

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

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

TEXT 11:1-11

"And when they draw nigh 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: "Stateliner, 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.

COMMENT

TIME.—Tuesday, April 4, A.D. 30, two days after entry into Jerusalem.

PLACE.—In the temple, probably in the court of the Gentiles.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS.—Matt. 22:15-22; Luke 20:20-26.

OUTLINE.—1. The trap setters, vs. 13. 2. The trap set, vs. 14, 15a. 3. Caught in their own trap, vs. 15b-17.

ANALYSIS

I. THE TRAPPERS, vs. 13.

1. They were official—i.e. sent by others.
2. Made up of two opposing forces, who now joined together to oppose Jesus.

II. THE TRAP, vs. 14, 15a.

1. Flattery used as a camouflage.
2. The trap is a question; shall we pay taxes to usurpers?

III. THE TRAPPED, vs. 15b-17.

1. He knew their purpose.
2. He sprang the trap on them.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. THE TRAPPERS.

"13. Although thus foiled in their direct attempt to silence him, they lose no time in aiming at the same end by a more insidious method, all the parties hostile to him coalescing for a moment in a joint and several effort to destroy his popularity and influence, by setting him at variance either with the Roman government or Jewish people. The means employed for this end was a series of entangling questions upon difficult and controverted points, both doctrinal and practical, to which it seemed impossible for him to return any answer that would not commit him in the eyes of some important party. This design is apparent from the coalition of two adverse sects or parties in the first attack, the Pharisees, or bigoted opponents of all heathenish and foreign domination, and the Herodians, or followers of Herod, who sustained him as the instrument and vassal of the Romans. This unnatural alliance between parties diametrically opposite in principle was caused by their common hostility to Christ, whose growing influence was far more dangerous to both than either could be to the other. By combining, too, they seemed to render his escape impossible, as any answer which would satisfy the one side must of course afford a ground of opposition to the other. Of this crafty and unprincipled contrivance, on the part of men whose only bond of union was their hatred of our Lord and their desire to destroy him, it might well be said that their design was *to catch him*, as a bird is caught

in fowling, *by a word*, i.e. by a perplexing question, or, as some explain it, by an unguarded answer."

II. THE TRAP.

"*And they coming say to him*, their first words being not a peremptory challenge, as in the preceding case (11, 27), but a flattering address intended to allay suspicion and conceal their real purpose, so as to throw him off his guard and make it easier to entrap him. *Master*, i.e. Teacher, *we know*, not necessarily a false profession, since the character here ascribed to Christ was not only true but universally acknowledged. *True*, i.e. honest, candid, truthful, one who spoke the truth without regard to consequences. Carest for no man, in the Greek a double negative, as usual enforcing the negation. *It does not concern thee about no man*. The impersonal verb is that employed in 4, 38, and there explained. What they here ascribe to him is not indifference or unconcern as to the welfare of others, but independence of their influence and authority, as motives for suppressing an unwelcome truth. The flattery here lies, not in the falsehood or extravagance of the description, but in the honesty with which they seem to comprehend themselves among those for whom he did not care in the sense above explained. As if they had said, we come to you not only as a wise and famous teacher, but because we know that you will tell us to our faces what you think, without considering how it will affect us. *Regardest not the person*, literally *dost not look into the face* (or at the outward appearance) *of men*, i.e. art not influenced by any difference of rank, position, wealth, or power, a regard to which in the administration of justice was forbidden in the law of Moses as *respect of persons* or judicial partiality. (See Lev. 19; 15. Deut. 1; 17. 16, 19, and compare Prov. 24, 23. 28, 21.) The same thing is here denied of Christ, not as a judge, but as a teacher. *In truth or of a truth*, i.e. truly, really, sincerely, without any such reserves or personal regards as those just mentioned. Such adulation has blinded the eyes and warped the judgment of its thousands and its tens of thousands among human sages, and especially of those who glory in their insusceptibility of flattery. It is not surprising, therefore, that these crafty casuists and politicians, who regarded Jesus as a mere man, though an eminently wise and good one, should have hoped to find him as susceptible of flattery as others. Having thus prepared the way for their ensuing question, they at length propound it, in a very categorical and simple form. *Is it lawful*, is it right, not in itself or in the abstract, but for us as members of the chosen people, subjects of a theocracy, *to give tribute*, literally *census*, one of the Latin words embedded in the Greek of Mark, strictly meaning an enrollment of the people and assessment of their property with a view to taxation

(compare Luke 2, 1-5), but also used in the secondary sense of the tax itself, here distinguished as a Roman not a Jewish impost by the Latin word applied to it and by the express mention of the taxing power. *Cesar*, a surname of the Julian family at Rome, inherited from Julius Caesar by his grand nephew and adopted son, Octavius or Augustus, the first emperor of Rome, was afterwards transmitted through the line of his successors, not only those who were connected with his family, but those exalted by a popular or military nomination. It is here applied abstractly to the office, or rather to the actual incumbent, Tiberius, the stepson and successor of Augustus, who reigned from the 14th to the 37th year of the Christian era. It is not however in his personal capacity, but as the representative of Roman power, that he is here mentioned. *Or not?* an artful presentation of the question as requiring a direct and categorical solution, without qualifications or distinctions, but as we say in English, "Yea or nay?"

15a. May we give, or may we not give? the form of the Greek verb being not future but subjunctive and indefinite. It is therefore really another form of the preceding question, not a second one consequent upon it, as the English version seems to intimate. 1. Is it lawful? 2. Shall we do it? for a thing may be lawful and yet not expedient or binding. (Compare 1 Cor. 6, 12, 10, 23). But in Greek no such distinction is expressed or suggested, but a simple repetition of the same inquiry in a different and more laconic form, thus rendering it still more categorical and peremptory, as admitting of no answer but a simple affirmation or negation. While the preamble to the question, therefore, was adapted to conciliate and prepossess an ordinary wise man, the question itself was so framed as almost to extort a categorical and therefore compromising answer. But he with whom they had to deal saw not only through their question but themselves, and shaped his course accordingly, so as at one stroke to solve the difficulty and defeat their malice."

III. THE TRAPPED.

"15b. *Knowing* (or according to some copies, *seeing*) *their hypocrisy*, the part which they were acting, but here from the connection necessarily suggesting the idea of dissimulation, false pretenses, which we commonly attach to the derivative in English. *Why tempt ye me?* not why entice me into sin, which is the ordinary sense of tempting (see 1, 13), but why do you try me, prove me, put me to the test, which is its primary and proper import. (See 8, 11, 10, 2.) Then, instead of answering *in thesi*, as they evidently wished and expected, he gives a striking popularity and vividness to what he is about to say, by addressing it not only

to the ears but to the eyes of those about him. *Bring me a penny, a denarius*, another of Mark's Latin words, denoting a silver coin in common circulation since the Roman conquest, worth from fifteen to seventeen cents of our money, but here mentioned not with any reference whatever to its value, but as the tribute money (*coin of the census or taxation*) as it is expressed in Matthew (22, 19.) *That I may see (it)*, is almost sarcastic, for though he did desire and intend to see it, yet the words, if seriously understood, seem to imply that he had never done so, and expected to derive some information from an inspection of the coin itself. But this was no doubt understood by all about him as a sort of grave rebuking irony, intended to disclose his knowledge of their secret motives, and his scorn of their hypocrisy, in raising such an abstract question on a point decided by their every-day transactions in the way of business. As if he had said; 'What! Are you required to pay taxes to the Romans? And in what coin? Let me see one'—thus attracting the attention of all present to the question, and preparing them to understand his memorable answer.

16. *And they* (either those who put the question or some others present) *brought (it)*. We may now conceive of him as holding the denarius in his hand, or displaying it to those around, as if it had been something new, thus still more exciting curiosity and gradually opening the way for the solution of the difficulty which had been suggested. *Whose is this image and inscription?* referring to the well-known head and title of the emperor by which the money was authenticated as a legal tender. As if he had continued in the same tone as before. 'See this money has a man's head and a man's name stamped upon it; what does this mean? who is this, here represented both in words and figures?' The inevitable answer, Cesar's, may to some have suggested, at least vaguely and obscurely, the solution just about to be expressed in words, while others, perhaps most, still continued in suspense, until the words were uttered.

17. The first words of this verse are not to be slurred over as mere expletives or words of course, but read with great deliberation and strong emphasis. *And Jesus* (having thus directed attention to the captious and unreasonable nature of the question, not evading it, but) *answering* (at last) *said unto them*, i.e. directly to his tempters, as a solution of their abstract question, but at the same time through them and as it were over their heads to the surrounding masses, as a practical direction or a rule of duty. *Render* (return, pay back) *the (things) of Cesar to Cesar, and the (things) of God to God*, a collocation more emphatic (though identical in meaning) than the one in the translation, as it places last in either clause, not the thing to be paid but the person to receive it. Some attach to the Greek verb the diluted sense of simply giving out or

paying, but the strong sense of paying back, restoring, correctly though not clearly enough given in our version, is not only permitted by the etymology and favoured by the usage of the word (compare Matt. 5, 26. 33. 6, 4. 18, 25. 20, 8. Luke 4, 20. 9, 42. 19, 8. Rom. 12, 17. 13, 7. 1 Th. 5, 15. 1 Pet. 3, 9), but required by the whole connection and essential to the full force of our Saviour's answer. Of the numerous specific senses put upon that answer there are probably but two exegetically possible and yet essentially unlike. The first of these supposes Christ to represent the two things as entirely distinct and independent of each other, belonging to excentric incommensurable spheres, and therefore not to be reduced to any common principle or rule. As if he had said, Pay your taxes and perform your religious duties, but do not mix the two together or attempt to bring them either into conflict or agreement; for they really belong to different worlds or systems, and have nothing common or alike by which they can even be compared. This paradoxical interpretation would deserve no notice had it not been gravely urged by one of the most celebrated modern German writers. The other exegetical hypothesis supposes Christ to say precisely the opposite of this, to wit, that the two duties are in perfect harmony and rest on one and the same principle. Within this general hypothesis, however, there are several gradations or distinct forms of opinion as to the principle here laid down. Without enumerating all these, it will be sufficient to state two, the lowest and the highest, which can be reduced to this class. The former understands our Lord as rather distinguishing the two obligations, but affirming their consistency and equal obligation, when they are not in collision. The latter understands him as identifying both as parts of one and the same system, as if he had said, your civil duties are but parts of your religious duties. By rendering to Cesar what is his you render unto God what is his. But the question still remains, what doctrine did he teach as to the Roman domination and the duty of the Jews while under it? The most approved and prevalent opinion is that in accordance with the maxim of Maimonides and other rabbis, he regards the circulation of the coin of any sovereign as a practical proof that his sovereignty not only exists but is submitted to. So long as the Jews submitted to the Romans and enjoyed their protection they were not only authorized but bound to pay for the advantage. Others make the prominent idea that of penal visitation, or subjection to the Romans as a punishment of sin. The other precept, render unto God, etc., is understood according to these different hypotheses as meaning either, give your souls or yourselves (which bear his image) back to him by faithful service or by true repentance, as you give back to the emperor in tribute the coin which he circulates among you. All these constructions seem to me too artificial,

and the only satisfactory one that which understands our Lord as first suggesting by the very aspect of the coin that they were under obligations to the civil power, and then reminding them that till these came in conflict with religious obligations they were no less binding. As if he had said, 'Yes, if you are actually under Roman domination, yet allowed to serve God in the way of his appointment, and indeed protected in that service, you are bound to pay back what you thus receive, but no such obligations can destroy those which you owe to God himself, or suspend them when they come in competition. In a word, repay to Cesar what he gives you, and to God the infinitely greater gifts which you receive from him.'" (J. A. Alexander)

FACT QUESTIONS 12:13-17

744. What was meant by the expression "It does not concern thee about no man"?
745. In what sense did our Lord "look into the face of man"?
746. What immediate advantage was hoped for in the use of flattery?
747. Just what was meant by the word "tribute"? How is the word "Caesar" used?
748. Are there two questions—one in vs. 14 and another in vs. 15? Explain.
749. What kind of an answer did these men want? Why?
750. Just what was the point of hypocrisy, i.e. in what were they being hypocritical?
751. Why ask to see the coin? Why ask about the superscription?
752. To whom did Jesus address His answer? Why?
753. Where is the emphasis? On the thing to be paid, or the person to receive it?
754. State the two possible interpretations of this expression i.e. general ones.
755. Which of the gradations of the above two views is to be preferred? Why?
756. What did Jesus teach about the duty of the Jews to Roman domination?; to God?

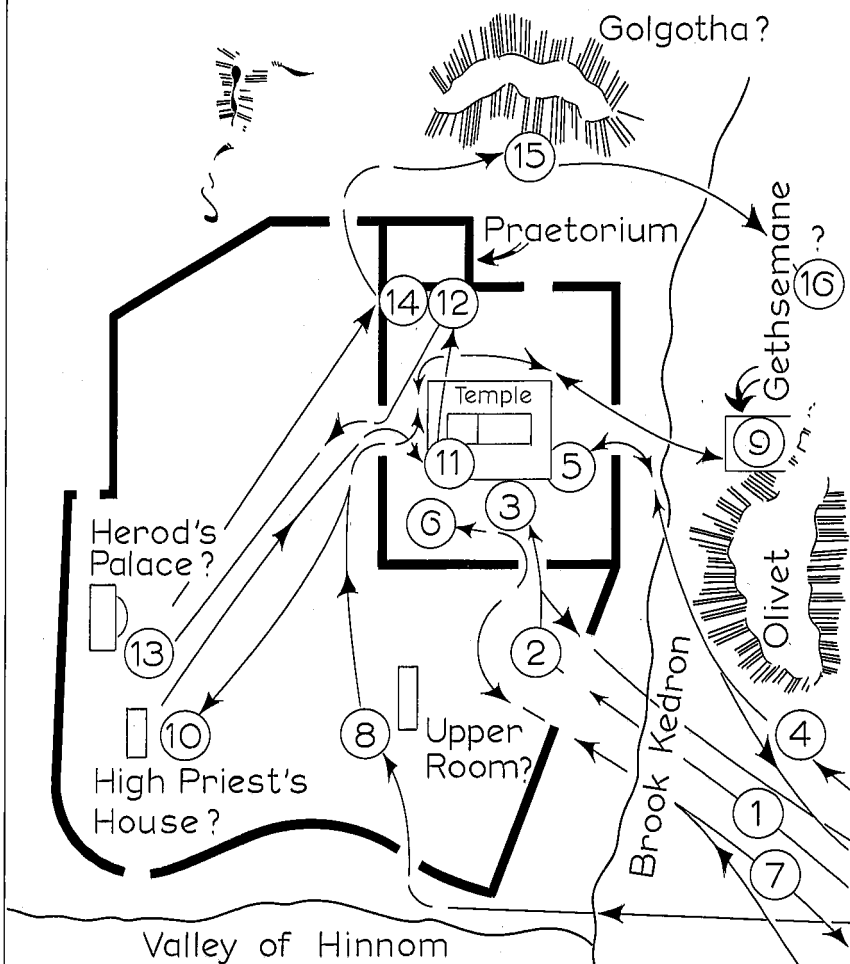
5. THE QUESTION ABOUT THE RESURRECTION 12:18-27

TEXT 12:18-27

"And there come unto him Sadducees, which say there is no resurrection; and they asked him, saying, Master, Moses wrote unto us, If a man's brother die, and leave a wife behind him, and leave no child, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. There were seven brethren: and the first took a wife, and dying left no seed; and the second took her, and died, leaving no seed behind him;

MAP NO. 7—LAST WEEK

1. Bethany—Feast, Mary anoints Jesus, Mt. 26:6-13; Mk. 13:3-9; Jn. 12
2. Jerusalem—Triumphal entry (Sunday) Mt. 21; Mk. 11; Lk. 19; Jn. 12
3. Temple, enters, looks around, says nothing, leaves, Mk. 11:11
4. Curses fig tree (Monday), Mt. 21; Mk. 11
5. Temple—cleanses 2nd time (Monday), Mt. 21; Mk. 11; Lk. 19
6. Temple courts?—Great day of discussions (Tuesday)—Mt. 21-22-23-24-25; Mk. 11-12-13-14; Lk. 20-21-22
7. Retirement to Rest?—(Wednesday), Judas plots to betray Jesus, Mt. 26; Mk. 14; Lk. 22
8. Upper Room—(Thursday), 4th Passover, Lord's Supper, Mt. 26; Mk. 14; Lk. 22; Jn. 13-14
9. Gethsemane—(Thursday night), Parting discourses, agony, betrayal and arrest, Jn. 15-16-17; Mt. 26; Mk. 14; Lk. 22
10. Trial before Annas and Caiaphas, Mt. 26-27; Mk. 14-15; Lk. 22-23
11. Trial before Sanhedrin, Jn. 18
12. Trial before Pilate
13. Trial before Herod
14. Trial before Pilate (2nd)
15. Golgotha—(Friday), Crucifixion, Mt. 27; Mk. 15; Lk. 23; Jn. 19
16. Garden—(Sunday), Resurrection, appears to Mary, other women, Mt. 28; Mk. 16; Lk. 24; Jn. 20



and the third likewise; and the seven left no seed. Last of all the woman also died. In the resurrection whose wife shall she be of them? for the seven had her to wife. Jesus said unto them, Is it not for this cause that ye err, that ye know not the scriptures, nor the power of God? For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as angels in heaven. But as touching the dead, that they are raised; have ye not read in the book of Moses, in the place concerning the Bush, how God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? He is not the God of the dead, but of the living: ye do greatly err."

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 12:18-27

664. Why this concerted effort to ensnare our Lord in His speech?
665. Give three facts about the Sadducees.
666. Since they did not believe in a resurrection why ask a question involving it?
667. Was this a real case or only a hypothetical one? What does a discussion of the sex relationship of marriage reveal about the hearts of the men who ask it?
668. There are two things absolutely essential in escaping religious error—Jesus states them in vs. 24—what are they?
669. Why not marry in heaven? Are we to understand we will lose our identity as husband and wife? Discuss.
670. Are angels distinguishable—i.e. are they recognized as separate beings?
671. Why add the comment on the resurrection?
672. Show how the reference to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob proves the natural immortality of man. Discuss.
673. In what did the Sadducees err?

COMMENT

TIME.—Tuesday, April 4, A.D. 30, two days after entry into Jerusalem.

PLACE.—In the temple, probably in the court of the Gentiles.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS.—Matt. 22:23-33; Luke 20:27-38.

OUTLINE.—1. The Sadducees ask an ignorant question, vs. 18-23. 2. Jesus answers their question and spiritual need, vs. 24-27.

ANALYSIS

I. THE SADDUCEES ASK AN IGNORANT QUESTION, VS. 18-23.

1. Asked by those who did not believe in a resurrection.
2. Their question was based on the law of Moses.
3. Whose wife will the much married woman be in the resurrection?

II. JESUS ANSWERS THEIR QUESTION AND THEIR SPIRITUAL NEED, vs. 24-27.

1. You do not know because you do not know the scriptures or the power of God.
2. There is no marriage relationship in the world to come.
3. Read again about the burning bush—Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are still alive for God said He was their God. There can be and will be a resurrection.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. THE SADDUCEES ASK AN IGNORANT QUESTION.

"18. The Pharisees and Herodians having been silenced, it was the turn of *the Sadducees* to come forward. Their question is as insincere as the preceding; it was a puzzle upon a doctrine in which they were total unbelievers. It proves, however, that the doctrine of the resurrection was everywhere recognized as a doctrine of Jesus.

19-23. This is the so-called Levirate marriage (from Latin *levir*, "a brother-in-law"). (See Deut. 25:5-10.) This provision corresponded to the universal desire in Israel for the perpetuation of name and family. So strong was the desire that this provision was made for a putative offspring in default of actual. The custom was older than the law, however (Gen. 38:8), and exists in many Eastern nations. But the obscure expression in Deut. 25:5, "If brethren dwell together, and one of them die," leaves us uncertain in exactly what circumstances the law was applicable. There is no case recorded in the Old Testament, though there is an allusion to the custom in Ruth 1:11-13. The transaction of Ruth 4:1-8 is of another kind. These questioners stated the law fairly, but their illustration was an extreme one, meant for a *reductio ad absurdum*. The language of verse 19 is awkward, but there is no difficulty about the sense.—*There were seven brethren*. In Matthew, "There were with us," as if the case were fresh from the life. Verse 22 should be, simply, *and the seven left no seed: last of all the woman died also*. Childless by all the marriages, the woman was not linked to any one of the husbands more than to the others.—*In the resurrection, therefore, when they (the woman and the seven brothers) shall rise, whose wife shall she be of them?* It is assumed that she be someone's wife, and how will Jesus judge between the rival claims of the seven?"

II. JESUS ANSWERS THEIR QUESTION AND THEIR SPIRITUAL NEED.

"24. There is something wonderful in the gentleness of the answer, considering the insincerity of the question. He quietly assumed that there

was an error, and proceeded to account for it; he did not even distinctly assert it. *Do ye not therefore* (from this cause) *err*—is it not for this cause that ye err—*because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God?* Is not ignorance the secret of your error? Ignorance (1) as to the Scriptures. He did not mean, of course, that the resurrection was mentioned in the Old Testament plainly, as it was mentioned by him. He meant that if they had understood the Old Testament rightly, they would have found the resurrection implied in its teaching, or at least would have been prepared to receive the doctrine. Not unfamiliarity with the Scriptures, but ignorance of their true meaning, kept them from believing in the resurrection. Moreover, a true knowledge of the Scriptures would have prevented their ideas from being so grossly carnal. (2) As to the power of God. All their conceptions of a resurrection were of a low and carnal kind that underestimated the power of God as shown therein. They thought only of re-establishment of the present fleshly life. No conception had they of the power of God to make life altogether new in the resurrection-state, but this is what he will do. Now follows the truth on these two points: (1) The Power of God; (2) The Scriptures.

THE POWER OF GOD.—25. He tells them that they have not understood the resurrection: it is something far nobler than they have supposed, and it will work changes such as they never thought of. *When they shall rise from the dead.* General, and equal to "in the resurrection" of Matthew. —*They neither marry*—contract marriage as husbands—*nor are given in marriage*, by the act of their parents, as wives. In the resurrection-state there will be no marriage. The reason, as expressly given in Luke, is that they "cannot die any more." Marriage, especially as suggested by the Levirate institution, exists for the sake of offspring. But birth and death are correlatives; they belong in the same world: if one ceases, the other must cease. In that world there is no death; hence no birth, hence no marriage. The power of God will have brought into being that which Paul calls the spiritual body, in which sexual relations will not continue. Notice that this is not a denial of the perpetuity of those mental characteristics which distinguish the sexes in this world. It is not affirmed that they are excluded from the resurrection-state. It is not said that the holy spiritual relations and personal affinities that may have accompanied marriage will not continue, or that husband and wife will be nothing to each other in the future life. The questioners thought of that life as a continuation of this, with its relations unchanged; and he simply told them that marriage, in that world, would be out of place.—Upon the relations of soul with soul in that world he did not touch.—*But are as the angels which are in heaven.* Not "are angels," but "are

as angels." The most that we know of angels is drawn from such allusions as this. What is here implied concerning them is that they are immortal, and hence among them the marriage relation does not exist.

Thus far, Jesus expounded the doctrine of the resurrection. The Sadducees rejected it, but they knew it only in a gross form. Very beautiful is his kindness in thus commending a rejected doctrine by presenting it in a nobler form; as much as to say, "Would not even you have believed it, if you had known it thus?" An example to all preachers and teachers. State your doctrine at its noblest; perhaps those who reject it have never understood it.

THE SCRIPTURES.—26, 27. Now he turns to prove the doctrine that he has been expounding—i.e. to find it in the Holy Writings. He quoted from the book of the law (the Pentateuch), because from it the question had been drawn; possibly, also, because the Sadducees prized it above the other Scriptures. The relation of this extract to the doctrine in discussion is somewhat peculiar. The expectation of a life beyond the present was expressed with greater or less clearness here and there in the Old Testament. Many of the writers had shown that they cherished such a hope, though not with clearness of the gospel. But it was not the hope or expectation that Jesus now wished to bring out: it was the fact. Hence an expression of human desire or aspiration would not suit his purpose, even though it were made under the guidance of the Divine Spirit. He must find a direct utterance of God. This passage, therefore, may be expected to be of unusual importance respecting a future life. To this peculiarity of the case well corresponds Luke's word: "That the dead are raised, Moses also revealed"—brought to light—"at the bush."—Translate, in verse 26, "have ye not read, in the book of Moses, at the bush, how God spake unto him"—i.e. in the section or paragraph where "the bush" is the subject of discourse. (Compare 2 Sam. 1:18.)—*I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.* The citation here is from Ex. 3:6, the words of Jehovah to Moses.—The words might be found in many other places of Scripture: no language was more characteristic of the old covenant or more familiar to Jewish ears. He took no reconдите passage, but one of the great words of the old dispensation.—In verse 27, *therefore* is to be omitted. The reading is, *He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: ye do greatly err.*—i.e. ye greatly err in interpreting the text as if he called himself the God of men who do not now exist. If he is any man's God, you may know that that man exists.

How did he draw such an inference? By a fresh and rich principle of interpretation, arguing from the nature of God, and of God's relations

to man. The Sadducees took the passage to mean, "I am the God in whom Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob put their trust during their brief existence, which is now forever ended." But Jesus reasoned thus: "A God who did for the patriarchs what he did would not speak so of himself. He was gloriously their God—so gloriously that he could not call himself their God in such a sense, if their being had been but transient. If men were destined to become extinct, he could not be so gloriously a God to them. That such a God is or can be their God is proof that they are more than mortal." The argument is that the relations in which God enters, or proposes to enter, with men imply their immortality. The richness of man's relation to God is the fact from which Jesus infers his continued existence. See what a God becomes man's God, and it will be plain that he is no creature of a day. Notice that he does not present this as a fact that lies upon the face of Scripture, so that no one can miss it. The Sadducees missed it, and others may; but Jesus teaches us that they who explore the Scriptures by the light of God's nature will find it.—As if in order to ensure that this should not be taken as an argument for conditional immortality—i.e. immortality for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as chosen ones—Luke adds that "all live unto him"—i.e. in such sense that he is "God of the living" to them, all are alive. A distinct statement of the continued existence of all human beings. The relation to God from which the argument is derived is naturally possible to all, if not actual; and so the conclusion, of immortality, is true of all.—Notice that he draws no distinction here between continued existence and resurrection. The assertion of the former he regards as sufficient to establish the latter. If persons continue to exist, it is proper to speak of their resurrection. Compare John 5:29, where resurrection is predicted for the two classes that include all men.

Luke adds that after this answer some of the scribes responded, "Rabbi, thou hast well said," being, perhaps, as Farrar says, "pleased by the spiritual refutation of a scepticism which their reasonings had been unable to remove."—The fresh method that he thus introduced, of interpreting Scripture in the light of the nature of God and of his relations to men, is a method of boundless suggestiveness. This one specimen of exegesis is enough to prove the freshness and originality of the Christian light upon the word of God." (*W. N. Clarke*)

FACT QUESTIONS 12:18-27

757. How can we know the question of the Sadducees was as insincere as that of the Pharisees?
758. To ask the question in the manner they did was to admit the doctrine of Jesus—what was it?

759. What was a Levirate marriage? Why was it practiced?
760. What was wonderful about the manner in which Jesus answered the question?
761. Did Jesus mean to say that the resurrection was taught in the Old Testament? Explain.
762. Not unfamiliarity with the Scriptures but something else kept them from believing in the resurrection, what was it?
763. How was their understanding of the power of God limited?
764. Why no marriages in the resurrection-state?
765. Are there to be no sexes in heaven? Discuss.
766. What beautiful example in teaching is given here for preachers and teachers of today?
767. Why quote from the Pentateuch?
768. Jesus wasn't concerned with merely the hope or the expectation of life beyond but with the _____ of it.
769. Just how did Moses reveal that the dead are raised?
770. Please explain how Jesus drew the inference He did concerning man's immortality?
771. Are all men inherently immortal?
772. Notice that Jesus draws no distinction between continued existence and resurrection—what does this prove?
773. How does John 5:29 relate to this section?
774. Were some of the questioners helped by His answer?
775. The method here introduced by Jesus of interpreting scriptures is one of "boundless suggestiveness."—what is it?

6. THE TWO GREAT COMMANDMENTS 12:28-34

TEXT 12:28-34

"And one of the scribes came, and heard them questioning together, and knowing that he had answered them well, asked him, What commandment is the first of all? Jesus answered, The first is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God, the Lord is one: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. The second is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these. And the scribe said unto him, Of a truth, Master, thou hast well said that he is one; and there is none other but he: and to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him any question."

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 12:28-34

668. What were the circumstances of the questioning of vs. 28?
 667. What was the motive of the scribe in asking this question?
 668. Why preface the greatest commandment with an expression concerning the nature of God? Cf. Deut. 6:4ff. and Lev. 19: 18.
 669. What is involved in loving God with all your heart? i.e. what is the heart?
 670. What is involved in loving God with all your soul?—your mind?—your strength?
 671. Specify areas of love involved in loving our neighbor as ourselves?
 672. In the answer of Jesus what was the first thing that appealed to the scribe? Why?
 673. Why mention "whole burnt offerings and sacrifices?"
 674. What is the meaning of the word "discreetly" as here used by Jesus?
 675. What "kingdom" was involved?
 676. Had Jesus set up His kingdom? Discuss.

COMMENT

TIME.—A.D. 30; Tuesday, April 4, same day as the last event.

PLACE.—The temple in Jerusalem.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS.—Matt. 22:15-33; Luke 20:20-40.

OUTLINE.—1. Love the Lord thy God. 2. Love Thy Neighbor. 3. Not Far from the Kingdom.

ANALYSIS

- I. LOVE THE LORD THY GOD, vs. 28-30.
 1. The Scribe's Question. Mark 12:28; Matt. 22:35.
 2. The Lord One Lord. Mark 12:29; Deut. 6:4.
 3. The First Commandment. Mark 12:30; Matt. 22:37; Luke 10:27; Deut. 6:4.
- II. LOVE THY NEIGHBOR, v. 31.
- III. NOT FAR FROM KINGDOM, vs. 32-34.
 1. None Other God. Mark 12:32; Deut. 4:39; Isa. 45:6, 14.
 2. More than Burnt Offerings. Mark 12:33; 1 Sam. 15:22; Hosea 6:6.
 3. Near the Kingdom. Mark 12:34.
 4. Christ's Enemies Silenced. Mark 12:34; Matt. 22:46.

INTRODUCTION

This was one of the busiest days of the Lord's ministry, a day of bitter conflict with his enemies right in the citadel of their power. After the parable of the wicked husbandmen, Jesus utters one more parable, that of the king's son (Matt. 22:1-14). There was but one of two courses

before them. They will see their sins and repent; or, being thus accused, and refusing to repent, they will be still more enraged against him. They refused to repent, and, filled with a desire for vengeance, they take counsel with the Herodians how they may compel him to say something that will refute his claims as the Messiah, or give ground for an accusation against him before the government. The Herodians first asked a question that they hoped would be so answered that they could accuse him of sedition; then the Sadducees attempted to involve him in confusion; then the Pharisees put forward a scribe to ask another, still in the hope that he would betray some weakness that would destroy confidence in his wisdom.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. LOVE THE LORD THY GOD.

28. *One of the scribes came.* Matthew in the Parallel Account says he was a Pharisee and a lawyer, which was another designation for a scribe. The scribes were learned men who preserved, copied and expounded the Jewish law. They were called by Jewish writers, "the schoolmasters of the nation." Many of them were Pharisees and members of the Sanhedrim. *Having heard them reasoning together.* The question of the Sadducees concerning the resurrection and the Lord's remarkable reply. See Mark 12:18-26. *Asked.* Matthew (22:35) adds, "tempting him." Not, perhaps, maliciously, but in the sense of testing on another question the wisdom of one who answered so admirably. I judge that he was neither a caviller, nor a disciple, but one curious to see what reply Christ would make to one of the puzzling theological problems of the day. *Which is the first commandment of all?* First in importance: the primary, leading commandment, the most fundamental one. This was a question which, with some others, divided the Jewish teachers into rival schools, and was a constant bone of contention—one of those "strivings about the law" against which Paul warns Titus (Tit. 3:9). The Jews divided the commandments of their law into greater and lesser; but they were not agreed in the particulars. Some contended for the law of circumcision; others, for that of sacrifice; others, for that of phylacteries; others, for that concerning ablutions. The Jewish Talmud reckons the positive laws of Moses at 248, and the negative at 365, the sum being 613. To keep so many laws, said the Jews, is an angel's work, and so they had much question which was the great commandment, so that they might keep that in lieu of keeping the whole.

29. *Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord.* Our Lord begins with the creed of Israel. This passage (Deut. 6:4-9) was one of the

four places of Scripture inscribed on the phylacteries.—*Cook*. It was called the Shema. To say the Shema, was a passport into paradise for any child of Abraham.—*Ellicott*. This every devout Jew recited twice every day; and they do it to this day, thus keeping up the great ancient national protest against the polytheisms and pantheisms of the heathen world, the great utterance of the national faith in one living and personal God. This mighty text contains far more than a mere declaration that God is one. It asserts that the Lord God of Israel is absolutely God, and none other.

30. *Thou shalt love*. We have here the language of law, expressive of God's claims. What, then, are we here bound down to do? One word is made to express it. And what a word—LOVE! Had the essence of the divine law consisted in deeds, it could not possibly have been expressed in a single word; for no one deed is comprehensive of all others embraced in the law. But, as it consists in an affection of the soul, one word suffices to express it—but only one. But love is an all-inclusive affection, embracing not only every other affection proper to its object, but all that is proper to be *done* to its object; for, as love spontaneously seeks to please its object, so, in the case of men to God, it is the native well-spring of a voluntary obedience. It is, besides, the most personal of all affections. One may fear an event, one may hope for an event, one may rejoice in an event, but one can love only a *person*. It is the tenderest, the most unselfish, the most divine, of all affections. Such, then, is the affection in which the essence of the divine law is declared to consist.—*Brown*. *Heart, soul, mind, strength*. We may understand this four-fold enumeration as a command to devote all the faculties to the love of God.—*Cook*. "Heart" denotes in general terms the affection and will; affectionate choice, "the love of conscious resolve, expressed with will, which must at once become a second nature." "Soul" is the individual existence, the person himself, the seat of the will, disposition, desires, character. The two words are united to teach that the entire, undivided person must share in that which it has to perform with the heart.—*Cremer's Biblico-Theol. Lexicon*. *With all thy mind*. This commands our intellectual nature: "Thou shalt put intelligence into thine affection"—in opposition to a blind devotion, or mere devoteeism. *With all thy strength*. Enjoins the full and entire devotion of all these powers. Such is the "first" of the commandments, in the order of importance. Taking these four things together, the command of the law is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy powers—with a sincere, a fervid, an intelligent, an energetic love." This subordinates the whole life to the love of God and brings the whole being into willing obedience. *This is*

the first commandment. A precept so narrow as to measure the smallest thought of the smallest man; so broad, as to compass the mightiest outgoings of the largest angel; so perfect, as to bind all moral beings to the throne of God, and produce eternal and universal harmony and happiness and progress.

II. LOVE THY NEIGHBOR.

31. *The second is like.* To complete the lesson, and to leave no room for perverse distinctions between duties to God and man, our Lord makes the second commandment the necessary result and complement of the first. The first is the sun, so to speak, of the spiritual life; this the *lesser* light, which reflects the shining of that other. It is like to it inasmuch as both are laws of love; both deduced from the great and highest love; both dependent on "I am the Lord thy God." Supreme love to God is to manifest itself in love to men. Alike binding, the two are correspondent, not contradictory. He who loves God must love those who are in the image of God. *Thy neighbor.* On "Who is my neighbor?" see Luke 10:25-37, and Jas. 1:27. The words were found, strangely enough, in the book which is for the most part ceremonial (Lev. 19:18). *As thyself.* (1) Not as he *does* love himself, but as he *ought* to love himself. (2) After the same manner; i.e., freely and readily, sincerely and unfeignedly, tenderly and compassionately, constantly and preservingly. Cases arise where a man ought to love his neighbor more than his life—physical life—and has done so, sacrificing it for his fellows, his country, and the church, an imitation of the example of Christ and the martyrs.—*Schaff. None other commandment greater.* The unity of the moral law prevents any discrimination between its precepts; it is one law of love, the hinge of the whole Old Testament revelation. There can be none greater. No one can love God without loving his fellowmen, and no one can truly love man without loving God. The former is the source of the latter. Hence the first table (the first five commandments) enjoins love to God; the second table (the last five commandments), love to our neighbors.—*Schaff.* All duty springs from the single principle of love.

He only wanted (but the want was indeed a serious one) repentance and faith to be within it. The Lord shows us here, that even outside his flock those who can answer discreetly, who have knowledge of the spirit of the great command of law and gospel, are nearer to being of his flock than the formalists; but then, as Bengel adds, "If thou are not far off, enter; otherwise, it were better that thou wert far off."—*Alford.* This scribe saw that an outward, formal obedience would not satisfy God, but had yet perhaps failed to see that a heart wholly surrendered to God

would require an implicit obedience, not only in the heart, but outwardly to the Divine will. "If a man love me," says Christ, "he will keep my words." The demonstration of love is a loving and faithful obedience. Whether this scribe finally decided to follow the Lord and entered into the kingdom, upon the borders of which he stood, we are not told. It may be that we are left in suspense concerning his fate in order to teach us how important it is that those near the kingdom should enter in.

III. NOT FAR FROM THE KINGDOM.

32. *The scribe said unto him.* Mark alone records the effect of our Lord's answer upon the scribe. It came home to his heart with convincing power. Doubtless he never before saw so plainly the deep spiritual truths of these commands. Entering into our Lord's reply, he cannot but express his approval, and even admiration.

33. *Burnt offerings and sacrifices.* The scribe gathers up in his reply some of the great utterances of the prophets, which prove the superiority of Love to God and man over all mere ceremonial observances. See 1 Sam. 15:22; Psalm 51; Hosea 6:6; Mic. 6:6-8. The reply shows that he had either read the prophets with much greater discernment than most of his fellow scribes, or that his understanding had been enlightened by the teachings of the Lord. To say that love was greater than burnt offerings and sacrifices was a daring utterance, directly opposed to the rigid ceremonial ideas of the Jewish leaders.

34. *Discreetly.* With knowledge and understanding. *Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.* This man had hold of that principle in which law and gospel are one. He stood, as it were, at the door of the kingdom of God.

FACT QUESTIONS 12:28-34

776. What two courses did Jesus place before the religious leaders of His day? Which one did they take? Why?
777. Compare Matthew's account of this incident—was this man a lawyer or a scribe? What is meant by such a designation?
778. In what sense was this man "tempting" our Lord? (Cf. Matt. 22:35).
779. How was the word "first" used in the question about the "first" commandment?
780. What choices had some made as to which commandment was first?
781. How many positive, and how many negative laws given by Moses? Why worry over which one was the greatest?
782. What was the "Shema"? How and why was it used?

783. Show how love encompasses all that God wants us to be and to do.
784. Attempt a definition and illustration of the use of the four words: heart, soul, mind, strength as related to love.
785. Why does our Lord make the second commandment the necessary result and complement of the first?
786. Why would it be impossible to keep the first commandment without keeping the second?
787. How was the question of "who is my neighbor" answered? Cf. Luke 10:25-37 and James 1:27.
788. Give three characteristics of the love we ought to have for our neighbor.
789. How were the tables of the law divided in content?
790. Read 1 Sam. 15:22; Psa. 51; Hosea 6:6; Mic. 6:6-8 and show how the scribe arrived at his conclusion as expressed in vs. 33.
791. What did the scribe need to admit him to the kingdom?
792. What had the scribe yet failed to see?
793. Why are we left without a knowledge of what the scribe did?

7. JESUS' QUESTION ABOUT THE SON OF DAVID 12:35-37

TEXT 12:35-37

"And Jesus answered and said, as he taught in the temple, How say the scribes that the Christ is the son of David? David himself said in the Holy Spirit, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet. David himself calleth him Lord; and whence is he his son? And the common people heard him gladly."

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 12:35-37

677. Why did Jesus raise this question? i.e. at this particular time and place.
678. What would be a synonym for "the Christ" of vs. 35?
679. Why was it important that the Christ should be of the lineage of David?
680. Is Jesus saying the Psalms were divinely inspired? Of what importance is this?
681. Who are the two "Lords" of vs. 36?
682. How does the promise of vs. 36 relate to the Jewish nation?
683. In what sense was the Messiah to be both the son of David and the Lord of David? i.e. how was this possible?
684. Why were the people so responsive to the teaching of Jesus?—was it the subject?—was it the place?—was it the people?

COMMENT

TIME.—A.D. 30. Tuesday, April 4.

PLACE.—The temple area, probably the court of the Gentiles.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS—Matt. 22:41-46; Luke 20:41-44.

OUTLINE.—1. The scribes say the Messiah is David's Son, vs. 35. 2. David said the Messiah was his Lord, vs. 36. 3. How do these views find agreement? vs. 37.

ANALYSIS

I. THE SCRIBES SAY THE MESSIAH IS DAVID'S SON, vs. 35.

1. This question was asked in connection with what had just preceded.
2. This question was asked amid His teaching while in the Temple court.

II. DAVID SAID THE MESSIAH WAS HIS LORD, vs. 36.

1. He said this under the impulse of the Holy Spirit.
2. God addressed this word to the Messiah.
3. It included a promise of Lordship over all the world.

III. HOW DO THESE VIEWS FIND AGREEMENT, vs. 37.

1. If the Messiah is David's Son, in what sense can He also be his Lord?
2. The people heard His teaching with genuine relish.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. THE SCRIBES SAY THE MESSIAH IS DAVID'S SON.

"35. Thus far our Lord's position had been wholly a defensive one; but now he turns the tables and asks a question in his turn, not merely for the purpose of silencing his enemies, but also with a view to the assertion of his own claims as the Messiah. *Answering*, retorting their interrogations. While he *taught*, literally, *teaching*, not in private conversation, but in the course of his public and official instructions. *In the temple*, i.e. in its area or enclosure. *How*, in what sense, upon what ground, or by what ground, or by what authority. *Say*, i.e. officially, or *ex cathedra*, here equivalent to teach. *The scribes*, as the expounders of the law and the religious teachers of the people. *The Christ*, the *Messiah*, Greek and Hebrew synonyms, both meaning *Anointed*, and applied to the Prophet, Priest and King of Israel, predicted by the prophets, and expected by the people. *Is*, in the doctrine of the scriptures, or *is to be*, in point of fact. Son, descendant, heir, *of David*, as the first and greatest theocratical sovereign."

II. DAVID SAID THE MESSIAH WAS HIS LORD.

"36. *For* assigns the reason of the question or the ground of the objection which it states; but the latest critics have expurged the particle.

In the Holy Spirit, i.e. in intimate union with and under the controlling influence of that divine person. *My Lord*, i.e. David's, as our Saviour explicitly declares in the passages already cited; yet not of David merely as a private person, nor even as an individual king, but as representing his own royal race and the house of Israel over which it reigned. The person thus described as the superior and sovereign of David and his house and of all Israel, could not possibly be David himself, nor any of his sons and successors except one who, by virtue of his twofold nature, was at once his sovereign and his son. See Rom. 1, 3. 4. That the Lord here meant was universally identified with the Messiah by the ancient Jews, is clear, not only from their own traditions, but from Christ's assuming this interpretation as the basis of his argument to prove the Messiah's superhuman nature, and from the fact that his opponents, far from questioning this fact, were unable to answer him a word, and afraid to interrogate him further (Matt. 22, 46.) The original form of expression, in the phrase *Sit at my right hand*, is the same as in Ps. 109, 31. A seat at the right hand of a king is mentioned in the Scriptures as a place of honour, not arbitrarily, but as implying a participation in his power, of which the right hand is a constant symbol. See Ps. 45, 10, and compare Matt. 19, 28. The sitting posture is appropriate to kings, who are frequently described as sitting on their thrones. (Compare Ps. 29, 10). In this case, however, the posture is of less moment than the position. Hence Stephen sees Christ *standing* at the right hand of God (Acts 7, 55. 56), and Paul simply says he is there (Rom. 8, 34). The participation in the divine power, thus ascribed to the Messiah, is a special and extraordinary one, having reference to the total subjugation of his enemies. This idea is expressed by the figure of their being made his footstool, perhaps with allusion to the ancient practice spoken of in Josh. 10, 24. This figure itself, however, presupposes the act of sitting on a throne. It does not imply inactivity, as some suppose, or mean that Jehovah would conquer his foes for him, without any intervention of his own. The idea running through the whole psalm is, that it is in and through him that Jehovah acts for the destruction of his enemies, and that for this very end he is invested with almighty power, as denoted by his session at the right hand of God. This session is to last until the total subjugation of his enemies, that is to say, this special and extraordinary power of the Messiah is then to terminate, a representation which agrees exactly with that of Paul in 1 Cor. 15, 24-28, where the verse before us is distinctly referred to, although not expressly quoted. It is therefore needless, though grammatical, to give the *until* an inclusive meaning, namely, until then and afterwards, as in Ps. 112, 8, etc. This

verse, it has been said, is more frequently quoted or referred to, in the New Testament, than any other in the Hebrew Bible. Besides the passages already cited, it lies at the foundation of all those which represent Christ as sitting at the right hand of the Father. See Matt. 26,64. 1 Cor. 15,25. Eph. 1, 20-22. Phil. 2,9-11. Heb. 1,3. 14, 8,1. 10, 12. 13. 1 Pet. 3, 22, and compare Rev. 3,21."

III. HOW DO THESE VIEWS FIND AGREEMENT?

"37. *Therefore, or so then, David calls him Lord, i.e. his own superior or rather sovereign. Whence, from what source, or by what means? How is he at once his superior and inferior, his son and sovereign? The only key to this enigma is the twofold nature of the Messiah as taught even in the Old Testament, and applied to the solution of this very question in the beginning of the epistle to the Romans (1, 3.4.)* But this doctrine had been lost among the Jews, and more especially among the scribes or spiritual leaders, so that to them the question was unanswerable. They still held fast however to the doctrine, that he was to be the Son of David, which indeed became a reason for their giving up the doctrine of his higher nature, as being incompatible with what the scripture taught so clearly as to his descent and lineage. It is an instructive instance of perverted ingenuity, that one of the most eminent of modern German critics and interpreters maintains that Jesus, far from admitting that the scribes were right in making Christ the Son of David, teaches here that he was not! The effect of this unanswerable question upon those to whom it was addressed, or at whom it was aimed, is said by Matthew (22, 46) to have been that no one could answer him a word, nor did any one dare from that day any more to question him. There is of course no inconsistency between this statement and the one in v. 34, above, as both occurrences took place upon the same day; and as it has been well said, while Mark exhibits him as silencing their questions. Matthew goes further and describes him as silencing their very answers. On the other hand, Mark here describes the impression which his teaching made upon the masses. *And the common people (literally, the much or great crowd) heard him gladly, sweetly, pleasantly, with pleasure.*" (J. A. Alexander)

FACT QUESTIONS 12:35-37

794. In what way did our Lord "turn the tables" on His opponents?
795. What purpose did He have?
796. Who were the scribes, i.e. in official capacity?
797. Who was David's Lord?
798. What is implied in the request to sit at His right hand?

799. Sitting does not imply inactivity—what does it imply?
 800. Show how 1 Cor. 15:24-28 relates to Mark 12:35-37.
 801. Mention at least three more places where this reference is referred to in the New Testament.
 802. Show how Romans 1:3, 4 answers the question of Jesus.
 803. Give two results to this question of Jesus.

8. JESUS WARNS AGAINST THE SCRIBES 12:38-40

TEXT 12:38-40

“And in his teaching he said, Beware of the scribes, which desire to walk in long robes, and to have salutations in the market-places, and chief seats in the synagogues, and chief places at feasts: they which devour widows’ houses, and for a pretence make long prayers; these shall receive greater condemnation.”

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 12:38-40

685. Were some of “the scribes” present to hear this warning? Wasn’t this unfair to the honest scribes? Discuss.
 686. What is inferred in the reference to the “long robes”?
 687. Why desire the salutations in the market-places?
 688. What advantage was there in the chief seats?
 689. How would scribes be especially prepared or able to “devour widows’ houses”?
 690. How was it possible to rob and pray in the same day?
 691. Why would long prayers be needed by these scribes?
 692. Is Jesus teaching measures of punishment in hell?

COMMENT

TIME.—A.D. 30—Tuesday, April 4.

PLACE.—The temple area, probably the court of the Gentiles.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS.—Matt. 23:1-39; Luke 20:45-47.

OUTLINE.—1. Beware of certain scribes, vs. 38, 39. 2. They devour widow’s houses, vs. 40.

ANALYSIS

- I. BEWARE OF CERTAIN SCRIBES, vs. 38, 39.
1. Those who love to walk in long robes.
 2. Those who love to be greeted in the market-places.
 3. Those who want the chief seats in the synagogue and at feasts.
- II. THEY DEVOUR WIDOWS’ HOUSES, vs. 40.
1. To cover up their crime they pray long prayers (in public).
 2. They should receive heavier judgment.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. BEWARE OF CERTAIN SCRIBES.

"How much of Matthew's twenty-third chapter is parallel, as having been now uttered, it is perhaps impossible to say. A large part of that chapter has a close parallel in Luke 11:37-52, and Luke 13:34, 35 is identical with the conclusion of the discourse in Matthew. According to Luke 11, the chief part of this discourse was spoken in a Pharisee's house, somewhere in Perea. It seems most probable that Matthew, not having recorded the Perea ministry, here combined several discourses of denunciation, which were actually delivered at various times. At the same time, the brief report in Mark and Luke may be only a fragment of what was said on this occasion. This appears to have been his last word with his enemies, as the discourse of John 14-16 was his last word with friends.

Beware of the scribes, which love—correctly, desire—to go in long clothing, and (desire) salutations in the market-places. Luke inserts "love" before "salutations", but Mark carries the verb "desire" through the sentence.—*In long clothing.* Liddell and Scott render "in full dress"—i.e. in whatever official robes they were entitled to wear; not, as Jesus, in the clothing of common life.—*Salutations,* formal and prolix, forbidden by Jesus to his disciples on their journeys for work (Luke 10:4).—*Chief seats in the synagogues.* The seats nearest to where the sacred rolls of the law were kept.—*Uppermost rooms*—chief places, or couches—*at feasts.* The places of honor at the table. "Uppermost rooms" was once intelligible, but is strangely misleading now. "Room" meant "place," not apartment, when the translators used it thus. (For explanation of the allusion, see Luke 14:7-11.)

II. THEY DEVOUR WIDOWS' HOUSES.

Devour widows' houses. As if this were what they fed upon in their first places at the feasts. Covetous designs that we cannot further specify are meant. "Insinuating themselves with defenceless women, as if they would truly be their defenders" (Theophylact).—*These shall receive greater*—or more abundant—*damnation,* or "condemnation." Greater, because they had misused their spiritual privileges, betrayed the trust of the simple, and brought reproach upon the name of God.—Our Lord's denunciations of the representatives of Judaism in his day seem terribly severe and almost cruel; but what is known of the absurd and heartless refinements of the Pharisaism of that age fully supports the strong language that he used. What must have been the indignation of such a soul as his at such perversion of the religion of his Father!" (W. N. Clarke)

FACT QUESTIONS 12:38-40

804. How much of Matt. 23:1-39 is parallel to this account? Discuss.
 805. How do Mark and Luke relate to the longer discourse of Matt.?
 806. What did the love of "full dress" indicate?
 807. Is there something wrong in greeting one another? Cf. Luke 10:4—
 Discuss.
 808. Where were the chief seats?
 809. What is meant by "rooms" in K.J.V.?
 810. Wasn't our Lord terribly severe with the religious leaders of His day?
 811. Discuss the deadly danger of pretence in prayer. i.e. today?

9. THE POOR WIDOW AND HER OFFERING 12:41-44

TEXT 12:41-44

"And he sat down over against the treasury, and beheld how the multitude cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a poor widow, and she cast in two mites, which make a farthing. And he called unto him his disciples, and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, This poor widow cast in more than all they which are casting into the treasury: for they all did cast in of their superfluity; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living."

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 12:41-44

693. Identify a diagram of the temple—locate the treasury.
 694. What was of particular interest to our Lord as He watched the worshippers at the Treasury?
 695. Why was the multitude giving?
 696. For what was the money used?
 697. Is there some connection in thought with this widow and the ones mentioned in vs. 40?
 698. How much did the widow give?
 699. If she had two coins why didn't she keep one? Wasn't she foolhardy in her generosity?
 700. Why call the disciples to Him—where were they? Cf. 13:1.
 701. According to Jesus what is a truly liberal gift?

COMMENT

TIME.—A.D. 30—Tuesday, April 4

PLACE.—The temple area, probably the court of the Gentiles.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS.—Luke 21:1-4.

OUTLINE.—1. Jesus by the treasury, vs. 41. 2. He sees a poor widow, vs. 42. 3. He points out true generosity, vs. 43,44.

ANALYSIS

- I. JESUS BY THE TREASURY, vs. 41.
1. He was seated near for careful observation.
 2. He noticed the manner of giving as well as the amount.
 3. The rich were especially conspicuous.
- II. HE SEES A POOR WIDOW, vs. 42.
1. Of her own choice she came.
 2. She put in two copper coins amounting to less than a cent.
- III. HE POINTS OUT TRUE GENEROSITY, vs. 43. 44.
1. He called His disciples to Him.
 2. Attention was called to the widow as giving more than anyone else.
 3. Her heart was given with her gift—she gave her life—her living in the gift.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. JESUS BY THE TREASURY.

*"And Jesus sat over against the treasury. —The treasury test:—*The lesson taught by this narrative is—man's treatment of God's treasury the true touchstone of piety. I. GOD HAS A TREASURY IN HIS CHURCH. God has conferred on man various kinds of material possessions and property for uses and enjoyment. Among these, money has become the portable representative and circulating medium of all. Far above these possessions is the privilege of sacred worship. This would be an urgent necessity and a lofty privilege even if man were holy. How much more now that he is a sinner! As all material arrangements are costful, so also is worship. If man could not meet this cost, God would. As man can, Why should he not? Is he not honoured in being allowed to do it? Does not this test his character?"

II. HE SEES A POOR WIDOW.

"II. MEN CONTRIBUTE TO GOD'S TREASURY IN VARIOUS MEASURES AND FROM VARIOUS MOTIVES. The Divine rule has ever been according to one's power. This principle is definitely stated in an instance for universal guidance (Lev. v. 7, 11.): "As God hath prospered." "According to that a man hath." In the temple scene before us, we behold the devotion of every coin, from the golden mineh, of three guineas value, to the mite of brass, three-quarters of a farthing. Motives also differ, often as much as coins. Some give from necessity. Some give from a sense of honesty; if they did not give, debt and dishonour must ensue. Some give with pride and self-righteousness even before God. Some give from habit acquired from youth. Some give with holy love and joy, as a blessed privilege and rich delight; thus did the widow; so also have

many done till now. III. THE SAVIOUR OBSERVES HOW MEN TREAT HIS TREASURY, AND BY THIS TESTS THEIR LOVE TO HIMSELF. As worship is man's highest act, its gifts should be rich and substantial. Jesus beheld men at the treasury. He still directs His eye thither; not that He needs man's gifts; but deeds and gifts test man's love; also they elevate and refresh man's heart. Men test others' love by deeds and gifts. Jesus challenges us to test the love of God thus."

III. HE POINTS OUT TRUE GENEROSITY.

"IV. JESUS ESTIMATES GIFTS CHIEFLY BY WHAT IS RETAINED. This principle alone accounts for the higher worth of the widow's gift. 1. This estimate of gifts according to what is retained agrees with reason. Man's gauge of the moral value of a deed is the power of the doer. The child is not expected to put forth the strength of a man. Less force is looked for from the feeble than the strong man. A small gift from a narrow income is esteemed as much as a large gift from a vast income. 2. This treasury test accords with general life. This principle is acknowledged in all departments of life. Men readily meet the cost of their chosen pursuits and pleasures, in the measure of their means. True patriots willingly pay national charges, according to their ability. Faithful husbands provide for their wives, in the measure of their power. Loving parents nourish their children, as their resources allow. Should not Christians thus provide for the service and glory of Christ? Notice God's rebuke of Israel's neglect of this principle (Isa. 43:22-24; Jer. 7:18). 3. This treasury test accords with universal Scripture demands. God tested man's confidence and honesty by the forbidden fruit. We know the sad issues. Jesus tests our obedience, love, and devotion by a treasury. Besides the large dedication of their property to the national religious service, Israel was commanded to open a treasury to the Lord, to build a tabernacle (Exod. 35, 36); David to build a temple (1 Chron. 29); Joash to meet the expenses of worship (2 Kings 12:1, 9). This woman would give her all to His worship. Who doubts her love? But did she act prudently? She acted according to the rule. She acted for the hour and the occasion. She would not make herself an exception to the rule. She gave her all to God. She left the future to Him. Does any one think she starved by this? Behold what a grandeur the smallest service acquires, when it is done for God! Observe what magnificent interest and enduring renown accrue from the devotion of a creature's all to God. Jesus did not disparage the other gifts; He simply indicated their true relative value, and attached to the widow's His highest commendation. Application:—1. God has a treasury for human hearts, His own heart. He would have your heart centre in love, safety, and joy in His own heart. He wants you there,

as a creature who can love, serve, and delight in Him. He claims and demands you for His. Christ has died to redeem and win you back to Him. Will you give yourself to Him now just as you are, that He may make you all that He can delight in, that you may find in Him all that your soul can desire? 2. Christ gathers the funds of His kingdom in His Church. 3. All worshipers are required to give as a duty. 4. To give cheerfully is to elevate a duty into a privilege. 5. Jesus thus tests His friends and foes, the obedient and the disobedient. 6. Jesus waits at the treasury for your gift, to receive it at your hands, to bless it, and to teach you how to use it. If Christ is Lord of your mind, and heart and life, let Him be also of your silver and gold. (*John Ross.*)"

FACT QUESTIONS 12:41-44

812. What is the touchstone of true piety?
813. What is the "portable representative and circulating medium" of all material possessions?
814. State two measures and two motives men use in contributing to God's treasury.
815. Just how does the Saviour test our love to Him?
816. How does Jesus chiefly estimate man's gifts? Show how this principle agrees with reason.
817. Illustrate the above principle from a life situation.
818. By three examples show how the treasury test accords with all of the scripture.
819. What is God's treasury for human hearts?
820. Where does God gather His funds for His kingdom?
821. Are we required to give? Discuss.
822. If we do not give our gold and silver to Christ can we in honesty say we have given anything else to Him?
823. Please remember the two things that God said He saw and remembered about that good man Cornelius? Cf. Acts 10:4.

SUMMARY

11:1-12:44

In this section the historian has presented only one miracle, that of withering the barren fig-tree. The section is chiefly taken up with conversations and speeches, in which some of the peculiar teachings of Jesus are set forth, and in which his superhuman wisdom is conspicuously exhibited. In the conversations about his own authority, the tribute to Caesar, the resurrection of the dead, the great commandment, and the Lordship of the Christ, he not only silenced his enemies, so that no man dared to ask him any more questions, but he displayed a wisdom which

has never ceased to command the admiration of wise and good men. All men, in the presence of his utterances on these subjects, feel themselves in contact with a mind which towers above their own as the heavens are above the earth. They contain a subtile but irresistible proof, that he who spoke to them was filled with a wisdom which came down from heaven; and such must be the ever deepening conviction of all who dwell on them thoughtfully. (*J. W. McGarvey*)

10. THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE FORETOLD. 13:1-13.

TEXT 13:1-13

"And as he went forth out of the temple, one of his disciples saith unto him, Master, behold, what manner of stones and what manner of buildings! And Jesus said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? There shall not be left here one stone upon another, which shall not be thrown down. And as he sat on the Mount of Olives over against the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when these things are all about to be accomplished? And Jesus began to say unto them, Take heed that no man lead you astray. Many shall come in my name, saying, I am he; and shall lead many astray. And when ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, be not troubled: these things must needs come to pass: but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: there shall be earthquakes in divers places; there shall be famines: these things are the beginning of travail. But take ye heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in synagogues shall ye be beaten; and before governors and kings shall ye stand for my sake, for a testimony unto them. And the gospel must first be preached unto all the nations. And when they lead you to judgment, and deliver you up, be not anxious before hand what ye shall speak: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Spirit. And brother shall deliver up brother to death, and the father his child; and children shall rise up against parents, and cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved."

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 13:1-13

702. What was the motive of the disciple of Jesus in calling attention to the stones and buildings?
703. What size stones were involved in the prediction of Jesus?
704. In what year was the prediction of destruction made?—when was it fulfilled?

705. At about what time of the day was the question about the temple asked and answered? What side of the city and temple was in view?
706. Is there any significance in who asked the questions?
707. How many questions were asked? (Compare the parallel accounts in Matt. 24:1-22 and Luke 21:5-24).
708. Why associate the destruction of Jerusalem and the second coming of Christ?
709. In what particular area of misleading did Jesus speak in vs. 5?
710. Was Jesus saying certain persons would appear as the Messiah?—in His first or second advent?
711. What "end" is discussed in vs. 7? The end of the world?; The end of Jerusalem?; The end of the Jewish nation?
712. When was vs. 8 fulfilled? or is it to be fulfilled?
713. One translation says "the beginning of birth pangs" in verse 8b. What does this mean?
714. Were the four disciples who heard the words of vs. 9 treated in the manner described? was this a fulfillment of the prediction?
715. Was the gospel ever preached to "all the nations"? Cf. Col. 1:23. Why *must* the gospel first be preached to all nations?
716. Verses eleven and twelve seems to indicate a promise to be fulfilled in the lifetime of the apostles—was it? How does it fit the context of the world—or the destruction of Jerusalem?
717. In what sense "saved" as in vs. 13?

COMMENT

TIME.—A.D. 30; Tuesday, April 4; the same day after our Lord's farewell to and final departure from the temple.

PLACES.—The lesson begins in the temple, as the Lord departs from it, and ends upon the Mount of Olives, over against and over-looking Jerusalem and the temple, from the east.

INTERESTING HISTORY.—After the incidents of the widow's mite (Mark 12:41-43). Certain Greeks desire to see Jesus (John 12:20-27); a voice from heaven (John 12:28-36); reflections on the unbelief of the Jews (John 12:37-50); the scathing rebuke to the Pharisees, scribes and lawyers (Matt. 23:1-36) and the farewell to the temple (Matt. 23:37-39).

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS.—Matt. 24:1-22. Luke 21:5-24.

LESSON OUTLINE.—1. The Temple Doomed. 2. False Christs and Trouble. 3. The Era of Persecution.

ANALYSIS

I. THE TEMPLE DOOMED, vs. 1-4.

1. The Lord Forsakes the Temple. Mark 13:1; Matt. 24:1; Luke 21:5.
2. The Temple's Fate. Mark 13:2; Matt. 24:2; Luke 21:6.

3. Christ on the Mount of Olives. Mark 13:3; Matt. 24:3.
4. When shall these things be? Mark 13:4; Matt. 24:3; Luke 21:7.

II. FALSE CHRISTS AND TROUBLE, vs. 5-8.

1. Beware of Deceivers. Mark 13:5; Matt. 24:4; Luke 21:8.
2. False Christs. Mark 13:6; Matt. 24:5; Luke 21:8.
3. Wars and Rumors of Wars. Mark 13:7; Matt. 24:6; Luke 21:9.
4. Universal Commotion. Mark 13:8; Matt. 24:7; Luke 21:10, 11.

III. THE ERA OF PERSECUTION, vs. 9-13.

1. The Suffering Church. Mark 13:9; Matt. 24:8-13; Luke 21:12-19.
2. The Gospel Among all Nations. Mark 13:10; Matt. 24:14.
3. The Divine Helper. Mark 13:11; Luke 21:15.
4. Saved by Endurance. Mark 13:13; Matt. 24:13.

INTRODUCTION

In order to fully understand the student must have pictured before him the circumstances. On Sunday the Lord had proclaimed probably, for the first time, by his entry into Jerusalem that he was the Messiah King. On Monday and Tuesday, in the temple, before the leaders of the nation, he had for the last time offered them the divine message. When it was rejected he warned them in parables and then, passing from the parable, he delivered the withering denunciations recorded in the twenty-third chapter of Matthew. This discourse has never been surpassed in indignant rebuke, withering denunciation, and tearful sorrow over the coming fate of confirmed sinners who would not be saved. It contains Christ's last words to the Jewish nation. The contest had been growing fiercer, the opposition of his enemies was more bitter, their plots against his life were working, their utter perverseness was fully manifested, the time for tender appeal had passed by, and the Lord turns upon the "Whited Sepulchers," the "generation of vipers," the hypocritical pretenders, in a philippic that we believe has never been equalled. But even in the midst of it, like a rift of blue sky in the fearful storm cloud, his love and pity shine forth with wonderful beauty in the pathetic exclamation of verse thirty-seven. In his parting words, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate," he seemed to see the awful picture of a ruined temple and city smoking among the starved and mangled carcasses of the people of Israel; the fearful doom of many that listened to his voice. When this farewell was spoken he turned to depart from a temple that had rejected God and which he never more would enter. As he passed through its courts, his disciples apparently to make an appeal in behalf of so splendid a structure, pointed to the massive stones used in its construction. Then he replied, "Not one stone shall be left upon another."

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. THE TEMPLE DOOMED.

1. *As he went out of the temple.* After the solemn and pathetic farewell recorded in the latter part of the twenty-third chapter of Matthew. Those words closed his public ministry to the Jewish nation, and he left the temple never to return. He left it "desolate." He probably passed from the exclusively Jewish part to the court of the Gentiles and then the reference was made to the stones of the structure by one of the disciples which drew forth his prediction. *What manner of stones and what manner of buildings?* Josephus, the Jewish historian, who was present when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans nearly forty years after the Lord's prediction speaks of the immense stones used in the structure. He, in his *Antiquities* (xv. 11, 3), speaks of the stones of a certain part of the edifice, as being "each, in length, 25 cubits (37 to 44 feet); in height, 8 (12 to 14 feet); in breadth, about 12 (18 to 21 feet)." In his *Wars* (5:5,6), he speaks of "some of the stones as 45 cubits in length, 5 in height, and 6 in breadth." Few buildings, in ancient or modern times, have equalled in magnificence Herod's Temple. With its out-buildings it covered an area of over 19 acres, was built of white marble, was 46 years in building (John 2:20), and employed in its construction 10,000 skilled workmen. Josephus also speaks of the great strength of the structure and tells that "the strongest of the batterings was worked against the wall without effect, for five days in succession; the size and joining of the stones were too strong for it, and for all the others." The descriptions vie with each other in describing the splendor of the temple as rebuilt by Herod the Great. Says Farrar: "The disciples eagerly pointed to goodly stones and splendid offerings; to the nine gates overlaid with gold and silver, and to the one of Corinthian brass, yet more precious; those graceful and towering porches; those double cloisters and stately pillars; that lavish adornment of sculpture and arabesque; those alternate blocks of red and white marble, recalling the crest and the hollow of sea waves.

2. *There shall not be one stone left upon another.* At the time this was spoken no event was more improbable than this. The temple was vast, rich, splendid. It was the pride of the nation, and the nation was at peace. Yet in the short space of forty years all this was exactly accomplished. Jerusalem was taken by the Roman armies, under the command of Titus, A.D. 70. The account of the siege and destruction of the city is left us by Josephus. *That shall not be thrown down.* The fortifications of Jerusalem and its natural advantages rendered it so apparently impregnable, that, after its fall, Titus, the captor, is reported by Josephus (*Wars*

of the Jews, 6:9,1) to have said, "It was no other than God who ejected the Jews out of these fortifications." Titus ordered the whole city and the temple to be dug up, leaving only two or three of the chief towers, so that those who visited it could hardly believe that it had ever been inhabited (*Wars*, vii I). Of the temple proper not a vestige remains. It was built, however, upon an immense platform, partly composed of natural masonry. This platform is still standing. The remains which recent explorations have disinterred belong, all of them, to the sub-structure of the temple—its drains, foundations, underground passages, and the like.

3. *And as he sat.* The words fell on the ears of the disciples, and awed them into silence. It was not till they had crossed to the Mount of Olives that even the foremost and most favored ventured to break it. Jesus paused before passing the ridge of Olivet, and sat down with his disciples to look back upon Jerusalem. The sun was setting, and the whole city, with the surrounding valleys and hillsides alive with the camps of pilgrims, lay beneath him in the evening light. The history of a thousand years, the divine oracles speaking by a thousand voices, the monuments of prophets, patriarchs, and kings, the visitations of angels, miraculous inter-positions in judgment and in blessing, from the offering of Isaac and the building of the temple, were present to him, as he looked upon Moriah and Zion, and heard the murmur and the evening songs of a million people gathered within and around the walls of the holy city. Nowhere on earth was it possible to find another scene of such commanding interest as that which lay before the eyes of Jesus when he turned to look upon Jerusalem for the last time (*—March.*) *Over against the temple.* On leaving the temple Jesus would descend into the valley of the Kedron, and ascend the opposite slope of the Mount of Olives. Then full in view the temple would rise with its colonnades of dazzling white marble, surmounted with golden roof and pinnacles. At a distance the whole temple looked literally like a mount of snow, fretted with golden pinnacles. *Peter, James, John, Andrew.* The four fishermen first called, and first named in the lists, the confidential disciples. *Asked him privately.* Either apart from the multitude, but in the presence of the other disciples, or apart from the other disciples, in a private conference.

4. *When shall these things be?* The things of which they had heard him speak. The question is given more fully by Matthew (24:3). It embraced three points: (1) the time of the destruction of the temple; (2) the sign of his coming; and (3) of the end of the world.—*Maclear.* *What shall be the sign?* By what signs shall we know when these things shall be accomplished? They wanted some insight into his plans, so that

they might know when and how he was to come, and all the events he had foretold should take place, and his kingdom be established.

II. FALSE CHRISTS AND TROUBLE.

5. *Jesus answering them began.* Our Lord's answer to these questions was framed to afford all the information needful to them, or useful for their guidance, but little to gratify a vague curiosity. Neither did he answer their questions categorically, but so intermingled his replies that it required after knowledge and experience to discriminate more than was actually needful for their safety and warning to know. We can now distinguish that he spoke of his coming, not personally, but by the fulfillment of his predictions concerning Jerusalem, and for the final uprooting of that theocracy which had become obstructive to the progress of the gospel; and again of his final coming to judge the world, of which, also, they inquired. Much that our Lord said might be applicable to both these great events—both these "comings," being, in fact, comings to judgment; but toward the close his language grew more distinctly applicable to his final coming to judge the world (*—J. Kitto.*) *Lest any man deceive you.* The Lord does not answer *when*, but by admonitions not to be deceived. It is not given to us to know the times and the seasons. The Lord's purpose in this first part of his discourse is not to tell what are, but what are not, the premonitions of the great catastrophe to which he here refers.

6. *For.* Introducing the ground or reason of this unexpected warning (*—Alexander.*) *Many shall come.* Five tokens are here given, to which the Lord direct the attention of his disciples: (1) The rise of false prophets; (2) wars and rumors of wars; (3) the rising of nation against nation; (4) earthquakes; (5) famines (*—Cambridge Bible.*) *In my name.* Pretending to be the Messiah. As the destruction of their holy city drew near, and the Messianic hopes of the Jews were at fever-heat, many enthusiasts arose, and awakened false expectations, and drew large numbers after them (Acts 5:36, 37; 1 John 2:18). Josephus says that in the reign of Claudius (who died A.D. 54), the land was overwhelmed with deceivers who pretended to be the Christ. The names and abortive efforts of several of these deceivers are given by Josephus and other historians.

7. *Ye shall bear of wars and rumours of wars.* A seeming anti-climax, but a real climax. The rumors of an expected invasion are often more dreadful than the invasion itself.—*Abbott.* Wars and rumors of wars there certainly were during this period; but the prophecy must be interpreted rather than those of which the Hebrew Christians would be most

likely to hear as a cause of terror. Such, undoubtedly, were the three threats of war against the Jews by Caligula, Claudius, and Nero; of the first which Josephus says, "that it would have brought extermination to the Jewish nation had it not been for Caligula's death."—*Alford*. *Be ye not troubled*. (1) As if everything were going to ruin. Be not troubled; for *you* will be safe, both at the judgment and at the destruction of Jerusalem. Every Christian escaped from that destruction. (2) These things do not prove that the great catastrophe and final consummation is at hand. *The end not yet*. Neither that destruction of Jerusalem, nor the end of the world. These are not the certain signs of the end, for they occur at other times as well as then.

8. *Nation shall rise against nation*. Bear in mind the massacres of Caesarea, between Syrians and Jews, in which 20,000 of the latter fell, while in Syria almost every city was divided into two armies, which stood opposed to one another as deadly enemies; the quick succession of the five emperors in Rome within a few years, Nero, Galba, Otho, Vitellius, Vespasian, and the tumults connected therewith in wider and narrower circles. The war-fiend ran riot in Palestine, Syria, Egypt, and throughout the whole Roman empire. The ten years ending with the destruction of Jerusalem was such a period of civil commotion as the world has seldom witnessed. *Earthquakes*. The principal earthquakes occurring between this prophecy and the destruction of Jerusalem were, (1) a great earthquake in Crete, A.D. 46 or 47; (2) one at Rome on the day when Nero assumed the manly toga, A.D. 51; (3) one at Apamaea in Phrygia, mentioned by Tacitus, A.D. 53; (4) one at Laodicea in Phrygia, A.D. 60; (5) one in Campania.—*Alford*. *Famines and troubles*. These would naturally follow the devastating civil wars. These woes all precede the awful end of Jerusalem and the Jewish nation.

III. THE ERA OF PERSECUTION.

9. *Take heed to yourselves*. Not as a means of escaping from persecution, but as a means of preparing for it, as Christ bade Peter take heed against temptation (Matt. 26:41). *For*. "Before all these things" (Luke 21:12); i.e., before these public calamities come, *they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten*. These refer to ecclesiastical proceedings against them. *And ye shall be brought before rulers and kings*. Before civil tribunals next. *For my sake, for a testimony against them*. Rather, "unto them"; to give you an opportunity of bearing testimony to me before them. In the Acts of the Apostles we have the best commentary on this announcement (Matt. 10:17, 18). The martyrdoms and persecutions have ever called attention to the religion of Christ, and opened ways for its promulgation.

10. *The gospel must first be published.* Preached, proclaimed, which is the proper conception of preaching. *Among all nations.* The gospel had been published through the Roman world as then known, and every nation had received its testimony before the destruction of Jerusalem. See Col. 1:6, 23; 2 Tim. 4:17. But further, the gospel has yet to be preached universally for a testimony. And the universal diffusion of it by modern Christian missions is now a leading sign of the end.

11. *Take no thought beforehand.* "Be not anxious," as in the New Version. The idea is: You need not distress yourselves by anxiously considering beforehand how you ought to speak before such high and august personages. "Let all your thoughts beforehand be concerned about the publishing. Let your words and thoughts be aggressive; I will take care for the defense. Delivered from care of the future, be occupied with present duty." This verse is best interpreted by such practical illustrations as are afforded by Acts 4:19, 20; 5:20-32; 22:3-21. Observe that this direction affords no countenance whatever to preaching the truth without previous preparation. It is simply a warning against allowing the mind to be divided in time of danger between the desire of personal safety and the desire to be faithful to the truth.

12. *Brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son.* As there is nothing that excites such love as the gospel when intelligently received, so there is nothing that occasions such hate as this same gospel when passionately rejected. In that reception or rejection the heart of the heart is concerned.—*Morison.* In missionary lands this is literally fulfilled today, as we all know.

13. *Hated of all men.* The Roman historian, Tacitus, speaks of the early Christians as a hated race. It is difficult for us in these days to understand how literally this was fulfilled. The most shameful practices were attributed to Christians; and partly in consequence of these falsehoods, partly from hatred of good, they were treated as the offscouring of the earth. *Endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.* The primary meaning of this seems to be that whosoever remained faithful till the destruction of Jerusalem should be preserved from it. No Christian, that we know of, perished in the siege or after it. But it has ulterior meanings, according to which *the end* will signify, to an individual, the day of his death (Rev. 2:10), his martyrdom, as in the case of some of those here addressed; to the church, endurance in the faith to the end of all things.—*Alford.*

FACT QUESTIONS 13:1-13

824. State the five points or events occurring between the close of Mark

- chapter twelve and the opening of the thirteenth chapter. Cf. John 12:20-27; 28-36; 37-50; Matt. 23:1-36; 23:37-39.
825. What occurred when for the last time our Lord offered His divine message and it was rejected?
 826. What is meant by the expression "your house is left unto you desolate"?
 827. Where were Jesus and His disciples when the disciples made the comment they did about the stones.
 828. Give the length, height and breadth of some of the stones according to Josephus.
 829. What was the area covered by the temple?
 830. How many years was the temple in being built? How many skilled workmen were employed in building the temple?
 831. Give three facts stated in Farrar's description.
 832. Who said, "It was no other than God who ejected the Jews out of these fortifications"? Why?
 833. How did Titus accomplish the prediction of Jesus?
 834. There was a long pause between the words of Jesus and the answer of His disciples—what happened during the pause?
 835. How was it possible for the temple to appear as "a mount of snow, fretted with golden pinnacles"?
 836. What three points were involved in the question: "When shall these things be?"
 837. What was "the sign" of vs. 4?
 838. How was the answer of Jesus both adequate and yet disappointing?
 839. What two "comings" were involved in His answer?
 840. What five tokens are mentioned to which the Lord directs the attention of the disciples?
 841. What caused the Messianic hopes of the Jews to rise to a fever-heat?
 842. What were the three wars and rumors of war especially significant to the Hebrew Christians?
 843. What two reasons are given for not being troubled?
 844. When in particular did "nation rise against nation"?
 845. Name the five earthquakes in the period between the time of our Lord and 70 A.D.
 846. Specify where and when and to whom the prediction of vs. 9 found fulfillment.
 847. Prove scripturally that "every nation had received its (the gospel's) testimony before the destruction of Jerusalem. Cf. Col. 1:6; 23; II Tim. 4:17.
 848. Show how Acts 4:19, 20; 5:20-32; 22:3-21 fulfill the 11th verse.
 849. Does verse eleven give some encouragement to the thought of

preaching the gospel without preparation? Discuss.

850. Under what conditions would verses 12 and 13 be fulfilled?

851. What two or three "ends" are possible as of vs. 13b?

11. THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION 13:14-23

TEXT 13:14-23

"But when ye see the abomination of desolation standing where he ought not (let him that readeth understand), then let them that are in Judea flee unto the mountains: and let him that is on the housetop not go down, nor enter in, to take anything out of his house, and let him that is in the field not return back to take his cloke. But woe unto them that are with child and to them that give suck in those days! And pray ye that it be not in the winter. For those days shall be tribulation, such as there hath not been the like from the beginning of the creation which God created until now, and never shall be. And except the Lord had shortened the days, no flesh would have been saved: but for the elect's sake, whom he chose, he shortened the days. And then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is the Christ; or, Lo, there; believe it not: for there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall shew signs and wonders, that they may lead astray, if possible, the elect. But take ye heed: behold, I have told you all things beforehand."

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 13:14-23

718. Read Daniel 9:27; 11:37; 12:11 and Matt. 24:15 for help in the meaning of the strange phrase "abomination of desolation." Does this refer to an incident at the destruction of Jerusalem or at the end of the world?

719. Who said "let him that readeth understand"—Jesus or Mark?

720. How could we possibly refer "the abomination of desolation" to the end of the world when those involved are instructed to flee from Judea to the Mountains?

721. Why the urgency as suggested in vs. 15 through 18.

722. Are we to believe the destruction of Jerusalem was worse than dropping an atomic bomb on a city? Cf. vs. 19.

723. Who are "the elect" of vs. 20? (This is perhaps one of the most difficult questions to answer—but attempt one—make it thoughtful.)

724. During what period of time were the false Christs to appear?

725. The words of Jesus seem to have a direct reference to His apostles is this true? Discuss.

COMMENT

TIME—Late Tuesday afternoon, April 4, A.D. 30.

PLACE—The Mount of Olives. After the final departure of Jesus from the temple.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS—Matt. 24:15-28; Luke 21:20-24.

OUTLINE—1. What to do when you see the abomination of desolation, vs. 14-18. 2. The tribulation of those days, vs. 19, 20. 3. A warning against false Christs, vs. 21-23.

ANALYSIS

- I. WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU SEE THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION, vs. 14-18.
 1. Those in Judea are to flee to the mountains.
 2. He that is on the housetop should not enter the house for possessions.
 3. He that is in the field should not come to the house for his cloak.
 4. It will be very difficult for those in pregnancy or with young children.
 5. Pray it may not happen in the winter.
- II. THE TRIBULATION OF THESE DAYS, vs. 19-20.
 1. More severe than any before or after.
 2. Without the providential help of God the whole Jewish Nation would have been lost.
 3. The severity and time of the tribulation was shortened because of "the elect."
- III. A WARNING AGAINST FALSE CHRISTS, vs. 21-23.
 1. There shall be many claims to Messiahship—do not accept them.
 2. False Christs and prophets will perform signs and wonders—do not believe them.
 3. These prophetic warnings and careful details should forearm you against that day.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU SEE THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION.

"14. But when ye see the abomination of desolation standing where he ought not. In the Authorized Version, after the word "desolation," the words "spoken of by Daniel the prophet," are introduced, but without sufficient authority. They were probably interpolated from Matthew, where there is abundant authority for them; and thus their omission by Mark does not affect the argument drawn from them in favour of the genuineness of the Book of Daniel, against those, whether in earlier or in later times, who reject this book, or ascribe it to some more recent authorship. The "abomination of desolation" is a Hebrew idiom, meaning "the abomination, that maketh desolate." Luke (21:20) does not use the expression; it would have sounded strange to his Gentile readers. He says, "When ye see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that her

desolation is at hand." This reference to the Roman armies by Luke has led some commentators to suppose that the "abomination of desolation" meant the Roman eagles. But this was a sign from without; whereas "the abomination of desolation" was a sign from within, connected with the ceasing of the daily sacrifice of the temple. It is alluded to by the Prophet Daniel in three places, namely, Dan. 9:27; 11:31; 12:11. We must seek for its explanation in something within the temple, "standing in the holy place" (Matt. 24:15)—some profanation of the temple, on account of which God's judgments would fall on Jerusalem. Now, Daniel's prophecy had already received one fulfillment (B.C. 168), when we read (1 Macc. i. 54) that they set up "the abomination of desolation upon the altar." This was when Antiochus Euphianes set up the statue of Jupiter on the great altar of burnt sacrifice. But that "abomination of desolation" was the forerunner of another and a worse profanation yet to come, which our Lord, no doubt, had in his mind when he called the attention of his disciples to these predictions by Daniel. There is a remarkable passage in Josephus (*Wars of the Jews*, iv.6,) in which he refers to an ancient saying then current, that "Jerusalem would be taken, and the temple be destroyed, when it had been defiled by the hands of the Jews themselves." Now, this literally took place. For while the Roman armies were invading Jerusalem, the Jews within the city were in fierce conflict amongst themselves. And it would seem most probable that our Lord had in his mind, in connection with Daniel's prophecy, more especially that at 9:27, the eruption of the army of Zealots and Assassins into the temple, filling the holy place with the dead bodies of their own fellow-citizens. The Jews had invited these marauders to defend them against the army of the Romans; and they, by their outrages against God, were the special cause of the desolation of Jerusalem. Thus, while Luke points to the sign from without, namely, the Roman forces surrounding the city, Matthew and Mark refer to the more terrible sign from within, the "abomination of desolation"—the abomination that would fill up the measure of their iniquities and cause the avenging power of Rome to come down upon them and crush them. It was after these two signs—the sign from within and the sign from without—that Jerusalem was laid prostrate. Therefore our Lord proceeds to warn both Jews and Christians alike, that when they saw these signs they should flee unto the mountains—not to the mountains of Judea, for those were already occupied by the Roman army (*Josephus, lib. iii. cap. xii.*), but those further off, beyond Judea. We know from Eusebius (iii.15) that the Christians fled to Pella, on the other side of the Jordan. The Jews, on the other hand, as they saw the Roman army approaching nearer, betook themselves to Jerusalem, as to an asylum, thinking that

there they would be under the special protection of Jehovah; but there, alas, they were imprisoned and slain.

15. Let him that is on the housetop not go down, nor enter in, to take anything out of his house. The roofs of the houses were flat, with frequently a little "dome" in the centre. The people lived very much upon them; and the stairs were outside, so that a person wishing to enter the house must first descend by these outer stairs. The words, therefore, mean that he must flee suddenly, if he would save his life, even though he might lose his goods. He must escape, perhaps by crossing over the parapet of his own housetop, and so from housetop to housetop, until he could find a convenient point for flight into the hill country.

16.—And let him that is in the field not return back to take his cloke. This was the outer garment or pallium. They who worked in the field were accustomed to leave their cloak and their tunic at home; so that, half-stripped, they might be more free in labour. Thereafter our Lord warns them that in this impending destruction, so suddenly would it come, they must be ready to fly just as they were. It was the direction given to Lot, "Escape for thy life; look not behind thee."

17. But woe unto them that are with child and to them that give suck in those days! Women in this condition would be specially objects of pity, for they would be more exposed to danger. The words, "Woe to them!" are an exclamation of pity, as though it was said, "Alas! for them." Josephus (vii. 8) mentions that some mothers constrained by hunger during the siege, devoured their own infants!

18. And pray ye that it be not in the winter. According to the best authorities, "your flight" is omitted, but the meaning remains very much the same. Matthew (xxiv. 20) adds, "neither on a sabbath." But this would be comparatively of little interest to those to whom Mark was writing. Our Lord thus specifies the winter, because at that season, on account of the cold and snow, flight would be attended with special difficulty and hardship, and would be almost impossible for the aged and infirm."

II. THE TRIBULATION OF THOSE DAYS.

"19. For those days shall be tribulation, such as there hath not been the like from the beginning of the creation. These expressions are very remarkable. To begin with, the tribulation would be so unexampled and so severe that the days themselves would be called "tribulation." They would be known ever after as "the tribulation." There never had been anything like them, and there never would be again. Neither the Deluge, nor the destruction of cities of the plain, nor the drowning of Pharaoh

and his host in the Red Sea, nor the slaughter of the Canaanites, nor the destruction of Nineveh, or of Babylon, or of other great cities and nations, would be so violent and dreadful as the overthrow of Jerusalem by Titus. All this is confirmed by Josephus, who says, speaking of this overthrow, "I do not think that any state ever suffered such things, or any nation within the memory of man." St. Chrysostom assigns the cause of all this to the base and cruel treatment of the Son of God by the Jews. The destruction of their city and their temple, and their continued desolation afterwards, were the lessons by which the Jews were taught that the Christ had indeed come, and that this was the Christ whom they had crucified and slain.

20. And except the Lord had shortened the days, no flesh would have been saved: but for the elect's sake, whom he chose, he shortened the days. St. Matthew's record (xxiv. 22) differs from that of St. Mark in the omission of the words "the Lord," and the clause "whom he chose." If the time of the siege of Jerusalem had lasted much longer, not one of the nation could have survived; all would have perished by war, or famine, or pestilence. The Romans raged against the Jews as an obstinate and rebellious nation, and would have exterminated them. But "the Lord" shortened the time of this frightful catastrophe, for the elect's sake, that is, partly for the sake of the Christians who could not escape from Jerusalem, and partly for that of the Jews, who subdued by this awful visitation, were converted to Christ or would hereafter be converted to him. We learn from hence how great is the love of God towards his elect, and his care for them. For their sakes he spared many Jews. For their sakes he created and preserves the whole world. Yea, for their sakes, Christ the eternal Son was made man, and became obedient unto death. "All things are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." It may be added that a number of providential circumstances combined to shorten these days of terror. Titus was himself disposed to clemency, and friendly towards Josephus. Moreover, he was attached to Bernice, a Jewess, the sister of Agrippa. All these and other circumstances conspired in the providence of God to "shorten the days."

III. A WARNING AGAINST FALSE CHRISTS.

"21, 22. And then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ; or, Lo, there, believe it not; for there shall arise false Christs and false prophets. Josephus mentions one Simon of Gerasa, who, pretending to be a deliverer of the people from the Romans, gathered around him a crowd of followers, and gained admission into Jerusalem, and harassed the Jews. In like manner, Eleazar and John, leaders of the

Zealots, gained admission into the holy place, under the pretence of defending the city, but really that they might plunder it. But it seems as though our Lord here looked beyond the siege of Jerusalem to the end of the world; and he warns us that as the time of his second advent approaches, deceivers will arise, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect. The word "to seduce" is more properly rendered, as in the Revised Version, to lead astray. Every age has produced its crop of such deceivers; and it may be expected that, as the time of the end draws nearer and nearer, their number will increase. Sometimes those idiosyncrasies in them which show themselves in lying wonders, are the result of self-delusion; but still oftener they are deliberate attempts made for the purpose of imposing on the unwary. Sometimes they are a combination of both. In the cases to which our Lord refers there is evidently an intention to lead astray, although it may have had its origin in self-deceit. In our day there is a sad tendency to lead men astray with regard to the great fundamental verities of Christianity. And the words of St. Jerome may well be remembered here: "If any would persuade you that Christ is to be found in the wilderness of unbelief or sceptical philosophy, or in the secret chambers of heresy, believe them not."

23. But take ye heed. The "ye" is here emphatic. The disciples were around him, hanging upon his lips. But his admonition is meant for Christians everywhere, even to the end of the world." (*Bickersteth*)

FACT QUESTIONS 13:14-24

852. How do some critics use Mark (13:14) against the early date of the book of Daniel? How answered?
853. How does Luke 21:20 help (us Gentiles) in understanding the meaning of the expression "abomination of desolation"?
854. Why is it wrong to conclude that the "abomination" was the Roman eagles?
855. Show how Daniel's prophecy had already received one fulfillment.
856. How does Josephus help us in our understanding of "the abomination of desolation"?
857. Why were there so many Jews in Jerusalem when Titus attacked? Why no Christians?
858. If the occupant was not to come down from the housetop where was he to go? How would this help?
859. Why return for "the cloke"?
860. What words of Josephus help us to appreciate the words of Jesus "woe unto them that are with child etc."?

861. Who would be hindered in a winter flight?
862. Mention three or four other violent events which are of less violent a character than the overthrow of Jerusalem.
863. Who confirmed the words of Jesus as in vs. 19? Discuss.
864. Who were "the elect" of vs. 20—what great lesson is here for our learning?
865. Mention one or two of the providential circumstances combined to shorten the days.
866. Who was "Simon of Gerasa"?
867. Who were "Eleazar and John"?
868. Show how pertinent the words of Jerome are for our day.
869. To whom is vs. 23 directed?

12. THE COMMAND TO WATCH 13:24-37

TEXT 13:24-37

"But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall be falling from heaven, and the powers that are in the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in clouds with great power and glory. And then shall he send forth the angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.

Now from the fig tree learn her parable: when her branch is now become tender, and putteth forth its leaves, ye know that the summer is nigh; even so ye also, when ye see these things coming to pass, know ye that he is nigh, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, until all these things be accomplished. Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away. But of that day or that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. It is as when a man, sojourning in another country, having left his house, and given authority to his servants, to each one his work, commanded also the porter to watch. Watch therefore: for ye know not when the lord of the house cometh, whether at even, or at midnight, or at cockcrowing, or in the morning; lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch."

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 13:24-37

726. Just what "days" are contemplated in vs. 24?
727. Is this prediction of literal events or is this symbolic language? i.e. "sun"—"the moon" etc.

728. Who will see the Son of man when He comes? Why refer to "the sun"—"the moon" etc.
729. Who are "the elect"?
731. Who would be in the "uttermost part of the heaven"?
730. What is the meaning of "the four winds"?
732. Have we learned from the fig tree her parable?
733. Please specify some of the signs of His coming.
734. What "generation" is meant in vs. 30?
735. Why the emphatic statement of vs. 31?
736. Why was it important to say that no one knew the day or the hour?
737. For what are we to watch and pray? (Please be specific)
738. Who is the man sojourning in another country?
739. Has the Lord given to each of us a work to do? List ten separate areas of work for our Lord.
740. What was the one sin against which our Lord warned us?

COMMENT

TIME.—Late Tuesday afternoon, April 4, A.D. 30.

PLACE.—The Mount of Olives. After the final departure of Jesus from the temple.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS.—Matt. 24:23-42; Luke 21:25-36.

OUTLINE.—1. The Coming of the Son of Man. 2. The Lesson from the Fig Tree. 3. Be Ye Always Ready.

ANALYSIS

- I. THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN, vs. 24-27.
1. The Sun and Moon Darkened. Mark 13:24; Matt. 24:29; Luke 21:25.
 2. The Heavenly Powers Shaken. Mark 13:25; Matt. 24:29.
 3. The Sign of the Son of Man. Mark 13:26; Matt. 24:30; Luke 25:27.
 4. The Saints Gathered. Mark 13:27; Matt. 24:31.
- II. THE LESSON FROM THE FIG TREE, vs. 28-31.
1. The Sign that it is near. Mark 13:28, 29; Matt. 24:32, 33; Luke 25:29.
 2. This Generation shall not pass. Mark 13:30; Matt. 24:34; Luke 25:32.
 3. Christ's word sure. Mark 13:31; Matt. 24:35; Luke 25:33.
- III. BE YE ALWAYS READY, vs. 32-37.
1. The Time Known only to the Father. Mark 13:32; Matt. 24:36.
 2. Therefore be Watchful. Mark 13:33; Mark 24:42; Luke 25:36.
 3. Watchfulness Enforced by Parable. Mark 13:34-37; Matt. 24:43-51.

INTRODUCTION

This is a part of the same prophecy as just considered, foretelling so much of the future as was necessary for the comfort and courage and watchfulness of the disciples then and for all time. The developments of Divine Providence filled up the outline of the divine word, and no man with the word of God in one hand, and the history of the Jews in the other, can fail to see a most minute and perfect correspondence between the two. And so long as the world reads the words of Jesus, and beholds those words fulfilled in Jerusalem, still trodden down of the Gentiles, and in the Jews still scattered and homeless among the nations, it has an argument for the infallibility of the Founder of Christianity, and for the truth of the religion proceeding forth from him and his teaching, which nothing can gainsay or resist. Out of the dust and ashes of the holy city for nineteen hundred years has risen a voice in attestation of the Messiahship of him who was crucified without her walls; and the people who denied the Holy One and the Just in all their dispersion have, for an equal period, been proclaiming him their true though rejected Lord.—*H. S. Kelsey.*

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN.

24. *In those days, after that tribulation.* In the period of history that lies after the final overthrow of Jerusalem, which is meant by "that tribulation." It will help the reader to compare the 24th chapter of Matthew, which is fuller. The following from my *Lesson Commentary* for 1887 will suggest some hints towards the understanding of these prophecies: "As the Lord and his disciples passed out of the temple, after his farewell and prediction of its desolation, in the close of chapter 23, his disciples pointed out the solidity and splendor of the structure, as though in doubt whether such massive walls could be destroyed. The answer was that not one stone should be left on another. When they had reached the Mount of Olives and from its summit looked down on the city and temple, as upon a map, the disciples, still thinking of what he had uttered, asked three questions: 1. When shall these things be? That is, when shall the temple and city be destroyed? 2. What shall be the sign of thy coming? 3. What shall be the sign of the end of the world? The interpreter, in order to understand the Savior's answer, must keep in mind that not one, but three questions are answered. The answer to the first extends to verse 28. Immediately after follows the answer to the second with various warnings and exhortations, while in the 25th chapter we have given an account of the end of the world and a picture of the judgment day." The present study comes in the answer to the

second question and is an exhortation to be ready for Christ's coming. *The sun shall be darkened.* Some interpret all that is said of sun, moon and stars literally, as great natural phenomena that shall precede the coming of the Lord. Others suppose that these are symbols of great disturbances in the history of mankind. I believe that a correct interpretation only requires that these words be given their usual symbolic meaning. This is prophecy and prophecy always chooses symbols. While we can never be certain of the *exact* meaning of unfulfilled prophecy, I believe that this prediction has been a great part fulfilled. The sun is the usual symbol of Christ, "the Light of the world," "the Sun of Righteousness;" the moon, which only shines with the reflected splendor of the sun, is the church, which only shines in the light of Christ. The stars are apostles and other great lights of the church. Without consuming space, I will say that this is the usual meaning of these symbols in New Testament prophecy. As to the application, the Lord is outlining history to the end of the world. When the apostasy began to develop, about three centuries after these words were spoken, the rays of light that came from Christ's teaching were obscured by the traditions of men, the church therefore ceased to shed her light on mankind, and the apostles were no longer recognized as the great authorities of religious life. They fell from their high place, or from heaven. The Bible was taken from men and what history has pleased to call significantly "The Dark Ages" came upon the world. Certainly this interpretation is in precise harmony with history. Still, at this time, two-thirds of Christendom are destitute of the Bible and wrapped in the darkness of human tradition. The "Sun" is still darkened, the "moon" does not yet give her light, and the "stars" are not restored to their places in the heavens.

25. *The powers that are in heaven shall be shaken.* For the interpretation, see comment on verse 24. These powers refer to the spiritual forces that should control mankind.

26. *And then shall they see the Son of man.* After this spiritual darkening. Therefore, still in the future. As the spiritual darkness seems to be slowly lifting we have in this a cheering omen that the coming draws nearer. I understand this to be a literal coming. "They shall see him." See, also, Acts 1:9-11. As the apostles saw the Lord ascend, "in like manner" shall he return. Certain facts may be noted: (1) The Lord shall come as the Son of man. They that pierced him shall look upon him. (2) His coming shall be seen by all mortals. "Every eye shall see him." (3) It will be glorious. He shall ride upon the clouds of heaven and shall have "all his holy angels with him."

27. *Then shall he send his angels.* "With a great sound of a trumpet"

(Matt. 24:31). *And shall gather together his elect, etc.* As the tribes of Israel were anciently gathered together by sound of trumpet (Exod. 19:13, 16, 19; Lev. 23:24; Ps. 81:3-5), so any mighty gathering of God's people, by divine command, is represented as collected by sound of trumpet (Isa. 27:13; Rev. 11:15); and the ministry of angels, employed in all the great operations of Providence, is here held forth as the agency by which the present assembling of the elect is to be accomplished. *The four winds.* Used to denote the quarters of the earth's surface; i.e., from all parts of the earth. *The uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.* Probably an allusion to the apparent junction of earth and sky at the visible horizon, but in any case it refers to the whole world.

II. THE LESSON FROM THE FIG TREE.

28. *Learn a parable of the fig tree.* More literally, *Learn the parable from the fig tree.* The fig is a native product of the East, and grows in spontaneous plenty in Palestine. In a warm climate fruit forms a very large proportion of customary food, and hence the fruit tree is a favorite source for illustration. Our Lord spoke this upon the Mount of Olives where fig trees were growing all around him. He was near to Bethphage (or Fig-ville), so-called, probably, from the abundance of this product. It was now about the last of March, and though "the time of figs was not yet," the trees were doubtless beginning to verify the words by opening signs of the season. As the sprouting leaf was a sign of the approach of summer, so the events just named foreshadowed the coming of the Son of man.

29. *So ye, in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass.* Rather, "coming to pass." *Is nigh, even at the doors.* That is, the full manifestation of it; for till then it admitted of no full development. In Luke (21:28) the following words precede these: "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads: for your redemption draweth nigh." Their redemption, in the instance certainly, from Jewish oppression (1 Thess. 2:14-16; Luke 11:52), but in the highest sense of these words, redemption from all the oppressions and miseries of the present state at the second appearing of the Lord Jesus.

30. *This generation shall not pass (away) till all these things be done.* Accomplished. There are two explanations: (1) Generation is taken in its ordinary sense of the persons then living. And the prophecy had one exact fulfillment within that generation. (2) The word translated generation has sometimes the meaning of race or nation; having, it is true, a more pregnant meaning, implying that the character of one generation stamps itself upon the race, as here in this verse also.—*Alford.* The last

meaning is, no doubt, correct. The word in the Greek (*genea*) also means "nation." Dean Alford in his *Critical Greek Testament* says: "It may be well to show that the original (*genea*) has in Hellenistic Greek the meaning of a *race or family of people*, for this purpose see Jer. 8:3 (where *genea* occurs in the Septuagint Greek); compare Matt. 23:36 with verse 35, and observe that the living generation did not slay Zacharias, so that the *whole* people were addressed. See also Matt. 12:45 where the sense absolutely requires that the meaning of *nation* should be attached to the word. See also Matt. 17:17 . . . In all these passages *generation* is equivalent to nation." Mark 13:30 should therefore read "This race shall not pass away until all these things be done"; a prediction of the marvelous and miraculous preservation of the Jewish race, despite the awful overthrow of the nation, its dispersion to the ends of the earth, the constant persecution and oft-repeated massacres, such calamities as no other race ever endured, to the end of time as a living witness to the truth of Christ's testimony. Without a country or a temple, scattered among all nations, persecuted as no other people, the Jews have been preserved through 1900 years separate, distinct, and virtually unchanged; a case without parallel in history.

III. BE YE ALWAYS READY.

32. *Of that day and that hour.* Of Christ's coming. *Knoweth no man.* "The signs of the times" are left to us; the times themselves are in the hands of God. *Not the angels . . . neither the Son.* The practical lesson of the verse is well put by Dr. Schaff: "His voluntarily not knowing the day of judgment, during the days of his flesh, is a warning against chronological curiosity and mathematical calculations in the exposition of Scripture prophecy. It is not likely that any theologian, however learned, should know more or ought to know more on this point than Christ himself, who will judge the quick and the dead, chose to know in the state of his humiliation."

33. *Watch and pray.* To watch, denotes (1) to be sleepless; (2) to be vigilant.—*Maclear.* In view of the suddenness and unexpectedness of this coming, "watch and pray"; not be always expecting what will come unexpectedly, nor be seeking to know what cannot be known, but be always in a state of readiness, because, of the uncertainty.

34. *For the Son of man.* Better, "It is as when a man." The whole matter of watching is as in the following parable. *Taking a far journey.* Sojourning in another country. *Gave authority;* power to conduct his household, and to manage his affairs while absent. *To every man his work.* The authority being joined with duty. Even so our Lord left his Church,

gave authority to his servants the apostles, and to those who should come after them, and to every man his work, and is now waiting for the consummation of all things. *Commanded the porter to watch.* After he had given all the orders concerning the internal affairs, he gives finally, at the door, to the porter, the additional command to watch: this is the point of the parable. I do not suppose that the Lord designs any particular official in the church by the porter, rather to enforce the duty of watchfulness.

35. *Watch.* It is the fundamental law of watchfulness, to be always watching. *Ye know not when the master of the house cometh.* But with all the obscurity thus intentionally thrown around the day and the hour of Christ's coming, let us not forget that no obscurity, no uncertainty, hangs around the great event itself. In all that future, which lies before us, these are the only two events of which we are absolutely certain: our own approaching death, our Lord's approaching advent.—*Hanna. At even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning.* The four regular watches, from eventide to daybreak, representing, either periods in the world's history, or epochs in human life.

36. *Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping.* During the night the captain of the temple made his rounds. On his approach the guards had to rise, and salute him in a particular manner. Any guard found asleep when on duty was beaten, or his garments were set on fire—a punishment, as we know, actually awarded.—*Edersheim.*

37. *What I say unto you I say unto all.* Though the apostles and the ministry are watchmen and porters, yet all believers are to be incessantly watchful, and for the same reasons.—*Schaff. Watch.* Observe in this chapter the emphasis given to Christ's exhortation, "Watch!" Matthew tells us how the Lord sought to impress these lessons of watchfulness and faithfulness still more deeply by the parables of the "Ten Virgins" (Matt. 25:1-13), and the "Talents" (Matt. 25:14-30), and closed all with a picture of the awful day when the Son of man should separate all nations one from another as the shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats (Matt. 25:31-46).

FACT QUESTIONS 13:24-37

870. "No man with the word of God in one hand and the history of the Jews in the other, can fail to see _____" what?
871. How does Jerusalem and the scattering of the Jews become a grand witness for the infallibility of the Founder of Christianity?
872. State the three questions of the disciples—which question is being answered in vs. 24?

873. Why does Johnson choose to use a symbolic meaning for the sun, moon, and stars of vs. 24?
874. Who is represented by "the sun," "the moon"—"the stars"?
875. What do "the Dark Ages" have to do with this prophecy?
876. What are "the powers that are in heaven"? How shaken?
877. Could we believe Christ could come at any time and still believe Johnson's interpretation of the signs of His coming? Discuss.
878. Are we nearer to His coming today according to this symbolic interpretation of the signs than when Johnson wrote it seventy-six years ago? Discuss.
879. What three facts are to be noted in His coming "in like manner"?
880. Why was a trumpet used in gathering together His elect? Cf. Matthew 24:31.
881. What is represented in the expression "uttermost part of heaven"?
882. Show how appropriate in time and place was the use of the fig tree for an illustration.
883. If we were to wait for the literal sun, moon, and stars to be affected, couldn't we become negligent in our waiting? Discuss.
884. Read Luke 21:28 and state what "redemption" is involved.
885. How could it be possible that the prophecy of Jesus was fulfilled during the generation of the apostles?
886. Read Jer. 8:3 and Matt. 23:36 and 35 and Matt. 12:45; 17:17—what is taught in these verses about the meaning of the word "generation"?
887. What case is without parallel in history?
888. What warning does Christ give to certain theological prophets?
889. What is involved in the expression "watch and pray"?
890. What one subject is developed in the parable?
891. What are we to do while we watch and wait?
892. Who is represented by "the porter" in the parable?
893. Of what two events are we absolutely certain?
894. What is represented by the four watches mentioned?
895. What did Edersheim say about sleeping on duty?
896. What does Matthew add to this exhortation to watchfulness?
Cf. Matt. 25:1-13; 14-30.

SUMMARY

13:1-37

In this section Mark sets forth his Master as a prophet. At the time that his narrative was composed, some of the predictions recorded in the section had already been fulfilled, but the chief part was yet in the future. He staked the validity of his argument, and the reputation of Jesus as a

prophet, partly on the former, but chiefly on the predictions which were yet to be fulfilled, and fulfilled before the eyes of the then living generation. The discourse, as he wrote it out, contained in itself a challenge to that generation of Jews to watch the course of events in their own national history, and to say whether its predictions proved true or false. No generation has lived that was so competent to expose a failure had it occurred, or that would have done so more eagerly. But the events, as they transpired, turned the prophecy into history, and demonstrated the foreknowledge of Jesus. But if Jesus possessed this foreknowledge, his claim to be the Christ the Son of God was miraculously attested thereby; and even his admission that he knew not the day or the hour of his own second coming, detracts nothing from the argument; for foreknowledge is still displayed, notwithstanding this limitation of it, and the limitation itself is known only by his own voluntary admission — an admission which is a singular and conclusive proof of his perfect honesty and candor. (*J. W. McGarvey*)

13. THE ANOINTING AT BETHANY 14:1-9

TEXT 14:1-9

"Now after two days was the feast of the passover and the unleavened bread: and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take him with subtlety, and kill him: for they said, Not during the feast, lest haply there shall be a tumult of the people. And while he was in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat there came a woman having an alabaster cruse of ointment of spikenard very costly; and she brake the cruse, and poured it over his head. But there were some that had indignation among themselves, saying, To what purpose hath this waste of the ointment been made? For this ointment might have been sold for above three hundred pence, and given to the poor. And they murmured against her. But Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? She hath wrought a good work on me. For ye have the poor always with you, and whensoever ye will ye can do them good: but me ye have not always. She hath done what she could: she hath anointed my body beforehand for the burying. And verily I say unto you, Wheresoever the gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, that also which this woman hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her."

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 14:1-9

741. If the feast of the Passover was held on Thursday (as traditionally represented) then this plot was made on Tuesday or Wednesday—do you agree with this thought? Discuss.
742. Why did they want to kill Him?

743. When did the feast of unleavened bread begin? How long did it last?
744. Please read John 12:2-8. When did this anointing take place? Isn't there a break in the chronology? Discuss.
745. Read Luke 7:36-50—please notice the differences in the two anointings.
746. Read Matt. 26:6-13—note the additions Matthew makes to Mark's account.
747. Why refer to Simon as a "leper"; was he a leper at the time of the anointing?
748. We know by reading John's account who the woman was—who was it?
749. Was this a common meal? A celebration? What is meant by "as he sat at meat"?
750. Why was the ointment in an alabaster container?
751. What is "pure nard"?
752. How could she pour it if she broke the container?
753. Wasn't it "messy" to thus be covered with this ointment?
754. Was the complaint of waste a justifiable one? Discuss.
755. In what sense were they to "let her alone"?
756. Jesus accepted the anointing in spite of criticism—does this offer some encouragement to us?
757. Jesus says something about good intentions vs. good works, in His words of vs. 7—what is it?
758. Why say "she has done what she could"?
759. Did Mary intend a pre-burial anointing by her actions?
760. How have the words of Jesus in vs. 9 been fulfilled?

COMMENT

TIME—Mark has placed the account of the anointing out of its chronological order. The preceding incident was dated Tuesday, April 4, A.D. 30. This event, instead of following, occurred on Saturday, April 1st, three days before, the day before the Lord's entry into Jerusalem. It was during the Lord's stay at Bethany on his way to the Holy City. The consultation of the priests referred to in verses 1, 2, was on Tuesday evening, April 4, the same day as Jesus' predictions.

PLACES—The consultation of the priests and scribes took place in Jerusalem, probably in the palace of Caiaphas. The anointing and feast were at Bethany, the home of Lazarus and his sisters, the beloved retreat of the Saviour two miles east of Jerusalem, on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, on the highway that led to Jericho and the country east of the Jordan.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS—The plotting against Jesus (vs. 1, 2, 10, 11) is recorded also, Matt. 26:1-5, 14-16; Luke 22:1-6. The supper (3-9) in Matt. 26:6-13; John 12:2-8.

LESSON OUTLINE—1. The Conspiracy of the Rulers, 2. The Lord Anointed, 3. The Lord's Commendation.

ANALYSIS

I. THE CONSPIRACY OF THE RULERS, VS. 1, 2.

1. The Chief Priests Hold Counsel. Mark 14:1; Matt. 26:2; Luke 22:1; John 11:55.
2. Fear of the People. Mark 14:2; Matt. 26:5; Luke 22:2.

II. THE LORD ANOINTED, VS. 3-5.

1. The Ointment Poured on His Head. Mark 14:3; Matt. 26:6; John 12:1, 3.
2. The Indignation of Disciples. Mark 14:4; Matt. 26:8; John 12:4.
3. The Charge of Waste. Mark 14:5; Matt. 26:9; John 12:5.

III. THE LORD'S COMMENDATION, VS. 6-9.

1. A Good Work. Mark 14:6; Matt. 26:10.
2. Have the Poor Always. Mark 14:7; Matt. 26:11; John 12:8.
3. The Lord Anointed for Burial. Mark 14:8; Matt. 26:12.
4. The Woman's Deed Praised in All the World. Mark 14:9; Matt. 26:13.

INTRODUCTION

We have before us here a simple-hearted, loving woman, who has had no subtle questions of criticism about matter of duty and right, but only loves her Lord's person with a love that is probably a kind of mystery to herself, which love she wants somehow to express. She comes, therefore, with her box of ointment, having sold we know not what article or portion of her property to buy it, for it was very costly, and pours it on the Saviour's head—just here to encounter, for the first time, scruples, questions, and rebuffs of argument.—*Bushnell*. John says that this was six days before the Passover. From the order in which Matthew and Mark mention it, it would have been supposed that it was but two days before the Passover, and after the cleansing of the temple. But it is to be observed, (1) That Matthew and Mark often neglect the exact order of the event that they record; (2) That they do not affirm at what time this was. They leave it indefinite, saying that while Jesus was in Bethany he was anointed by Mary; (3) That Mark introduced it here for the purpose of

giving a connected account of the conduct of Judas. Judas murmured at the waste of the ointment (John 12:4), and one of the effects of his indignation, it seems, was to betray his Lord.—*Barnes*.

I. THE CONSPIRACY OF THE RULERS.

1. *After two days was the feast of the passover.* It was Tuesday evening with us, but after Wednesday began with the Jews a new day began at sunset. Two days after would bring Friday, the day the Passover was slain. This date locates the time of the meeting of the rulers, not of the feast at the house of Simon the leper. *Of unleavened bread.* The Passover meal was the beginning of the feast of unleavened bread, which lasted for seven days. The whole paschal week was termed the feast of unleavened bread; the Passover was, strictly speaking, the 15th of Nisan, "the great day of the feast." *The chief priests and the scribes* (members of the Sanhedrim). The meeting of the chief priests and the scribes for consultation was at the palace of Caiaphas, the high priest (Matt. 26:3), (which tradition places on the "Hill of Evil Counsel"). From the fact that the council met at the palace of Caiaphas, and also that its session was in the evening, we may infer that it was an extraordinary meeting, held for secret consultation. This plotting was begun at least three months before, after the raising of Lazarus; and more recently the triumphal entry, the driving out the money-changers from the temple, the parables spoken against the Jewish leaders, seem to have enraged them, so that they felt that something must be done immediately to put a stop to his career. No doubt there was long debate. Some certainly opposed the putting him to death, as Joseph of Arimathea (Luke 23:51), and Nicodemus (John 7:50, 51), who were members of the Sanhedrim. For an instance of the debate in a like meeting for the same purpose, see John 11:46-51.—P. The first step in putting Christ to death was taken by the religious teachers of the Jewish nation. The very men who ought to have welcomed the Messiah were the men who conspired to kill him. *By craft.* With subtlety. That is, by some secret plan that would secure possession of him without exciting the opposition of the people.

2. *Not on the feast day*—As it was a time when vast multitudes were present from all parts of the land, and the Jews of Galilee and Perea being more friendly to Jesus than those of the capital, might make a disturbance if he were publicly arrested. Josephus computes that three million persons attended the Passover which is not incredible, seeing that the nation was expected to assemble at this greatest of the festivals. The acclamations on the Sunday before, as the Lord entered Jerusalem, demonstrated the favor he enjoyed with the people.

II. THE LORD ANOINTED.

This anointing is not to be confounded with the anointing mentioned in Luke 7:36-50. There is nothing in common between them, except the name of the householder, Simon; and this was a very common name in Palestine. The occasion, the time, the parties, and the spiritual significance are all different. The repetition of the incident is not at all strange. "An act of this kind, which had been once commended by our Lord (as in Luke), was very likely to have been repeated."—*Abbott*.

3. *Being in Bethany.* See *Time*. Jesus arrived in Bethany Friday; and the supper was Saturday evening, just after the close of the Jewish sabbath, and, as John expressly states (12:1), the evening before the triumphal entry into Jerusalem. *Bethany*. A village about two miles east of Jerusalem (John 11:18), being on the other side of the Mount of Olives. It was the home of Mary and Martha, where Christ was wont to visit when in Jerusalem (Luke 10:38-41; Matt. 21:17; Mark 11:11, 12). It was the scene of the resurrection of Lazarus (John, chap. 11), and of Christ's own ascension (Luke 24:50). It is not mentioned in the Old Testament.—*Abbott*. *Simon the Leper*. Perhaps he had been healed of his leprosy by Jesus. He dwelt in Bethany. It is natural to suppose that he had made Jesus a feast in gratitude. According to a tradition, he was the father of Lazarus; according to others, he was the husband of Martha, or Martha was his widow. Very likely he was in some way related to the family of Lazarus. Mary and Martha served (John 12:2). *There came a woman*. Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus (John 12:3), not the woman in Luke 7, "who was a sinner." The latter person is generally, but without reason, identified with Mary Magdalene, and the three women confounded.—*Schaff*. *Having an alabaster box*, or flask, called an alabaster; as we say, "a glass." These *alabastra*, or unguent flasks, were usually made of the Oriental or onyx alabaster, with long narrow necks, which let the oil escape drop by drop, and could easily be broken. *Ointment of spikenard*. The American portion of the Revision Committee would render this "pure nard" (with marginal reading, or liquid nard). Spikenard, from which the ointment was made, was an aromatic herb of the valerian family. It was imported from an early age from Arabia, India, and the Far East. The ointment of nard was highly esteemed, and was a costly luxury. *Very precious*. It was the costliest anointing oil of antiquity, and was sold throughout the Roman Empire, where it fetched a price that put it beyond any but the wealthy. Mary had bought a vase or flask of it containing twelve ounces (John 12:3).—*Cambridge Bible*. The three hundred pence given as its selling value (verse 5) would make it worth about \$300 in our money. The value of the ointment only expressed the depth of her love. *She brake the box*; i.e., she broke the narrow neck of the small flask,

and poured the perfume, first on the head and then on the feet of Jesus (John 12:3), the Oriental custom of reclining at table made the latter easier than the former. *Poured it on his head.* Anointing with oil was a primitive custom of consecration (Gen. 18:18). It was then used for the ritual of consecration of priests; occasionally, also, of prophets. The anointing of the head was also a distinction which was conferred upon the guest of honor (Luke 7:46)—not only among the Jews, but generally in the East, and among the ancients. Mary may have intended only to show this honor; but this action symbolized Christ's Messiahship, and had a deeper significance, as our Lord points out in vs. 8.

4. *Some that had indignation.* Matthew (26:8) states that "the disciples" had indignation; Mark reports that "some" had indignation; John (12:4), as knowing who had whispered the first word of blame, fixes the uncharitable judgment on "Judas Iscariot, Simon's son." The narrow, covetous soul of the traitor could see nothing in the lavish gift but a "waste." His indignation, partly real, partly affected, was perhaps honestly shared by some of his fellow-disciples. *Why was this waste?* Worldly men would of course agree with the idea of Judas, that money laid out in the cherishing or expression of mere devotional sentiment is "waste." There is no waste in anything that helps the soul.

5. *Might have been sold for more than three hundred pence.* A penny here is the *denarius*, a Roman coin worth from fifteen to seventeen cents, or as the values of silver and gold were much greater then than now, about one dollar at the present time. The three hundred pence would make about forty-five dollars in silver, or at present, would amount to about \$300. *And have been given to the poor.* The true friends of the poor, who give most and do most for them, will always be found among those who do most for Christ. It is the successors of Mary of Bethany, and not of Judas Iscariot, who really "care for the poor."—*Ryle. Murmured against her. Scolded her.—De Wette.* Addressed her harshly.

III. THE LORD'S COMMENDATION.

6. *Jesus said, Let her alone.* "Let her alone," is the language of sharp rebuke. Christ was indignant at the hypocrisy which made a pretended consideration of the poor an excuse for attacking and condemning an act of love toward himself. The answer of Jesus indicates the woman's cordial, unstudied sacrifice. *Why trouble ye her?* This indicates that Mary was herself abashed and downcast by the criticism of the twelve. Perhaps, as Maurice says, "She could not herself have answered Judas Iscariot's complaining question."—*Abbott. She hath wrought a good work on me.* Christ measured the moral quality of the act by the motive, the disciples by its seeming utility.

7. *Ye have the poor with you always.* You will have plenty of opportunities to aid them; and the more they did for their Master, the more they would do for the poor, for the poor are left in his stead, and through them will be expressed the increased love of the Master.

8. *She hath done what she could.* This praise is more precious than the ointment, coming from such a one as Christ. It is like that which he passed upon the poor widow: "She hath cast in all that she had." Blessed are they of whom the Master will say, "They have done what they could." *Come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying.* She had anticipated the hour of my decease; anointing my body before death, and thus preparing it for burial. It is worthy of note that this was all the anointing which our Lord's body received from the hand of Mary or her female friends, inasmuch as he had risen before they reached the sepulchre with their spices.

9. *Wheresoever this gospel.* The tidings of salvation, with special reference to Christ's death, just alluded to.—*Schaff. Preached throughout the whole world.* A prediction of the world-wide preaching of his death. *This also that she hath done . . . a memorial.* Fulfilled to the letter. It is right to record and remember the good deeds of those who love Christ; but when the desire to be put on record enters, the ointment is spoiled. This is the only case where such a promise is made; therefore the incident has a weighty lesson, and holds up a noble example.—*Schaff.*

FACT QUESTIONS 14:1-9

897. Is it true that Mark placed the anointing out of its chronological order? When did the anointing occur?
898. When and where did the consultation of the priests take place?
899. How did Mary obtain this costly ointment?
900. What possible purpose did Mark have in introducing the incident of the anointing at the time he did?
901. Who did the most murmuring? Why?
902. On what day of the week was the Passover slain? What day and month of the Jewish calendar?
903. When was the feast of unleavened bread observed?
904. How does Matt. 26:3 help us in our understanding of the plot of the chief priests and scribes?
905. What prompted the thought that something must be done immediately to stop Jesus?
906. Who would oppose putting Him to death?
907. What is meant in the word "craft" or "subtlety"?
908. What group of Jews were especially friendly toward Jesus? How

- many Jews in Jerusalem for the Passover?
909. How could the commending given by our Lord as related in Luke 7:36-50 relate to this incident?
910. At what precise time was the feast held? Cf. John 12:1.
911. Three facts about Bethany:
912. Who was Simon the leper? Why the feast?
913. The woman (Mary) really never had a "box" at all—what was it?
914. From what plant was the ointment made? From where was it imported?
915. How many ounces in the flask of Mary?
916. B. W. Johnson states the ointment was worth \$300 in 1889—what would be the value today?
917. In what way did she break the jar?
918. What special honor was associated with anointing the head?
919. Who was involved in the "indignation"?
920. There was no waste—explain why.
921. Who really cares for the poor?
922. What sharp rebuke was delivered by our Lord? Why?
923. Was Mary affected by the criticism of the twelve? In what way? What answer did she have to Judas' question?
924. How did Jesus measure the moral quality of the act? How did the disciples measure it?
925. What is meant by the expression "ye have the poor with you always"?
926. What praise is more precious than the ointment?
927. Did Mary really anticipate our Lord's death and come to "aforehand" anoint his body?
928. What prediction is made of the world-wide preaching of the death of Christ?
929. When is "the ointment spoiled"?

14. THE TREACHERY OF JUDAS 14:10, 11

TEXT 14:10, 11

"And Judas Iscariot, he that was one of the twelve, went away unto the chief priests, that he might deliver him unto them. And they, when they heard it, were glad, and promised to give him money. And he sought how he might conveniently deliver him unto them."

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 14:10, 11

761. Was the betrayal of Judas at all related to the incident which just preceded it? Discuss. Cf. Matt. 26:14.
762. What possible motive or motives did Judas have in the betrayal? Suggest at least two.

763. Just what agreement did Judas make with the chief priests?
 764. Did the priests pay him at the time of his agreement with them?
 765. How could these religious men act in such an irreligious manner—
 discuss the chief contributing cause to such a condition.
 766. Did the betrayal of Judas include delivering Jesus into their hands?

COMMENT

TIME—Late Saturday evening, April 1, A.D. 30.

PLACES—Temple—the house of Caiaphas.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS—Matt. 26:14-16; Luke 22:3-6.

OUTLINE—1. The man of the betrayal, vs. 10a. 2. Those who paid, vs. 10b-11a. 3. Waiting and watching, vs. 11b.

ANALYSIS

- I. THE MAN OF THE BETRAYAL, vs. 10a.
 1. Judas Iscariot.
 2. One of the Twelve.
- II. THOSE WHO PAID, vs. 10b-11a.
 1. Chief priests.
 2. They were pleased.
 3. Money promised.
- III. WAITING AND WATCHING, vs. 11b.
 1. Waiting as a supposed friend.
 2. Watching as a traitor for the best time to deliver Him up.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. THE MAN OF THE BETRAYAL, vs. 11b.

“Verses 10, 11—*Volunteering to betray*. The “and” connects this with the preceding paragraph, not only historically but psychologically. His present action was (immediately) determined by the gift of Mary and the mild rebuke of the Master.

To deliver up Christ to his enemies. Whether he fully realized how much was involved as a result of this step is uncertain. He might imagine that not death, but the checking of his Master upon the career he had marked out, would ensue. But there is recklessness as to any consequences, provided he himself should be no loser. In robbing the alms from the bag, he was guilty of a breach of trust; in this new development of his master passion the unfaithfulness culminated. It is manifest that the spiritual side of Christ's ministry had for him no value. It was only the earthly rewards that might attend on discipleship that made it attractive to him. Was it to force the hand of the ideal, unpractical Christ that he sought to deliver him up? A miracle of deliverance might then result in

a realization greater than his most brilliant hopes could depict, and thus his (passing) act of villainy be condoned. Or was it in sheer disgust and desperation respecting the course affairs seemed to be taking that he conceived of his deed? We cannot tell. In a mind like that of Judas there are depths beyond depths.

II. THOSE WHO PAID, vs. 10b-11a.

That selfishness was at the root we may be sure. *Avarice* is the direction it took. He proposed money, and asked how much (Matt. 26:15). Thirty pieces of silver a small sum? Yes, but he might be at that moment in real or fancied need, or the amount might be looked upon as a mere instalment of further reward, when he might have made himself useful, perhaps necessary, to the rulers. *Fear of consequences*, if he followed Christ further in the direction in which he was moving, may also have influenced his mind. And there can be no question as to the immediate impulse of *wounded feeling*, through baffled dishonesty and the sense that Christ saw through him. Falling short of the higher illumination and power of the Spirit, he was at the mercy of his own base, earthly nature.

III. WAITING AND WATCHING, vs. 11b.

The background to all this mental and spiritual movement on the part of Judas is the attitude of the chief priests and scribes, "seeking how they might take" Christ. But for opportunity afforded the treachery of Judas might have remained an aimless mood or a latent disposition, instead of becoming a definite purpose. In this consists the danger of unspiritual states of mind: they subject those in whom they are indulged to the tyranny of passing influences and circumstances.—M." (*Bickersteth*)

FACT QUESTIONS 14:10, 11

930. Show the psychological connection of this act to the gift of Mary and the rebuke of Jesus.
931. Does one sin lead to another in the life of Judas? Discuss.
932. What had no attraction—what had great attraction in the life of Judas?
933. How could it be said by some that Judas was attempting to "force the hand of an unpractical Christ"?
934. Show how selfishness turned to avarice.
935. Show how fear of consequences in following Christ and wounded feelings could have contributed to the motive for betrayal.
936. Except for something "the treachery of Judas might have remained an aimless mood or a latent disposition"—what was it?
Please note the vast import of this for us.

D. THURSDAY: THE LORD'S SUPPER

TEXT 14:12-26

"And on the first day of unleavened bread, when they sacrificed the passover, his disciples say unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and make ready that thou mayest eat the passover? And he sendeth two of his disciples, and saith unto them, Go into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him; and wheresoever he shall enter in, say to the good man of the house, The Master saith, Where is my guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? And he will himself shew you a large upper room furnished and ready: and there make ready for us. And the disciples went forth, and came into the city, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover.

And when it was evening he cometh with the twelve. And as they sat and were eating, Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, One of you shall betray me, even he that eateth with me. They began to be sorrowful, and began to say unto him one by one, Is it I? And he said unto them, It is one of the twelve, he that dippeth with me in the dish. For the Son of man goeth, even as it is written of him: but woe unto that man through whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had not been born.

And as they were eating, he took bread, and when he had blessed, he brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take ye: this is my body. And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave to them: and they all drank of it. And he said unto them, This is my blood of the covenant, which is shed for many. Verily I say unto you, I will no more drink of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.

And when they had sung a hymn, they went out unto the mount of Olives."

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 14:12-26

767. Just when was the first day of unleavened bread? i.e., according to our time—and according to Jewish time?
768. Who was responsible for sacrificing the passover lamb?
769. Had Jesus eaten the passover with His disciples before this occasion?
770. Why did the disciples feel responsible for preparation of the passover? How elaborate was the preparation?
771. Where were Jesus and His disciples when He gave the instructions for the Passover preparation?

772. Who were the two disciples?
773. Was there anything strange about a man carrying a pitcher of water?
774. What was the purpose of these rather strange instructions?
775. Why was the householder so willing to offer his large upper room? (There is a good deal of traditional information as to who owned the upper room—read some of it.)
776. What was the reaction of the disciples when they saw the words of Jesus fulfilled?
777. At what time was the Passover eaten?
778. Why did Jesus predict His own betrayal? Be specific.
779. Did any of the disciples feel they were capable of betraying Him?
780. How specific was Jesus in pointing out His betrayer?
781. What is meant by the expression "dipping bread in the same dish with me."?
782. If Jesus was betrayed in fulfillment of prophecy why blame the one who did it?
783. How could a man be better off if he was never born?
784. What is involved in "blessing bread"?
785. What type of bread was broken? What had it symbolically represented before Jesus used it to represent His body?
786. By reading all the accounts of the Lord's Supper attempt to reconstruct the order of service in the passover feast.
787. If there was just *one* cup in the institution of the Lord's Supper how is it we use more than one?
788. Some can believe the bread underwent a change when Jesus said "This is my body"—the fruit of the vine did the same when He said "this is my blood." How can such a thought be gathered from the text?
789. Did Jesus drink fermented grape juice?
790. Did the apostles have any idea what "covenant" was meant when Jesus referred to "the blood of the covenant"?
791. When were the words of promise in vs. 25 fulfilled?
792. Why sing a hymn?
793. What thoughts filled their hearts as they departed?

COMMENT

TIME.—Thursday evening, April 6 (14th Nisan), A.D. 30. With the Jews the 15th Nisan had begun.

PLACE.—Jerusalem, in an upper room with the disciples.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS.—Matt. 26:17-25; Luke 22:7-18, 21-23; John 13:21-26.

INTERVENING HISTORY.—Christ spent Tuesday eve, all day Wednesday,

and part of Thursday in retirement at Bethany, it is supposed. The historians, however, do not indicate how or where Wednesday was spent, but on Thursday the Lord came in from Bethany to eat the passover.

OUTLINE.—The Passover Made Ready. 2. The Last Passover Feast. 3. The First Lord's Supper.

ANALYSIS

- I. THE PASSOVER MADE READY, vs. 12-16.
 1. The First Day of Unleavened Bread. Mark 14:12; Matt. 26:17; Luke 22:7.
 2. The Two Disciples Sent. Mark 14:13; Matt. 26:18; Luke 22:8.
 3. The Guest Chamber Prepared. Mark 14:16; Matt. 26:19; Luke 22:13.
- II. THE LAST PASSOVER FEAST, vs. 17-21.
 1. The Lord Cometh with the Twelve. Mark 14:17; Matt. 26:20; Luke 22:14.
 2. The Traitor Pointed Out. Mark 14:18; Matt. 26:21; Luke 22:20; John 13:26.
 3. The Traitor's Fate Predicted. Mark 14:21; Matt. 26:24; Luke 22:22.
- III. THE FIRST LORD'S SUPPER, vs. 22-26.
 1. The Emblem of the Lord's Body. Mark 14:22; Matt. 26:26; Luke 22:19.
 2. The Emblem of the Blood. Mark 14:23; Matt. 26:27; Luke 22:20.
 3. The Blood of the New Covenant. Mark 14:24; Matt. 26:28; Luke 22:20.
 4. Departure to Gethsemane. Mark 14:26; Matt. 26:30.

INTRODUCTION

The most probable hypothesis combines these accounts as follows: Christ gives two of his disciples directions as to the preparation of the passover supper for himself and the twelve (Mark 14:12-16; Luke 22:7-13); when the even is come he goes with the twelve to the place prepared for them, where an unseemly strife occurs as to which shall be greatest (Luke 22:24-30); this Christ rebukes by washing the feet of the disciples (John 14:1-20); all then take their places at the table (Matt. 26:20); Christ prophesies his betrayal (Matt. 26:21-25; Mark 14:18-21; Luke 22:21-23; John 13:21-26); Judas, learning that his treachery is known, goes out to complete it (John 13:27-30). The supper, which has been interrupted by this incident, now goes on and ends with the institution of the Lord's supper at the close of passover feast (Matt. 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:19, 20; 1 Cor. 11:23-25). After or during this meal Christ gives his disciples the instructions and utters for them the prayer recorded in John,

chapters 14-17 inclusive.—*Abbott*. At the close of the discourse recorded in John, chapters 14-16, and the prayer of chapter 17, the Lord and his disciples left the upper chamber, went out into the darkness of the night, passed out of the city gates and across the Kedron to the ascent of the Mount of Olives, where he retired within the garden of Gethsemane.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. THE PASSOVER MADE READY.

12. *And the first day of unleavened bread.* Strictly speaking, the 15th of Nisan (part of our March and April), after the Paschal lamb was killed, but here the 14th day (Thursday). See Exodus 12: 16. This suggests one of the most difficult questions of Scripture chronology, whether the Lord ate the passover one day before the regular Jewish passover, or at the same time. *Pressnse, Millman, Ellicott, Townsend, Alford, Neander, Farrar*, and many other great authorities, hold that he ate it the day preceding, and died on the day and about the time the Jewish passover lambs were slain. This view I have accepted and shown the reason why in the *Commentary on John*, pp. 208, 209. *The statements of John that the supper was eaten, the Lord betrayed and condemned before the passover, seem positive. For a fuller discussion we must refer to the *Commentary of John. When they killed the passover*. Or at which the passover was sacrificed, as in the Revised Version. The word "passover" signifies a *passing*, and commemorates the manner in which the Israelites were spared in Egypt when the Almighty "passed over" their houses, sprinkled with the blood of the lamb, without slaying their first-born. This name, which originally denoted the lamb, was applied later to the supper itself, then to the entire feast (Exodus 12). The passover was the feast of spring, after the death of winter; the national birthday feast; the springtime of grace, pointing to the birth of the true Israel. The rabbis claimed that, (1) all were to be present; (2) they must offer thanksgiving offerings; (3) it was a feast of joyousness, looking forward to their complete deliverance. *Where wilt thou that we go and prepare . . . the passover?* According to the directions given in Deut. 16:1-5, the passover must be eaten in the place where the Lord's name was recorded, or where the tabernacle or temple was located. Jesus was at Bethany at this time. As that place was within a Sabbath day's journey of Jerusalem, the passover could be eaten there according to the rabbis, and the disciples might have supposed that this would be the Lord's decision. The preparation involved the selection of a guest chamber (Mark 14:15), the selection, sacrifice and cooking of the lamb, the procurement of unleavened bread, and the bitter herbs. *That we go and prepare.* The lamb had, we

*B. W. Johnson's commentary on John.

may believe, already been bought on the 10th of Nisan, according to the rule of the law, the very day of which He, the true Paschal Lamb, entered Jerusalem in meek triumph.—*Cambridge Bible. That thou mayest eat.* Note the reverential feeling that dominated the disciples. They did not say, "in order that *we* may eat the passover." They hid themselves behind their Lord.

13. *Two of his disciples.* Luke gives their names—Peter and John. *Saith unto them.* There can be no question that this direction was given them in superhuman foresight. *The city.* Jerusalem. *A man bearing a pitcher of water.* A very unusual sight in the East, where the water is drawn by women. He must probably have been the servant of one who was an open or secret disciple, unless we have here a reference to the Jewish custom of the master of a house himself drawing the water with which the unleavened bread was kneaded on Nisan 13th. On the evening of the 13th, before the stars appeared in the heavens, every father, according to Jewish custom, had to repair to the fountain to draw pure water with which to knead the unleavened bread.

14. *To the goodman of the house;* or, "master of the house." The expression, "goodman," as used by *Tyndale*, and preserved in our Authorized Version, is a relic of an olden time, when the heads of a household establishment expressed to one another, in their habitual intercourse, their mutual esteem. In some parts of the country the custom still lingers, and husbands and wives address each other as "goodman," "goodwife."—*Morison. The guest chamber.* The Revision says, correctly, "my guest chamber." The correct reading, "my," is suggestive. Our Lord lays claim to it. During the passover week, hospitality was recognized as a universal duty in Jerusalem; pilgrims and strangers were received, and rooms were allotted to them for the celebration of the feast. But it is not probable that a room would have been given to entire strangers without previous arrangement; and the language which the disciples are instructed to use, "The Master saith unto thee," seems to me clearly to indicate that the goodman of the house recognized Jesus as Master; in other words, was in some sense at least a disciple.—*Abbott. Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover?* The Master saith. It is a personal question, a proposal to the inner life of all. It is an offer of the one infinite divine blessing; for, in receiving the Master, Christ, the Son of Mary and the Son of God, we receive all the real good there is in earth and heaven.—*F. D. Huntington.*

15. *He will shew you a large upper room furnished and prepared.* A room on the second floor. Some think it was the "Alijah," or the room on the housetop. *Furnished;* i.e., with tables and couches. *Prepared.*

Already swept, and clean, and in order for the feast. Even at the present day, the very humblest Jewish family generally has at the passover time the walls of the house white-washed, the floor scrubbed, the furniture cleaned, and all things made to put on a new appearance. *Make ready.* The further preparations necessary for the passover. There are evidently two preparations for the passover mentioned in this sentence; that of the room, already made by the proprietor, and that of the lamb, with its accompaniments, bread and wine and bitter herbs, which was now to be made by the two disciples, and which they did make, as recorded in verse 16, where we learn no new fact but the simple execution of the Savior's orders.

16. *They made ready.* That is, they procured a "paschal lamb," multitudes of which were kept for sale in the temple; they procured it to be killed and flayed by the priests, and the blood to be poured at the altar; they roasted the lamb, and prepared the bitter herbs, the sauce, and the unleavened bread.—*Barnes.* As the new day opened, at sunset, the carcass was trussed for roasting, with two skewers of pomegranate wood, so that they formed a cross in the lamb. It was then put in an earthen oven of a special kind, resting, without bottom, on the ground, and was roasted in the earth. The feast could begin immediately after the setting of the sun and the appearing of the stars, on the opening of the 15th of Nisan, which was proclaimed by new trumpet-blasts from the temple.—*Geikie.*

II. THE LAST PASSOVER FEAST.

17. *In the evening he cometh with the twelve.* It was probably while the sun was beginning to decline in the horizon that Jesus and the disciples descended once more over the Mount of Olives into the Holy City. Before them lay Jerusalem in her festive attire. White tents dotted the sward, gay with the bright flowers of early spring, or peered out from the gardens and the darker foliage of the olive plantations. From the gorgeous temple buildings, dazzling in their snow-white marble and gold, on which the slanting rays of the sun were reflected, rose the smoke of the altar of burnt-offerings. The streets must have been thronged with strangers, and the flat roofs covered with eager gazers, who either feasted their eyes with a first sight of the sacred city, for which they had so often longed, or else once more rejoiced in view of the well-remembered localities. It was the last day-view which the Lord had of the Holy City—till his resurrection—*Edersheim's "The Temple and its Services."*

18. *As they sat and did eat.* Or, rather, "reclined at table." The passover was originally eaten standing; but this was altered by the Jews when they came to the land of promise and rest. *One of you which eateth with me shall betray me.* This indefinite announcement would give

Judas an opportunity of repentance; but it produced no effect. The announcement by Jesus of his knowledge of the traitor was needed to show the apostles that the manner of his arrest was no surprise to him. The words would seem to have been intentionally vague, as if to rouse some of those who heard them to self-questioning.

19. *They began to be sorrowful.* The very thought of treason was to their honest and faithful hearts insupportable, and excited great surprise and deepest sorrow. John (13:33) describes their perplexed and questioning glances at each other, the whisper of Peter to John, the answer of our Lord to the beloved disciple, announcing the sign by which the traitor was to be indicated. *Unto him.* They both inquired among themselves (Luke 22:23), and of Christ. *Is it I?* Their language expresses in the original a much stronger negation than in our version—*Surely not I, Lord?*

20. *One . . . that dippeth with me.* This answer, apparently given only to John (John 13:25, 26), does not designate the betrayer to the disciples. According to the Jewish ritual, the administrator in the course of the supper dipped the bitter herbs in a prepared sauce, and passed the dish to the rest. This Christ now did. His reply to the question of John was simply an emphatic reiteration of his previous declaration (John 13:28), "He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me." That it did not designate the traitor to any of the disciples is clear from John 13:28. Judas alone perceived that his treachery was known to Christ.—*Abbott.*

21. *The Son of man indeed goeth.* He marches with unflinching step in the way to the scene of death, as marked out by the divine prophecies. Yet that does not exculpate the authors of his betrayal and murder. *Good were it for that man, etc.* A proverbial expression of the most terrible destiny, forbidding the thought of any deliverance, however remote.—*Schaff.* Observe incidental confirmation of the doctrine elsewhere taught, that for the finally lost soul there is no redemption.—*Abbott.*

III. THE FIRST LORD'S SUPPER.

22. *As they did eat.* While they were still at the passover table. One memorial institution had now ended its mission; as it departed another was ordained. *Jesus took bread.* The bread that was broken was a round cake or cracker of unleavened bread. Throughout the entire passover week no leavened bread was allowed in the house. Exodus 12:8, 15. The administration of the Lord's Supper was subsequently termed the "breaking of bread." The bread, then, is (1) a symbolic reminder that Christ is God's unspeakable gift to us, (John 3:16; 2 Cor. 9:15;) (2) that the gift is perfected only in that he is broken for us, (John

3:14; 10:15; 12:32;) (3) that it is efficacious only as we partake of him, i.e., receive him into ourselves, so that he becomes one with us as he is one with the Father, (John 17:23,) as the bread when eaten becomes part of our nature, and so the sustainer of our life. *This is my body.* His language here closely conforms to that of the Jewish ritual. When the lamb was passed the master was asked by one of the children, "What is this?" and the father replied, "This the body of the lamb which our fathers ate in Egypt." Christ uses, but modifies, the same formula. Does any one suppose the lamb slain in Egypt was miraculously multiplied through all the subsequent ages?—*Abbott.* The word for *is* denotes only *likeness* in all metaphors and in the explanation of all symbols. "The seven good kine are seven years;" "These bones are the house of Israel;" "The seed is the Word of God;" "This is he who hears the Word;" "The field is the world;" "The rock was Christ;" "The women are two covenants;" "The seven lamps are seven churches." Resemblance and representation are certainly implied in these and similar statements, but nothing more.—*Biblical Museum.* In view of this usage how illogical are those who insist, contrary to their senses, that the bread is literally the flesh of Christ.

23. *He took the cup.* The cup was provided for the celebration of the paschal feast and was at hand as well as the bread. As before he gave thanks, and then commanded: *Drink ye all of it.* Observe that he simply said of the bread, Take, eat; but of the wine, *Drink ye all,* as if he intended to uproot the Catholic innovation of denying the cup to the laity.

24. *This is my blood.* A sign or emblem of my blood. This formula occurs again from the forms of the passover feast. "The blood is the life" (Lev. 17:14). He laid down his life. It pleased the Lord to bruise him (Isa. 53).—*Jacobus.* Up to this time the blood of bulls and goats had represented Christ's blood: henceforth the simple wine of this memorial supper should represent it (Heb. 9:13, 14). *New testament;* or, covenant. Covenant is the preferable sense here, as in most passages where the word occurs in the New Testament: the new covenant is contrasted with "the covenant which God made with our fathers" (Acts 3:25). It need hardly be remarked that the title of the New Testament is derived from this passage. The new covenant was, that God would renew and save all who believed in Jesus. In ancient times the ratification of important covenants was made by a sacrificial feast. *Shed for many.* Shed, in one sense, for all, for the benefits of the blood are offered to all; but "many" accept it and are saved.

25. *I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine.* He is done with

earthly rites, and at this sad moment points them to a future re-union at the marriage supper of the Lamb. The ordinance now receives its prophetic meaning (Cf. 1 Cor. 11:26, "till he come") directing believers to the perfect vision and fruition of that time, through the foretaste which this sacrament is designed to give.—*Schaff, Drink it new*. At the marriage supper of the Lamb. Rev. 19:9.

26. *When they had sung an hymn*. It was customary to conclude the passover by singing the Psalms from 115th to 118th, *To the Mount of Olives*. To the garden of Gethsemane which was on the slope of that mount.

FACT QUESTIONS 14:12-26

937. On what day of the week did Jesus eat the Passover? What Jewish month?—what day of the month? To which of our months does this correspond?
938. Please mark carefully the order of progression of the nine or ten incidents beginning with the preparation for the passover and ending with retirement in the garden.
939. When and where did the prayers and promises of John 14-17 occur?
940. What is meant by the expression "the first day of unleavened bread"?
941. What problem of chronology is found in vs. 13? What was the conclusion of B. W. Johnson? Do you agree? Discuss.
942. Show the progressive use of the term "passover". How did it become a "birthday feast"?
943. What does Deut. 16:1-15 say about the place of the eating of the the passover?
944. What was involved in preparing the passover? How could it have been lawful to eat the passover in Bethany?
945. When was the lamb for the passover purchased?—how related to the activities of Jesus?
946. How did the disciples show respect for Jesus in their question about the passover?
947. Who was the man with the pitcher of water?—show the possible significance.
948. Why use the word "goodman"?
949. How did Jesus refer to the guest chamber or the upper room? Why?
950. What is "an offer of the one infinite divine blessing"?
951. What preparation in the room had the householder made?—what preparations were the disciples to make?
952. Where was the lamb purchased?—in what preparation did the priest engage?
953. Besides the roasted lamb what was on the paschal table?

954. In what particular manner was the lamb roasted?—is there any possible symbolism here?
955. Silver trumpets were blown in the night—when and why?
956. Please read and re-read the beautiful description of Edersheim on vs. 17. Pause—close your eyes—conjure up the scene in your mind's eye.
957. When was the posture at the table changed?
958. Why the indefiniteness of the announcement of the betrayal of Judas?—it had a dual purpose—what was it?
959. Why were the apostles so surprised?—how did they express their surprise?
960. What strong expression did the apostles use in inquiring about their betrayal?
961. The answer of vs. 20 was not given to all—to whom? Why? How did Judas know?
962. Was the passover meal finished before Jesus instituted His Supper?—Discuss.
963. What type of loaf was used? Why?
964. Show how very appropriate is the expression "breaking of bread" when referring to the Lord's Supper. Specify three ways.
965. Show how closely the words "this is my body" conform to the Jewish ritual.
966. Show how illogical those are (Roman Catholics) who insist the bread was literally the flesh of Jesus.
967. What Catholic innovation is uprooted in vs. 23?
968. Before Jesus said of the fruit of the vine—"this is my blood" what had represented Christ's blood?
969. Why is "covenant" a better word than "testament"? What was the covenant?
970. Was the blood shed for "many" or for "all"? Explain.
971. When was—or will—the promise of vs. 25 fulfilled? Will we drink grape juice in heaven?
972. What hymn was sung? Why? Read the hymn for an answer.

4. PETER'S BOAST 14:27-31

TEXT 14:27-31

I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered abroad. Howbeit, after I am raised up, I will go before you into Galilee. But Peter said unto Him, Although all shall be offended, yet will not I. And Jesus saith unto him, Verily I say unto thee, that thou today, even this night, before the cock crow twice, shalt deny me thrice. But he spake exceeding vehemently, If I must die with thee, I will not deny thee. And in like manner said they all."

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 14:27-31

794. Where was Jesus when He spoke of the defection of the disciples?
 795. In what sense were the apostles to stumble?—how did prophecy relate to the stumbling of the disciples?
 796. What appreciation did the apostles have of the resurrection of Jesus?
 797. Why mention His visit to Galilee?
 798. What prompted Peter's pledge of loyalty? Please note that pride was not the only element.
 799. Read Matt. 26:34 and John 13:38—harmonize these two accounts with Mark 14:30.
 800. Why did Jesus predict the multiple denial of Peter?
 801. Didn't Peter believe Jesus knew all things? Why did he continue to contradict the words of Jesus?
 802. Just what did all the disciples say? Where they just as guilty as Peter? Discuss.

COMMENT

TIME.—Thursday evening, April 6th (14th Nisan), A.D. 30. With the Jews the 15th of Nisan had begun.

PLACE.—Jerusalem, in an upper room with the disciples.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS.—Matt. 26:31-35; Luke 22:31-38.

OUTLINE.—1. The prediction and promise of Jesus, vs. 27, 28. 2. The poor pride of Peter, vs. 29. 3. Pointing up the prediction, vs. 30. 4. personal and public pride, vs. 31.

ANALYSIS

- I. THE PREDICTION AND PROMISE OF JESUS, vs. 27, 28.
 1. The prediction: All ye shall be offended: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered abroad.
 2. The promise: after I am raised up, I will go before you into Galilee.
- II. THE POOR PRIDE OF PETER, vs. 29.
 1. He took exception with Jesus.
 2. He promised the highest of loyalty.
- III. POINTING UP THE PREDICTION, vs. 30.
 1. It shall happen this very night.
 2. Before the cock crows twice you shall deny me thrice.
- IV. THE PERSONAL AND PUBLIC PRIDE, vs. 31.
 1. Personal pride of Peter: ". . . he spake exceeding vehemently, If I must die with thee, I will not deny thee."
 2. Public pride of the rest of the apostles: "And in like manner also said they all."

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. THE PREDICTION AND PROMISE OF JESUS.

"27. *You will all be scandalized in my regard.* Our Lord means that when the disciples witnessed His humiliations and sufferings, it would be a sore trial to their faith, and would lead them to doubt that He was the Messiah. That this actually occurred we see from Luke 24:21. *But we hoped that it was he that should have redeemed Israel; and now besides all this,* etc. Evidently these disciples no longer hoped, and all were incredulous at first as regards the resurrection of Christ.

I will strike the shepherd, etc. The prophecy is not literally quoted; it runs thus, *Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that cleaveth to me, saith the Lord of hosts: strike the shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered, and I will turn my hand to the little ones* (Zech. 13:7). Jesus refers the prophecy to Himself as *the good shepherd* (John 10:11).

In quoting this prophecy the Evangelist represents God as saying I will strike, etc., and in truth the death of the Son was willed by the Father, that thus the Redemption of man might be effected, but He allowed human agents to accomplish His designs. God could not will man's sin, but he can make it serve His designs, and thus bring good out of evil.

the sheep shall be dispersed. Primarily the prophecy referred to the Jewish priests and to the Israelites, but there is a secondary reference to Christ the Messiah and to the disciples, the sheep of His flock. These words were fulfilled when in Gethsemane *his disciples leaving him, all fled away* (14:50). They were also accomplished in the dispersion of the Jews.

28. *But after I shall be risen,* etc. Christ now turns His hand to *His little ones*. In spite of their weak faith and of their cowardice, He promises to see them again, and foretells once more His resurrection.

I will go before you into Galilee. The angel of the Resurrection used these very words, and reminded the disciples of Christ's promise, *Remember how he spoke unto you, when he was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of man must . . . the third day rise again* (Luke 24:6, 7). *And going quickly, tell ye his disciples that he is risen: and behold he will go before you into Galilee; there you shall see him. Lo, I have foretold it to you* (Matt. 27:7). In spite of the disciples' predicted defection, Jesus consoles them—

- (1) by the assurance that He will rise again.
- (2) by promising to meet them in Galilee.

The prediction itself after its accomplishment, would strengthen their faith, since knowing that they would forsake Him, Christ had promised to see them in Galilee. There is perhaps in these words an allusion to the shepherd preceding his flock.

II. THE POOR PRIDE OF PETER.

29. *Peter saith to him: Although all, etc.* Peter, always impulsive and generous, cannot believe such desertion possible.

In his reply we notice—

1. Peter rejects the very idea as an impossibility, and bluntly contradicts our Lord. He evidently regarded our Lord's words as a mark of distrust of the disciples rather than as a prediction and solemn warning.
2. Peter asserts his strength of character to be greater than that of the other disciples.
3. He trusts to his own strength, though the remembrance of how his faith failed when he was sinking in the Lake of Galilee, should have presented this presumption.

III. POINTING UP THE PREDICTION.

"30. *Truly I say to thee.* Our Lord uses His solemn asseveration to check Peter's assumption and enforce the warning.

today, even in this night, etc. Notice the gradation "to-day" (the day had begun at sunset), "even this night," hence before tomorrow's dawn, before the second cock-crowing. The cock crew at midnight, and again about three o'clock in the morning.

In this chapter (verses 68-72) we find the fulfillment of this prediction. It has been objected that it was forbidden to have cocks and hens in Jerusalem, but this prohibition (if observed, which is very doubtful) could not affect the Romans, who would certainly have kept fowls in the Castle of Antonia, and whence Jews could hear the cock crowing distinctly. The Romans used these birds, and even carried them with them when on the march, since they required chickens for the *anspices*. It is mentioned by one of the rabbinical writers that a cock, which had killed a little child in Jerusalem, was slain.

deny me thrice: not merely once, but thrice. Mark alone gives the details—

- (a) that the cock should crow twice.
- (b) Peter's vehement, second declaration of fidelity."

IV. THE PERSONAL AND PUBLIC PRIDE.

"31. *spoke the more vehemently.* He denied the bare possibility of such a denial, with increased energy. Peter, from whom Mark received his gospel, reveals his own weakness with profound humility.

Some writers affirm that Peter never lost faith in our Lord, since Christ had prayed that his faith *fail not*, but that he sinned against charity in lacking the courage to profess his faith openly.

Although I should die, etc. Peter was sincere in his protestations of fidelity, but he had yet to learn how weak human nature is in the face of temptation and suffering. Luke and John give Peter's protestation more fully. *I will lay down my life for thee* (John 13:37.) *Lord, I am ready to go with thee both into prison and to death* (Luke 22:33). Thomas likewise had made a protestation of fidelity in the name of his companions. *Let us also go, that we may die with him* (John 11:16).

in like manner also said they all (i.e. all the Eleven). Judas was not present. We may be sure that they were sincere in their offer, but their inexperience led them to underestimate the force of the trial that awaited them." (*Cecilia*)

FACT QUESTIONS 14:27-31

973. Show when and where the words of our Lord, "you will all be scandalized in my regard" found fulfillment.
974. Who struck the shepherd? Why?
975. "God could not will man's _____, but He can make it serve His designs, and thus bring _____ out of _____."
976. Show at least two places and times when the words "the sheep shall be dispersed" were fulfilled.
977. In spite of the disciples predicted defection, Jesus consoles them in two thoughts—what are they?
978. Peter misunderstood the purpose of the words of Jesus—what purpose did he find in the prediction of defection?
979. Peter had reason to doubt the strength of his faith—what was it?
980. How is it that the expression "today", and "this night" mean the same period of time? At what two times did the cock crow?
981. Where was the cock when it crowed?
982. How could some writers affirm that Peter never lost his faith in his denial?
983. Show how Thomas and Peter were alike.
984. What caused the disciples to underestimate the force of the trial that awaited them?

E. FRIDAY

1. STRONG CRYING AND TEARS 14:32-42

TEXT: 14:32-42

"And they come unto a place which was named Gethsemane: and he saith unto his disciples, Sit ye here, while I pray. And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be greatly amazed, and sore troubled. And he saith unto them, *My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death: abide ye here, and watch.* And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass away from him. And he said, *Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; remove this cup from me: howbeit not what I will but what thou wilt.* And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, *Simon, sleepest thou? couldest thou not watch one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.* And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words. And again he came, and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy; and they wist not what to answer him. And he cometh the third time, and saith unto them, *Sleep on now, and take your rest: it is enough; the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Arise, let us be going: behold, he that betrayeth me is at hand.*"

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 14:32-42

803. Why did Jesus go to Gethsemane? Did this visit fill a need in His heart? Show what significance this place had in the life of our Lord.
804. What did Jesus want Peter, James and John to do while He was praying? Cf. vs. 37.
805. How would you explain the words "greatly amazed, and sore troubled?"
806. How is the word "soul" used in vs. 34?
807. Was there any possibility of Jesus dying in the garden? Could this possibility be "the cup" which He asked might "pass away"?
808. Is "the hour" of vs. 35 the same as "the cup" of vs. 36? Discuss.
809. What is the meaning of the expression "Abba" as in 36a?
810. Didn't Jesus know the will of the Father?—why then make the request He did?
811. Wasn't the will of our Lord constantly the will of God?—how shall we reconcile this fact with the request which includes "my will" and "your will"?
812. What did Jesus want the three apostles to do that they did not do?—what is included in the expression "watch"?
813. Notice how Jesus addressed Peter, i.e. in name—why?

814. About what were the three to pray?
 815. What temptation was here present?
 816. Explain the little phrase "the spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak"—*do it in its context.*
 817. Why repeat the prayer as in vs. 39?
 818. What question did Jesus ask the disciples as in vs. 40? Why no answer?
 819. In what attitude were the words, "sleep on now, and take your rest" spoken? Was Jesus ironic? critical? sympathetic? sad? explain.
 820. What was "enough" as in vs. 41b?
 821. Who were the "sinners" into whose hands the Son of man was betrayed?

COMMENT

TIME.—Thursday evening, April 6th (14th Nisan), A.D. 30. With the Jews the 15th of Nisan had begun.

PLACE.—Jerusalem—the Garden of Gethsemane.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS.—Matt. 26:36-46; Luke 22:40-46.

OUTLINE.—1. The place and persons of the Saviour's agony, vs. 32-34.
 2. Surrender in prayer, vs. 35, 36. 3. Disappointing disciples, vs. 37, 38.
 4. He prayed and wept alone, vs. 39, 40. 5. The Saviour's hour and the disciples failure, vs. 41, 42.

ANALYSIS

- I. THE PLACE AND PERSONS OF THE SAVIOUR'S AGONY, vs. 32-34.
1. The place:—Gethsemane.
 2. The persons:—disciples—and the three.
 3. His agony:—greatly amazed—sore troubled—exceeding sorrowful.
- II. SURRENDER IN PRAYER, vs. 35, 36.
1. The place of surrender:—"he went forward a little, and fell on the ground,"
 2. The struggle of the surrender—"if it were possible, the hour might pass away from him."—"remove this cup from me."
 3. The victory in surrender—"howbeit not what I will, but what thou wilt."
- III. DISAPPOINTING DISCIPLES, vs. 37, 38.
1. He came for comfort and found them asleep.
 2. He called Peter by his old name of "Simon"—"is one hour too long to watch for me?"
 3. He helped them (when they should have helped Him) with a warning—watch (be spiritually vigilant) and pray—in this way you (like me) will escape temptation. You have assented to my

will but you can never carry it out without being spiritually awake and in prayer—your flesh is too weak for such action.

IV. HE PRAYED AND WEPT ALONE, vs. 39, 40.

1. Away from the apostles—alone with God—the same need—the same answer.
2. Still asleep—yielded to the flesh—no human answer to spiritual need.

V. THE SAVIOUR'S HOUR AND THE DISCIPLES FAILURE, vs. 41, 42.

1. "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest?" (Ralph Earle)
2. "You have slept long enough" (Thayer).
3. "The great hour of the world's redemption has come." (Ralph Earle)
4. "Let us go to meet the betrayer."

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. THE PLACE AND PERSONS OF THE SAVIOUR'S AGONY.

"32. *And they come.* We are taken back, and look on. *To a place which was named Gethsemane.* The word means *oil-press*. And, no doubt, originally there would be, in the spot, an olive-oil press. The real locality cannot now be precisely determined; neither is it necessary. There is an enclosed spot, lying at the base of the western slope of the mount of Olives, which is called Gethsemane (El-Jesmaniye). It is kept by the Latin Christians, and contains eight extremely aged olive trees. "If," says Dr. Wilson, "the "Gethsemane of the Bible be not here, and we can see no reason for disturbing the tradition regarding it, it cannot certainly be far distant, as must be apparent from the incidental notices of the evangelists." (*Lands of the Bible*, vol. 1, p. 481.)

And He saith to His disciples, Sit here, until I shall pray. Until My prayer shall be past. The great crisis was at hand; and it was casting its dark shadow before on the spirit of our Lord. He felt that He must get into comparative retirement, in order that He might, without distraction, grapple with the appalling difficulties of the trial, and open up His heart, in the time of extremity, to His Father.

Vers. 33. *And He taketh with Him Peter and James and John.* The elite of his elect, who had been witnesses of the counterpart scene, the transfiguration (chap. ix. 2). They were admitted by their own brethren to be a representative triumvirate, and *primi inter pares*. For, even among those who are good and true, some are better fitted than others for posts of eminence, and for intimacy of intercourse.

And began to be dismayed. Stunned, as it were. That is the radical idea

of the word. (See G. Curtis, *Grundzuge*, p. 206.) He was *astonished*. Probably never before, within the limitations of His finite experience, had the sphere of our Lord's vision, in reference to sins, and their desert and effects, been so vast. Probably never before had the corresponding sphere of His emotions, in relation to these sins, been so profoundly agitated and heaved. This state of things now 'began.' And, as it 'began,' it caused an *amazement*, that culminated in consternation. Wycliffe translates the verb to *drede* (to dread); Coverdale, to *waxe fearefull*.

And greatly distressed. Comp. Phil. 2:26. Tyndale's version is borrowed from Luke, *to be in an agony*.

Vers. 34. *And He saith to them.* Namely after the terrible experience had 'begun' to roll in on His spirit.

My soul is exceeding sorrowful. The idea is, *My soul is sorrowful* all round and round. It was a kind of moral midnight within the periphery of His soul. At no point in the circumference was a single gleam of light.

Unto death. Not a mere rhetorical addition. The weight of woe was literally crushing out the Saviour's life. In bearing it He was making more literal sacrifice of Himself than ever had been made on literal altar. The sacrifice would have been complete, then and there, had it not been that it appeared to Him and to His Father that certain momentous purposes of publicity, in reference to the conclusion of the tragedy, would be better subserved by shifting the scene.

Remain here and watch. He had wished His chosen three to be near Him in His woe; and yet, as it advanced, He felt that He must retire even from them, and be alone with Himself and His Father. 'Of the people' none could be 'with Him' in the agony, none on the altar. Still He wished that His chosen ones should not be at a great distance, and hence He said, *Remain here*. He desired to be the object of their active sympathy, and hence He said, *and watch*.

II. SURRENDER IN PRAYER.

"Vers. 35. *And He went forward a little.* Still farther from the spot where the eight disciples had been asked to halt (vs. 32).

And fell on the ground. Gradually. The verb is in the imperfect. He would kneel first of all (Luke 22:41).

And prayed. He continued in prayer. The verb is in the imperfect. He *kept addressing* His heavenly Father. His aim in thus addressing His Father is brought out in the next clause.

That. In order that.

If it were possible. Very literally, if it is possible. We are taken back to the very time when the Saviour's prayers were uttered, and to the spot whence they were uttered, and we hear the very words which He used. *Possible:* the reference is not so much to *absolute* as to *relative possibility*, possibility in consistency with the great objects contemplated in the mission of the Saviour.

The hour might pass from Him. The *hour* that was imminent, and that embraced within its compass His betrayal, His arrestment, and the desertion of His disciples. He did not pray that the hour of the atoning sacrifice might pass by. It was the incidental woes, inflicted so superfluously and wantonly by men, and to no small extent by His own chosen disciples, it was these apparently these more particularly at least, to which the cry of His spirit referred.

Vers. 36. *And He said, Abba Father.* ^{Father-son} The filial element in His spirit rose up and overshadowed all the other elements of relationship. Mark alone records the 'bilingual' appellation, Aramaic and Greek. No doubt it would be genuine; and most likely it would be current in certain 'bilingual' home circles, more especially at moments of earnest address on the part of children. At such moments there is often a tendency to emphatic redundancy or repetitiousness of expression. Comp. Rom. viii. 15, and Gal. iv. 6. As employed by our Lord, the dual form of the appellation is delightfully fitted to suggest that, in His great work, He personated in His single self not Jews only, but Gentiles also.

All things are possible to Thee. Literally true. *A thing* is a *think*; and all things thinkable are possible to almightiness. To imagine that there are actual limits to God's power is merely to bewilder oneself in *unthinkabilities*. In the preceding verse the reference is to conditional possibility: hence the 'if.' In this the reference is to absolute possibility: hence the 'all.'

Remove this cup from Me. The Reheims translation is, *transfere this chalice from Me.* Not that our Saviour rued His enterprise, or desired to 'back out of it.' Infinitely far from that. The cup, which He felt it so dreadful to drink, had in it ingredients which were never mingled by the hand of His Father, such as the treachery of Judas, the desertion of His disciples, denial on the part of Peter, the trial in the Sanhedrim, the trial before Pilate, the scourging, the mockery of the soldiery, the crucifixion, etc., etc. All these incidental and unessential ingredients were put into the cup by men, wilfully and wantonly. Hence the petition, *Remove from Me this cup*, this cup as it is. Without these superadded ingredients the potion would have been unquestionably bitter enough; and it need

not be doubted that, in consideration of that bitterness, the exquisite sensibility of our Lord would be conscious of a feeling of shrinking and instinctive recoil. But still He had come for the very purpose of 'tasting death for every man,' and was no doubt willing and wishful to die.

But not what I will, but what Thou wilt. But the question is not, What will I? but What wilt Thou? The reference in the word will, in so far as it is applied by the Saviour to Himself, is to that which Peter calls the *sensitive* will, and the schoolmen *voluntas sensualitatis*. The more literal translation however of the verb is *wish* rather than *will*. The question with the Savior was not, *What do I wish? but What does My Father wish?* There was infinite submissiveness to the wish and will of His Father. If the Father deemed it best that the cup, just as it was, should be drained, the Son was absolutely acquiescent. It is easy to conceive of the greatest possible diversity in the circumstantial incidents of the atoning sacrifice. The Saviour would have wished them to have been different from what they were. Who would not? But on almost everything that is done in the world, or that has to be endured, the foul fingers of sin are laid."

III. DISAPPOINTING DISCIPLES.

"37. *And He cometh.* To His disciples, viz. at some intermission in the agony of His spirit, when He had got strength through prayer. See Luke xxii. 43.

And findeth them sleeping. So far were they from profoundly realizing the solemnities that were imminent.

And saith to Peter. Peter is no doubt singled out, partly because he was the leader of the three, and partly because he had singled himself out but a little before. See ver. 29, 31.

Simon, sleepest thou? Although thou sawest that I was in such distress, and although I expressly desired thee to keep awake and watch?

Couldst thou not watch one hour? Hadst thou not strength for that? Surely thou wilt not say so. Why then not use thy strength to watch, when I desired it, that I might have the consolation of thy sympathy? Note the expression *one hour*. It seems to indicate that our Savior had suffered an entire hour of agony. How long that period! when we remember that every moment would be stretched to its utmost.

Ver. 38. *Watch ye.* The three disciples, we may suppose, had waked up when Peter was addressed. What our Lord said to one, He meant for all; and here He expressly addresses all.

And pray, that ye may not enter into temptation. They were in danger of losing confidence in Him as the Messiah. There was therefore much need for faithful watching and earnest praying.

The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. The Saviour's gracious apology for the languor of His disciples. Even while He spoke to them, they had but imperfectly waked up. He saw them struggling with the oppressive languor, but ineffectively. And yet, true, as well as gracious, though His apology was, *the spirit was nevertheless to be somewhat blamed.* If it had been sympathetic to the quick, it would have roused the *flesh*. Some have supposed that the words, *the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak,* are the Saviour's explanation of His own distress. Unnatural. The supposition proceeds on the false assumption that the Saviour's horror was a weakness, and that it would have been more magnanimous and glorious to have had no experience of shrinking from the ingredients of the dreadful cup."

IV. HE PRAYED AND WEPT ALONE.

"Vers. 39. *And again He went away.* His agony returned on Him. Perhaps the very lethargy of His disciples might call up before His view the whole appalling succession of incidental and unessential woes that were about to overtake Him.

And prayed, saying the same words. More literally, as the Rheims, has it, *saying the selfsame word.* The term word is used collectively, as when we speak of *the word of God.*

Ver. 40. *And when He returned, He found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy.* Were, so to speak, 'weighted', or, according to the better reading, *weighed down.* The *for* introduces, not a reason for, but an illustration of, their sleepiness. It would appear that they had not deliberately surrendered themselves to sleep. They did not lie down, for instance. They sat, and, to a certain extent, sought to keep themselves awake. But ever and anon, and prevailingly, their eyelids closed.

And they wist not what to answer Him. They knew not what they could say to Him in reply. They had no excuse which they could honestly plead. *Wist*, or *wised* as it were, that is *knew*, is now obsolete, but is connected with an interesting group of words, *wise, wisdom, wizard,* and the German *wissen* 'to know.' On another line it is connected with the Anglo-Saxon *witan*, the Dutch *weten*, and the Gothic *vitan*, 'to know,' around which we have another group of words, *wit, wits, witty, witless, witch, outwit, to-wit.*"

V. THE SAVIOUR'S HOUR AND THE DISCIPLES' FAILURE.

"Ver. 41. *And He cometh the third time.* After a third retirement for a solitary endurance of His overwhelming agony.

And saith to them, Sleep on now. A rather unhappy translation, almost suggesting irritation and irony on the part of our Lord. Petter actually thinks that our Lord spoke 'in a taunting manner.' But the verb rendered *sleep on*, a translation got from Coverdale, is simply *sleep*, the translation of Tyndale, the Geneva and the Rheims; and the expression rendered *now* means literally *the remainder*, that is, *the remainder of the time that is available*. Tyndale and the Geneva render it *henceforth*. *Sleep the remaining interval!* It was in compassion that our Lord thus spoke. His own struggle was meanwhile past. He did not feel the same need of the intense active sympathy of His disciples which, in the crisis of His agony, He had so fervently desired. He saw too that they were still overpowered with drowsiness, notwithstanding the persevering efforts they were making to wake up. He hence spoke to them soothingly; and, as Cardinal Cajetan expresses it, 'indulgently,' that they might get the refreshment they so much required, *Sleep for the interval that remains. I can now calmly wait and watch alone.*

And take your rest. Or, as the Rheims has it, and *take rest. Rest yourselves*, that is, *refresh yourselves*. The word is so rendered in 1 Cor. 16:18; 2 Cor. 7:13; Philem. 7, 20.

It is enough. An expression that has given almost infinite trouble to critics. It fairly puzzled the Syriac translator. He renders it, *the end is at hand*. Our English translation is just a reproduction of the Vulgate version (*sufficit*), which must, one should suppose, have been dashed off in a fit of despair. But howsoever dashed off, or otherwise introduced, there it stands; and Luther, in his version, simply accepted it, without any attempt at an independent judgement; as did Erasmus also, and Tyndale, and Coverdale. Henry Stephens, the lexicographer, was much perplexed with the word, and in particular with its Vulgate translation; but at length he found a solitary passage, in one of the apocryphal *Odes of Anacreon* (xxviii. 33), in which the term would seem to bear no other interpretation. It afforded him great relief. Beza too found in the same ode a corresponding relief, and speaks indeed of the passage 'occurring to him,' in the midst of his doubts, as if it had been he, and not Henry Stephens, who had first alighted on it. He makes no reference at all to Stephens. The translation of the Vulgate, thus fortified out of *Anacreon*, was thenceforward regarded as confirmed. It was accepted by Castello, the Geneva, Piscator, Erasmus Schmid, Sebastian Schmidt. It is found in

all the Dutch versions, the earlier, the later, the latest. So too in Diodati, Zinzendorf, Rilliet; and in many other versions. Accepting the translation (and Wetstein hunted up another passage from *Cyril* on Hag. ii.9), the great body of expositors have interpreted the expression as a repetition 'in earnest' of the ironical expression that precedes, as if our Lord were now saying plainly, *ye have had enough of sleep*. See Diodati, Petter, and Schleusner. But Wolf supposes that the Saviour refers to His own sufferings, *I have suffered enough for the present, and it only remains that I endure the sufferings that are to come!* Neither phase of thought seems satisfactory. Grotius felt this, and imagined that the phrase must have an idiomatic import, corresponding to the technical expression employed in the Roman amphitheatre, when a gladiator was wounded, 'Habet,' *He has it, he has got it, he has got the fatal wound*. The Saviour, according to Grotius, as it were says, *It is all over with Me now. The time is past for any benefit to Me from your sympathy*. An unlikely interpretation, both on philological and on moral grounds, but accepted nevertheless by Principal Campbell, who renders the phrase *All is over*. Bengel's translation corresponds to a degree, only he gives it a turn in the direction of the disciples, not of the Saviour, *It is over, viz. with your rest*. So Felbinger. Kypke's interpretation is, *The time is up*. Heumann again, and Wahl, and Godwin, would render the phrase, *it is past*, or *It is away*, that is, *My agony is past*. Le Clerc, *The thing is past, My resolution to go on is taken*. There are other modifications of idea suggested by other expositors. But the great objection to all such interpretations is that the verb does not mean, *to be away, to be past, or to be over, or to be all over*. It means, when used intransitively, *to have off, to hold off, to be distant*. Such is its meaning in all the other passages of the New Testament in which it occurs with its intransitive signification. So Matt. 15:8 and Mark 7:6, 'their heart is *far from Me*,' 'is *distant from Me*.' So Luke 7:6, 'when He *was* now not far *distant* from the house.' So Luke 15:20, 'when he *was* yet a great way *off*,' that is, 'when he *was* yet a long way *distant*.' And Luke 24:13, 'A village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs,' that is, 'which *was distant* from Jerusalem.' We see no reason for departing, in the passage before us, from this, the word's accredited and ordinary signification. But the question arises, to what, or to whom, does the Saviour refer, when He says 'is distant'? He refers, as we apprehend, not to a thing, but to a person, of whom He was thinking much, as is evident at once from the last clause of this verse, and from the next verse. But, though thinking much of him, He did not feel inclined expressly to name him. The reference we take to be to Judas, *He is distant, He is at a distance*. The expression is thus not the unmasking of a previous sarcasm. It is the gracious utterance,

partly to His own mind, and partly to the minds of His lethargic disciples, of a reason for indulging them in a few minutes more of rest. We shall lose much of the true significance of the whole scene, and of the grandeur of the Saviour's demeanor, if we imagine that there was anything like hot haste and semi-irritation on the part of our Lord. There is not the slightest need for supposing that all the words, recorded by the evangelist, were spoken in rapid succession. It was, we believe, far otherwise. After our Saviour had got relief from the overwhelming pressure of His agony, and had graciously approached His disciples, and sympathised with them in their feelings of oppression, He would most probably seat Himself beside them, and say soothingly, *Sleep for the remainder of the little time that we still have, and refresh yourselves.* Then He would add, as a reason for this indulgence, the word before us, a word which did not demand, on the part of the disciples, any mental determination regarding the subject of the proposition. It was enough that they knew that, whether a person or a thing were referred to, *distance* was affirmed. They might indeed have waked up, and inquired, 'who is distant?' what is? who is? But this was not necessary, if they understood that the reason for making a final effort to shake off their drowsiness was yet *at a distance*. After the Lord had said (He) *is at a distance*, we may suppose that He paused, and turning His eyes in the direction of Jerusalem, wrapped Himself up in His own meditations. At length, when the moving lights of the band around Judas became visible, the Lord broke silence, and spoke as follows.

The hour has come. The *hour*, the crisis time, the beginning of the end.

Lo, the Son of Man is delivered up. *Is in the act of being delivered up*, viz. by Judas. The verb is in the present tense. The event was now so imminent that the Saviour speaks of it as transpiring.

Into the hands of sinners. Literally, *of the sinners.* The word is used, as often elsewhere, in its emphatic acceptance, and hence Godwin's translation does justice to its spirit, *of the wicked.* Such was the character of the white-washed men who bore sway in the Sanhedrim, and of the others who would co-operate with them in their eagerness to get rid of all who might disturb them in their hypocritical repose.

Ver. 42. *Rise up. Rouse yourselves up.* There was no longer time for repose.

Let us be going. Let us voluntarily lead ourselves on, viz. that we may confront the traitor and his band. How sublimely does the heroism of our Lord reveal itself!

Lo, he who delivereth Me up is at hand. Instead of naming Judas, the Lord described him, and, in the description, verified His own former predictions regarding Himself." (*James Morison*)

FACT QUESTIONS 14:32-42

985. What is the meaning of the word "Gethsemane"? What do we know of its location?
986. Why did Jesus separate Himself from His disciples?
987. In what sense were the three apostles "the elite of the elect"?
988. What is the meaning of the word "dismayed" as in vs. 33?
989. Why use the word "began" in connection with amazed?
990. How else could we say "greatly distressed"?
991. What thought or idea is behind the expression "my soul is exceeding sorrowful"?
992. Was there literal danger of death in the garden? Explain.
993. Discuss: "none could be with Him in the agony, none on the altar."
994. Show the meaning of the imperfect verbs of "fell" and "prayed."
995. "Jesus did not pray that the hour of the atoning sacrifice would pass away"—what then is included in the expression "the hour might pass from Him"?
996. What element in the spirit of Jesus arose to overshadow all other elements—show how touchingly and beautifully fitting is the bilingual use of the term "Father."
997. Explain—"all things are possible to thee".
998. Jesus did not request that the cup the Father gave Him to drink would be removed—what cup then is referred to in vs. 36?
999. Show how the expression "Not what do I wish, but what does my Father wish"—gives a better meaning to "not what I will, but what thou wilt."
1000. Why single Simon out of the group?
1001. What temptation was imminent when He said "that ye enter not into temptation"?
1002. What was "the Saviour's gracious apology for the languor of His disciples"?
1003. Why go again to pray the same words?
1004. What is meant by the expression "and they wist not what to answer Him."?
1005. How or in what manner did Jesus say "sleep on now"? What did He mean?
1006. Give at least three meanings to the little expression "it is enough".
1007. Do you agree with Morison's preference? Discuss.
1008. Who were "the sinners" of vs. 41?
1009. How does the sublime heroism of our Lord show itself?

2. JESUS BETRAYED, 14:43-54

TEXT: 14:43-54

"And straightway, while he yet spake, cometh Judas, one of the twelve, and with him a multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. Now he that betrayed him had given them a token, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is he; take him, and lead him away safely. And when he was come, straightway he came to him, and saith, Rabbi; and kissed him. And they laid hands on him, and took him. But a certain one of them that stood by drew his sword, and smote the servant of the high priest, and struck off his ear. And Jesus answered and said unto them are ye come out, as against a robber, with swords and staves to seize me? I was daily with you in the temple teaching and ye took me not; but this is done that the scriptures might be fulfilled. And they all left him and fled.

And a certain young man followed with him, having a linen cloth cast about him, over his naked body: and they lay hold on him; but he left the linen cloth, and fled naked.

And they led Jesus away to the high priest: and there come together with him all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes. And Peter had followed him afar off, even within, into the court of the high priest; and he was sitting with the officers, and warming himself in the light of the fire."

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 14:43-54

822. Please attempt a location of Jesus and His apostles when he said, "Behold, he that betrayeth me is at hand."
823. At what time was the betrayal made? How many were with Judas?
824. Show how each of the three groups mentioned were involved in the betrayal—i.e.: (1) "the chief priests, (2) the scribes, (3) the elders".
825. Did Judas hate Jesus? Why betray Him?
826. Why the need for "a token". Why use a kiss as a sign? Notice the footnote on the word "kiss"—this was not just a casual kiss.
827. Is there any thought that some feared Jesus would escape?
828. Show how Jesus willingly gave Himself up to His betrayer.
829. What is the meaning of "Rabbi"? Why use this greeting?
830. What was involved in "laid hands on Him."
831. What was right and wrong with Peter's defense of Jesus?
832. What did Peter imagine Jesus would do when he began his attack?
833. Why strike the servant of the high-priest?—was he the nearest one or was there some other reason?

834. What particular rebuke was in the words of Jesus in vs. 48 & 49?
i.e. what reflection on their power?
835. What scripture was fulfilled in the betrayal and capture of Jesus?
836. Why the incident of the young man as in verses 51, 52?
837. Why was this young man following Jesus?
838. Why take Jesus to the high-priest for trial?

COMMENT

TIME.—After the midnight of Thursday, April 6, A.D. 30. Probably between one and three o'clock on the morning of Friday, April 7th.

PLACE.—The betrayal took place at Gethsemane, near the base of the western slope of the Mount of Olives, where the Lord had passed the agony. Gethsemane was at the western foot of the Mount of Olives, beyond the Kedron ("black brook"), so called from its dark waters, which was still more darkened by the blood from the foot of the altar in the temple. The spot now pointed out as Gethsemane lies on the right of the path to the Mount of Olives. The wall has been restored. Eight olive trees remain, all of them very old, but scarcely of the time of our Lord, since Titus, during the siege of Jerusalem, had all the trees of the district cut down.—*Schaff*.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS.—Matt. 26:47-58; Luke 22:47-55; John 18:2-18.

LESSON OUTLINE.—1. The Traitor's Kiss. 2. The Flight of the Disciples. 3. The Lord Delivered to the Priests.

ANALYSIS

I. THE TRAITOR'S KISS, vs. 43-46.

1. Enemies Guided by Judas. Mark 14:43; Matt. 26:47; Luke 22:47; John 18:3.
2. The Traitor's Sign. Mark 14:44; Matt. 26:48.
3. Betrayed by a Kiss. Mark 14:45; Matt. 26:49; Luke 22:48.
4. The Lord Laid Hands Upon. Mark 14:46; Matt. 26:50.

II. THE LIGHT OF THE DISCIPLE, vs. 47-50.

1. Peter Draws the Sword. Mark 14:47; Matt. 26:51; Luke 22:50; John 18:10.
2. The Lord's Demand of His Enemies. Mark 14:47, 48; Matt. 26:55, 56; Luke 22:52, 53.
3. The Apostles Panic-stricken. Mark 14:50; Matt. 26:56.

III. THE LORD DELIVERED TO THE PRIESTS, vs. 51-54.

1. Mark Following at a Distance. Mark 14:51, 52.

2. Jesus Led to the Sanhedrim. Mark 14:53; Matt. 26:57; Luke 22:54; John 18:13.
3. Peter in the Palace of Caiaphas. Mark 14:54; Matt. 26:58; Luke 22:54; John 18:18.

INTRODUCTION

After his prayer (recorded in John 17) was ended, Jesus went with his disciples over the brook Kedron to the garden of Gethsemane, where he would await the coming of Judas. The apostate, after leaving the supper-room, had gone to the priests, and with them made arrangement for the immediate arrest of the Lord. Coming to the garden, Jesus takes with him Peter and James and John, and retires with them to a secluded spot. Here he begins to be heavy with sorrow, and, leaving the three, goes alone to pray. Returning, he finds them asleep. Leaving them, he again prays, and, in his agony, sweats a bloody sweat, but is strengthened by an angel. Again returning to the three disciples, he finds them asleep; he goes a third time and prays, and returning bids them sleep on, but soon announces the approach of Judas.—*Andrews*. The order of events, as indicated by a comparison of the four accounts, I think it to have been substantially as follows: Christ's prayer is broken in upon by the tramp of the approaching guards, and the gleaming of their lights as they issue from the gate of the city; their approach, observed across the intervening brook Kedron, he interprets as God' final answer to his prayer—it is the divine will that he should drink the bitter cup. He proceeds to the entrance of the garden and arouses his disciples (v. 46); Judas, who leads the band, draws near to kiss Jesus according to the pre-arranged signal; is abashed by the Lord's reproachful question, "Betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" and makes no reply (vs. 49, 50; Luke 22: 48); the band shares his confusion, and, under the influence of the superhuman majesty of our Lord, falls backward (John 18:4-6); the disciples, emboldened, ask permission to resist (Luke 22:49), and Peter, more impetuous than the rest, does not wait for an answer, but initiates the attack (v. 51; John 18:10); Christ rebukes him (vs. 52-54), heals the wounded servant (Luke 22:51), and demands of the officers that they let the disciples go their way (John 18:8); the disciples, forbidden to resist, interpret this as a hint to escape, and flee (v. 56); at the same time the officers, who have recovered from their momentary awe, proceed to bind Jesus (John 18:12), disregarding his dignified remonstrance against being treated as a thief (v. 55). For a full understanding of all the elements in this midnight scene, all the accounts should be carefully compared, but especially Matthew and John.—*Abbott*.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. THE TRAITOR'S KISS.

43. *Cometh Judas*. Between one and two o'clock Friday morning. The movements of Judas, after the last supper, we may readily picture to ourselves in their outline. Going immediately to Caiaphas, or to some other leading member of the Sanhedrim, he informs him where Jesus is, and announces that he is ready to fulfill his compact, and at once to make the arrest. It was not the intention to arrest Christ during the feast, lest there be a popular tumult (Matt. 26:5); but, now that an opportunity offered of seizing him secretly at dead of night, when all were asleep or engaged at the paschal meal, his enemies could not hesitate.—*Andrews*. Judas knew the place, for it was a frequent resort of Jesus with his disciples (John 18:2). *A great multitude*. This consisted, (1) of "the band" (John 18:3, 12), or Roman cohort, which, consisting of 300 to 600 men, quartered in the tower of Antonia, overlooking the temple, and ever ready to put down any tumult or arrest any disturber. Probably so much of the band as could be spared was present. (2) There were "the captains of the temple" (Luke 22:52), with their men, who guarded the temple and kept order. (3) Some of the "chief priests and elders" (Luke 22:52). (4) And, finally, their servants, such as Malchus (John 18:10), and others, who had been commissioned by the Jewish authorities.—*Clark*. *Swords and staves*. The soldiers were armed with swords, the officers of the priests with staves. They also had torches, though the moon was at the full, probably to search under the shadows of the trees and the rocks.

44. *He that betrayed . . . a token*. Judas had given them the sign previously. It was necessary, inasmuch as (the Roman soldiers did not personally know Christ, and) in the darkness he might be confounded, by the officers, with the disciples. The whole account indicates anxiety lest he should escape as he had done before (John 7:45, 46; 8:59; 10:39).—*Abbott*. *Shall kiss*. The kiss, among the ancients, was a sign of affectionate and cordial intimacy, and particularly a token of fidelity. Nothing could be baser than to come in enmity with the signs of deepest affection. Thus Joab betrayed and murdered Abner; a treacherous deed that David could not forget when he was dying.

45. *Master, master; and kissed him*. The salutation was hypocritical reverence. Master is the same as Rabbi, or teacher. *Kissed him*. An emphatic compound of the verb in the preceding verse, without exact equivalent in English, but denoting that he kissed him in an affectionate and earnest manner, adding to the guilt of the betrayal by the manner of committing it.

46. *Laid their hands on him.* This is an epitome of the following verses describing the capture. *And took him.* But only because Christ offers himself to be taken. He could have had twelve legions of angels to defend and rescue him, had he desired (Matt. 26:53). It was to be emphatically set forth before the eyes of all—Judas as well—that no man had power to bind this Jesus, or to lead him away to death, unless "he himself should lay down his life."

II. THE FLIGHT OF THE DISCIPLES.

47. *One of them . . . drew a sword.* The "one of them" was Peter (John 18:10). Why he was not mentioned is idle to inquire; one supposition only must be avoided, that there is any *purpose* in the omission. It is absurd to suppose that the mention of his name in a book current only among Christians, many years after the fact, could lead to his apprehension, which did not take place at the time, although he was recognized as the striker in the palace of the high priest (John 18:26). The real reason of the non-apprehension was that the servant was *healed* by the Lord.—*Alford.* *And smote a servant of the high priest.* His name was Malchus (John 18:10). The impetuosity of the attack was just like Peter. He asked, Shall we fight? and waited not for the answer, but struck at once. It is likely that Malchus was one of those who had seized the Lord. Peter's blow was one of his mistakes. Carnal weapons cannot defend the cause of the Lord. Besides, the Lord needed no defenders. The death of Christ was a voluntary surrendering of himself for the redemption of the world. Knowing the designs of the Pharisees against him, he could have eluded them by remaining beyond Jordan. Knowing the purpose of Judas to betray him, he could have withdrawn to some place of safety. But now that his mission of teaching, of healing, of guiding, was accomplished, the hour of sacrifice had come; and he was prepared to meet it. At the last, he could have summoned legions of angels to his help; but *he gave himself for us.*

48. *Are ye come out, as against a thief?* The word is the same as that used in John 18:40, of Barabbas, and points to the brigand chieftain of a lawless band, as distinct from the petty thief of towns or villages.—*Plumptre.* Judas had cautioned the guard to lead Jesus away securely (Mark 14:44), and when they finally arrested him they bound him (John 18:12). This indignity, it appears to me, probably called forth the remonstrance of this verse. Compare the language of Luke 22:52, 53—*Abbott.* Throughout his prolonged sufferings he complained of no other injury done to him than this; namely, that they came to apprehend him as a criminal.

49. *I was daily with you in the temple teaching.* This was not like a brigand. Why did they not arrest him then? *Took me not.* The offense with which he was charged was one of teaching, not of robbery or violence; it was open, public, unconcealed, and the time to arrest him was the time of his teaching; he had neither hid himself, nor surrounded himself with his followers for self-protection; the indignity of this midnight arrest was, therefore, gratuitous.—*Abbott. The Scriptures must be fulfilled.* As, for instance, relative to Judas (Ps. 41:9), relative to Christ being treated as a transgressor (Isa. 53:12), relative to the desertion of the disciples (Zech. 13:7). According to the counsel of God, for the salvation of a sinful world, as declared in the Scriptures, the Messiah must suffer; that suffering must be thus brought about. Our Lord's death could not be incidental or accidental. This declaration also contained consolation for his terrified disciples.

50. *They all forsook him and fled.* All had said they would never forsake him, but as soon as he submitted to his captors they were all panic-stricken and fled like sheep. They had never taken up the idea that it would be consistent with the ends contemplated in the mission of the Messiah that he should be ignominiously arrested. "This statement of the desertion of Jesus by 'all the disciples' is one of the most remarkable instances of that honesty which led the evangelists to record facts, though to their own dishonor."—*Mimpris.*

III. THE LORD DELIVERED TO THE PRIESTS.

51. *A certain young man.* The incident of this young man occurs very briefly, and is narrated apparently for no purpose whatever. The only solution, certainly the best, is the supposition that it was no other than Mark himself. Mark was at this time a young man, living probably in Jerusalem with his mother, and was more or less a follower of Jesus, and very likely to be present, from his interest in our Lord, during these awful transactions. That he should not name himself is very naturally explained, on the same principle of personal delicacy as induced the evangelist John to allude to himself in the third person. Such are the views of Schaff, Ellicott, Godet, and others. The minuteness of Mark's details of these events points to one who writes from personal knowledge. *A linen cloth.* A wrapper thrown over his undressed body. Doubtless this was the *aba*, an outer cloth thrown over the dress, and used even in sleep to enwrap the body. Dr. Thomson (vol. 1, p. 500) speaks of the very poor who sleep in their *aba*, or outer garment, and have no other "raiment for their skin." But the word rendered here "naked" often signifies undressed, that is, clad in the under-garments alone. Mark had, probably, been roused from sleep, or just preparing to retire to rest

in a house somewhere in the valley of Kedron, and he had nothing to cover him except the upper garment; but, in spite of this, he ventured, in his excitement, to press on amongst the crowd. This upper garment was worn much like a scottish plaid.

52. *And he left the linen cloth.* In attempting to lay hold on him, they grasped only the loose folds of the linen cloth. Letting this remain with them, he fled away and escaped, either not being pursued, or taking advantage of his knowledge of the place, in the darkness of the night, to elude his pursuers.

53. *Led Jesus away.* Jesus was now absolutely alone in the power of his enemies. At the command of the tribune his hands were tied behind his back, and, forming a close array around him, the Roman soldiers, followed and surrounded by the Jewish servants, led him once more through the night, over the Kedron, and up the steep city slope beyond it, to the palace of the high priest.—*Farrar. To the high priest.* We learn from John (18:13-15) that Jesus was first taken to the house of Annas, and, after a brief delay here, to the palace of Caiaphas, the high priest.—*Andrews.* It was the duty of Annas to examine the sacrifices, whether they were "without blemish;" there was significance in it that Christ, the great Sacrifice, was presented to him, and sent away bound as approved and ready for the altar.—*Lightfoot.* The actual high priest at the time was Caiaphas; but this Annas had been high priest, and as such enjoyed the title by courtesy. Being also a man of great wealth and influence, and of active habits, he took upon him much of the business of that office, as a sort of assessor to, or substitute for, Caiaphas, who was his son-in-law. Hence the evangelist describes them both as "high priests" (Luke 3:2), as they were in fact. *Were assembled all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes.* It was against the rules of Jewish law to hold a session of the Sanhedrim or council for the trial of capital offenses by night. Such an assembly on the night of the paschal supper must have been still more at variance with usage. The present gathering was therefore an informal one—probably a packed meeting of those who were parties to the plot; Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathaea, and probably not a few others, like the young "ruler" of Luke 18:18, not being summoned.—*Ellicott.*

54. *Peter followed him afar off.* After their flight in the garden, at least two of the apostles, Peter and John, turned about and followed from a distance the band that led the Savior. Peter followed secretly to see what the result would be. *Into the place of the high priest.* John, who was acquainted there, as we learn from his account, secured admission for Peter and himself. *And warmed himself at the fire.* The spring nights at Jerusalem, 2,600 feet above the sea, are often cold. The fire was built

in an open court in the interior of the building, open to the sky, around which the palace was constructed.

SUMMARY

14:1-52

This section exhibits, on the one hand, the evil purpose and wicked plottings of the enemies of Jesus, and on the other, the self-sacrifice with which he prepared himself for the fate which he foresaw, and to which he voluntarily submitted. It shows, by the counsel of the scribes and priests (1, 2), by the agreement with Judas (10, 11), by the remark concerning Judas at the supper-table (17-21), and by the manner of the arrest (44, 48, 49), that his death was sought for through malice and corruption. It shows, on the other hand, by the remarks of Jesus at the supper in Bethany (3-9), by his statement when instituting the Supper (22-25), and by his prayer in the garden (36), that he submitted voluntarily, though at the cost of unspeakable mental suffering, to a sacrificial death for the sins of the world. This last fact shows that he was impelled by a purpose which could originate in no human soul, and which no human being could under such circumstances maintain: for what mere human being, acquainted with the true God, could suppose that his own death would be an atonement for the sins of the world, and, having formed a purpose to die for this object, could maintain that purpose through such sufferings as Jesus endured? Here is an unmistakable mark of the divinity which dwelt in Jesus, giving direction to both his life and his death. (*J. W. McGarvey*)

FACT QUESTIONS 14:43-54

1010. At what time did the betrayal occur? Why?
1011. Describe the location of the garden of Gethsemane.
1012. What shall we say of the olive trees shown to tourists as the very ones under which our Lord knelt?
1013. Was it necessary to go over the Brook Kedron to reach Gethsemane?—Trace the route.
1014. At what juncture in His agony was our Lord strengthened by an angel?
1015. Why did Jesus return to His disciples three times?—was there any excuse for the sleep of the disciples?
1016. What does Christ interpret as God's final answer to His prayer?
1017. What very unusual event occurs to Judas and those who have come to arrest Jesus? Why?
1018. What two rebukes are given by Jesus during this betrayal scene?
1019. What was the circumstance that prompted the enemies of Christ not to hesitate in the arrest?

1020. Describe briefly the four groups in "a great multitude" who came to arrest Jesus.
1021. Read John 7:45, 46; 8:59; 10:39 and show the reason for the anxiety of those who came to take Jesus.
1022. How did Judas add to the guilt of his betrayal?
1023. How did Jesus plainly show to all that no man could have taken Him without Jesus' consent?
1024. What purpose was there in not mentioning the name of Peter as one who struck Malchus?
1025. Show three ways Jesus could have used to prevent His capture.
1026. In what way did Jesus link himself with Barabbas? Cf. John 18:40.
1027. For what was Jesus arrested? Show how appropriate are the words of vs. 49a.
1028. Read Ps. 41:9; Isa. 53:12; Zech. 13:7 and show how these were all fulfilled.
1029. Show how vs. 50 contains a remarkable instance of honesty on the part of the writer Mark.
1030. Why record the incident of "a certain young man"? Who was this young man?
1031. Why was the young man undressed?
1032. Did the soldiers arrest the apostles? Why attempt to arrest the unnamed young man?
1033. Describe the manner in which Christ was led away.
1034. To whom was Jesus first led? Why—What special significance is there in this action?
1035. How could it be that there were two high-priests? Who were they?
1036. What type of assembly gathered to judge Jesus? Who was and who wasn't there?
1037. Who followed with Peter? Why?—Where?

3. JESUS BEFORE THE COUNCIL 14:55-65

TEXT 14:55-65

"Now the chief priests and the whole council sought witness against Jesus to put him to death; and found it not. For many bare false witness against him, and their witness agreed not together. And there stood up certain, and bare false witness against him, saying, We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another made without hands. And not even so did their witness agree together. And the high priest stood up in the midst, and asked Jesus, saying, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee? But he held his peace, and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him, and saith unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of

the Blessed? And Jesus said, I am; and ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming with the clouds of heaven. And the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, What further need have we of witnesses? Ye have heard the blasphemy; what think ye? And they all condemned him to be worthy of death. And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him, and to say unto him, *Prophesy*; and the officers received him with blows of their hands."

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 14:55-65

839. Why were the chief priests and the whole council so determined to put Jesus to death?
840. Just what was involved in the testimony of witnesses? Why were they unable to find witnesses?
841. What was "unequal" about the testimony of the witnesses?
842. Why were the authorities so opposed to Jesus? Please attempt to be specific.
843. Read John 2:19 and show how the words of Jesus were twisted to say what Jesus did not say. Cf. 13:2.
844. Why the personal attempt on the part of the high priest to provoke a response from Jesus?
845. Why did Jesus answer the second question but not the first one?
846. What was the purpose of our Lord in speaking of "the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power"?
847. What is suggested in the action of the high priest in tearing his clothes?
848. Just what was the specific charge of the blasphemy?
849. Are we to understand the members of the Sanhedrim spit upon Jesus?
849. Are we to understand the members of the Sanhedrim spat upon Jesus? What was the cause of such intense hatred?

COMMENT

TIME.—Early Friday morning, April 7, A.D. 30, between one and six o'clock. This meeting took place before the dawn of day on Friday morning.

PLACE.—The palace of Caiaphas, the high priest in Jerusalem. The exact location of the palace of Caiaphas is unknown, but it was probably not far from the temple.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS.—Matt. 26:59-75. The trial (vs. 55-65) is found in Luke 22:63-71 and John 18:19-24.

ORDER OF EVENTS.—After the arrest, and its incidents: (1) Jesus was taken first to the house of Annas, ex-high priest (John 18:13). (2) Next to the palace of Caiaphas, Peter and John following (John 18:15). (3)

Here was a preliminary examination before Caiaphas (John 18:19-24. (4) The trial before the council, illegal because held at night—before three o'clock the cock-crowing (Matt. 26:59-65. Mark 14:55-64). (5) Peter's three denials during the trial (Matt. 26:69-75. Mark 14:66-72). (6) After the Sanhedrim had pronounced him guilty, it suspends its session till break of day. (7) During this interval Jesus is exposed to the insults of his enemies (Matt. 26:67, 68. Mark 14:65. Luke 22:63-65). (8) At the dawn of day the Sanhedrim reassembles (Matt. 27:1. Mark 15:1. Luke 22:66). (9) After hearing Christ's confession again, he is formally condemned to death for blasphemy (Luke 22:66-71.) (10) He is bound, and sent to Pilate (Mark 15:1).

OUTLINE.—1. False Witness Against Christ. 2. The Lord bears Witness. 3. The Lord Condemned to Die.

ANALYSIS

I. FALSE WITNESS AGAINST CHRIST, vs. 55-59.

1. False Testimony Sought. Mark 14:15; Matt. 26:59.
2. The False Witnesses fail to Agree. Mark 14:56; Matt. 26:50; 1 Pet. 3:16.
3. The False Witness Concerning the Temple. Mark 14:57-59; Matt. 26:51.

II. THE LORD BEARS WITNESS, vs. 60-62.

1. The High Priest Examines Christ. Mark 14:60; Matt. 26:52.
2. The Silence of Christ. Mark 14:61; Matt. 26:63; Issiah 53:7.
3. The Great and Good Confession. Mark 14:62; Matt. 26:64.

III. THE LORD CONDEMNED TO DIE, vs. 63-65.

1. The High Priest Pronounces Judgement. Mark 14:63; Matt. 26:65.
2. The Sanhedrim Votes the Death of Christ. Mark 14:64; Matt. 26:66.
3. The Lord Abused and Insulted. Mark 14:65; Matt. 22:67.

INTRODUCTION

I. THE COURT. The court convened to try Jesus Christ was the Sanhedrim, or Sanhedrin. It consisted of chief priests, that is, the heads of the twenty-four priestly classes; scribes, that is, rabbis learned in the literature of the church; and elders, who were chosen from amongst the most influential of the laity. Jewish tradition puts the number of members at seventy-one. The high priest usually presided: the vice-president sat at his right hand. The other councillors were ranged in front of these two in the form of a semicircle. Two scribes or clerks attended, who on criminal trials registered the votes, one for acquittal, the other for condemnation.—*Abbott*. The priests were there, whose greed and selfishness he had

exposed; and, worse than all, the worldly, sceptical Sadducees, the most cruel and dangerous of opponents, whose empty sapience he had confuted.—*Farrar*. The Sanhedrin had power to try those charged with capital offences, but it had no power to execute the sentence of death (John 18:31).

II. THE TRIAL. The whole criminal procedure in the Pentateuch rests upon three principles: (1) publicity of the trial, (2) entire liberty of defence allowed to the accused, and (3) a guaranty against the dangers of testimony: "one witness is no witness." There must be at least two or three who know the facts.—*M. Dupin*. Throughout the whole course of the trial, the rules of Jewish law of procedure were grossly violated, and the accused was deprived of rights belonging even to the meanest citizen. He was arrested in the night, bound as a malefactor, beaten before his arraignment, and struck in open court during the trial. He was tried on a feast-day, and before sunrise. He was compelled to criminate himself, and this under an oath of solemn judicial adjuration; and he was sentenced on the same day of the conviction. In all these particulars the law was wholly disregarded.—*Prof. Greenleaf's Trial of Jesus, in the Testimony of the Evangelists*.

III. THE ACCUSATION. The crime for which Jesus was condemned before the Sanhedrin was his alleged blasphemy; i.e., an assumption of power and authority which belonged to Jehovah alone (Matt. 26:65). But when he was brought before Pilate they changed the accusation to one of treason against the Roman government, as the only one of which Pilate would take cognizance (Luke 23:2).

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. FALSE WITNESS AGAINST CHRIST.

55. *The chief priests*, Annas and Caiaphas, the ex-high priest and the acting high priest, and the heads of the twenty-four courses. *All the council*. The priests just named and certain scribes and elders to the number of seventy-one (see *Introduction*) constituted the Sanhedrin, or council. Geikie says: "In imitation of the traditional usages of the Sanhedrin, while it existed, the judges before whom Jesus was led sat, turbaned, on cushions or pillows, in Oriental fashion, with crossed legs, and unshod feet, in a half circle; Caiaphas, as high priest, in the center, and the chief or oldest, according to precedence, on each side. The prisoner was placed, standing before Caiaphas; at each end of the semicircle sat a scribe, to write out the sentence of acquittal or condemnation; some bailiffs, with cords and thongs, guarded the accused, while a few others stood behind, to call witnesses, and, at the close, to

carry out the decision of the judges." *Sought for witness.* Not to ascertain the truth, but to destroy one whom they considered a personal enemy, was this trial conducted. *Found one.* It was necessary to find two who had been present at the same or a precisely similar offense, whatever it might be. The difficulty, then, was not that they found none, as the English Bible renders it, but, as the Greek words literally mean, they did not find (what they were seeking,) i.e., probably, two witnesses to one and the same act. It would have been strange indeed if no one could be found to testify at all; but it was not strange that they found it hard to obtain two concurrent witnesses to one and the same thing.—*Alexander.*

56. *Many bare false witness.* The charge against Jesus of declaring himself the Son of the God and so making himself equal with God (John 10:33), was one which it was impossible to substantiate by any witnesses outside the immediate circle of Christ's disciples, for his ministry had been one of singularly commingled boldness and caution—boldness in the truths he uttered, caution in the methods of his utterance. He never publicly proclaimed himself the Messiah. He forbade the evil spirits from announcing his character. Mark 1: 34. He received the confession of his disciples, but refused to permit them to repeat it to others. Matt. 16:20. Interrogated by the Jews whether he was the Christ, he had refused a direct reply, and had referred them to his works. John 10:24, 25. He had given the same response to the public questioning of John's disciples. In most of his later ministry he had veiled his meaning in parables. Hence the witnesses were contradictory and failed to meet the demands of the law.

57. *There arose certain.* At least two were found who were willing to give a distorted version of something Christ had said over two years before.

58. *We heard him say, I will destroy this temple.* The false witness consisted in giving that sense to his words which it appears by Matt. 27:63 they knew they did not bear. There is perhaps a trace, in the different reports of Matthew and Mark, of the discrepancy between the witnesses. There is considerable difference between the words attributed to him here, and there. These witnesses falsely reported his words, and failed also to understand what he did say but gave a new version according to their understanding.

59. *Neither so did their witness agree.* Their statements varied so much that there was not sufficient testimony on any one point to convict. Therefore this first plan failed.

II. THE LORD BEARS WITNESS.

60. *The high priest stood up.* Thus far, during all the wicked attempts to torture testimony against him the Lord had maintained unbroken silence. This was galling to the pride of Caiaphas, who saw that nothing remained but to force him, if possible, to criminate himself. *In the midst.* The high priest, leaving his official seat, came forward into the middle of the semi-circle, in which the members of the Sanhedrim were seated. The accused stood facing them, so that the high priest was then immediately side by side with our Lord. *Answerest thou nothing?* The question implies a long-continued silence, while witness after witness were uttering clumsy falsehoods. In the silence itself we may perhaps trace a deliberate fulfilment of Isa. 53:7. *What is it which these witness?* The first object of Caiaphas was to draw out an answer to the allegations, which, as he well knew, would not suffice, as they then stood, for condemnation.

61. *But he held his peace.* It was no part of his duty, as a defendant, to unravel the contradictions of his unprincipled accusers. Our Lord was silent; for in answering he must have opened to them the meaning of his words, which was not the work of this hour, nor fitting for that audience. Truth is never mute for want of arguments of defence, but sometimes silent, out of holy wisdom. *Said unto him.* "I adjure thee" (Matt. 26:63). This was the regular legal formula for administering oaths, and was binding on witnesses without their answering (Lev. 5:1). *Art thou the Christ?* Caiaphas became desperate, and adopted a resource which our own rules of evidence would declare most infamous, and which was also wholly adverse to the first principles of Mosaic jurisprudence, and the like of which occurs in no circumstance of Hebrew history. It was that of putting the prisoner upon his oath to answer questions framed for his own crimination.—*Kitto.*

62. *And Jesus said, I am.* His declaration of his divine Sonship constitutes Christ's solemn testimony to himself, uttered at the momentous crisis of his life, under the solemn sanction of an oath, in the course of judicial proceedings, in the presence of the highest council of the realm, in the far more sacred presence of God and his recording angels, at the peril of his life, and with a clear comprehension of the meaning which not only priests and people would attach to it, but with which it would be forever invested by humanity. If it had not been true it would have been blasphemy.—*Abbott. Ye shall see.* The "shall ye see" is to the council, the representatives of the chosen people, so soon to be judged by him to whom all judgment is committed—the power in contrast to his present

weakness—sitting, even as they now sat, to judge him; and the *coming in the clouds of heaven* (see Dan. 7:13) looks onward to the awful time of the end, when every eye shall see him.—*Alford*. Let it be noted that this is the Lord's first formal, public declaration of his divinity. He now offered up his life in attestation of his Messiahship and divine character.

III. THE LORD CONDEMNED TO DIE.

63. *The high priest rent his clothes*. The act was almost as much a formal sign of condemnation as the putting on of the black cap by an English judge.—*Plumptre*. The practice of rending the clothes on occasions of supposed blasphemy was based on 2 Kings 18:37. Originally it was a natural outburst of intense grief, and was involuntary; but at a later period it became a mere form regulated by special rules. The rent made in the garment was from the neck downward, and about a span in length. The body dress and outer garment were left untouched.—*Lange*. *What need we any further witnesses?* They had called but one true witness; his testimony they rejected; and yet on the strength of his testimony they were about to condemn him!

64. *Ye have heard the blasphemy*. Blasphemy here denotes "reproachful, irreverent, or insulting language concerning God, or any of his names or attributes." Such would be the making God to be only like a man. Hence, had Jesus not been the Messiah, what he said *would* have been blasphemy. *What think ye?* A formal putting of the question. *And they all*. It may therefore be inferred that none had been summoned who were known or suspected to favor our Lord, though they may have been called to the more formal council at daybreak. *Condemned him*. This formal condemnation was, as they imagined, according to the law (Lev. 24:16). Compare Deut. 18:20. The Sanhedrim was forbidden to investigate any capital crime during the night, and according to the Roman law a sentence pronounced before dawn was not valid. This test vote, however, they considered as settling the question.—*Schaff*. The council now adjourned, to meet at daybreak, when they could legally pronounce the sentence. In the mean time occurred the maltreatment by his lawless enemies described in the next verse. The daybreak meeting, at which the sentence already pronounced was formally ratified, is described in Luke 22:66-71. John only relates the examination before Annas; Matthew and Mark give the account of the packed and illegal meeting of the Sanhedrim before day, presided over by Caiaphas. Luke only gives the account of the ratification meeting of the Sanhedrim at the dawn of day. All the accounts must be studied in order to get the full account of the Jewish condemnation of the Lord.

65. *Began to spit on him.* One under sentence of death was always, in these rough ages, the sport of mockery of his guards, and those in charge of Jesus, made worse than common by the example of the judges, vented their cruelty on him with the coarsest brutality. Their passions, indeed, intensified their bitterness, for they were fierce Jewish bigots.—*Geikie. To say unto him, Prophecy.* He who claims to be chief of the prophets should now give us a specimen of his prophetic powers. He was blind-folded, so that they were putting his prophetic powers to a mock test. Compare these insults before the Jews, which alluded to his claims of Messiahship with the insults by the Romans, which alluded to his political claims.

FACT QUESTIONS 14:55-65

1038. Please retrace carefully the three incidents leading to the trial of Jesus and the seven following.
1039. How many chief priests in the council? From whence did they come?
1040. Who were the scribes? the elders?
1041. Who presided? How was the condemnation or acquittal recorded?
1042. Show why each class in the Sanhedrim were adverse in their opinion of Jesus.
1043. "The whole criminal procedure in the Pentateuch rests upon three principles"—what were they?
1044. Show at least four particulars in which throughout the course of his trial the rules of Jewish law were grossly violated.
1045. What were the two accusations brought against Jesus?
1046. Why did the council seek a witness?
1047. The problem was not that they could not find witnesses but rather in the quality of the ones they found—explain.
1048. Why would it be almost impossible to substantiate the charge of Jesus declaring Himself to be the Son of God?
1049. When had anyone heard Him say "I will destroy this temple?" Cf. Matt. 27:63.
1050. The testimony of the witnesses was rejected—why?
1051. Why did Caiaphas stand up in the midst of the council?
1052. Show how Isa. 53:7 was fulfilled in the trial.
1053. What did Caiaphas hope to do in any testimony Jesus would give?
1054. "Truth is never mute for want of arguments of defense, but sometimes silent out of _____."
1055. In what manner did Caiaphas attempt to cause Christ to criminate Himself?
1056. Please read Abbott's beautiful comment under vs. 62. "And Jesus

- said, I am"—give three or four of the momentous circumstances attending this confession.
1057. To whom did Jesus address the words "Ye shall see"? Why did He make such a stupendous prediction? Cf. Dan. 7:13.
1058. What significance was there in the rent clothes of the high priest? How did the practice originate?
1059. The claim of Jesus would have been indeed blasphemy except for one fact—what was it?
1060. Who was called to this Council meeting? When was it held?
1061. Read Lev. 24:16; Deut. 18:20 and show how the Council felt they had acted according to law—Show two particulars where they had not.
1062. In what sense was a "test vote" taken?
1063. Between the early morning meeting and daybreak what happened in the treatment of Jesus?
1064. Who spit on Jesus?
1065. Read Luke 22:66-71 for the daybreak meeting.
1066. When was Jesus tried before Annas?
1067. How can we imagine the dignified religious elders of the supreme court spitting on anyone?
1068. The Jews mocked Jesus for one claim, the Romans for another—what were the claims? Were they true?

4. PETER'S DENIALS 14:66-72

TEXT 14:66-72

"And as Peter was beneath in the court, there cometh one of the maids of the high priest; and seeing Peter warming himself, she looked upon him and saith, Thou also wast with the Nazarene, even Jesus. But he denied, saying, I neither know, nor understand what thou sayest: and he went out into the porch; and the cock crew. And the maid saw him and began again to say to them that stood by, This is one of them. But he again denied it. And after a little while again they that stood by said to Peter, Of a truth thou art one of them; for thou art a Galilean. But he began to curse, and to swear, I know not this man of whom ye speak. And straightway the second time the cock crew. And Peter called to mind the word, how that Jesus said unto him, Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. And when he thought thereon, he wept."

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 14:66-72

850. Please attempt a picture in mind of the Court of Caiaphas—what is meant by the expression "beneath the court" or "below in the courtyard"?

851. Why had Peter followed Jesus? What were his feelings about Jesus at this time?
852. Since it was dark (in the early morning hour) how could the maid recognize Peter?
853. Read John 18:16—could we identify this maid with the one mentioned by John?
854. What tasks were performed by these "maids of the high priest"?
855. Why was Peter so quick in his denial? Wouldn't it have been easier to ignore the accusation? Discuss.
856. Of what did Peter have to be ashamed in his association with Jesus?
857. What was "the porch" or "vestibule" into which Peter went? Where was the cock? Why go into the vestibule?
858. Read Matt. 26:29-75; Luke 22:55-62 and discuss who the second maid was in the second denial by Peter.
859. Who accused Peter in his third denial? Why? Cf. Luke 22:59.
860. What caused the by-standers to join in the verbal attack? Cf. Matt. 26:73.
861. Please attempt a careful explanation as to what is involved in "curse and to swear"—it is *not* profanity.
862. Read Luke 22:61 for a reason for the weeping of Peter.
863. What is meant by the word "having thought thereon"? i.e. in what manner did Peter think thereon?
864. Why was Peter willing to defend his Lord in Gethsemane—"face a mob armed with swords and clubs" and yet wilt before a maid who pointed her finger at him?
865. Attempt an explanation of the depth of repentance in the weeping of Peter.

COMMENT

Time.—Early Friday morning, April 7, A.D. 30, between one and six o'clock.

Place.—The palace of Caiaphas, the high priest in Jerusalem. The exact location of the palace of Caiaphas is unknown, but it was probably not far from the temple.

Parallel Accounts.—Matt. 26:69-75; Luke 22:55-62; John 18:15-18; 25-27.

Outline.—1. The first denial, vs. 66-68. 2. The second denial, vs. 69, 70a. 3. The third denial, vs. 70b-71. 4. Peter's repentance, vs. 72.

ANALYSIS

- I. THE FIRST DENIAL, vs. 66-68.
1. The place of the denial—"beneath in the courtyard."
 2. The accuser in the denial—"there cometh one of the maids of the high priest."
 3. The light for the denial—the fire of the enemies of Jesus—"seeing Peter warming himself."—"she looked upon him."
 4. The accusation of the denial—"Thou also wast with the Nazarene, even Jesus."
 5. The hasty, embarrassed denial—"I neither know, nor understand what thou sayest."
 6. Peter's retreat—"he went out into the porch."
 7. The sermon of the cock—"and the cock crew."
- II. THE SECOND DENIAL, vs. 69, 70a.
1. Either the same maid or another one again accused Him. Cf. Matt. 26:71; Luke 22:58.
 2. "He again denied it."
- III. THE THIRD DENIAL, vs. 70b-71.
1. Made by those who stood by—perhaps aroused by the words of the maid.
 2. Peter bound himself under an oath that he did not know Jesus.
- IV. PETER'S REPENTANCE, vs. 72.
1. The second crowing of the cock immediately after the third denial.
 2. The promise of Jesus called to mind.
 3. The meaning of what he had done broke his heart.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. THE FIRST DENIAL.

"66. *beneath in the palace.*) Or below in the court. Matthew, *without in the hall.* The chamber in which the Sanhedrim met was an upper room.

68. *neither understand I.*) Mark is careful to give every word; even this slight addition aggravates Peter's sin.

And he went out into the porch.) The exact place designated was a small forecourt in the open air. There the crowing of the cock might be heard more easily than in the inner court; this crowing was about one or two o'clock,—see note on v. 30—some three or four hours before the second crowing, giving therefore some intimation as to the length of the proceedings. According to the late Jewish tradition cocks were not kept in Jerusalem, being considered unclean; but there are distinct proofs to the contrary in the Talmud.

And the cock crew.) This is omitted by B, but is found in MSS of the highest authority, and in most ancient versions. It should certainly be retained."

II. THE SECOND DENIAL.

"69. *And a maid.*) This might give an impression that the same maid is meant; but Peter was then near the gate or outer door, and the person who would naturally see him was the portress. We know from John, chapter 18:16, that a female kept the door. She could speak positively to his identity. Then came the second denial. There was an interval, it might be of two hours, between this and the preceding denial: another interval of about an hour (Luke v. 59) passes and the bystanders, who had been present at the arrest, one recognizing him as the smiter of Malchus, unanimously charged him."

III. THE THIRD DENIAL.

"71. *curse and to swear.* Matthew has the same strong, expression, which Luke, the *Pauline Evangelist*, omits. But Mark adds a few sharp painful words, *this* (contemptuous), and the expression, "*whom ye speak*" of, as though he knew Him only from their statement.

The oldest MSS have *immediately* before the second time, which one omits."

IV. PETER'S REPENTANCE.

"72. *the second time.* This was about an hour before dawn. The trial was then just over: our Lord was now in the court passing towards the porch, bound and in the hands of the attendants, and turned, as Luke alone tells, to cast a look on the denier. That look Peter could not forget, but he could hardly bear to speak of it; it told too of unbroken affection, and that in relating his own great sin he might scarcely dare to record. What he does relate is the sudden reaction at the second cock-crowing, "and when he thought thereon he wept"—he will not even dwell on the *bitterness* of his anguish, which the other Synoptists record with natural sympathy. He omits also the words, "he went out." He will say nothing of himself save what concerned the greatness of his fall, and the simple fact of his grief (a long weeping,) on the awakening of conscience. The rendering "when he thought thereon," is correct; the Greek word implies exactly that when he turned his thought and recalled those words, he began to weep, and continued weeping. Other explanations are doubtful and unsatisfactory. N. B. Grimm (Lex. s.v.) gives good authority for this (Antonin. 10, 30; Plut. Plac. Phil. 4, 1), and adds, "absol. sc. quum perpendisset effatum Christi." Rather, "quum animum advertisset ad effatum Jesu."

Thus terminates the preliminary inquiry. The sentence of death is not pronounced in a formal and legal way, but the decision that death was the proper penalty has been given; the only question that remains is how it is to be executed. On the illegality of the whole proceeding, see note on Matt. xxvii. I." (*F. C. Cook*)

FACT QUESTIONS 14.66-72

1069. What slight addition in the report by Mark aggravates Peter's sin?
 1070. What intimation do we get of the length of the proceedings?
 1071. What was the total time involved in the three denials?
 1072. How is the word "this" used in vs. 71?
 1073. How do we learn of the unbroken affection between Jesus and Peter?
 1074. On what did Peter think that made him weep?

5. JESUS BEFORE PILATE 15:1-20

TEXT 15:1-20

"And straightway in the morning the chief priests with the elders and scribes, and the whole council, held a consultation, and bound Jesus, and carried him away, and delivered him up to Pilate. And Pilate asked him, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answering saith unto him, Thou sayest. And the chief priests accused him of many things. And Pilate asked him, saying, Answerest thou nothing? behold how many things they accuse thee of. But Jesus no more answered anything; insomuch that Pilate marvelled.

Now at the feast he used to release unto them one prisoner, whom they asked of him. And there was one called Barabbas, lying bound with them that had made insurrection, men who in the insurrection had committed murder. And the multitude went up and began to ask him to do as he was wont to do unto them. And Pilate answered them, saying, Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews? For he perceived that for envy the chief priests had delivered him up. But the chief priests stirred up the multitude, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them. And Pilate again answered and said unto them, What then shall I do unto him whom ye call the King of the Jews? And they cried out again, Crucify him. And Pilate said unto them, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out exceedingly, Crucify him. And Pilate, wishing to content the multitude, released unto them Barabbas, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified.

And the soldiers led him away within the court, which is the Praetorium; and they called together the whole band. And they clothe him with purple, and plaiting a crown of thorns, they put it on him; and they

began to salute him, Hail, King of the Jews! And they smote his head with a reed, and did spit upon him, and bowing their knees worshipped him. And when they had mocked him, they took off from him the purple, and put on him his garments. And they led him out to crucify him."

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 15:1-20

866. Why were the Jews so anxious to bring Jesus before Pilate?
867. If they had already condemned Jesus why hold another consultation?
868. Are we to understand from the little expression "the whole council" in vs. 1 that the whole council was not present at the first meeting?
869. Why ask about the Lordship of Jesus?
870. What did the answer of Jesus mean to Pilate?
871. Of what did the chief-priests accuse Jesus? (Please remember Jesus is before Pilate not Caiaphas)
872. Why didn't Jesus give answer to the accusations of the chief priests?
873. The marvelling of Pilate—was it an ordinary thing for this governor of Judea? Why did he marvel?
874. What feast was about to be held? Cf. vs. 6.
875. What purpose was served in releasing a prisoner during the feast?
876. Please mark how completely Barabbas was guilty of everything of which Jesus was accused.
877. What interest did the multitude have in the release of a prisoner?
878. Did Pilate believe Jesus was the actual "King of the Jews"?
879. Pilate knew the real motive for the arrest of Jesus—what is meant by the expression "for envy the chief priests had delivered Him up"?
880. What do you imagine the chief-priests would say to the multitude to stir them up?
881. Cf. Matt. 27:1, 2; 11-26. Luke 23:1-25; John 18:28-40; 19:1 to get a complete record of all the events. Pilate put forth a real effort to save Jesus—indicate three attempts.
882. What was the great sin of Pilate?
883. Why scourge Jesus? What was involved?
884. Where was the trial before Pilate held?
885. Why call together "the band" or "cohort"?
886. Was it customary to mock prisoners? Who did the mocking?
887. Discuss the details of His suffering—show how appropriate the method of mockery was as related to His suffering for us as the King of glory.

COMMENT

Time.—Friday morning, April 7, A.D. 30, between five and nine o'clock.

Place.—The last and formal condemnation of the Sanhedrim, described in Luke 22:66-71, was probably in their usual council chamber, called *Gazith*, at the southeast corner of one of the courts of the temple; or else in a hall near the gate Shusan, close by the temple. The trial before Pilate was either in the tower of Antonia, near the temple, or at Herod's palace, on the northern brow of Mount Zion.

Parallel Accounts.—Matt. 27:1, 2, 11-26; Luke 23: 1-25; John 18:28-40; 19:1.

ORDER OF EVENTS AT CHRIST'S TRIAL BEFORE PILATE:

1. Second session of the Sanhedrim (Matt. 27:1; Mark 15:1).
2. First application to Pilate (John 18:28-32).
3. Formal accusation before Pilate (Matt. 27:11; Mark 15:1,2).
4. First colloquy between Christ and Pilate (John 18:33-38; Mark 15:2.)
5. Acquittal; further charges; Christ's silence (Matt. 27: 12-14; Mark 15:3-5; Luke 23:4, 5).
6. Case sent to Herod (Luke 23:6-12).
7. Before Pilate again. Formal acquittal (Luke 23:13-16).
8. Jesus or Barabbas (Matt. 27:15-18; Mark 15:6-10).
9. Message of warning from Pilate's wife (while people are deciding) (Matt. 27:19).
10. Barabbas chosen. Cries to "Crucify him!" (Matt. 27:20-22; Mark 15:11-13).
11. Efforts of Pilate to save Jesus (Matt. 27:23; Mark 15:12-14).
12. Pilate washes his hands (Matt. 27:24, 25).
13. Sentence of crucifixion (Mark 15:15; Luke 23:24, 25).
14. Scourging and mockery (Matt. 27:26-30; Mark 15:16-19; John 19:1-3).
15. Further efforts to save Jesus (John 19:4-16).
16. Led away to be crucified (Matt. 27:31; Mark 15:20).

Outline.—1. The Lord Sent to Pilate. 2. Barabbas or Christ. 3. The Lord Delivered to be Crucified.

ANALYSIS

- I. THE LORD SENT TO PILATE, vs. 1-5.
 1. The Sanhedrim Delivers Jesus. Mark 15:1; Matt. 27:1; Luke 23:1; John 18:28.
 2. The King of the Jews. Mark 15:2; Matt. 27:11.
 3. As a Lamb before his Shearers. Mark 15:3-5; Matt. 27:11; John 19:9; Isa. 53:7.
- II. BARABBAS OR CHRIST, vs. 6-11.
 1. The Custom of the Feast. Mark 15:6; Matt. 27:15; Luke 23: 17; John 18:39.

2. Barabbas the Murderer. Mark 15:7.
 3. Pilate's Offer to Release Christ. Mark 15:9; Matt. 27:15; Luke 23:17; John 18:39.
 4. Barabbas Chosen. Mark 15:11; Matt. 27:20; Acts 3:14.
- III. THE LORD DELIVERED TO BE CRUCIFIED, vs. 12-20.
1. Pilate Importuned to Crucify Christ. Mark 15:12-24.
 2. Jesus Scourged. Mark 15:15; Matt. 27:26; John 19:1.
 3. Jesus Mocked. Mark 15:16-20; Matt. 27:27-32; Luke 23:26.

INTRODUCTION

Though the Sanhedrim had condemned Jesus to death on the charge of blasphemy, they had no power to carry out the sentence and were compelled to carry their prisoner to Pilate, the Roman governor, to secure his sanction. There they charge him with being a malefactor, and Pilate directs them to take him and judge him themselves. As they cannot inflict a capital punishment they bring the charge of sedition; and Pilate, re-entering the judgment hall, and calling Jesus, examines him as to his Messianic claims. Satisfied that he is innocent, Pilate goes out and affirms that he finds no fault in him. The Jews renewing their accusations, to which Jesus makes no reply, and mentioning Galilee, Pilate sends him to Herod, who was then at Jerusalem; but Jesus refuses to answer his questions, and is sent back to Pilate. The latter now resorts to another expedient. He seats himself upon the judgment-seat, and calling the chief priests and elders, declares to them that neither himself nor Herod had found any fault in him. According to custom, he would release him. But the multitude, beginning to cry that he should release Barabbas, not Jesus, he leaves it to their choice. During the interval, while the people were making their choice, his wife sends a message to him of warning. The people, persuaded by the priests and elders, reject Jesus and choose Barabbas, and Pilate makes several efforts to change their decision. At last he gives orders that Jesus be scourged previous to crucifixion. This was done by the soldiers with mockery and abuse, and Pilate, going forth, again takes Jesus and presents him to the people. The Jews continue to demand his death, but upon the ground that he made himself the Son of God. Terrified at this new charge, Pilate again takes Jesus into the hall to ask him, but receives no answer. Pilate strives earnestly to save him, but is met by the cry that he is Caesar's enemy. Yielding to fear, he ascends the tribunal, and, calling for water, washes his hands in token of his innocence, and then gives directions that he be taken away and crucified.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

1. THE LORD SENT TO PILATE.

1. *In the morning the chief priests held a consultation.* This was the meeting of the Sanhedrim described by Luke as held at the dawn, to ratify formally what had been done before with haste and informality. The circumstances under which its members had been convened at the palace of Caiaphas sufficiently show that the legal forms, which they were so scrupulous in observing, had not been complied with. The law forbidding capital trials in the night had been broken; the place of session was unusual, if not illegal; perhaps the attendance, so early after midnight, had not been full. On these accounts it was expedient that a more regular and legal sitting should be held as early in the morning as was possible. For a full account of this meeting see Luke 22:65-71. *Carried him away.* While the Sanhedrim had power to try those charged with capital offenses, it had no power to execute the sentence of death. It is generally agreed that from the time Judea became a Roman province the authority to punish capitally had been taken away from the Jewish tribunals. Shortly after the death of Herod the Great, Judea was annexed to the great Roman province of Syria, and governed by deputies called Procurators, the fourth of whom was Valerius Gratus, and the fifth Pontius Pilate, appointed in the thirteenth year of Tiberius. Like his predecessors and successors in that office, he resided commonly at Caesarea, but attended at Jerusalem during the great festivals, in order to preserve the peace.

2. *Pilate asked him.* The Jews, carefully suppressing the religious grounds on which they had condemned our Lord, had advanced against him a triple accusation of, (1) seditious agitation; (2) prohibition of the payment of the tribute money; and (3) the assumption of the suspicious title of "King of the Jews" (Luke 23:2). This last accusation amounted to a charge of treason—the greatest crime known to Roman law. Of the three points of accusation, (2) was utterly false; (1) and (3), though in a sense true, were not true in the sense intended. *Art thou the King of the Jews?* The question is asked because the Jews charged that he made such claims. Pilate may well have been perplexed. Christ had claimed to be King; promulgated laws; organized in the heart of Caesar's province the germ of an imperishable kingdom; entered Jerusalem in triumph, hailed by the throng as King of the Jews; and his arrest had been forcibly resisted by one of his followers. These facts a wily priesthood could easily pervert and exaggerate so as to give color to their accusation. *Thou sayest.* This is not to be taken as a doubtful answer, but as a strong

affirmation. The answer of defense of Jesus (John 18:34-38) is that he is King, but that his "kingdom is not of this world," therefore (it is inferred) the "perversion of the people" was not a rebellion that threatened the Roman government. The defense was complete, as Pilate admits: "I find no fault in him" (Luke 23:4). This is Pilate's first emphatic and unhesitating acquittal (John 18:38).

3. *Chief priests accused him.* Pilate's public decided acquittal only kindled the fury of his enemies into yet fiercer flame. After all that they had hazarded, was their purpose to be foiled by the intervention of the very Gentiles on whom they had relied for its bitter consummation?—*Farrar.* *Of many things.* Some are given in Luke 23:2-5 (see under v. 2). *Answered nothing.* He had already explained to Pilate the nature of his kingdom, and satisfied him that he is innocent of sedition; after that he keeps silence. He will answer honest perplexity, but not willful slander.

5. *Pilate marvelled.* Convinced as Pilate was of the innocence of Christ, he was all the more at a loss to understand the forbearance with which he maintained such sublime silence.—*Meyer.*

II. BARABBAS OR CHRIST.

6. *At that feast he released unto them one prisoner.* It was a Greek and Roman custom to release prisoners on birthdays of rulers and festive occasions, a custom still followed by rulers. On the jubilee of her coronation, Queen Victoria ordered the prisons of India to be opened. This custom had been introduced into the subject provinces of the Roman Empire and at the passover a prisoner was released in Jerusalem.

7. *There was one named Barabbas.* Matthew says he was a notable prisoner. Barabbas was plainly a ringleader in one of those fierce and fanatic outbreaks against the Roman domination, which fast succeeded one another in the latter days of the Jewish commonwealth. *Committed murder.* In this particular insurrection blood had been shed, and apparently some Roman soldiers had been killed. Note particularly the Revised Version here. It is remarkable that this man Barabbas was confessedly guilty of the very crime with which the priests and rulers had falsely charged Jesus—that of sedition; and no plainer proof of their hypocrisy could be given to the watchful Pilate than their efforts to release the former and condemn the latter.

8. *The multitude . . . began to desire him.* Note the wording in the New Version. The mob of the city, pouring from street and alley in the excited Oriental fashion, came streaming up the avenue to the front of

the palace, shouting for this annual gift. The cry was for once welcome to Pilate, for he saw in it a loophole of escape from his disagreeable position.—*Stalker*.

9. *Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews?* The events may be thus arranged: Pilate presents to the people the two—Jesus and Barabbas—between whom they were to choose. A little interval followed, during which he received his wife's message. He now formally asks the people whom they wished to have released (Matt. 27:21; Mark 15:9; Luke 23:16-18). They answer, "Barabbas," Pilate, hoping that by changing the form of the question he could obtain an answer more in accordance with his wishes, says "What shall I do, then, with Jesus, which is called Chsist?" (Matt. 27:22; Mark 15:12). To this they reply, "Let him be crucified." His use of the term, "the King of the Jews," was probably an attempt to enlist the patriotic feeling of the multitude on the side of the prisoner.

11. *Chief priests moved the people.* They dared not openly apprehend him, for fear of the people; but, taking him secretly and surrendering him with all the appendages of a culprit guilty of something, the people are induced to consider him as a deceiver and blasphemer and traitor. Doubtless the friends of Jesus were mostly absent, frightened away by this fearful revolution, or ignorant of what was in progress, since not more than six hours had passed since Jesus was seized, and those hours of darkness.

III. THE LORD DELIVERED TO BE CRUCIFIED.

12. *What . . . then that I shall do unto him.* That he did not permanently protect him, rose partly from his character, and partly from his past history as procurator. Morally enervated and lawless, the petty tyrant was incapable of a strong impression of righteous firmness, and besides, he dreaded complaints at Rome from the Jewish authorities, and insurrections of the masses in his local government.—*Geikie. Do unto him.* This is remarkable; since it shows that Pilate made, so to speak, a second offer. He was called upon by the people to release one prisoner only at the festival; but his question implies, that, even after their declared preference of Barabbas, he was willing to leave the fate of the man to their decision—*Cook*.

13. *Cried out again.* There had been various outcries of the people; and with this fresh outburst of fury there was the demand for death.

14. *Then Pilate said unto them, Why what evil hath he done?* The question attested the judge's conviction of the innocence of the accused,

but it attested also the cowardice of the judge. We find from Luke 23:22, that he had recourse to the desperate expedient of suggesting a milder punishment, chastising, i.e., scourging; but the suggestion itself showed his weakness. Pilate sought to satisfy all; the people, by releasing him; the priests and elders, by chastising him; and himself, by delivering him from death. But he satisfied none.

15. *Willing to content the people.* Observe the pitiful vacillation of a man, devoid of all principle or conscience of duty. Pilate is willing to release Jesus (Luke 23:20), and Pilate is also willing to content the people. Heaven and hell strive in his bosom for the mastery and the latter gains the victory.

SUMMARY

14:53—15:15

If Jesus had been arrested on some charge of criminal conduct, and if his trial and sentence had been marked by the due forms of justice, these facts would have detracted somewhat from the force of the evidence of his innocence. But the proceedings connected with his arrest and condemnation by the Sanhedrim, and those by which the sentence of death was procured from Pilate, furnish evidence in favor of his claims. It is only when justice is to be perverted, and the innocent condemned, that men resort to practices so corrupt. Though false witnesses were purposely employed in his trial before the Sanhedrim, and though their testimony when presented was contradictory, still the high priest pretended that it contained evidence of guilt (xiv. 57-60). Not willing, however, to rest the case on this testimony, Jesus was then called on to testify in his own case, and though his answer was merely a repetition of what he had claimed for himself from the beginning, on this he was pronounced worthy of death (xiv. 61-64). After thus condemning him on a false charge of blasphemy, they went before Pilate with an entirely different charge, that of disloyalty to Caesar, a charge of which they had special reasons to know that he was not guilty (xv. 1, 2; comp. xii. 13-17). Pilate was now subjected to the alternative of either vindicating the cause of justice, or giving success to the iniquitous prosecution of Jesus. He knew that the chief priests had accused him through envy (xv. 10), and he openly proclaimed that he could find no evil in his conduct (xv. 14); yet, "to content the people, he released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus to be crucified" (xv. 15). Thus the condemnation and the sentence of Jesus, viewed merely in the light of Mark's account, contain unmistakable proofs that they were brought about by the employment of such measures, and such only, as are employed in the condemnation and death of innocent persons. (*J. W. McGarvey*)

16. *Led him into the hall called Praetorium.* The Praetorium, translated "hall of judgment," was the headquarters of the Roman military governor, wherever he happened to be. *The whole band.* The "whole band," or cohort, which was gathered to join in the mockery, was the tenth part of a legion, embracing from there three to six hundred men.

17. *Clothed him in Purple.* A kind of round cloak, which was confined on the right shoulder by a clasp, so as to cover the left side of the body, worn by military officers, and called *paludamentum*. Those of the emperors were purple. This cloak or robe, called by Matthew scarlet, is by Mark called purple. The two colors blend into each other, and the words are interchangeable. *Platted a crown of thorns.* Made of a plant similar to the cactus. What crown could have been imagined for our King Jesus which should have so exactly suited him as this crown of thorns? He who came to obtain for us the blessing bears what the curse-laden earth brings forth, being made a curse for us.

18. *Hail, king of the Jews.* "The king of the Jews," the title which he had assumed, and which these soldiers, like their commander, thought supremely ridiculous, as borne by such a person. It has been well observed that, as the Jews especially derided his prophetic claims, so the Romans mocked at his regal pretensions.

19. *Smote him on the head.* The blow of the reed would have been too light to inflict much pain upon any other part than the head, and there it would aggravate the pain of the thorns. *Spit upon him.* As their excitement increased, they spat upon him, following the example of the chief priests (Mark 14:65). It is remarkable that during the whole of this treatment Christ offered no resistance, and uttered no word—he who with a glance of his eye could have scathed them into ashes.

20. *Put his own clothes on him.* He was thus mocked, not in his own clothes, but in another's, to signify that he suffered not for his own sin. *Led him out.* That is, from the city; the place of execution was without the city walls (Heb. 13:12). Quesnel says: He suffered "without the gate," in order to show us that we are not to expect sanctification by the sacrifices offered within that city; and that he died, not for the Jews only, but for all mankind. Heb: 13:11-14. After the mocking, and before the royal robes were taken off, we have to insert the account which John gives (19:4, 5) of Pilate's last attempt to rescue the "just Man" whom he had unjustly condemned. He showed the silent Sufferer in the mock insignia of royalty, as if asking them, Is not this enough? The cries of "Crucify him!" were but redoubled; and once again the cowardly judge took his place in the official chair, and passed the final sentence.

FACT QUESTIONS 15:1-20

1075. Please read again the order of events at Christ's trial before Pilate.
1076. What was Pilate's first reaction to the charge of the Jews that Jesus was a malefactor?
1077. Why send Jesus to Herod?
1078. When did Pilate's wife send him a message? What did it say?
1079. What was terrifying in the charge that Jesus made Himself the Son of God?
1080. What was the cry that caused Pilate to deliver Jesus to be crucified?
1081. What laws (name two) were broken in the first meeting of the council?
1082. When did Pilate begin his rule?
1083. What was the triple accusation against our Lord? Show how they were false.
1084. How had the "wily priesthood" perverted the facts so as to perplex Pilate?
1085. What was the defense of Jesus that satisfied Pilate that he was innocent? Cf. John 18:34-38.
1086. "Pilate's public decided acquittal only kindled the fury of his enemies"—why?
1087. Some things Jesus would answer—some things he would not—what were they?
1088. Where had the custom of releasing prisoners originated?
1089. Give three facts about Barabbas.
1090. What cry of the multitude was far more welcome to Pilate? Why?
1091. Why ask the second question—"what shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called Christ"?
1092. Where were the friends of Jesus? Why were they absent?
1093. Why didn't Pilate permanently protect Jesus if He was innocent?
1094. What statement of Pilate shows his cowardice?
1095. Read Luke 23:22 and tell what desperate expedient Pilate attempted to use.
1096. Show how heaven and hell strove in the bosom of Pilate—which won? Why?
1097. What is the meaning of "Praetorium"—where was it?—how many men joined in the mockery of Jesus?
1098. What is meant by "clothed Him in Purple"?—was the robe purple or scarlet?
1099. Show how very appropriate it was for Jesus to wear "the crown of thorns."
1100. What was the estimation of Pilate and the soldiers of the title "King of the Jews"? Why?

1101. Why didn't Jesus offer resistance to the ridicule?
 1102. Is there some significance in that Jesus suffered in someone else's clothes?
 1103. What was the final attempt of Pilate to release Him? Describe it in your own words.

6. JESUS CRUCIFIED 15:21-39

TEXT 5:21-39

"And they compel one passing by, Simon of Cyrene, coming from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to go with them, that he might bear his cross. And they bring him unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of a skull. And they offered him wine mingled with myrrh: but he received it not. And they crucify him, and part his garments among them, casting lots upon them, what each should take. And it was the third hour, and they crucified him. And the superscription of his accusation was written over, THE KING OF THE JEWS. And with him they crucify two robbers: one on his right hand, and one on his left. And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ha! thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself, and come down from the cross. In like manner also the chief priests mocking him among themselves with the scribes said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. Let the Christ, the King of Israel, now come down from the cross, that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with him reproached him.

And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? And some of them that stood by, when they heard it, said, Behold, he calleth Elijah. And one ran, filling a sponge full of vinegar, put it on a reed, and gave him to drink, saying, Let be; let us see whether Elijah cometh to take him down. And Jesus uttered a loud voice, and gave up the ghost. And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. And when the centurion, which stood over against him, saw that he so gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God."

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 15:21-39

888. Who compelled Simon of Cyrene to carry the cross?
 889. Cf. Luke 23:26—some feel Simon carried the cross *with* Jesus—what do you think?
 890. Are we to conclude Simon was a negro?

891. Why mention that Simon was the father of Alexander and Rufus?
892. Why was Simon of Cyrene coming to Jerusalem?
893. How far was the cross carried?—a mile? less than a mile? More than a mile?
894. Why call the place of crucifixion—"Golgotha"?
895. What was the purpose of offering the wine and myrrh? Who offered it to Him? (Please read the parallel accounts.) Matt. 27:34.
896. Why didn't Jesus drink the potion offered?
897. Are we to understand that since four garments and the robe were taken from our Lord that He was crucified without any covering? Cf. Matt. 27:35; John 19:23; Luke 23:34.
898. Did they cast lots for all the garments?
899. Please read the four versions of the superscription (1) Matt. 27:35 (2) Mark 15:26 (3) Luke 23:38 (4) John 19:16—how shall we account for this difference? (—please remember in how many languages it was written).
900. The two robbers could have been partners in crime with whom?
901. Who were the persons who railed on Him? What incited such persons to do this?
902. Why mention especially the destruction of the temple?
903. Why couldn't Jesus answer their taunts and save Himself?
904. Note vs. 31—it contains the greatest truth in the universe—and yet a terrible lie. Designate each.
905. If Jesus had delivered Himself from the cross what would have been the reaction of those who mocked Him?—the immediate reaction and the lasting reaction.
906. Did both thieves deride Jesus?—Discuss.
907. What particular type of darkness was present?—i.e. an eclipse—a storm? or What? Name the hours (our time).
908. How extensive was the darkness?—how intense?
909. What happened during the three hours from 12 to 3?
910. Was Jesus quoting scripture intentionally or was this a spontaneous expression of His own deep need? Did God forsake Him? Discuss.
911. Why did some think He called for Elijah?
912. What was the purpose of offering wine at this time? What is the difference between a reed and hyssop? Cf. John 19:29.
913. When Jesus cried with a loud voice what did He Say? Cf. John 19:30 and Luke 23:46.
914. Is there some significance in the fact that He cried with a *loud* voice? i.e. as the manner of His death.
915. What meaning is there in the fact that the temple veil was torn?

916. The centurion at the cross seems to admit two things in his statement—what were they?

COMMENT

Time.—Friday, April 7, A.D. 30, between the hours of 9 A.M. and 3 P.M.

Place.—The Lord was taken by the soldiers without the city to a place called Calvary (the place of a skull), or Golgotha, to be crucified. The site is uncertain, and travelers have differed much concerning its location. Dr. Barclay thinks it was on the east side of the city, just south of St. Stephen's gate, on the Goath of Jeremiah 31:39, a tongue or spur of land projecting southeasterly into the Kedron valley toward Gethsemane. Others place it on the northwest of the city. It was, (1) apparently a well-known spot; (2) outside the gate (compare Heb. 13:12); but (3) near the city (John 19:20); (4) on a thoroughfare leading into the country (Luke 23:26); and (5) contained a "garden" or "orchard" (John 19:41). Tradition has for sixteen centuries pointed out the site of the present Church of the Holy Sepulchre as the actual spot; but it is highly probable that this spot was inside the city wall at that time. The question is of little practical importance; for the apostles and evangelists barely allude to the place of Christ's birth, death, and resurrection. They fixed their eyes on the great facts themselves, and worshipped the exalted Savior in heaven where he forever lives.

Parallel Accounts.—Matt. 27:27-37; Luke 23:26-38; John 19:1-24.

Outline.—1. The Lord Nailed to the Cross. 2. The Lord Numbered with Transgressors. 3. The Earth Draped in Mourning.

ANALYSIS

I. THE LORD NAILED TO THE CROSS, vs. 21-26.

1. The Lord Led to Golgotha. Mark 15:22; Matt. 27:33; Luke 23:33; John 19:17.
2. The Stupefying Cup Refused. Mark 15:23; Matt. 27:34.
3. His Garments Parted by Lot. Mark 15:24; Matt. 27:35; John 19:23; Luke 23:34.
4. The Superscription on the Cross. Mark 15:26; Matt. 27:37; John 19:19.

II. THE LORD NUMBERED WITH TRANSGRESSORS, vs. 27-32.

1. The Lord Between Thieves. Mark 15:27; Matt. 27:38; Luke 23:32; Isaiah 53:12.
2. The Railing of the Multitude. Mark 15:29; Matt. 27:40; Luke 23:35.
3. The Rulers Mock Him. Mark 15:31; Matt. 27:41; Luke 23:35.

III. THE EARTH DRAPED IN MOURNING, VS. 33-39.

1. The Land Darkened. Mark 15:33; Matt. 27:45; Luke 23:45.
2. The Cry Upon the Cross. Mark 15:34; Matt. 27:46.
3. It is Finished. Mark 15:37; Matt. 27:50; Luke 23:46; John 19:30.
4. The Veil of the Temple was Rent. Mark 15:38; Matt. 27:51.
5. The Centurion's Confession. Mark 15:39; Luke 23:47.

INTRODUCTION

Crucifixion.—Nothing demonstrates more forcibly the malignity of the Jews than their persistent and boisterous demand that Jesus should be crucified. Other forms of execution were common; stoning, as in the case of Stephen; killing with the sword, as in the case of James; beheading, as in the case of John the Baptist, and, among the Romans, strangling. Crucifixion had never been adopted by the Jews. Even to hang a corpse upon a tree was accounted among them a great indignity (Deut. 21:22, 23). It was inflicted on Jewish malefactors by the Romans because it was regarded with such horror. Cicero called it a punishment most inhuman and shocking, and wrote of it that it should be removed from the eyes and ears and every thought of man. The Romans reserved it for slaves and foreigners whom they despised. Yet it was this most shameful and terrible of all deaths which the Jews call on Pilate to inflict upon a prisoner whom he had pronounced innocent. The terrible details of such a death should be noted in order to comprehend what our Savior suffered for us, and I have condensed from Farrar and Geikie the following description of a death on the cross: He was stripped naked of all his clothes. He was laid down upon the implement of torture. His arms were stretched along the cross-beams, and at the center of the open palms the point of a huge iron nail was placed, which, by the blow of a mallet, was driven home into the wood. Then through either foot separately, or possibly through both together, as they were placed one over the other, another huge nail tore its way through the quivering flesh. To prevent the hands and feet being torn away by the weight of the body, which could not "rest upon nothing but four great wounds," there was, about the center of the cross, a wooden projection strong enough to support, at least in part, a human body, which soon became a weight of agony. And then the accursed tree, with its living human burden hanging upon it in helpless agony, and suffering fresh tortures as every movement irritated the fresh rents in hands and feet, was slowly heaved up by strong arms and the end of it fixed firmly in a hole dug deep in the ground for that purpose. The body was terribly wrenched when the cross was raised and dropped into its place; the concussion often dislocated the limbs. Inflammation of the wounds in both hands

and feet speedily set in, and ere long rose also in other places where the circulation was checked by the tension of the parts; intolerable thirst and ever-increasing pain resulted; the blood, which could no longer reach the extremities, rose to the head, swelling the veins and arteries in it unnaturally, and causing the most agonizing tortures in the brain; besides, it could no longer move freely from the lungs; the heart grew more and more oppressed, and all the veins were distended. Had the wounds bled freely it would have been a great relief, but there was very little lost. The weight of the body itself, resting on the wooden pin of the upright beam, the burning heat of the sun, scorching the veins, and the hot winds which dried up the moisture of the body, made each moment more terrible than that before. The numbness and stiffness of the more distant muscles brought on painful convulsions; and this numbness, slowly extending, sometimes through two or three days, at last reached the vital parts, and released the sufferer by death.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. THE LORD NAILED TO THE CROSS.

21. *They compel one Simon a Cyrenian.* The Roman officer had official authority to press into the military service, for a special purpose, either horses or men. See Matt. 5:41. *A Cyrenian.* There were many Simons, or Simeons, among the early Christians; but this one was distinguished from all the rest as Simon of Cyrene, a great and flourishing city of North Africa. It lay between Alexandria on the east and Carthage on the west. This ancient city is now a heap of ruins. *Coming out of the country.* Going up to Jerusalem to attend the feast of the passover. *Alexander and Rufus.* It is taken for granted that they were well known at the time when the gospel was written, and hence, doubtless, they were Christians of some note in the church. *Bear his cross.* Jesus at first bore his own cross (John 19:17), as was customary. Tradition says that our Lord sunk to the ground beneath the load; but the more exact expression of Luke 23:26 shows that the after-part of the cross alone, which usually dragged upon the ground, was put upon Simon.—*Schaff.* Here, as always, the Savior bears the heaviest part of the burden.

22. *Golgotha.* A Hebrew word, meaning a skull. From its Latin equivalent, *calvaria*, comes our English word Calvary, which occurs in the English New Testament only in Luke 23:33, where it should be translated "a skull." The significance of the name is uncertain. Some suppose it was the common place of execution, and that the skulls of those who were executed lay about; others that it was a bare rounded knoll, in form like a skull. For further remarks on the locality see *Place*.

23. *They gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh.* This was a stupefying drink to deaden the pain. It was composed of vinegar or sour wine, in which were mingled certain bitter drugs. It was customary for compassionate people to give a stupefying drink to criminals on their way to execution. It is stated in the Talmud that there was an association of women in Jerusalem who sought to alleviate the sufferings of the crucified in this way. Luke 23:27 may refer to the women who provided the drink. The effect of the draught was to dull the nerves, to cloud the intellect, to provide an anaesthetic against some part, at least, of the lingering agonies of that dreadful death. *He received it not.* The "tasting" (Matt. 27:34) implied a recognition of the kindly purpose of the act, but a recognition only. In the refusal to do more than this we see the resolute purpose to drink the cup which his Father had given him to the last drop, and not to dull, either the sense of suffering or the clearness of his communion with his Father with the slumbrous potion.

24. *When they had crucified him.* Nailed him to the cross. For details see "Crucifixion" in the *Introduction*. There were three forms of crosses; the first in the shape of the letter X, called the crux decussato, or, later, St. Andrews' cross; one in the form of the letter T, called the crux commissa, or, later, St. Anthony's cross; and third, the Latin cross, or crux immissa, like the preceding one, except that the upright beam projects above the horizontal one. That the Latin cross was the one on which Jesus was crucified, is indicated by uniform tradition. *They parted his garments, casting lots.* The garments were perquisites of the executioners. As there were four soldiers there would be four shares. The inner robe, however, like the robes of the priests, was of one piece, woven from the top, without any seam or stitching and would be destroyed by rending. The dice were ready in their pocket, and one of their brazen helmets would serve to throw them; it would be better to cast lots for this, and let him who won the highest number keep it for himself; and so it was done. No wonder that both Matthew and John, looking back on the scene, were struck by the fact that it had been written, ages before, in the twenty-second Psalm, which the Jews of that day, as well as Christians, rightly believed to refer to the Messiah, "They parted my garments among them, and for my vesture they cast lots."—*Geikie*.

25. *The third hour,* according to the Jewish reckoning, that is, from sunrise, about nine o'clock of our time. But, according to John (19:14), it was already the sixth hour when Pilate made his last attempt to rescue him. A solution is, that John, writing primarily for the churches of Asia Minor, uses the Roman mode of reckoning, that is, from midnight.

26. *The superscription of his accusation.* It was the Roman custom to place on the cross over the criminal's head, a *titulus*, or placard, stating the crime for which he suffered. Luke (23:38) says that the title was written in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, the chief languages then spoken, and all spectators would be able to read it. The superscription is given differently by each evangelist: "This is Jesus the King of the Jews" (Matt. 27:37). "The King of the Jews" (Mark 15:26). "This is the King of the Jews (Luke 23:38). "Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews" (John 19:16). Although no serious and sensible writer would dream of talking about a "discrepancy" here, it is very probable that the differences arise from the different forms assumed by the title in the three languages. *King of the Jews.* The inscription stated the offense of which Jesus had been found guilty. Pilate intended that the inscription should have a sting in it for the chief priests and elders and scribes.

II. THE LORD NUMBERED WITH TRANSGRESSORS.

27. *With him they crucify two thieves.* Rather, robbers; in all probability partners in the crime of Barabbas. The mountain robbers, or banditti, were always ready to take part in such desperate risings against the Roman power. Thus he touched life at its lowest point, plunged into the stream of humanity where it was blackest.

28. This verse is omitted in the Revised Version, not being found in the oldest manuscripts.

29. *They that passed by railed at him.* The people going in and out of the city, on the thoroughfare near the place of crucifixion. *Wagging their heads.* Derisively and insultingly. Compare 2 Kings 19:21; Job 16:4; Psalm 109:25. *Thou that destroyest the temple.* It is evident that the Lord's saying (John 2:19-21), or rather this perversion of it (for he claimed not to destroy but to rebuild the temple destroyed by them), had greatly exasperated the feelings which the priests and Pharisees had contrived to excite against him.

30. *Save thyself.* This may be ironical, or it is a recognition of his miracles of mercy, to taunt him with a supposed loss of power just when he needed it most for himself. His very mercy is used in mockery.—*Schaff.* If Christ had saved himself he could not have saved others.

31. *The chief priests.* The chief priests, and scribes, and elders, less awestruck, less compassionate, than the mass of the people, were not ashamed to add their heartless reproaches to those of the evil few.

32. *Descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe.* A true index to their religious ideas. If they saw Him with their bodily eyes

by a miracle come down from the cross, they would believe. Their religion rested on their five senses. The invisible spiritual power, in which Jesus taught, did his work, and founded his kingdom, had no existence for them. The only authority for their faith was what they could grasp with their hands, or see with their eyes.—*Geikie*. *They that were crucified with him reviled him*. It is not certain whether both of the malefactors reviled him, or but one; Matthew and Mark speak of both; Luke of but one. Most, after Augustine, suppose that Matthew and Mark speak in general terms of them as a class of persons that joined in deriding Jesus, but without meaning to say that both actually derided him.

III. THE EARTH DRAPED IN MOURNING.

33. *The sixth hour . . . there was darkness*. This was no eclipse of the sun, for it was full moon at the time—nor any partial obscuration of the sun such as sometimes takes place before an earthquake—for it is clear that no earthquake in the ordinary sense of the word is here intended. Those whose belief leads them to reflect Who was then suffering, will have no difficulty in accounting for these signs of sympathy in nature nor in seeing their applicability. The consent, in the same words, of all three evangelists, must silence all question as to the universal belief of this darkness as a fact; and the early Fathers appeal to the testimony of profane authors for its truth.—*Alford*. *Over the whole land*. The darkness began at the sixth hour, or twelve A.M., and continued till the ninth, or three P.M. The forms of expression, "over all the land," (Matthew), "over the whole land," (Mark and Luke), do not determine how far the darkness extended. Many would confine it to the land of Judea as our version does.

34. *At the ninth hour*. Three o'clock; so far as appears, during the three hours of gloom the Lord was silent, and, doubtless, all were silent around him. *My God, my God*. The Savior here applies the holy psalm (Psalm 22) to himself as prophetic. The particular words are expressive of the divine abandonment, of the departure of the divine presence, as part of his atonement endurance. They are uttered by him to show that he is enduring an intolerable agony, deeper than any external infliction. "The finest thing in all this dear history of Immanuel on the earth is exhibited just here. When he began his suffering on the cross, he said, "Father"; and when he reached its end he also said "Father"; but in the deep midnight of woe between them, he said "My God, My God!" Reasons for the forsaking: one is, God rejects sin, and sin was then laid on Jesus. Again, perhaps the almighty Father meant that Jesus should now fight the battle single-handed, in order that the glory of the final victory to be gained might be his own."—*Robinson*.

35. *He calleth for Elias.* The resemblance between the word "Eli" and the name Elijah is very close in the original. There is here an allusion to the belief that Elijah would come before the Messiah, and hence a sarcastic denial of his Messiahship. The words may have been imperfectly understood.

36. *Sponge full of vinegar.* The vinegar is the *posca*, sour wine, or vinegar and water, the ordinary drink of the Roman soldiers. *Put it on a reed.* The "reed" is described by John as the *byssope*.

37. *Cried with a loud voice.* Emitting a great voice, not a mere cry, but an articulate, intelligible utterance, the words of which have been preserved by John (19:30), and Luke (23:46). *Gave up the Ghost.* A better translation is "yielded up his spirit."

38. *The veil of the temple was rent.* The great work of salvation was now, at last, completed; prophecy fulfilled; the ancient covenant at an end, the new inaugurated. Judaism was forever obsolete, and the holy of holies had ceased to be the peculiar presence chamber of Jehovah among men. Nor was a sign wanting that it was so, for the great veil of purple and gold—sixty feet long and thirty broad—before the inner sanctuary of the temple, suddenly rent itself in two from the top to the bottom at the moment of Christ's death, as if he who had hitherto dwelt there had gone forth to lead up his eternal Son to his own right hand.—*Geikie.*

39. *The centurion.* An officer of the Roman answering to the captain in our own organization. He commanded a century, answering to our "company," originally a hundred men, subsequently from fifty to a hundred. *This man was the Son of God.* Observe that he says not *is* but *was* a Son of God; evidently in his thought the death of Christ was the end. It is worth noticing that the cross had greater effect on the centurion, who had been before simply ignorant of and indifferent to Christ, than on the Pharisees.

FACT QUESTIONS 15:21-39

1104. What two places are identified as the location of Calvary?
1105. Give three Scriptural facts about Calvary.
1106. Why do we reject the location chosen by the Roman Catholics?
1107. Mention three other forms of capital punishment than crucifixion.
1108. What was the Jewish opinion of crucifixion?
1109. What did Cicero say about crucifixion?
1110. It would help in our appreciation of what our Savior suffered for us if we were to attempt to rewrite in our own words what Johnson has given us from Farrar and Geikie. Try it.

1111. How does Matt. 5:41 relate to Simon of Cyrene?
1112. Where is Cyrene?
1113. Do you agree with Johnson and Schaff that Jesus and Simon carried the cross?
1114. The English word "Calvary" (Cf. Luke 23:33) should not appear at all—why not?
1115. Why called "the place of a skull"?
1116. The Talmud says there was a certain association of women in Jerusalem—what was their work?
1117. The refusal to drink the wine and myrrh indicated a desire to drink another cup—what was it?
1118. Describe and name the three types of crosses used in the days of our Lord—which was used with our Lord?
1119. Over what robe did the soldiers gamble? What did they use in "casting lots"?
1120. Please notice how remarkable a prediction is Psa. 22:16. Remember—crucifixion was a Roman form of capital punishment.
1121. Mark says "the third hour"—John says it was "the sixth hour." Cf. John 19:14—how reconcile these times?
1122. "No serious and sensible writer would dream of talking about a discrepancy in the different versions of the title on the cross"—why not?
1123. The chief priests did not like the title—why not?
1124. Show how Jesus touched life at its lowest point.
1125. Why leave out vs. 28? Isn't it true?
1126. Why would some folks be passing by the scene of the crucifixion?
1127. Was the expression "save thyself" ironical?
1128. The men who lied when they told the truth—who were they? Cf. vs. 31.
1129. What shows a true index of the religious ideas of the chief-priests?
1130. How does Augustine explain the thought that Mark says both thieves reviled Jesus?
1131. How do we know the darkness was not an eclipse of the sun?
1132. How account for the darkness? Was the darkness confined to Judea?
1133. What is "the finest thing in all this dear history of Immanuel"?
1134. What could have been a sarcastic denial of His Messiahship?

1135. Did Jesus control His own death? i.e., choose the time His spirit would depart His body? Discuss.
1136. Show how beautifully symbolic was the tearing of the temple veil.
1137. Why did the death of Christ have more effect on the centurion than on the Pharisees?

7. WOMEN WATCHING. DESCENT FROM THE CROSS.

THE BURIAL. 15:40-47

TEXT 15:40-47

And there were also women beholding from afar: among whom were both Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome; who, when he was in Galilee, followed him, and ministered unto him; and many other women which came up with him unto Jerusalem.

And when even was now come, because it was the Preparation, that is the day before the sabbath, there came Joseph of Arimathea, a councillor of honourable estate, who also himself was looking for the kingdom of God; and he boldly went in unto Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus. And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead: and calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead. And when he learned it of the centurion, he granted the corpse to Joseph. And he bought a linen cloth, and taking him down, wound him in the linen cloth, and laid him in a tomb which had been hewn out of a rock; and he rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses beheld where he was laid.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 15:40-47

917. What purpose did Mark have in mentioning the women of vs. 40?
918. Have we heard of Mary of Magdala, or Magdalene, before?
919. Please attempt to identify the persons here mentioned—i.e.: (1) James the less, (2) Joses, (3) Salome.
920. What is the meaning of the expression—"ministered unto him"?
921. Why the many women who followed Jesus i.e., why were they there?
922. Can we definitely identify Friday as the day of the crucifixion?
923. Are we to understand from vs. 43 that Joseph of Arimathea was a member of the Sanhedrin?
924. Just what was involved in "looking for the kingdom of God"?
925. What could Pilate learn from the centurion he could not have found out from Joseph?
926. Why use a linen cloth for the body?
927. To whom did the tomb belong?

COMMENT

TIME.—Friday.

PLACE.—Calvary or Golgotha—the tomb.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS.—Matt. 27:45-66; Luke 23:49-56; John 19:28-42, 15:40-47.

OUTLINE.—1. Women watching, vs. 40, 41. 2. The descent from the cross, and the burial of Jesus, 42-47.

ANALYSIS

I. WOMEN WATCHING, VS. 40, 41.

1. Watched from a distance.
2. They were: Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the less, and of Joses and Salome.
3. Earlier they had followed Him and ministered to Him in Galilee.
4. There were many other women present who had followed Him to Jerusalem.

II. THE DESCENT FROM THE CROSS, AND THE BURIAL OF JESUS, VS. 42-47.

1. Joseph of Arimathaea came in the late afternoon of the day before the Sabbath to ask of Pilate the body of Jesus.
2. Pilate was surprised Jesus was already dead—he confirmed the report by asking the centurion.
3. Upon a sure knowledge of the death of Jesus, the corpse was given to Joseph.
4. Joseph bought linen in which to wrap the body of Jesus—Jesus' body was taken down from the cross and laid in a rock-hewn tomb—a stone was rolled against the door of the tomb.
5. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses noticed the place of His burial.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. WOMEN WATCHING.

"All the synoptists mention this group of women, Luke without enumeration of their names. Luke has a similar group (or, more strictly, the same) at chap. 8:2,3, with some names enumerated. Here three are mentioned as belonging to the company that *followed him, when he was in Galilee, and ministered unto him* (Luke 8:3, "ministered to him of their substance"), and *many other women* are mentioned (by Mark alone) as having come up *with him unto Jerusalem*.—They stood *afar off* (so all the synoptists), looking on, and with them (Luke) were "all his acquaintance"—i.e., the group contained generally those of his friends who were present in Jerusalem. Of course the mention of this group, being introduced after the record of his death, relates to no single mo-

ment, and does not imply that the same persons were together during the whole time of the crucifixion. John has already spoken of all whose names are given here as standing earlier "beside the cross." It is a touching fact that the mother of Jesus appears only there, beside the cross, and not among those who stood *afar off*. — *Mary Magdalene*. Now earliest mentioned, except in Luke 8:2. Her connection with her Lord began, as that passage leads us to believe, with his act in casting out of her "seven demons"—i.e., in relieving her of some specially severe form of demoniacal possession; for there is no good reason to spiritualize the healing, as James Freeman Clarke has done (*The Legend of Thomas Didymus*) into the deliverance from falsehood, murder, pride, luxury, selfishness, unbelief, and despair. There is no evidence for identifying her with any other Mary of the Gospels or to cast doubt on the purity of her life. The most probable derivation of her name is from "Magdala," or "Migdol," "the watchtower," a town on the shore of Lake Gennesaret. After the healing she became one of the "ministering women"; but her recorded connection with her Lord has to do mainly with the scenes of his death and resurrection.—*Mary the mother of James the less*, or the little. Probably a descriptive name, given because he, like Zacchaeus, was small of stature.—*And of Joses*. (See Mark 3:18). There are unanswered questions about this family group, but it seems most probable that the James and Joses here mentioned are not to be identified with those who appear among the "brethren of the Lord" at Mark 6:3.—*Salome* is to be identified with "the mother of Zebedee's children" in the parallel passage in Matthew, and probably with the sister of our Lord's mother in John 19:25.

Between the record of the death and that of the descent from the cross John inserts the narrative, which he alone has preserved, of the breaking of the legs of the two robbers, in order to hasten their death before the beginning of the Jewish Sabbath, and of the piercing of the side of Jesus with the soldier's spear, in order to test the reality of his death, or rather to decide the question, if there was any doubt. It is from the outflow of "blood and water" that the inference is drawn respecting the physical cause of his death.

II. THE DESCENT FROM THE CROSS AND THE BURIAL OF JESUS.

42. The natural inference is that the death occurred not long after the ninth hour—i.e., at between three and four o'clock by our reckoning. The Sabbath would begin at sunset. It was common enough for the Romans to leave the bodies of the crucified on the cross—indeed, they often remained there till they were devoured by birds or fell to pieces in decay—but this execution had taken place under Jewish auspices, and the Jews would not be willing, in view of the prohibition in Deut.

21:23, that the body of Jesus should remain all night on the cross, and still less over the Sabbath, which as the Sabbath of the passover week, was "a great day" (John 19:31).—*The Preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath.* A valuable definition, because it removes the suspicion that the same word may elsewhere mean the day before the passover.—The time, *when the even was come*, cannot be more closely defined, but it cannot have been long after the death of our Saviour.

43. *Joseph of Arimathaea*, or "who was from Arimathaea." Mentioned on this occasion only, his name and residence being given by all four evangelists. Arimathaea is of uncertain site. It is commonly identified with Ramah, or Ramathaim-zophim, the home of Elkanah, the father of Samuel (1 Sam. 1:1; 2:11)—a place which is known in the Septuagint as "Armathaim." The identification is probably correct, but the site of Ramah has long been in doubt. The best modern theory follows a somewhat ancient tradition in locating it at *Neby Samwil*, about four miles north-west from Jerusalem. This site would satisfy all the requirements of the history, and may be regarded as probably the true one. Concerning Joseph himself, we learn from Matthew that he was a rich man; from Mark, that he was *an honorable counsellor*, or, more probably, "a counsellor of honorable estate," a rich and prosperous man. Luke as well as Mark calls him a counsellor, which means, here, a member of the council, or Sanhedrin, of the Jews. Luke further calls him "a good man and a just," and adds that "he had not consented to their counsel and deed." Apparently, he had been absent from the meeting; perhaps intentionally omitted from the call, perhaps absent at daybreak, when the meeting was held, at his home in Arimathaea. Concerning his relations to Jesus, we have in Mark and Luke that he *waited*, or was looking, *for the kingdom of God* (compare Luke 2:25, 38), by which is meant that he was a devout Jew who delighted in the promises of God concerning his coming kingdom and was expecting their early fulfillment. The phrase does not declare that he was a disciple of Jesus, but it does represent him as one of those who were ready for discipleship. Matthew says, however, that he "was a disciple of Jesus," and John says the same, adding, "but secretly, for fear of the Jews." Thus he belonged to the class mentioned in John 12:42, 43. Not until now, apparently, had his convictions in favor brought him to frank confession. His position was a trying one, and he had not had moral power to conquer its difficulties. But now, "the Lord being merciful unto him," as he was to Lot in Sodom (Gen. 19:16), he was brought forth out of his false position, love and sorrow being the messengers that led him forth. He *came*—i.e., to the place of crucifixion. Perhaps the word, standing where it does, indicates that he arrived at the place when Jesus was dying or

dead, having only then come into the city from his home. If he had been at Arimathaea since the night before, he may have known nothing of what was going on; in which case the sudden amazement would swell the tide of his indignation and horror, and easily lead him beyond his former self in devotion to the Crucified one. The participle does not merely mean *boldly*; it means, "waxing bold," coming to new boldness. The word is peculiar to Mark. In this new boldness he *went in unto Pilate*, to his house or place of judgment, whither the chief priests would not go for fear of defilement (John 18:28). There he *craved*—or, literally, "asked"—*the body of Jesus*. So, identically, the synoptists; John, "asked that he might take away the body of Jesus."

44, 45. The mention of Pilate's wonder and inquiry is peculiar to Mark. Plainly, Pilate did not know of the breaking of the legs of the robbers. Only a few hours had passed, and it seemed impossible that Jesus was dead. Not improbably, there was a shock to Pilate's mind in the tidings: he had honestly wished to save him, and so soon all was over! *Calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been dead long* (*palai*), not *any while*. There is a certain rough tenderness in Pilate here; he would do what he could to preserve the Crucified One from insult and help him to honorable burial; so, the death being officially confirmed, *he gave the body* (or, rather, "granted the corpse") to Joseph. So the best text: *ptoma*, instead of *soma*. Here John adds, "he came therefore, and took away his body." Here, also, John tells of the coming of a helper to Joseph—a man of the same class, a fellow-member of the Sanhedrin, another secret disciple—Nicodemus, who came to Jesus by night (John 3:1). His accession now is a surprise to us, but it may not have been to Joseph. He has appeared before only in that nightly conversation, and as pleading for candor in the judgment respecting Jesus, and taunted by his companions as if they already suspected him of a kind of discipleship (John 7:50-52). He now brought "a mixture of myrrh and aloes"—i.e., of the aromatics used in preparing the dead for burial—"about a hundred pounds weight." This was not necessarily bought beforehand; speedy burials were common in that land, and rapid preparation must have been common too. Moreover, there is no reason to doubt that Nicodemus knew all the day what was going on. He may have been preparing while Jesus was dying. So there is no reason to suppose, as some have done, that his preparation was parallel to that of Mary of Bethany, made beforehand (Mark 14:8). There is something extremely touching about the coming of these two men to bury the body of him whom they had not publicly confessed when he was alive. The shock of sorrow and indignation quickened love and rendered secret discipleship no longer possible. If the two men were thus drawn to Jesus

in his extremest humiliation, it seems likely that by his resurrection their faith would be confirmed and rendered permanent.

46. The fine linen was the *sindon*, the same as that mentioned in Chap. 14:51—a foreign fabric, probably Indian, said to have been used in Egypt as a wrapping for mummies. In later Greek, however, the word means "linen." It can scarcely be said to define positively the nature of the cloth. Mark alone says that it was *bought* now, at the very time it was to be used. *Wrapped him in the linen*. The wrapping in this cloth was not a mere enfolding of the body, but, at least in part, the closer wrapping or binding (John, "they took the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices") which was customary among the Jews. When Lazarus came forth, he was "bound hand and foot with grave-clothes" (John 11:44), each limb wrapped up by itself. This wrapping, however, in the case of Jesus, was left unfinished because of haste, the Sabbath coming quickly on. Observe that the very thought of preparing the body thus for burial was inconsistent with all thought of a resurrection. Of the site and ownership of the sepulchre Mark tells us nothing, saying merely that it was *hewn out of a rock*, or rather, "out of the rock"—i.e., not a natural cavern, such as were frequently used for tombs. Matthew and Luke note the same fact, Luke using a word (*laxentos*) that points a little more definitely to the skillful workmanship of which the tomb gave evidence. It was no rude cave in which he was laid, but a carefully-made *sepulchre*. Luke and John tell us that it was new and had never before been used; Matthew, by a single word, that it was the property of Joseph. From John we learn that it was in a "garden" or orchard, an enclosed and cultivated place—the same word that is used of Gethsemane—and that the garden was "in the place where he was crucified"—i.e., close at hand. The nearness of the spot is given by John, who says nothing of Joseph's ownership as the reason for selecting it, the approach of the Sabbath requiring haste. Having thus placed the body, Joseph *rolled a stone unto*, or against (*epi*), *the door of the sepulchre*. Matthew, "a great stone." Visualize the tomb described in the following passage: "In Jerusalem has been found a peculiar tomb. The sloping ground has been cut down perpendicularly and the rock is cut out, so that the front wall is perpendicular rock. There is a chamber within, containing a table of stone on which to prepare the body for burial and a stone bowl for water. Within this is the tomb itself, an inner chamber, with shelves to receive the bodies. The entrance to this is an opening in the upright rock-wall three feet square. Running across before this opening, at the foot of the wall in which it is made, is a groove in the floor, one foot deep and six inches wide. In this groove is a round stone, six inches thick, just fitting the groove, and four

feet or more in diameter—a stone like a grindstone. This runs in the groove, and can be rolled up before the square opening so as to cover it, and rolled away from it so as to give entrance. It is so heavy that the full strength of a man is required to roll it away. If Joseph's new tomb were like this, the women might well ask who should roll away the stone for them." The date of this tomb, however, seems to be unknown, and so high an authority in Jewish customs as Dr. Ederheim appears to know nothing of such structures. (See *Bible Educator*, vol. iv., p. 332.) It is certain that rock-hewn tombs usually had doors of stone that turned on hinges. (See Hackett's *Illustrations of Scripture*, p. 108; Van Lennep's *Bible Lands*, p. 580.) If Joseph's new tomb, perhaps unfinished, had such a door, with its fastenings yet uncompleted, he may, for additional security, have caused a stone so large as to be moved only with difficulty to be rolled up against it, on the outside.

47. The women had remained at the cross when no apostle was there, and now they followed to the sepulchre, where new friends were doing the work that belonged to old. Only two are mentioned here and in Matthew; in Luke, the women generally who had followed from Galilee. Matthew shows them "sitting over against the sepulchre"; Mark says that *they beheld where he was laid*; and Luke shows them present and watchful during the entombment. He also shows them going home and preparing spices to finish the embalming, but not till after the Sabbath. (See the true division of paragraphs in Luke, in the Revision.) That Sabbath was to be "a high-day" with the Jews; to the disciples it was a day of despair. In truth, it was the turning-point of time, though neither Jews nor disciples knew it. The crime of the Jews and of sinful humanity was completed; the revelation of God as Saviour had been made; the work of preparatory dispensations was ended; all was ready for the breaking forth of the new power of God unto salvation. But that Jewish Sabbath before the dawning of the first Lord's Day was the time of pause and silence: the Prince of Life lay dead, and all hopes seemed disappointed; the new power was as yet unknown and undreamed of in the world. No day was ever like that, or ever shall be.

Matthew adds the record of what was done after the night had passed: the enemies of Jesus secured the placing of the official seal of the governor on the door of the tomb and the setting of a guard there, under the pretence of fear that his friends might steal his body and declare that he had risen." (*W. N. Clarke*)

FACT QUESTIONS 15:40-47

1138. What purpose was there in mentioning the women who followed and ministered to Him of their substance?

1139. What touching fact is mentioned about the mother of Jesus?
1140. What was the first mention of Mary Magdalene?
1141. There is no reason to associate Mary Magdalene with some special acts of sinfulness—why do some do this?
1142. Identify Mary the mother of James the less—who was Josés and Salomé? (Cf. John 19:25; Mark 3:17.)
1143. John alone records an incident between the record of the death and the descent from the cross—what was it?
1144. Is it true that Jesus died of a literal, physical "broken heart"? Discuss.
1145. What Jewish law forbid bodies to be left on the cross overnight—what was the practice of the Romans?
1146. Why refer to one sabbath day as "a great day"? (Cf. John 19:31.)
1147. What is meant by "The Preparation,"?
1148. Give three facts about Joseph of Arimathaea.
1149. Where is Arimathaea?
1150. What was Joseph's attitude toward the condemnation of Jesus?
1151. What is meant by the expression "he waited, or was looking, for the kingdom of God"?
1152. Joseph was a disciple of Jesus—but what kind?
1153. When did Joseph arrive at the crucifixion? Show the boldness in the act of asking for the body of Jesus.
1154. What "certain rough tenderness" is seen in the actions of Pilate?
1155. What was probably a shock to Pilate? Why had Jesus died so soon? What had hastened the death of the robbers?
1156. Who came to help Joseph in the burial of Jesus—what did he bring.
1157. What was it that "quickenéd love and rendered secret discipleship no longer possible"?
1158. Did Nicodemus know of the events on the day of the crucifixion?
1159. What type of cloth was bought for the body of Jesus?
1160. Was Jesus bound in the cloth even as Lazarus?
1161. Give three facts about the tomb where Jesus' body was laid.
1162. What should we understand in the fact that a stone was rolled in front of the door of the tomb?
1163. How were doors usually fastened to the rock-hewn tombs?
1164. "New friends were doing the work that belonged to old"—what was it?
1165. What day was the "turning point of time"? Explain.
1166. What was done after the night was passed?

F. SUNDAY:

1. JESUS RISEN 16:1-13

TEXT 16:1-13

"And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices, that they might come and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, they come to the tomb when the sun was risen. And they were saying among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the tomb? and looking up, they see that the stone is rolled back: for it was exceeding great. And entering into the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, arrayed in a white robe; and they were amazed. And he saith unto them, Be not amazed: ye seek Jesus, the Nazarene, which hath been crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold, the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter, He goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you. And they went out and fled from the tomb; for trembling and astonishment had come upon them; and they said nothing to any one; for they were afraid.

"Now when he was risen early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven devils. She went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept. And they, when they heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, disbelieved.

"And after these things he was manifested in another form unto two of them, as they walked, on their way into the country. And they went away and told it unto the rest: neither believed they them."

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 16:1-13

928. Identify the particular time the women came to the sepulchre.
929. What was the purpose in anointing the body?
930. Why did the women come to the tomb if they knew they could not roll away the stone?
931. Where were they that they could look up?
932. Describe in your own words the thoughts of the two Mary's as they approached the open tomb.
933. Why especially mention Peter in the message to the disciples?
934. Why call Him "Jesus, the Nazarene, who hath been crucified"?
935. Why promise to meet them in Galilee? When was this promise kept?
936. How long were the women quiet? i.e., as indicated in vs. 8?
937. Who did Mary Magdalene tell about His resurrection? Why didn't they believe? Discuss.
938. Please read the fuller accounts of His post resurrection appearances.

939. What are the evidences in these accounts that show them to be genuine?

COMMENT

TIME.—Sunday morning, April 9th, A.D. 30; the third day after the crucifixion and burial of the Lord.

PLACE.—The place of the burial was in a new made tomb, hewn out of the rock, belonging to Joseph of Arimathea. It was in a garden not far from Calvary, but the precise location of Calvary or the sepulcher is unknown to man. It is almost certain, however, that it was not where here now stands the "Church of the Holy Sepulcher."

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS.—Matt. 28:1-8. Luke 24:1-11. John 20:1-21.

INTERVENING HISTORY.—Soon after the Lord's death the chief priests came to Pilate, requesting that the bodies might be taken down before sunset, because the next day was the Sabbath. Obtaining their request, the legs of the two malefactors are broken to hasten their death; but Jesus, being found already dead, is pierced with a spear in the side. At this time Joseph of Arimathea goes to Pilate, and informing him that Jesus was already dead, asks his body for burial; and Pilate, after satisfying himself that he was actually dead, orders the body to be given him. Aided by Nicodemus, Joseph took the body, and winding it in linen cloths with spices, laid it in his own sepulcher, in a garden near the cross and shut up the sepulcher. Some women beheld where he was laid, and, returning home, prepared spices and ointments, that they might embalm him after the Sabbath was past. During the Sabbath the council obtains permission from Pilate to seal up the sepulcher, and to place a watch, lest the disciples should steal the body.—*S. J. Andrews.*

OUTLINE.—1. The Women at the Sepulcher. 2. The Angel's Message. 3. The Risen Saviour.

ANALYSIS

I. THE WOMEN AT THE SEPULCHER, VS. 1-4.

1. The Women Come with Spices. Mark 16:1; Luke 24:2.
2. Visit to the Sepulcher Sunday Morning. Mark 16:2; Matt. 28:1; Luke 24:1; John 20:1.
3. The Stone Rolled Away. Mark 16:4; Matt. 28:2; Luke 24:2; John 20:1.

II. THE ANGEL'S MESSAGE, VS. 5-8.

1. The Angel in the Sepulcher. Mark 16:5; Matt. 28:2; Luke 24:4.
2. The Angel's Message. Mark 16:6; Matt. 28:5; Luke 24:6.
3. The Women Flee from the Sepulcher. Mark 16:8; Matt. 28:8; Luke 24:9.

III. THE RISEN SAVIOR, VS. 9-13.

1. The Lord Appears to Mary Magdalene. Mark 16:9; Matt. 28:9; John 20:14.
2. The Unbelief of the Disciples. Mark 16:11.
3. Appears to two Disciples. Mark 16:12; Luke 24:15.

INTRODUCTION

Nothing stands more historically certain than that Jesus rose from the dead and appeared again to his followers, or than that their seeing him thus again was the beginning of a higher faith, and of all their Christian work in the world. It is equally certain that they thus saw him, not as a common man, or as a shade or ghost risen from the grave; but as the Only Son of God—already more than man at once in nature and power; and that all who thus beheld him recognized at once and instinctively his unique divine dignity, and firmly believed in it henceforth. The twelve and others had, indeed, learned to look on him, even in life, as the True Messianic King and the Son of God, but from the moment of his reappearing, they recognized more clearly and fully the divine side of his nature, and saw in him the conqueror of death. Yet the two pictures of him thus fixed in their minds were in their essence identical. That former familiar appearance of the earthly Christ, and this higher vision of him, with its depth of emotion and ecstatic joy, were so inter-related that, even in the first days or weeks after his death, they could never have seen in him the Heavenly Messiah, if they had not first known him so well as the earthly.—*Ewald*.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. THE WOMAN AT THE SEPULCHER.

1. *When the sabbath was past*. The seventh day of the week, Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath. The first day of the week, Sunday, is never the Sabbath in the Scriptures, but the "Lord's day," or the "first day." The Sabbath ended at sunset according to Jewish ideas. Much as these women loved the Lord they waited until the Sabbath was over before they come to the sepulcher. *Mary Magdalene*. We find that Mark mentions Mary Magdalene, Mary mother of James, and Salome. Luke mentions Mary Magdalene, Mary mother of James, and Joanna, "and others with them." John mentions Mary Magdalene only. What shall we conclude from these discrepancies? Do the evangelists speak in general terms, giving the names of certain prominent members only of the party, without designing to enumerate all; or do they refer to two or more distinct parties, who visited the sepulcher at different times? The former is much the more probable. *Had bought sweet spices*. Consisting of myrrh, aloes

and other preventives of putrefaction, and odorous perfumes. These spices had been prepared upon the previous Friday evening.—*Whedon*. *Anoint him*. This had not been done as yet. Nicodemus (John 19:40) had only wrapped the body hurriedly in the spices with the linen cloths.—*Alford*. It was customary among the Jews, as a mark of honor to the deceased, after washing the corpse, to anoint it with certain perfumes, or to enclose them in the grave-clothes in which the body was wrapped. They were sometimes also burned as an incense. The hurried burial had not permitted this anointing to be completed; it had been commenced by Nicodemus at the time of the interment (John 19:39, 40). Perhaps the women were ignorant of that; perhaps they wished to add their own offerings. The aromatics employed for this purpose appear from John to have been aloes and myrrh.—*Abbott*.

2. *And very early in the morning*. All the four accounts agree that the visit of the women was very early Sunday morning, about dawn. The spices had probably been gathered in the night, after the Sabbath had ended. *Came unto the sepulcher*. Salome, the wife of Zebedee, had a home in Jerusalem; Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, had her home doubtless in Herod's palace on Mount Zion. These and the two Marys seem to have gathered the spices in concert and to have come together.

3. *Who shall roll us away the stone?* They seem not to have known of the deputation of the Jewish rulers, which had gone to Pilate, and secured the sealing of the stone and the setting of the watch over the tomb (Matt. 27:62-66). Hence, their only anxiety was how they should get the great stone removed from the mouth of the sepulcher. Keep in mind that the tomb was not a grave, but a cavity hewn in the side of the rocky cliff, with a door that was closed with a stone.

4. *The stone was rolled away*. Matthew says that an angel came and rolled it away, and that there was an earthquake; but the grave was not opened by the commotion or earthquake, but the commotion or earthquake accompanied the rolling back of the stone. It is not necessary to suppose that the resurrection accompanied the earthquake. It was not for him, to whom (John 20:19, 20) the stone was no hindrance, but for the women and the disciples, that it was rolled away. Often the difficulties we picture before us in the path of duty are removed. "The stone is rolled away."

II. THE ANGEL'S MESSAGE.

5. *And entering into the sepulchre*. Mary Magdalene seeing the stone rolled away, and supposing the body had been removed by the Jews,

runs to find Peter and John (John 20:1, 2). The other women proceed to the sepulcher, and enter. *Saw a young man.* Matthew calls him an angel. Luke says that there were two who stood; i.e., appeared suddenly. Besides, they might easily have both sat and stood during the interview; might have been both outside and inside at different moments; and they might have been seen both singly and together in the sudden and shifting apparition.—*Jacobus. Sitting on the right side.* As they entered, apparently. He might be sitting on one of the ledges or platforms which are common in the Oriental sepulchres, and which are convenient for the accommodation of the body during the process of anointing.—*Morison. In a long white garment.* Matthew says it was white as snow, and his countenance was like lightning. The white raiment was a symbol of purity and of fellowship with God (Rev. 3:4, 5, 18; 4:4; 6:11; 7:9-13). *Affrighted.* Rather filled with awe and amazement.

6. *Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth.* "Jesus the Nazarene, the crucified," is not a mere description of the person, but a pointed allusion to his extreme humiliation, summed up in the name *Nazarene* (Matt. 2:23), and terminating in his crucifixion. *Behold the place where they laid him.* Pointing, doubtless, to the particular cell in the wall of the tomb. This implies that the angel was in the tomb.

7. *Tell his disciples and Peter.* Observe, that as Christ's first appearance is to Mary Magdalene (John 20:18), out of whom he had cast seven devils, so his special message is to Peter, who had denied him.—*Abbott.* A touching commentary on our Saviour's saying that he came to save sinners. Tell Peter, for it will be news more welcome to him than to any of them; for he is in sorrow for sin, and he will be afraid lest the joy of this good news do not belong to him.—*Matthew Henry.* *He goeth before you into Galilee.* Where the Lord had promised just before his death to meet his disciples after the resurrection. Indeed (Matt. 26:32) he used almost this very language in his prediction, "After I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee."

8. *Neither said they anything to any man;* i.e., on their way to tell the disciples. "For," says Dr. Wells, "they were afraid to stay, and not to hasten all they could to the apostles." They were in a tumult of commotion, and could not pause by the way to speak to any. Observe, in their haste here to tell the story of the resurrection, an illustration of the spirit which should always actuate the disciples of Christ.

III. THE RISEN SAVIOR.

9. *He appeared first to Mary Magdalene.* This appearance is described more fully in John 20:11-17. Mary Magdalene, on finding the tomb empty, went away immediately to inform Peter and John, leaving the

other women at the tomb. Soon after these had left, Peter and John arrive in haste, followed by Mary Magdalene. The disciples examine the tomb, and depart, leaving Mary near the sepulchre. While weeping there she looks in, and sees two angels, who speak with her; then, turning back, she sees Jesus himself, whom she thinks to be the gardener, for the tomb was in a garden. She recognizes him by the tone in which he speaks her name, *Out of whom he had cast seven devils*. Recorded in Luke 8:2.

10. *And she went*. While she was going to tell the disciples, Jesus appeared to the other women, who had started before on the same errand (Matt. 28:9, 10). Possibly Mary had joined the others by this time. *As they mourned and wept*. It seemed to them that not only had their Friend gone, but every hope of salvation, and of the promised coming of the kingdom of God, had departed with him.

11. *They . . . believed not*. Perhaps the fact that he had not appeared to any of the apostles had something to do with the incredulity of the latter, for it is natural to suppose that he would first manifest himself to them. Accordingly we find that it was the testimony of Peter that convinced them (Luke 24:34). In the entire remainder of the chapter Mark gives three appearances of our Saviour which illustrate the matter of the unbelief which his resurrection had to overcome in the minds of the apostles. First of all, to Mary Magdalene, whose narrative was discredited; "after that" to the two from Emmaus, whose account was also disbelieved; and "afterward" (or rather, finally, v. 14) to the whole eleven, whom he "upbraided with their unbelief."

12. *After that*. This second appearance of Jesus is more fully described in Luke 24:13. The place in the country was Emmaus, some eight miles from Jerusalem. Dr. Thomson identifies Emmaus with the present Kuriet el' Aineb, situated on the road to Joppa, on the dividing ridge between plain and mountain.

13. *Neither believed they them*. Their skepticism affords just ground for our belief. Their testimony is the testimony of incredulous and scrutinizing witnesses. They seemed to have forgotten that he said he would rise again. It was while they were discussing the story of the two disciples who had seen him at Emmaus that the Lord appeared in their midst and "upbraided their unbelief" (Luke 24:36).

FACT QUESTIONS 16:1-13

1167. Wherever Calvary was located we are sure it is not in one place—where?
1168. Who started the action in getting the bodies down from the cross before sunset? Why pierce the side of Jesus?

1169. When was the watch set at the door of the tomb?
1170. Is it ever proper to call Sunday "the Sabbath"?
1171. How shall we account for the differences in the records of the evangelists as to who came to the tomb?
1172. What was the purpose in the custom of anointing the body?
1173. It would add reality to this account if you knew the particular fragrances from each of the perfumes and ointments. Look it up in a Bible Dictionary.
1174. Who among the women lived in Jerusalem—and could thus conveniently gather the spices?
1175. What didn't the women know about the tomb? Was this providential.
1176. How was the stone rolled away? Did the earthquake accompany the resurrection?
1177. Jesus did not need the stone rolled away to rise from the dead—why, then, was it?
1178. Mary Magdalene does not go all the way to the sepulchre—where does she go?
1179. Show how the accounts of the appearing of two angels can be harmonized. How was the angel dressed?
1180. What implied the angel was in the tomb?
1181. What is "a touching commentary on our Saviour's saying that He came to save sinners"?
1182. Read Matt. 26:32 and show its connection with the words of the angel.
1183. What is meant by the expression "neither said they anything to any man"? What example is in this for us?
1184. Describe in your own words the activity of Mary at the tomb—i.e., from her first visit until Jesus appeared to her.
1185. When and where did Jesus appear to the "other women" including Mary Magdalene?
1186. The fact that Jesus did not first appear to the apostles affected the women—how?
1187. Jesus had much unbelief to overcome in the minds of His apostles—show examples.
1188. What was being discussed by the apostles when the Lord appeared to them in the upper room? (Cf. Luke 24:36.)

2. THE GREAT COMMISSION ACCORDING
TO MARK 16:14-20
TEXT 16:14-20

"And afterward he was manifested unto the eleven themselves as they sat at meat; and he upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of

heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen. And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned. And these signs shall follow them that believe: in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall in no wise hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken unto them, was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached everywhere the Lord working with them, and confirming the word by the signs that followed. Amen."

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 16:14-20

939. Is this the first and only time Jesus appeared to the eleven apostles at a meal?
940. Give your definition of the word "upbraided".
941. Are unbelief and disbelief the same?
942. How does hardness of heart relate to unbelief? Please define "hardness of heart."
943. Please mention at least three different persons or groups of persons who had seen Him after He was raised from the dead.
944. Why was there a hesitancy in believing the report of those who had seen Him?
945. When and where did our Lord give the commission as recorded in vs. 15 and 16?
946. What is meant by the word "world" as here used—i.e., does this refer to all the world as we know it—or as the apostles knew it—or as our Lord knew it?
947. What is included in "the whole creation"?
948. Are we to understand "the gospel" to be preached is something different than "the faith" of Jude 3—or "the whole council of God of Acts 20:27? Cf. Acts 20:25; 8:4.
949. Are we to equate "Shall be saved" in vs. 16 with "the remission of sins" in Acts 2:38; "washing away of sins" Acts 22:16; "putting on Christ" of Gal. 3:27? Discuss.
950. Is a lack of baptism included in the condemnation of 16b? Discuss. "And these signs shall accompany *them that believe*"—who is involved in *them that believe*? Please note in vs. 14 who was lacking in faith.
951. Read the following references and note who performed the signs: (1) Acts 8:7, 16:18; (2) Acts 2:4-11; (3) Acts 28:5; (4) Acts 3:7, 5:15, 9:34. What is the meaning of the word "sign"?

952. Were miracles ever performed as an end in themselves or always as a means to an end?
953. Is there a time or place in the mind of Mark as he speaks of the ascension?
954. Cf. *Psa.* 110:1 and show its fulfillment.
955. Show how verse nineteen seems to be a most fitting close to the gospel of Mark.
956. Verse twenty summarizes the theme of which book in the New Testament.
957. Who went forth everywhere preaching? Who used the signs of vs. 17? For what purpose? Were the signs performed without faith?

COMMENT

TIME.—Sometime after the resurrection—no definite time is indicated.
PLACE.—At a meal of the apostles—no definite place indicated for vs. 19, 20.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS.—There are no parallel accounts. There are some similar references—i.e., *Luke* 24:36-43; *Matt.* 28:16-20; *I Cor.* 15:6; *Luke* 24:47; *Matt.* 28:19; *Acts* 1:9.

OUTLINE.—1. The place of the great commission, vs. 14. 2. The great commission, vs. 15, 16. 3. The promise of signs to confirm the commission, vs. 17, 18. 4. Jesus went to heaven, the apostles went into the world accompanied by the promised signs, vs. 19, 20.

INTRODUCTION

How should we regard the last twelve verses of the gospel of Mark?

“By the revisers these verses are set by themselves with the remark, ‘The two oldest Greek manuscripts, and some other authorities, omit from verse 9 to the end. Some other authorities have a different ending to the Gospel.’ Doubtless the revisers would not be understood to mean that the ‘different ending’ was of any value. They would only cite its existence in some ancient authorities as a sign of uncertainty as to the genuineness of the present ending. The majority of modern authorities regard these verses as the work of some other person than Mark. The most elaborate defense of their genuineness is by the Rev. J. W. Burgon (*The Last Twelve Verses of St. Mark’s Gospel Vindicated*). The argument in their favor may be found clearly stated in *Scrivener’s Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament* (second edition, pp. 507-513). Dr. J. A. Broadus has argued on the same side in the *Baptist Quarterly*, July, 1869. The reasons for regarding the passage as the work of another hand than that of Mark are given by Alford in his *Commen-*

tary, and by Meyer. The possible conjectures as to the history of the passage are given by Dr. Plumptre in Ellicott's *New Testament Commentary for English Readers*. It is to be noticed that the revisers do not enclose the passage in brackets as they do John 7:53-8:11, evidently regarding the argument against it as less conclusive than the one against that passage.

The reasons in favor of the passage are as follows: (1) It is contained in all the ancient manuscripts except two, and in all the versions. (2) The nineteenth verse is quoted by Irenaeus (about A.D. 170) with the introduction, "Mark says, at the end of the Gospel." From that time on the passage is freely cited by Christian writers generally, who treat it as they do other Scripture. (3) It has a place in the lectionaries, or selections of Scripture for public reading, which were in use in the Eastern Church "certainly in the fourth century, very probably much earlier" (*Scrivener*). It held a place of honor, indeed, in being taken as the Scripture for a special service at matins on Ascension Day. There is no question that the passage came down, to say the least, from very nearly the same date as the Gospel of Mark, or that it was generally, though not universally, accepted in the church as a part of that Gospel." (*W. N. Clarke*)

ANALYSIS

- I. THE PLACE OF THE GREAT COMMISSION, VS. 14.
 1. After several other appearances.
 2. To the eleven as they were eating.
 3. He reproved them sharply for their lack of faith in the report of those who had seen Him after His death.
- II. THE GREAT COMMISSION, VS. 15, 16.
 1. Go into all the world preaching the good news to the whole creation.
 2. He that believes the good news and is baptized shall be saved.
 3. He who disbelieves will be condemned.
- III. THE PROMISE OF SIGNS TO CONFIRM THE COMMISSION, VS. 17, 18.
 1. Promised upon the basis of faith.
 2. Accomplished by the authority of Christ.
 3. Cast out demons.
 4. Speak with new languages (i.e., new to the speaker).
 5. Handle serpents without harm.
 6. Suffer no ill effects from poison.
 7. Heal the sick by the laying on of hands.
- IV. JESUS WENT TO HEAVEN, THE APOSTLES WENT INTO ALL THE WORLD ACCOMPANIED BY THE PROMISED SIGNS, VS. 19, 20.

1. Jesus taken up into heaven by the power of God.
2. Sat down at the right hand of God.
3. The apostles went forth to preach everywhere.
4. The Lord worked with them confirming the truthfulness of their message by the promised signs.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. THE PLACE OF THE GREAT COMMISSION.

14. *as they sat at meat.*—The circumstance that the disciples "sat at meat" when Jesus appeared to them, as recorded in this verse, seems to identify this appearance with that recorded in Luke 24:36-43, at which he called for food and ate it in order to convince them that he was not a spirit. And as that appearance occurred on the evening of the first day of the week, this identifies it with that recorded in John 20:19-23.

because they believed not.—Mark has thus far mentioned only such testimony to the resurrection as had been discredited by the disciples, and it is true that to the extent of this testimony "they believed not them who had seen him after he was risen." Yet, as we learn from Luke, this discrediting of the testimony was not universal, for they did believe the testimony of Peter (Luke 24:33, 34, and comp. note on verse 13).

II. THE GREAT COMMISSION.

15. *And he said unto them.*—Here there is a silent transition from the interview on the evening after the day of the resurrection, which is the subject of verse 14, to one which occurred on the day of the ascension (verse 19), forty days later (Acts 1:3). From Mark's narrative alone we would not be able to discover this transition, but would suppose that the words of Jesus in verses 15-18 were spoken at the time of the appearance mentioned in verse 14 but this is only one among many instances in which details not essential to an understanding of the chief thought to be conveyed, are omitted from one narrative but found in another.

Go ye.—Here begins the Apostolic Commission, as given by Jesus on the day of his ascension. It had already been given, as recorded by Matthew, on the mountain in Galilee (Matt. 28:16-20), and now it is repeated in a slightly different form. It is properly called a commission, because it committed to the apostles what they had not before received, the authority to preach the gospel, and to announce the conditions of salvation. Hitherto they had been forbidden even to tell any man that Jesus was the Christ. (See Matt. 16:20; 17:9). Now their lips are unsealed, with this only limitation, that they are to tarry in Jerusalem until they are "endued with power from on high." (Luke 24:47-49; Acts 1:7,

8). Then they are to "go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

16. *He that believeth.*—That is, he that believeth the gospel (verse 15). It was to be preached in order that it might be believed, and belief, both on this account, and because it is, from the nature of the case, a prerequisite to repentance and obedience, is the first act of compliance with its demands.

and is baptized.—The collocation of the words, and the fact that baptism is an act of obedience, which could not be without faith, shows that baptism is to be preceded by faith. This commission both authorizes the apostles to baptize believers, and restricts them to believers as the subjects of baptism. No comment can make this clearer than it is made by the words of the commission itself. It is impossible, therefore, that the apostles could have found authority in their commission for baptizing infants, and it is equally impossible for modern Pedobaptists to find it (Comp. Matt. 28:19).

shall be saved.—To be saved is to be made safe. It implies that the person saved was in danger, or in actual distress, and that the danger or the distress is removed. When the term refers to the eternal state it includes the resurrection from the dead, and perpetual safety from sin and suffering. But death and all suffering are but the consequences of sin, and therefore to be made safe from sin exhausts the idea of the salvation provided in the gospel. When the term "saved" is used in reference to the state of the Christian in this world, as it frequently is (Acts 2:47; I Cor. 1:18, 15:2; Eph. 2:5; Tit. 3:5), it means that he is made safe from his past sins, which is effected by pardon and can be effected in no other way. If it be said that when a man is once saved he is saved forever, because he can not fall away, still it must be granted that the salvation affirmed of him includes the present forgiveness of his past sins. Consequently, in the statement, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," the salvation promised must include at least the forgiveness of sins, whatever it may be supposed to include in addition to this. It really includes no more than this, and is equivalent to the promise of pardon to all who believe and are baptized. If any man's mind revolts at the idea of placing baptism in such a connection with salvation or the forgiveness of sins, let him remember that it is Jesus who has placed it in this connection, and that when our minds revolt at any of his words or collocation of words, it is not his fault but ours. It is always the result of some misconception on our part. If one should be tempted to say, True, he that believes and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believes and is not baptized shall also be saved, let him ask himself why Jesus

in this formal commission, says, "He that believeth *and is baptized* shall be saved," if the same is true of him who is *not* baptized. Men do not, on solemn occasions, trifle with words in this way. If the Executive of a State should say to the convicted thieves in the penitentiary, He that will make a written pledge to be an honest man, and will restore four-fold what he has stolen, shall be pardoned, there is not a man in any penitentiary who would expect pardon without the restitution required; and if it were ascertained that the Executive meant by these words to promise pardon to all who would make the pledge, whether they would, being able, make the restitution or not, he would be justly chargeable with trifling, and also with offering different conditions of pardon to the same class of criminals. So in the present case. If he that is not baptized, being capable of the act, is as certainly saved as he that is baptized, the Saviour spoke idle words in the commission, and he offers two plans of pardon to the same class of sinners, showing partiality by offering to release one on easier terms than another. Such is the absurdity in which we are inevitably involved if we allow not the words in question their proper and natural force. When the apostles went out to preach under this commission, they knew only from its terms to whom they should promise pardon, and consequently they never encouraged any person to hope for it previous to baptism, nor gave any unbaptized person reason to think that his sins had already been forgiven. If any of the unbaptized, therefore, are pardoned, it is because God has granted to them more than he has promised. This he may unquestionably do, if the circumstances of individuals shall make it right in his eyes to do so, but of these circumstances He alone can judge, who knows all things and whose judgments are guided by infinite wisdom.

he that believeth not shall be damned.—The term "damned" has no more reference to the eternal state than the term "saved" in the preceding clause. They both have primary reference to the present state, and the former is the exact counterpart of the latter. The original term means "condemned," and this should be its rendering. Condemnation already rests on those who believe not (John 3:19), but the apostles are here told that it shall especially rest on those who *hear* the gospel and believe it not. It rests on them now, and it must, of course, rest on them forever unless, at some subsequent period of life, they shall become believers. In this way the state of condemnation which now exists will reach forward into eternity, unless its cause be removed, in like manner as the state of salvation enjoyed by the baptized believer will reach into eternity, unless it be forfeited by subsequent apostasy. It has frequently been observed, that though Jesus says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," he does not, in stating the ground of condemnation, mention

the failure to be baptized as part of it, but simply says, "He that believeth not shall be condemned." From this it is again inferred that baptism is not one of the conditions of pardon. But the conclusion does not follow; for the fact that baptism is not mentioned in stating who shall be condemned, can never remove it from the place it occupies in stating who shall be saved. In the supposed case of the convicts above mentioned, if, after saying to all the convicted thieves, "He that will make a written pledge to be an honest man, and will restore fourfold what he has stolen, shall be pardoned," the Governor had added, "but he that will not make this pledge shall serve out his time in prison," none but a crazy thief could think that because restitution is not mentioned in the latter instance he would be pardoned without making restitution. Equally unreasonable is the conclusion in question. The leading thought in the commission is to state the ground on which men would be saved, and not that on which they would be damned. The apostles were to be concerned with saving men, not with damning them; consequently, Jesus tells them in detail on what ground they are promised salvation; but as damnation is his own work, not theirs, he speaks of that comprehensively by naming the one sin of unbelief which renders all acceptable obedience impossible, and is the chief cause of all condemnation. A man should come to the commission, then, not to learn how he may be damned, but how he may be saved; and this it teaches him right plainly.

The assertion, "He that believeth not shall be condemned," implies that all who hear can believe—that no innate or acquired incredulity can justify unbelief of the gospel. This is asserting the highest possible claim in behalf of the evidences of Christianity, and he who makes the claim is He who will judge the world at the last day. If, in the face of this declaration, any man will venture to the judgment in unbelief, alleging that the evidence is not sufficient for him, he must settle the issue with Jesus Himself."

III. THE PROMISE OF SIGNS TO CONFIRM THE COMMISSION.

"17, 18. *these signs shall follow.*— The promise is, not that these signs shall follow for any specified time, nor that they should follow each individual believer; but merely that they shall follow, and follow "the believers" taken as a body. They did follow the believers during the apostolic age—not every individual believer, but all, or nearly all, the organized bodies of the believers. This was a complete fulfillment of what was promised. He who claims that the promise included more than this, presses the words of the promise beyond what is necessary to a full realization of their meaning; and he who affirms that the signs

do yet follow the believers, should present some ocular demonstration of the fact before he asks the people to believe his assertion. Signs were intended to convince the unbelievers, and they were always wrought openly in the presence of the unbelievers: let us see them, and then we will believe. Paul's expectation was that prophesying, speaking in tongues, and miraculous knowledge, would vanish away (1 Cor. 15:8); and so they did with the death of the apostles and of those to whom they had imparted miraculous gifts."

IV. JESUS WENT TO HEAVEN, THE APOSTLES WENT INTO ALL THE WORLD ACCOMPANIED BY THE PROMISED SIGNS.

"19. *after the Lord had spoken.*—The statement that "after the Lord had spoken to them he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God," establishes a close connection in time between the close of the speech and the ascension of Jesus. The same connection is indicated by Luke both in his gospel and in Acts, where, although he quotes none of the words reported by Mark, he reports a conversation quite similar to it which occurred on the same occasion and was immediately followed by the ascension. (See Luke 24:49-51; Acts 1:4-9.)

20. *And they went forth.*—In this sentence Mark overleaps the stay of the apostles in Jerusalem, and reaches forward to the period of their greatest activity, when "they went forth and preached every-where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following." Thus he brings to a most appropriate termination his narrative of those events that had gradually prepared the apostles for the mission of mercy on which they were sent forth, and which, when recited in their preaching, led men to believe in Jesus, and to accept the offered salvation." (J. W. McGarvey)

SUMMARY

15:16—16:20

This closing section of Mark, like the corresponding section in Matthew, contains two proofs of the divinity of Jesus. The first is found in the darkness that covered the earth during three hours of his suffering. It is common, when we would make a comparison to indicate the impossibility of an undertaking, to say that you may as well attempt to blot the sun from the heavens. But this, God did, in effect, when the noon-day sun was shining on the dying agonies of Jesus. It was accomplished by no natural eclipse, for the moon was on the opposite side of the globe (the moon was always full at the Passover); but it was done by the simple fiat of Jehovah. No stroke of His almighty hand since the sun was created has been more wonderful. It finds its only conceivable ex-

planation in the fact that Jesus was dying. Was Jesus, then, an imposter? Or was he, what he claimed to be, the Son of God? Let a man stand, by imagination, for three hours amid that awful gloom, as did the Roman centurion, and then answer the question.

But the crowning proof in the grand series which Mark has presented, is the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. No power but God's could have raised him from the dead, and this power could not have been exerted in behalf of a pretender. That he was raised from the dead, then, is proof demonstrative that he was all that he claimed to be—the Christ, the Son of the living God.

It has sometimes been admitted, that to prove so extraordinary an event as the resurrection of one from the dead, would require most extraordinary evidence; and certainly it would in the case of any ordinary person; but in the case of Jesus, who had wrought so many miracles in proof of his divinity, who had repeatedly declared that he would arise from the dead, and who had died amid the most astounding manifestations of the divine displeasure toward his murderers, his resurrection was an event most reasonably to be expected, and it ought to be believed on the most ordinary testimony. Indeed, after having lived as he did, and having died as he did, his failure to arise from the dead would have been the most astonishing circumstances in his wonderful career. Such a life ending in the unbroken slumber of the grave, would have been an everlasting puzzle to the world. But such a life, followed by a glorious resurrection from the dead, attains a fitting consummation, and rounds out to completeness the most extraordinary personal history known in the annals of earth or heaven. The proofs of this event, furnished by Mark, are briefly these—that an angel appeared to a company of women in the empty sepulcher, and told them that Jesus had arisen; that he himself appeared alive that morning to Mary Magdalene; that he appeared the same day to two male disciples as they walked into the country; that he appeared afterward to the eleven as they sat at meat; and that, having given them a commission to preach salvation through him to every creature, he ascended up to heaven, and subsequently worked with the disciples by "signs following," as they went everywhere preaching the Gospel. Closing his testimony in the midst of a world which at the time of his writing was being filled with these last-mentioned signs, and which was still able to disprove by living witnesses all that he had written, if it were not true, he laid his pen aside, and sent forth his graphic narrative to challenge contradiction, and to do its part in the regeneration of mankind. We thank God that it has lived and come down to us; and as we pass it on to generations which shall come

after us, we smile to think of the blessings it will bear to millions yet unborn, and of the undimmed radiance with which every sentence in it will shine when the sun shall have been blotted out forever, and the harvest of God shall all be gathered in. (*J. W. McGarvey*)

FACT QUESTIONS 16:14-20

1189. Why have authorities referred to the "different ending" of Mark?
1190. What authority is opposed to the genuineness of the last verses? What authority is in favor of their genuineness?
1191. Please state the three arguments in favor of the passage—are these conclusive?
1192. Show how Luke 25:36-43 and John 20:19-23 relate to Mark 16:14.
1193. In what limited sense are we to understand the phrase "they believed not"?
1194. What is the silent transition of vs. 14 to 15? On what two days do these events occur?
1195. State the two places where the great commission was given.
1196. What one limitation was involved in preparation before giving the great commission?
1197. How does the commission both authorize and restrict?
1198. It is impossible to find authority to baptize some persons—who are they?
1199. What is promised in "the salvation" of vs. 16?
1200. The understanding of some persons would involve Jesus in partiality—explain.
1201. Show how the use of the term "condemned" or "damned" has reference to the present and not the future.
1202. Indicate how unreasonable it is to conclude that baptism is not necessary for salvation because it is not necessary for condemnation.
1203. What is implied as to the ability to believe?
1204. When and how were the words "these signs shall follow" fulfilled?
1205. Do signs follow believers today? Discuss.
1206. Show the close connection of Luke 24:49-51, Acts 1:4-9, and Mark 16:19.
1207. Show how vs. 20 is an appropriate termination of Mark's narrative.