark 11:11; Matt. 21:10; Luke 19:41; John 12:19.

INTRODUCTION

We may suppose that as our Savior crossed the Jordan, and came across the desert tract between the Jordan and Jericho, he walks at the head of his train of twelve disciples. As he departs from Jericho, his fame, and the idea that he is on his way to Jerusalem, attract the multitude to follow him. From Jericho he mounts the ascending hills of bleak limestone rocks, celebrated at that time as a route of danger from robber hordes, and characterized from that time to this as a scene of desert dreariness. It was the scene of the parable of the good Samaritan. By the same route that the men went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, did our Lord go up from Jericho to Jerusalem. Some miles he walks, when Bethany appears in a distant view, a little widespread village, perched upon a shelf of the eastern side of the Mount of Olives, about two miles from Jerusalem. He arrived at Bethany, according to John 12:1, six days before his last passover; the six days

of what has been called in the church, with true propriety, the *Passion Week*. The significance of this entry into Jerusalem has been too little considered. It was Christ's nature to shun crowds; his custom to avoid them. He forbade his disciples from disclosing to others that he was the Messiah, and this prohibition was repeatedly given. Matt. 16:20; 17:9; Mark 3:12; 5:43; 6:36, etc. This exceptional assumption of dignity and acceptance of homage is for this reason the more remarkable and significant. I believe it to be an emphasis of the truth that he was a King and came as King; that it throws forth into prominence a truth respecting him often forgotten, namely, that he is Lord and Master, as well as Savior, crowned with authority as well as with humility and love.—*Abbott*.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. THE LORD'S CHARGE.

1. *When they came nigh to Jerusalem.* Luke says, "ascended up to Jerusalem," because Jericho is 3,000 feet lower than Jerusalem. A journey of about eighteen miles up the rugged ravine that leads from Jericho to Jerusalem. As the passover, with its sacrifices, was just at hand, companies of pilgrims, driving sheep for the altar, would be seen in the highways, all gathering up from the four quarters to the center of the nation's faith. Among them goes the Lamb of God—the one sacrifice—final, perfect, and sufficient, whom these typical altars of thousands of years had heralded with their banners of smoke and flame. *To Bethphage and Bethany.* Two suburban villages east of Jerusalem on the east slope of the Mount of Olives. Mark omits all mention of the stay at Bethany, which is narrated in John 12:1-11. The Lord reached Bethany Friday evening, remained over the Sabbath at that quiet hamlet, and on Sunday made his entry into Jerusalem. *Sendeth forth two of his disciples.* The sending of the two disciples proves the deliberate intention of Jesus to give a certain solemnity to the scene. Till then he had withdrawn from popular expressions of homage; but once, at least, he wished to show himself as King Messiah of his people. It was a last call addressed by him to the population of Jerusalem. This course, besides, could no longer compromise his work. He knew that in any case death awaited him in the capital.—*Godet*. He would have a public testimony to the fact that it was their King the Jews crucified. It is not merely the Messiah that saves, nor the crucified One that saves, but the Messiah crucified (1 Cor. 1:23). An analogous commission to prepare the passover was given to Peter and John (Luke 22:8). They may have been the two sent forth.—*Abbott*.

2. *Into the village over against you.* Leaving Bethany on foot, attended by his disciples and others, he comes to the place where the neighboring

village of Bethphage is in view, over against them, perhaps separated from them by a valley. To this village he probably sent his disciples. *Ye shall find a colt tied.* It was the colt of an ass, an animal in disfavor in the West, but highly esteemed in the East. Geikie says: "Statelier, livelier, swifter than with us, it vies with the horse in favor. In contrast to the horse, which had been introduced by Solomon from Egypt, and was used especially for war, it was the symbol of peace. To the Jew it was peculiarly national. For had not Moses led his wife, seated on an ass, to Egypt? had not the Judges ridden on white asses? Every Jew, moreover, expected, from the words of one of the prophets (Zech. 9:9), that the Messiah would enter Jerusalem riding on an ass. No act could be more perfectly in keeping with the conception of a king of Israel." Matthew speaks of the "she-ass and the colt" together, to show that it was a colt which yet went with its mother—so fulfilling the Scripture, that it was one "upon which never man sat." *Whereon never man sat.* The fact is mentioned by Mark and Luke only (19:30). It was probably, in their eyes, significant, as showing that he who used the colt did so in his own right, and not as filling a place which others had filled before him. This was not, we think, as Hengstenberg maintains, to indicate humility, but sacredness. See Luke 23:53. Our Lord was "laid in a sepulcher that was hewn in stone, wherein never man was laid before." And so our Lord was born of a pure virgin. His birth, His triumph, His tomb, were thus alike. His appearance, His history, and his departure are thus indicated to be above the level of ordinary humanity. *Loose him, and bring him.* The demand was kingly. On this day the Lord's acts are all those of a King. The owner of the colt either was impressed by the authority of the expected Messiah King, or was a disciple.

3. *The Lord hath need of him.* It was enough for the loyal subject of an eastern king to know that his Lord made the demand and it was instantly obeyed. Hence, on this occasion, the only explanation to be offered was that the King had need. All Israel should be made to know that he who had come to Jerusalem to die was their King.

II. THE CHARGE OBEYED.

4. *And found the colt tied by the door without.* Trusting their Master, the two disciples obeyed, and found all as the Lord declared. The colt was tied, without the door, in front, "in the open street," as the Revision translates, rather than at a street corner, as the Common Version implies. It is not likely that Bethphage had any cross streets, but was built on each side of the road leading to Jerusalem. It was a small village.

5. *What do ye, loosing the colt?* This was spoken by the owner, or members of his household. The reply given was that which the Lord

directed, and had the expected effect. The disciples were simply to obey orders, and all the rest would follow.

6. *And they let them go.* All this was in accordance with a plan predicted 600 years ago. The prophet Zechariah had declared (Zech. 9:9) that thus the King would make his entry.

7. *They brought the colt to Jesus.* It was not the mother, but the colt, upon which no man had ever sat, that Jesus chose for his purpose. *Cast their garments on him.* Combining the four accounts, we get the following features: Some took off their outer garments, the burnoose, and bound it on the colt as a kind of saddle; others cast their garments in the way, a mark of honor to a king (2 Kings 9:13); others climbed the trees, cut down the branches, and strewed them in the way (Matt. 21:8); others gathered leaves and twigs and rushes (Mark 11:8). This procession was made up largely of Galileans, but the reputation of Christ, increased by the resurrection of Lazarus, had preceded him, and many came out from the city to swell the acclamations and increase the enthusiasm (John 12:13). Matthew adds that all this was in fulfillment of prophecy (Matt. 21:4, 5). Compare Zech. 9:9. *He sat upon him.* Our Lord sat on the foal (Mark, Luke), and the mother accompanied, apparently after the manner of a sumpter, as prophets so riding would be usually accompanied (but not, of course, doing the work of a sumpter). He who in all his journeys travelled like a poor man on foot, without noise and without train, now he goes up to Jerusalem to die for sinners; he rides, to show his great forwardness to lay down his life for us. Every Jew, moreover, expected, from the words of one of the prophets, that the Messiah would enter Jerusalem, poor and riding on an ass. No act could be more perfectly in keeping with the conception of a king of Israel, and no words could express more plainly that the King proclaimed himself the Messiah.

8. *Spread their garments.* The custom is still sometimes seen in the East. Dr Robinson relates that shortly after a rebellion which had taken place among the people of Bethlehem, "when some of the inhabitants were already imprisoned, and all were in deep distress, Mr. Farran, the English consul at Dasmascus, was on a visit to Jerusalem, and had rode out with Mr. Nicolayson to Solomon's pools. On their return, as they rose the ascent to enter Bethlehem, hundreds of the people, male and female, met them, imploring the consul to interfere in their behalf, and afford them his protection, and all at once, by a sort of simultaneous movement, "they spread their garments in the way" before the horses." It has not been uncommon to carpet the way for a king. *Cut down branches.* John says of palm trees. The wide, spreading leaf of the palm would be well adapted to the purpose of making a carpet for his way. The "branches

of palm trees" are not strictly branches at all, but the enormous leaves, twelve to sixteen feet long, which spring from the top of the tall, straight trunk. A few palm trees are still to be seen in Jerusalem.

III. THE KING PROCLAIMED.

9. *That went before and . . . that followed.* Two vast streams of people met on that day. The one poured out from the city; and, as they came through the gardens whose clusters of palm rose on the southeastern corner of Olivet, they cut down the long branches, as was their wont at the Feast of Tabernacles, and moved upward toward Bethany with shouts of welcome. From Bethany streamed forth the crowds who had assembled there the previous night. The two streams met midway. Half of the vast mass, turning round, preceded: the other half followed. Gradually the long procession swept up and over the ridge where first begins "the descent of the Mount of Olives" towards Jerusalem. At this point the first view is caught of the southeastern corner of the city. The temple and the northern portions are hid by the slope of Olivet on the right: what is seen is only Mount Zion. It was at this point, "as he drew near, at the descent of Mount Olives," that the shout of triumph burst forth from the multitude.—*Stanley. Hosanna.* A Greek modification of the Hebrew words, "Save now, I beseech thee," in Psalm 118:25, the next verse of which formed part of their song, "Blessed," etc. It is used as an expression of praise, like hallelujah. The faith of the holy Jews under the law, and of the holy Gentiles under the gospel, was one and the same. They that went before Christ in the one, and they that followed Christ in the other, did both cry, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" did both obtain salvation by the same Savior, and by the same way (Eph. 2:18).—*Lightfoot. That cometh in the name of the Lord.* The words are taken in part from Psalms 118:25, 26, a hymn which belonged to the great hallelujah chanted at the end of the Paschal Supper and the Feast of Tabernacles. The people were accustomed to apply it to the Messiah.—*Godet.*

10. *Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh.* (Better as in the Revised.) This recognizes clearly that Christ's kingdom is the continuation of the old kingdom of God's people, whose future glories are prophesied so often in the Old Testament. *Hosanna in the highest.* In the highest degree, in the highest strains, in the highest heavens.

11. *Entered into Jerusalem.* It was hereafter never possible to say that he had never declared himself in a wholly unequivocal manner. When Jerusalem afterwards was accused of the murder of the Messiah, she could not say that he had omitted to give an intelligible sign to all alike.—*Lange. Into the temple.* Jesus, the true Paschal Lamb, thus pre-

sented himself, as required by the law, that the victim to be offered should be set apart four days before the great day of atonement.—*Mimpriss*. He went to the temple that the prophecy might be fulfilled (Mal. 3:1-3).—*M. Henry*. *And had looked round about*. It was an act by which he took possession as it were, of his Father's house, and claimed dominion over it—an attitude maintained by him throughout this final visit to the holy city. *And now the eventide was come*. The word "eventide" is somewhat indefinite; but it included the two or three hours before sunset, as well as after. The procession, if it started in the morning, had probably been delayed by frequent halts; and its movements through such a dense crowd must have been but slow.—*Plumptre*. *He went out*. The day's work is completed with the Messianic entry itself; and only a visit to the Temple, and a significant look round about it, form the close. What the Messiah has still further to do (the cleansing of the temple, etc.) follows on the morrow.—*Meyer*. *To Bethany*. Where he spent the nights of this eventful week.

FACT QUESTIONS 11:1-11

648. Give the day, month and year for Palm Sunday. Why call it *Palm Sunday*?
649. What "tender associations" were maintained by our Lord at Bethany?
650. Where was Bethphage?
651. Locate the mount of Olives as related to Jerusalem.
652. Name at least three events between the healing of Bartimeus and entering Jerusalem.
653. What route did Jesus take from Jericho to Bethany? Why wasn't it dangerous for Jesus?
654. Show how Jesus' actions in this entrance into Jerusalem was especially significant.
655. Describe the procession from Jericho to Jerusalem; how far was it?
656. What occurred in John 12:1-11 omitted by Mark?
657. How did Jesus give expression to His "deliberate intention"?
658. Show just who it is that saves.
659. How does Luke 22:8 relate to sending out the two for the colt?
660. In what village were they to find the colt?
661. In what historical connection was the colt in contrast with the horse?
662. Show how use of the ass was peculiarly national.
663. Show how our Lord's birth, triumph and tomb were all alike.
664. Was the colt tied at a street corner? Explain the K.J.V. vs. 4b.
665. Show how the whole plan of the entrance into Jerusalem was 600 years old.

- 666. Refer to II Kings 9:13 and show how it compares here.
- 667. What particular people made up the procession who hailed Jesus as King?
- 668. What is a "sumpter" and "the work of a sumpter"?
- 669. What great forwardness is shown by our Lord?
- 670. Show how the experience of Dr. Robinson *confirms* the event of the scripture.
- 671. How would palm branches be especially appropriate for this occasion?
- 672. What two vast crowds met midway?
- 673. Show the relation of Psa. 118:25, 26 to this event.
- 674. Lightfoot makes a beautiful comparison of the two crowds—what is it?
- 675. What had Jesus declared in a very unequivocal manner?
- 676. In what way was Jesus keeping the law for the Paschal lamb?
- 677. What prophecy was fulfilled in Jesus' going into the temple? Cf. Mal. 3:1-3.
- 678. Why look about in the temple?
- 679. What hours are included in the word "eventide"?
- 680. When did Jesus weep over Jerusalem?

B. MONDAY:

1. THE BARREN FIG TREE. 11:12-14.

TEXT 11:12-14

"And on the morrow, when they were come out from Bethany, he hungered. And seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, he came, if haply he might find anything thereon; and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for it was not the season of figs. And he answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit from thee henceforward for ever. And his disciples heard it."

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 11:12-14

- 608. If Jesus stayed in the home of Mary and Martha why was He hungry?
- 609. Where was the fig tree? Cf. Matt. 21:18, 19.
- 610. In what way are leaves an indication of figs?
- 611. Didn't Jesus know before He came to the tree that there were no figs? For whose benefit did He search among the leaves?
- 612. If it was not the season for figs why expect them?
- 613. Wasn't there something terribly symbolic about this whole action? What was it?

614. Did the disciples understand the prophetic judgment against the Hebrew nation in the cursing of the fig tree? If not why do it?

COMMENT

TIME.—A.D. 30, Monday, 3rd April, 11th Nisan (Monday) the fourth day before the great Jewish Passover.

PLACES.—On the road from Bethany to Jerusalem—Jerusalem—the Temple—Bethany—the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus.

PARALLEL ACCOUNT.—Matt. 21:18, 19.

OUTLINE.—1. The time, place and cause for judgment, vs. 12. 2. The object of judgment, vs. 13. 3. Judgment pronounced, vs. 14.

ANALYSIS

- I. THE TIME, PLACE AND CAUSE FOR JUDGMENT, vs. 12.
 1. "on the morrow" probably Monday morning.
 2. Just outside Bethany was the place.
 3. Jesus was hungry.
- II. THE OBJECT OF JUDGMENT, vs. 13.
 1. A fig tree in full view.
 2. Full of leaves.
 3. A hypocrite—no figs.
- III. JUDGMENT PRONOUNCED, vs. 14.
 1. Addressed directly by word.
 2. Its mission removed forever.
 3. Those for whom the lesson was given heard and saw.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. THE TIME, PLACE AND CAUSE FOR JUDGMENT.

"We see, in the beginning of this passage, one of the many proofs that our Lord Jesus Christ was really man. We read that "He was hungry." He had a nature and bodily constitution like our own in all things, sin only excepted. He could weep and rejoice and suffer pain. He could be weary and need rest. He could be thirsty and need drink. He could be hungry and need food.

Expressions like this should teach us the condescension of Christ. How wonderful they are when we reflect upon them! He who is the eternal God,—He who made the world and all that it contains,—He from whose hand the fruits of the earth, the fish of the sea, the fowls of the air, the beasts of the field, all had their beginning,—He, even He was pleased to suffer hunger, when He came into the world to save sinners. This is a great mystery. Kindness and love like this pass man's understanding. No wonder that St. Paul speaks of the "unsearchable riches of Christ." (Eph. 3:8).

Expressions like this should teach us Christ's power to sympathize with His believing people on earth. He knows their sorrows by experience. He can be touched with the feeling of their infirmities. He has had experience of a body and its daily wants. He has suffered Himself the severe sufferings that the body of man is liable to. He has tasted pain, and weakness, and weariness, and hunger, and thirst. When we tell Him of these things in our prayers, He knows what we mean, and is no stranger to our troubles. Surely this is just the Saviour and Friend that poor aching, groaning, human nature requires!"

II. THE OBJECT OF JUDGMENT.

"We learn, in the second place, from these verses, the great danger of unfruitfulness and formality in religion. This is a lesson which our Lord teaches in a remarkable typical action. We are told that coming to a fig tree in search of fruit, and finding on it "nothing but leaves," He pronounced on it the solemn sentence, "No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever." And we are told that the next day the fig tree was found "dried up from the roots." We cannot doubt for a moment that this whole transaction was an emblem of spiritual things. It was a parable in deeds, as full of meaning as any of our Lord's parables in words."

III. JUDGMENT PRONOUNCED.

"But who were they to whom this withered fig tree was intended to speak? It was a sermon of three-fold application, a sermon that ought to speak loudly to the consciences of all professing Christians. Though withered and dried up, that fig tree yet speaks. There was a voice in it for the Jewish Church. Rich in the leaves of a formal religion, but barren of all fruits of the Spirit, that Church was in fearful danger at the very time when this withering took place. Well would it have been for the Jewish Church if it had had eyes to see its peril! There was a voice in the fig tree for all the branches of Christ's visible Church, in every age and every part of the world. There was a warning against an empty profession of Christianity unaccompanied by sound doctrine and holy living, which some of those branches would have done well to lay to heart.—But above all there was a voice in that withered fig tree for all carnal, hypocritical, and false-hearted Christians. Well would it be for all who are content with a name to live while in reality they are dead, if they would only see their own faces in the glass of this passage.

Let us take care that we each individually learn the lesson that this fig tree conveys. Let us always remember that baptism, and church-membership, and reception of the Lord's supper, and a diligent use of the outward forms of Christianity, are not sufficient to save our souls. They

are leaves, nothing but leaves, and without fruit will add to our condemnation. Like the fig leaves of which Adam and Eve made themselves garments, they will not hide the nakedness of our souls from the eye of an all-seeing God, or give us boldness when we stand before Him at the last day. No: we must bear fruit, or be lost for ever! There must be fruit in our hearts and fruit in our lives—the fruit of repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ,—and true holiness in our conversation. Without such fruits as these a profession of Christianity will only sink us lower into hell.” (*J. C. Ryle*)

FACT QUESTIONS 11:12-14

681. How is the humanness of Jesus shown in this passage?
682. What does the humanness of Jesus teach us?
683. What great encouragement is found in His human qualities?
684. How do these verses become a “parable in deeds”?
685. Discuss and answer in your own words the two difficulties in this incident.
686. What does the withered fig tree say to the Jewish nation?
687. What does it say to the church of today?
688. Above all the withered fig tree speaks to whom?
689. In what sense are baptism, the Lord’s supper and church-membership nothing but leaves?

2. THE CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE 11:15-19

TEXT 11:15-19

“And they come to Jerusalem: and he entered into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and them that bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold the doves; and he would not suffer that any man should carry a vessel through the temple. And he taught, and said unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations? but ye have made it a den of robbers. And the chief priests and the scribes heard it, and sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, for all the multitude was astonished at his teaching. And every evening he went forth out of the city.”

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 11:15-19

615. Is this the same cleansing as recorded in John 2:13-22? Discuss.
616. In what particular part of the temple does this incident occur?
617. Was it altogether wrong to buy and sell in the temple?
618. Why overthrow the tables and seats?
619. Explain vs. 16.
620. From what two references did Jesus quote?

621. How could the Jewish temple be a "house of prayer for all nations."
 622. Why would the words and actions of Jesus especially anger the chief priests?
 623. Give two or three possible reasons for the hatred of the leaders.
 624. How is the word "astonished" used in vs. 18b?
 625. Why mention the fact that He left the city every evening?

COMMENT

TIME.—A.D. 30—Monday, 3rd April, 11th Nisan, the fourth day before the great Jewish Passover.

PLACES.—The Temple—in the court of the Gentiles—Bethany.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS.—Matt. 21:11-13; Luke 19:45-48.

OUTLINE.—1. What He did, vs. 15, 16. 2. What He taught, vs. 17. 3. The results, vs. 18, 19.

ANALYSIS

- I. WHAT HE DID, VS. 15, 16.
1. Entered the temple and cast out those who bought and sold.
 2. Overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves.
 3. Would not permit the traffic of those carrying various burdens.
- II. WHAT HE TAUGHT, VS. 17.
1. It is written—"My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations."
 2. Ye have made it a den of robbers.
- III. THE RESULTS, VS. 18, 19.
1. His words and actions were known by the chief priests and scribes.
 2. They sought a way to kill Him because of jealousy.
 3. He could not stay overnight in Jerusalem.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. WHAT HE DID.

"15. *'And they come to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out,' etc.* It seems, at first sight, almost incredible that men who professed such reverence for the temple, and were so scrupulous about the slightest ceremonial defilement (John 18:28), should actually let out, as they did, a portion of the sacred precincts, the court of the Gentiles, or a part of it, to dealers in cattle and sheep and doves, and to money-changers, but unscrupulous men will do anything for the sake of gain. It would be a great convenience to a Jew from a distance to buy his Passover Lamb close to the spot where it had to be killed; and the

Sadducean priests, taking advantage of this, were themselves the real desecrators of the most sacred building of which they were the guardians, by encouraging the unholy traffic. But the Lord, Who ever regarded the temple as His Father's house, and looked upon the very building as imparting its sanctity to all in it, resented this as He had done on a former occasion, alone and unaided, for this occurred on the day after His arrival, and the enthusiastic crowds were dispersed. He drove out all the traffickers, overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of those who sold doves to those who were too poor to bring a more costly offering, and according to our Evangelist, even went further, by forbidding the temple to be made a thoroughfare, so that vessels should be carried through it.

Now we must ask first, "Was this an ordinary exercise of power?" and then, "What was its significance?"

It would have been a natural, though, of course, a remarkable exercise of power if it had been, as is asserted, through the personal greatness and intensity of will that showed itself in our Lord's look and word and tone. But if this personal greatness means a very commanding presence, so that all enemies should be at once overawed, why did not this save Him from the insults and outrages which were heaped upon Him during this very week? We have no reason to believe from anything in the gospel that the Lord had a presence which greatly overawed men, and He must have had a very commanding personal presence indeed, to disperse without apparently the faintest opposition a crowd of cattle-dealers and money-changers. It seems to me that the faculty of transfiguring Himself at will, so as on one day to put on an appearance which overawed the roughest of men, and on the next day so to disguise His majesty as that the very slaves should spit on Him and strike Him, is as much a supernatural endowment as the power of healing the sick or casting out devils."

Why do men treat the exercise of the Lord's Divine power as if it were something immoral, something to be ashamed of, something that we must get rid of even at the expense of common sense, unless we are compelled to acknowledge it? It may interest the reader to contrast with the modern view, that of a Father of the Church, St. Jerome: "To me it appears that amid all the signs of our Lord, this was the most wonderful; that one single man, at a time too when He was an object of scorn, and accounted so vile as soon after to have been crucified, while the Scribes and Pharisees (chief priests?) moreover were furiously raging against Him, on account of the loss through Him of their worldly gain, should

nevertheless have succeeded with a whip of small cords (John 2:15), in driving out of the temple so vast a multitude, overthrowing the tables and the seats, and doing other like things, which scarcely a troop of soldiers could have accomplished."

The second question is, "What is the significance of the act? Did its significance cease when the fame whose sanctity Christ thus marvelously vindicated, was forever desecrated and cast to the ground, or has it any reference to the new state of things in the kingdom of God? To this we answer, it asserts an universal principle, that whatsoever is consecrated to the true God, be it building, or society, or body, cannot be profaned without bringing on those who desecrate it the severe anger of God. God has nowhere, in so many words, commanded that the buildings devoted to the prayers and Lord's Supper of the New Covenant should be dedicated with a special service. He has left such a thing to be inferred from his Word, and a certain Divine instinct has led Christians everywhere solemnly to set apart their material churches to the exclusive service of God; but when they do so God holds them to their word. They have set apart these buildings to Him, He has accepted the offering, and inasmuch as He has not ceased to be a jealous God, He will certainly regard any desecration of them as profanity and impiety. If it be asserted that the Jewish temple was of greater sanctity than a Christian Church, because so much is said in Scripture about its dedication, we answer, No. A building, however humble, set apart for the offering up of prayer in the Name of Jesus, must be greater than a temple, however magnificent, in which His Name was never invoked—a building set apart for the celebration of the Lord's Supper must be holier than a building set apart for the offering of bullocks and calves. It also is defiled by heresy and false doctrine, and traffic in holy offices; and Christ will assuredly look upon this with more anger than He looked upon the profanation of the temple, inasmuch as a temple of living stones, built into a spiritual house, is a greater thing than a building even of marble and gold. And so with the bodies of Christians, which together with their souls, are so made the temple of God in Holy Baptism, that an inspired Apostle could ask, "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you?" and so he says, "If any man defile the temple of God, him will God destroy." Let us then cleanse our souls by prayer and thoughts about the holiest things, or Christ may suddenly visit us and cast us out of the true house of God.

With respect to our Lord's not suffering anyone to carry a vessel through the temple, *Dr. South* has a good remark: "We must know that the least degree of contempt weakens religion; because it is absolutely contrary

to the nature of it; religion properly consisting of reverential esteem for things sacred." (Quoted in *Ford*).

II. WHAT HE TAUGHT.

"17. *'And he taught, saying unto them, My house shall be called,' etc.* If, as is probable, the marginal translation ("a house of prayer for all nations") is the true one, then there may be here a tacit reference to the fact that the court of the Gentiles, as being the least sacred part of the temple, had been employed, in part at least, for the infamous traffic; in which case the Lord's words would mean, 'My house shall be called the house of prayer for all the Gentiles, but ye have driven them out and polluted their share, and made it a den of thieves.'

It has been asked, Were not the future houses of God to be houses of preaching—was not, that is, preaching to be their characteristic? No, we answer, and for this reason: preaching may be and ought to be, everywhere; wherever people can be congregated to hear it: Whereas the celebration of the Lord's supper and also united Church prayer ought, if possible, to be in places set apart from the world, its associations, its businesses, and pleasures; and ought to be in places, the architecture and arrangement and associations of which tend to raise the worshipper above the world. The restriction on the part of the authorities of the English Church, for nearly two centuries, of preaching to the interior of churches, has been most disastrous. It has been the real reason why she has lost so many of the working classes. Our missionaries, in India preach to the heathen in thoroughfares, in bazaars, at times even in the temples, and the heathen of England require to be met in the same way."

III. THE RESULTS.

"18. *'And the scribes and chief priests heard it, and sought how they might,' etc.* This is the first instance in the Synoptics of the "chief priests" taking serious measures to destroy Him, and the reader will notice how closely it follows upon the cleansing of the temple.

"They sought how they might destroy him.' Their fears made them think that it would be no easy thing to destroy Him. They did not count upon the fleeting nature of all popularity. Three days after this the people who were astonished at His doctrine made no effort to save Him." (*M. F. Sadler*)

FACT QUESTIONS 11:15-19

690. For one thing unscrupulous men will do anything—What is the "one thing"?

691. Who encouraged this unholy traffic? Why?
692. Why would carrying items through the temple defile it?
693. Just how did Jesus accomplish what scarcely a troop of soldiers could have done? Discuss.
694. How does Sadler relate this incident to the transfiguration? Do you agree?
695. What universal principle is given in the cleansing of the temple?
696. How can it be thought that church buildings today are in any way sacred unto God?
697. In what sense is the most humble building today holier than the temple?
698. In what way is Christ attempting to cleanse the church of today?
699. What about cleansing the temple of our body? Mention scriptural support.
700. Are not the meeting houses of today to be houses of preaching? Discuss as related to prayer.
701. Specify and discuss how our Lord is at work cleansing His temple today.

C. TUESDAY:

1. THE LESSON OF THE WITHERED FIG TREE. 11:20-26

TEXT 11:20-26

"And as they passed by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered away from the roots. And Peter calling to remembrance saith unto him, Rabbi, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away. And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou taken up and cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that what he saith cometh to pass; he shall have it. Therefore I say unto you, All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye have received them, and ye shall have them. And whensoever ye stand praying forgive, if ye have aught against any one; that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses."

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 11:20-26

626. Is there any significance in the amount of time involved in the withering of the fig tree?
627. What is indicated in the withering from the roots up?
628. Of what was Peter reminded when he saw the withered tree?
629. Was there a question implicit in the statement of Peter in vs. 21? What was it?
630. Show the connection of the words of Peter in vs. 21 and those of our Lord in vs. 22.

631. Was there a special need for faith at this time? Why?
 632. Did Jesus have reference to a literal mountain?
 633. Please associate this faith with the supernatural powers exercised by the apostles throughout their ministry.
 634. Discuss the context of vs. 25, 26 i.e. show how they relate to what has preceded.

COMMENT

TIME.—A.D. 30—Tuesday, 4th April, 12th of Nisan, the third day before the great Jewish Passover.

PLACES.—On the road from Bethany to Jerusalem.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS.—Matt. 21:19-22.

OUTLINE.—1. The withered fig tree—how did it happen?, vs. 20, 21. 2. By faith in God—you could do even greater, vs. 22-24. 3. But not if you do not forgive, vs. 25, 26.

ANALYSIS

- I. THE WITHERED FIG TREE—HOW DID IT HAPPEN?, vs. 20, 21.
 1. This question raised in the morning as Jesus and the apostles passed the withered fig tree.
 2. Peter asked the question.
- II. BY FAITH IN GOD—YOU COULD DO EVEN GREATER, vs. 22-24.
 1. Faith in God essential.
 2. Real faith can remove mountains.
 3. No request is denied those with genuine faith.
- III. BUT NOT IF YOU DO NOT FORGIVE, vs. 25, 26.
 1. When you pray forgive that you might be forgiven.
 2. If you do not forgive you can not be forgiven.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. THE WITHERED FIG TREE—HOW DID IT HAPPEN?

"Here begins the record of Tuesday, which extends (if we include with the day the evening, according to our way of reckoning) to the end of chap. 13. The other records of the day are Luke, chaps. 20, 21, and Matthew, 21:20-25, 46. This was the last day of his public ministry. Of no other day have we so full a record, and none that we know of was more significant in his personal history. Now came the great decisive conflict, in which his enemies were openly worsted, one after another, and driven to the desperation of hatred.—But first, on the way to the city, they observed the blighted tree. *Dried up from the roots*. It was no mere injury or weakening, no withering of the foliage; the tree was destroyed and already ruined.—*And Peter, calling to remembrance*. Peculiar to Mark, and doubtless a personal reminiscence of Peter.—Yet here, as else-

where, he uttered the general thought. *Which thou cursedst*.—i.e. which thou didst devote to evil. Beware of associating with the word in the least degree the idea of profanity. The ordinary name for this act, "the cursing of the fig tree," is an unfortunate one. To modern ears it suggests strong language, even profane language, and improper feeling; whereas the language was moderate and feeling was right. "Blighting," or "destruction," is far better."

II. BY FAITH IN GOD—YOU COULD DO EVEN GREATER.

"22. *Have faith in God*. Literally, "faith of God," God being conceived of as the object of faith. A very unexpected turn of discourse, the purpose of his act upon the tree being entirely ignored. Why did he not explain the symbolic meaning of the act? And why did he content himself with giving an object-lesson in faith? It was on the principle of John 16:12: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." He preferred to leave the sad symbolic meaning to be perceived at a later time, when they could better understand it. Before the day was over they might begin to understand it for themselves by observing how Jerusalem treated their Master. If not so, his discourse at evening might begin to open their eyes. For that discourse this act was a kind of text. It did not now need unfolding; it would be opened soon enough. But of a lesson in faith they were in need; and so, instead of telling them why this had been done, he told them how works of faith still greater might be performed.

23. *Whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, etc.* A similar saying had been given the disciples after their failure to heal the lunatic child (Matt. 17:20). Such language cannot possibly have been understood by them or meant by him in any sense but that of hyperbole. (See an allusion to this saying in 1 Cor. 13:2). The thought is that works as impossible to human strength as the moving of the Mount of Olives to the sea shall be possible to faith and shall actually be wrought. "With God all things are possible." For an illustration of Jesus bringing divine possibilities near to human faith, see his words to Martha (John 11:23-27).—Undoubting confidence is the secret of such power; but confidence in what? The belief that *those things which he saith shall come to pass* must have some foundation; what is the true foundation? Plainly, the confidence that is here encouraged is the confidence that the proposed act is accordant with the will of God, and that the will of God can and will be done. Such confidence, if it is to be of any value, cannot be blind. It must have its rational and spiritual supports. No man can expect, under this promise, that a mountain will be removed until he is convinced by good reasons that God wishes it to be removed. If he is sure

of that, and sure that what God wishes can and will be done, he will believe that the mountain is to be removed. The promise is made to undoubting confidence; but if there is room for question whether the confidence is not irrational, how can it continue undoubting? So this promise gives no encouragement to random, enthusiastic prayers or to selfish petitions. Prevailing prayer is reasonable.

24. *Therefore*—i.e. because faith is so mighty—I say unto you—a sign of special emphasis—*What things soever ye desire when ye pray.* This is given correctly by the revisers: "all things whatsoever ye pray and ask for." *Desire* is a mistranslation for "ask."—"Believe that ye received (them), and they shall be to you." So literally. The verb "received" is in the aorist. The best commentary on this saying is found in Rom. 8:26, 27, where the acceptable petitions which are destined to be granted are said to have been given to the suppliant by the Holy Spirit, and by him made so strong in the soul as to be unutterable groanings of desire. Thus our Lord says, "Believe that you received these things from the Spirit of God as the materials of prayer; believe that these longings were awakened in you from above; and your requests shall be granted." But this faith, again, cannot be blind, if it is to inherit such a promise. It must have its reasons—so good that the whole man shall be satisfied with them. The reading of the will of God must be rational, as well as the pleading of it. The promise is, in meaning, "When you have reason to believe, and do believe that your prayer came to your heart from the Spirit of God, you may be sure that an answer to your prayer will also come from God." Compare the profound yet simple testimony concerning prayer in 1 John 5: 14, 15. There, as here, the crucial point is the knowing that we are asking according to his will. But thanks be to God that there is a Spirit who maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God, working in them that which is well-pleasing in his sight!"

III. BUT NOT IF YOU DO NOT FORGIVE.

"25, 26. *Forgive, if ye have aught against any; that your father also which is in heaven may forgive you.* This saying is very similar to Matt. 6:14, 15 and 18:35. Verse 26 is properly omitted by the revisers as having been added here by free quotation from Matt. 6:15. The solemn words concerning forgiveness were added, perhaps, partly to prevent misunderstanding of his act upon the fig tree and false inferences from it. Prayer is a tremendous power, but it cannot be used for the gratification of personal resentments. So far from that, the cherishing of such resentments is fatal to prayer itself, being fatal to that full acceptance with God upon which, as a basis, prevailing prayer proceeds. An unforgiving

prayer against an enemy would be null and fruitless by its own nature according to this law. Still further, the unforgiving spirit would vitiate all prayer. In this searching law, expressed in verse 26, there is nothing retaliatory or narrow on the part of God. The reason for the law lies in the nature of things. The unforgiving spirit is not the penitent and humble spirit to which forgiveness is promised. Rather is it the hard and self-asserting temper to which the remission of sins cannot be granted. To harbor resentment while pleading for pardon is to cherish the "guile" of Ps. 32:2. This law, limiting the availability of prayer, makes power contingent upon love: the true Christian relation.—For other illustrations of what things are contingent upon love, study the First Epistle of John. Do not shrink from the Epistle, either. No part of Scripture is more searching or more fundamental." (*W. N. Clarke*).

FACT QUESTIONS 11:20-26

702. What is especially significant about the day on which this incident occurred?
703. In what sense are we to understand the use of the word "cursed" as in vs. 21? What would be a better word? Why?
704. Why didn't Jesus explain the symbolic meaning of destroying the fig tree? Cf. John 16:12.
705. Show the similarity of Mark 11:23 and Matt. 17:20.
706. What is the essential thought in vs. 23?
707. What is the true foundation for removing a mountain to the sea?
708. Show how Rom. 8:26, 27 and 1 John 5:14, 15 illustrate the meaning of vs. 24.
709. Why were the words on forgiveness added to those on faith?
710. What was said about Psa. 32:2 and the first letter of John?

2. JESUS' AUTHORITY CHALLENGED. 11:27-33.

TEXT 11:27-33

"And they come again to Jerusalem: and as he was walking in the temple, there come to him the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders; and they said unto him, By what authority doest thou these things? or who gave thee this authority to do these things? And Jesus said unto them, I will ask of you one question, and answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or from men? answer me. And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then did ye not believe him? But should we say, From men—they feared the people: for all verily held John to be a prophet. And they answered Jesus and say, We know not. And Jesus saith unto them Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things."

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 11:27-33

635. How many times had Jesus been to Jerusalem since He was found in its precincts by His mother?
636. Why were Jesus and His apostles in the temple?
637. Who did these three groups represent?
638. What "things" were of particular interest to those asking the question?
639. Why did Jesus ask the question about John the Baptist?
640. Did these men know the correct answer to Jesus' question?
641. Why fear the multitude?
642. Why did Jesus refuse to answer the question of His authority?—or did He refuse? Discuss.

COMMENT

TIME.—A.D. 30—Tuesday, 4th April, 12th of Nisan, the third day before the great Jewish Passover.

PLACES.—In the temple courts.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS.—Matt. 21:23-27; Luke 20:1-8.

OUTLINE.—1. The place and people of the question, vs. 27. 2. The question, vs. 28. 3. The answer, vs. 29-33.

ANALYSIS

- I. THE PLACE AND PEOPLE OF THE QUESTION, VS. 27.
1. In the temple in Jerusalem.
 2. Representatives of the Sanhedrin: chief priests, scribes and elders.
- II. THE QUESTION, VS. 28.
1. By what power do you do what you do?
 2. Who gave you permission to do what you do?
- III. THE ANSWER, VS. 29-33.
1. You answer my question and I will answer yours.
 2. Was John the Baptist a prophet or a pretender?
 3. This forced an admission they were unwilling to voice.
 4. They lied and said, "we do not know."
 5. Jesus kept His word.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. THE PLACE AND PEOPLE OF THE QUESTION.

"And they come again to Jerusalem: and as he was walking in the temple," etc. This was, no doubt, on the Tuesday.

As He was walking in the temple, very probably employed in works of mercy, according as St. Matthew says, "The lame and the blind came

to him in the temple, and he healed them." St. Luke also adds, "As he preached the gospel."

"There come to him the chief priests," etc. This was the one public intimation which He received from these very dignified persons that His pretensions were known to them. Hitherto they had simply ignored Him as a body, though individual priests or rulers may have remonstrated with Him."

II. THE QUESTION.

"28. *"By what authority doest thou these things?"* What is meant by "these things?" If it was the healing of the lame and the blind, such power of doing good, especially in the very temple of God, must have come from the Author of all good; and they ought to have been the very first to confess it. If they alluded to His preaching and teaching, there seems to have been among the Jews a very great liberty for preaching—the rulers of the synagogues frequently sending to strangers to ask them if they had any word of exhortation. But if, as no doubt was the case, it was because He had interfered in the management of the temple, then, as rulers of the temple, they had a perfect right to ask the question, only they must come with clean hands, which they were not doing, as their hands were defiled with the ill-gotten gains of sacrilege. They must also ask the question in sincerity, which they were not doing: for they had prejudged Him, and were watching for their opportunity to destroy Him."

III. THE ANSWER.

"But the question arises, seeing that they were the religious rulers and leaders of the Jewish nation,—how was it that they were so late in inquiring personally into His claims? They had sent a deputation to the Baptist on the banks of the Jordan to inquire who he was: how was it, then, that they allowed the Lord to teach and preach and perform miracles in the most open way, all over the Holy Land, for three years, and did not solemnly, and as the God-appointed leaders of Israel, require publicly and personally of Him to give account of Himself? It was surely their duty to do so. It was clearly the most cowardly dereliction of their highest functions, as judges in matters of religion, to ignore such claims. They knew well all that He had done. They knew well the resurrection of Lazarus, which had taken place but a very short time before. They had had their solemn conclave, and an animated discussion about it (John 11:47); but all conducted with the determination of condemning Him, no matter what the signs of His Messiahship. Such was the spirit in which they approached the Lord—insincere, hypocritical, crafty, blood-thirsty. And the Lord met them—met not their words only, but the secret

machinations of their hearts, and at once and effectually silenced them, not only by a simple question, but by one which, above all men, He had a right to ask. They had sent to John to ask who he was, and John had told them that he was but a forerunner—a voice to call men's minds to the One Who should come after. They must have known, their emissaries must have told them, that the One Whom John pointed to was Jesus; and the Lord fulfilled in His own person all that John had foretold: for He had filled the Holy Land, and the neighbouring territories, even Jerusalem itself, with the fame of His mighty deeds. John baptized, but it was not into the belief of himself, but of One that should come after him. What was the significance of John's baptism—His baptism, of course, including his whole mission—was it earthly or heavenly?

30. "*The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?*" And, apparently, they were confounded by the question; and, after pausing for an answer, He, no doubt, looked them in the face, and said, "Answer me."

31. "*And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, etc. Why then did ye not believe him?*" Of course, here means, Why did ye not believe him when he testified of Me? John's mission and baptism had no meaning, except as preparing for Another's. He founded no Church, no institution, no sect. He was a herald, and, so far as office was concerned, nothing more; and yet he had so stirred the religious heart of the whole people that they were persuaded that he was a prophet indeed. And the chief priests and scribes dare not shipwreck their whole influence with the people by denying this. And so they were in a dilemma. The Lord in His wisdom conducted them, with their eyes wide open, into the snare. And they were forced to say, "We cannot tell." We, the judges of the faith and worship of Israel, cannot tell whether the greatest teacher who has appeared amongst us for many centuries is from God or not.

To have to make such a confession was to seal their own condemnation as the leaders of the people of God.

And so the Lord answered them: "Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things." If they had possessed the smallest residue of the spirit of their great and holy predecessors, Phinehas, Abiathar, Zadok, Jehoiada, Joshua, the Lord would not have answered them thus." (M. F. Sadler)

FACT QUESTIONS 11:27-33

711. What was Jesus doing in the temple besides walking?

712. To what three areas could "these things" of vs. 28 be applied?

713. Show proof that the spirit of these who asked the question was insincere, hypocritical, crafty and bloodthirsty.
714. Indicate the very valid right Jesus had to ask the question He did.
715. What was the mission of John?
716. Show how their answer sealed their influence as leaders of the people.

3. THE REJECTED SON 12:1-12

TEXT 12:1-12

"And he began to speak unto them in parables. A man planted a vineyard, and set a hedge about it, and digged a pit for the winepress, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into another country. And at the season he sent to the husbandmen a servant, that he might receive from the husbandmen of the fruits of the vineyard. And they took him, and beat him, and sent him away empty. And again he sent unto them another servant; and him they wounded in the head, and handled shamefully. And he sent another; and him they killed, and many others; beating some, and killing some. He had yet one, a beloved son: he sent him last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son. But those husbandmen said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours. And they took him, and killed him, and cast him forth out of the vineyard. What therefore will the lord of the vineyard do? he will come and destroy the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others. Have ye not read even this scripture; The stone which the builders rejected, The same was made the head of the corner: This was from the Lord, And it is marvellous in our eyes? And they sought to lay hold on him; and they feared the multitude; for they perceived that he spake the parable against them: and they left him, and went away."

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 12:1-12

643. Show how especially appropriate the parable was by way of time and persons.
644. Who was the owner of the vineyard? i.e. who was represented by the owner?
645. Why use parables at this time?
646. Who was represented by the vine-growers?
647. Who were the servants?
648. Why was the owner of the vineyard so exceedingly patient?
649. Did anyone understand the obvious prophetic words about the son?
650. Who were "the others" to whom the vineyard was to be given?
651. What was the import of the "chief corner stone"?
652. If they wanted to seize and kill Him why didn't they do it?

COMMENT

TIME.—Tuesday, April 4, A.D. 30, two days after the entry into Jerusalem.
PLACE.—The words here were uttered in the temple, probably in the court of the Gentiles, where the Lord often taught the people. We shall later give a description of the temple and its courts.

INTERVENING HISTORY.—On Sunday April 2, the Lord made his official entrance into Jerusalem, looked through the temple and then retired to Bethany for the night. On Monday, April 3, he returned and taught in the temple. This teaching continued over Tuesday, and embraces a number of parables and discourses, either referring to his own rejection, the end of the Jewish state, or the end of the world, either on Monday or Tuesday, probably the latter.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS.—Matt. 21:33-46; Luke 20:9-19.

LESSON OUTLINE.—1. The Wicked Husbandmen. 2. The Son Rejected and Slain. 3. Judgment Inflicted.

ANALYSIS

- I. THE WICKED HUSBANDMEN, vs. 1-5.
 1. The Vineyard Planted. Mark 12:1; Matt. 21:33; Luke 20:9.
 2. Fruits Demanded. Mark 12:2; Matt. 21:24; Luke 20:10.
 3. The Lord's Servants Persecuted. Mark 12:3-5; Matt. 21:35, 36; Luke 20:5.
- II. THE SON REJECTED, vs. 6-8.
 1. The Son Chosen. Mark 12:6; Matt. 21:37; Luke 20:6.
 2. Evil Counsel. Mark 12:7; Matt. 21:38; Luke 20:7.
 3. The Son Slain. Mark 12:8; Matt. 21:39; Luke 20:8.
- III. JUDGMENT INFLICTED, vs. 9-12.
 1. The Wicked Husbandmen Destroyed. Mark 12:9; Matt. 21:16; Luke 20:9.
 2. The Rejected Stone. Mark 12:10; Matt. 21:42; 44; Luke 21:10.

INTRODUCTION

The enemies of Christ had already determined on his death. Their only ground of hesitation was his popularity with the throngs who now crowded Jerusalem. This day was one of constant conflict. The chief ecclesiastical authorities had come to him to demand his authority for driving the money changers out of the temple but had been silenced by a question that he had hurled upon them. After Jesus had put to silence the chief priests and scribes, he spoke to them three parables. The Two Sons, recorded only by Matthew; the Wicked Husbandmen, and The Marriage of the King's Son, given only by Matthew. It was as if in a glass held up before them they might see themselves. Yet even these parables, wearing as they do so severe and threatening an aspect, are not

words of defiance, but of earnest, tenderest love—spoken, if it were yet possible to turn them from their purpose to save them the fearful sin they were about to commit, to win them also for the kingdom of God.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. THE WICKED HUSBANDMEN.

1. *He began to speak to them.* To the chief priests and scribes whom he had just silenced, as related in the last chapter. The people were present but his words and their rebuke are for their rulers whom he directly addressed in parables of which they could see the application. *A certain man.* The man who planted the vineyard represents the Heavenly Father who had planted the Jewish nation. *A vineyard.* Our Lord draws, as was his wont, his illustration from common life and familiar objects. Palestine was emphatically a vine-growing country, and fitted, in consequence of its peculiar configuration and climate, for rearing the very finest grapes. The image of the kingdom of God as a vinestock or as a vineyard is not peculiar to this parable, but runs through the whole Old Testament (Deut. 32:32; Ps. 80:8-16; Isa. 5:1-7; 27:1-7; Jer. 2:21; Ezek. 15:1-6; 19:10); and has this especial fitness, that no property was considered to yield so large a return (Cant. 8:11, 12). None was therefore of such price and esteem. It no doubt belongs to the fitness of the image, that a vineyard does, if it is to bring forth richly, require the most diligent and never ceasing care; that there is no season in the year in which much has not to be done in it. *Set an hedge about it.* Probably a hedge of thorns; possibly a wall. Enclosures of loose stone, everywhere catch the eye on the bare slopes of Hebron, of Bethlehem, and of Olivet. The hedge around them is the law, separating them from the Gentiles. By their circumscription through the law (Eph. 5:14) the Jews became a people dwelling alone, and not reckoned among the nations; that law being at once a hedge of separation and defense—a wall of fire, which, preserving them distinct from the idolatrous nations round them and from their abominations, gave them the pledge and assurance of the continued protection of God. *Digged a place (or pit) for the wine-fat (or wine-press).* The wine-press (Matt. 21:33) consisted of two parts—(1) the press, or trough, above, in which the grapes were placed, and there trodden by the feet of several persons amidst singing and other expressions of joy (Judg. 9:27; Isa. 16:10; Jer. 25:30); (2) a smaller trough (yekeb), into which the expressed juice flowed through a hole or spout (Neh. 13:15; Isa. 63:2; Lam. 1:15). Here the smaller trough, which was often hollowed (digged) out of the earth or native rock and then lined with masonry, is put for the whole apparatus, and is called a wine-fat.—*Cambridge Bible.* *Built a tower.* Towers were erected in vine-

yards, of a very considerable height, and were intended for accommodation of keepers, who defended the vineyards from thieves and from troublesome animals. *Let it out to husbandmen*. Representing the rulers of the Jews (Matt. 21:45); but the people as a whole, a nation or a church, are included (Matt. 21:43). It is customary in the East, for the owner to let out his estate to husbandmen; i.e., to tenants, who pay him an annual rent, either in money or, as apparently in this case, in kind. *Went into a far country*. "For a long while" (for time), adds Luke. At Sinai, the Lord may be said to have openly manifested himself to Israel, but then to have withdrawn himself again for a while, not speaking to the people again face to face (Deut. 34:10-12), but waiting in patience to see what the law would effect, and what manner of works the people, under the teaching of their spiritual guides, would bring forth.

2. *At the season*. By the Mosaic law the fruit of the trees was not to be eaten for five years after planting. This reasonable provision, though based on religious grounds, gave the tree opportunity of maturing before use. Lev. 19:23-25. In the vineyard of our probation all the time of our responsible years is harvest time, in which we are expected to bring forth fruit to Him who hath planted and let to us the vineyard. But as applied to Israel it refers to the period of her history when, Canaan being fully possessed, God sent his prophets to remind his people of their duty. *Sent . . . a servant*—The different sendings must not be pressed; they probably imply the fullness and sufficiency of warnings given and set forth the long suffering of the householder, and the increasing rebellion of the husbandmen is shown by their increasing ill-treatment of the messengers.—*Alford*. These servants, like Elijah, Isaiah and Jeremiah, were sent to demand that a nation for whom God had done so much should yield fitting fruit to God.

3. *They caught him*. The gradual growth of the outrage is clearly traced: (1) The first servant they "caught, beat, and sent away empty;" (2) at the second they "cast stones, and wounded him in the head, and sent him away shamefully handled;" (3) the third "they killed." *Empty*. Empty-handed; i.e., without that which he came for. According to the obvious design of the whole parable, this is a lively figure for the undutiful and violent reception often given to the prophets or other divine messengers, and the refusal to obey their message. (See Matt. 23:29-31, 34, 37; Luke 11; 47-50; 13:33, 34. Compare 1 Thess. 2:15; Rev. 16:6; 18:24).

4. *Another servant*. God sent many prophets to the Jews, as he sends many influences to us. *Shamefully handled*, or dishonored. It is the

generic summing up of all that the imagination naturally suggests when we think of what must have been done to the man in the affray in which his head was seriously wounded.—*Morison*.

5. *Him they killed*. Some of the prophets were not merely maltreated, but actually put to death. Thus, if we may trust Jewish tradition, Jeremiah was stoned by the exiles in Egypt, Isaiah sawn asunder by Manasseh; and, for an ample historical justification of this description, see Jer. 27:38; 1 Kings 18:13; 22:24-27; 2 Kings 6:31; 21: 16; 2 Chron. 24:19-22; 36:16; and also Acts 7:52; and the whole passage finds parallel in the words of the apostle (Heb. 11:36). The patience of the householder under these extraordinary provocations is wonderful.

II. THE SON REJECTED.

6. *Having yet therefore one son*. This was the last and crowning effort of divine mercy; after which, on the one side, all the resources even of heavenly love are exhausted; on the other the measure of sins is perfectly filled up. Undoubtedly they who were our Lord's actual hearers quite understood what he meant, and the honor which in these words he claimed as his own; though they were unable to turn his words against himself, and to accuse him, on the strength of them, of making himself, as indeed he did then affirm himself, the Son of God.—*Trench*. *One son, his well beloved, he sent him*. This saying, put at that time by Jesus in the mouth of God, has a peculiar solemnity. There is his answer to the question, "By what authority doest thou these things?" See Mark 11:28. *They will reverence my son*. That is, they will respect and treat with due esteem such a messenger (John 3:16, 17).—*Jacobus*. The expression of the hope that the husbandmen will reverence the son implies, of course, no ignorance, but the sincere will of God that all should be saved.

7. *This is the heir*. He for whom the inheritance is meant, and to whom it will in due course rightfully arrive—not, as in earthly relations, by the death, but by the free appointment of the actual possessor. Christ is "heir of all things" (Heb. 1:2). *Come, let us kill him*. The very words of Genesis (37:20), where Joseph's brethren express a similar resolution. This resolution had actually been taken (John 11:53). It is the *heart* which speaks in God's hearing. The thought of men's hearts is their true speech, and therefore given as though it were the words of their lips. *And the inheritance shall be ours*. They were so connected with a system which must pass away with Christ, with wrong ideas and principles and customs which Christ was doing away, that, if Christ prevailed, they must fall. But they imagined that, if they could destroy Christ, they could continue in possession of the inheritance, be rulers

over Israel, teachers and leaders of the people, the possessors of the nation. See, also, John 11:48.

8. *And killed him.* As the Jews did Jesus. They killed that they might possess; and because they killed they lost. *Cast him out of the vineyard.* This may involve an allusion to Christ suffering "without the gate" (Heb. 13:12, 13; John 19:17).

III. JUDGMENT INFLICTED.

9. *What shall therefore the lord of the vineyard do?* In Matthew 21:41, the people answer this question. It may be that the Pharisees, to whom he addressed himself, and who gave the answer reported, had as yet missed the scope of the parable, answering as they did, and so, before they were aware, pronounced sentence against themselves. *He will come.* The coming of the Lord in this place is to be interpreted of the destruction of Jerusalem. *And destroy the husbandmen.* The polity of the Jews was destroyed, their temple razed to the ground, their capital laid waste by the Romans, about forty years after this. *Give the vineyard unto others.* Expressed by the apostle when he said, "Lo, we turn to the Gentiles" (Acts 13:46). The others were the Christian Church which Christ ordained for his kingdom.

10. *Have ye not read this scripture.* Referring them to Psalm 118:22, 23—a psalm which the Jews applied to the Messiah. Peter twice applied it to him (Acts 4:11; 1 Pet. 2:7). In the primary meaning of the psalm the illustration seems to have been drawn from one of the stones, quarried, hewn, and marked, away from the site of the temple, which the builders, ignorant of the head architect's plans, or finding on it no mark (such as recent explorations in Jerusalem have shown to have been placed on the stones of Solomon's temple in the place where they were quarried, to indicate their position in the future structure of the fabric), had put on one side as having no place in the building, but which was found afterwards to be that on which the completeness of the structure depended—on which, as the chief corner-stone, the two walls met and were bonded together.—*Plumptre. The stone.* The "stone" is the whole kingdom and power of the Messiah summed up in himself.—*Alford. The builders rejected.* The builders answer to the husbandman; they were appointed of God to carry up the spiritual building, as these to cultivate the spiritual vineyard. The rejection of the chief corner-stone answers exactly to the denying and murdering the heir.—*Trench. Become the head of the corner.* The most important foundation-stone, joining two walls. A reference to the union of Jews and Gentiles in Christ, as in Eph. 2:19-22, may be included (see *Alford*); but the main thought is that the Messiah, even

if rejected by the "builders," should become the corner-stone of the real temple of God (his new spiritual kingdom).—*Schaff*.

11. *This was the Lord's doing*. The making the Rejected Stone the head of the corner. It is still marvelous and incredible to many that one rejected, despised, and put to death as a malefactor, should be exalted as the Lord of life and glory.

12. *And they sought to lay hold on him*. The three accounts supplement each other here. The purpose to seize him is plainly stated in all. Mark shows that it was a continued effort (literally, "they were seeking"), while Luke tells that they would have done so on the spot, had they not been afraid of the people. *For they knew, etc.* Matthew gives the more general reason for this fear: "Because they held him as a prophet." Their desire to seize him was increased by this parable; but their fear of the people was also increased, since they (i.e. the rulers) perceived *that he spake the parable against them*, and in the presence of the people (Luke 20:9), so that they felt themselves convicted before the people. Conscience made them cowards.—*Schaff*.

FACT QUESTIONS 12:1-12

717. At what particular place or area in the temple was this parable told?
718. What was "the only ground of hesitation" in the plan to kill our Lord?
719. Name the three parables Jesus gave on this Tuesday.
720. What was the ultimate purpose in these parables?
721. To whom was this parable addressed?
722. Who was the "certain man"—what was represented by the "vineyard"?
723. Give two examples of Israel represented as a vineyard.
724. What did the wall represent?
725. What were the two parts to the wine-press?
726. For what purpose were the towers?
727. Read Matt. 21:45 and state who in the parable is here indicated.
728. When did the Lord in a sense withdraw Himself for awhile?
729. What is represented by "the season"?
730. Elijah, Isaiah and Jeremiah are represented by whom?
731. Show how the gradual growth of outrage is indicated.
732. Who was sent "empty away"?
733. Which of the prophets did they actually put to death?
734. In what one act are all the resources of heaven's love exhausted and all the measure of man's sin filled up?
735. Show how the words of Gen. 37:20 relate to the parable, Cf. John 11:53.

- 736. How did the rulers and teachers of Israel imagine they would obtain the inheritance?
- 737. How did the Pharisees pronounce sentence against themselves?
- 738. When did the Lord of the vineyard come and destroy the husbandman? To whom was the vineyard given?
- 739. How would the builders know which stone was the cornerstone?
- 740. Show the importance of the cornerstone.
- 741. To what incident in the parable does the rejection of the cornerstone compare?
- 742. What was marvelous and incredible?
- 743. What does Mark add about the effort to seize Him that is not included in Matthew or Luke?

4. THE QUESTION OF PAYING TAXES 12:13-17

TEXT 12:13-17

"And they send unto him certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, that they might catch him in talk. And when they were come, they say unto him, Master, we know that thou art true, and carest not for any one: for thou regardest not the person of men, but of a truth teachest the way of God: Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not? Shall we give, or shall we not give? But he, knowing their hypocrisy, said unto them, Why tempt ye me? bring me a penny, that I may see it. And they brought it. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? And they said unto him, Caesar's. And Jesus said unto them, Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's. And they marvelled greatly at him."

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 12:13-17

- 653. Who sent the Pharisees and Herodians?
- 654. Who were the Herodians? Were they friends of the Pharisees? Discuss.
- 655. Why desire to catch Jesus in His speech?
- 656. What is meant by the use of the word "true" as in vs. 14?
- 657. In what sense didn't Jesus "care for anyone"?
- 658. Did these enemies of Jesus believe what they said to Him about Him?
- 659. Whose law was involved in paying tribute to Caesar? Discuss.
- 660. In what sense were these inquirers hypocrites?
- 661. Why ask about the inscription on the coin?
- 662. Did Jesus recommend paying taxes?
- 663. What things belong to God—are they the same things that belong to Caesar? Discuss.